



God's Infirmary

When Jesus heard this, he told them, "It is not those who are well who need a doctor, but those who are sick. I didn't come to call the righteous, but sinners." ~ Mark 2:17

Discover the Context

Mark 2:13-22

 How can you bring the message of this verse to a sick person in the infirmary? How would you present it to a proud, self-righteous person? What attitudes in you does this message confront? How can you be more like Matthew (Levi) the tax collector who dropped everything to follow Jesus?

 As you read today's *Dig Deeper* chapter (Isaiah 61), write out all the categories of people that Isaiah says the good news is for. After each one write out in your own words how the gospel is suited for that type of person. Circle the one that most applies to you. (If none of them really do, then just write out what you think most characterizes you right now.) Write a prayer of thanks to God for the way Jesus Christ meets your specific needs.

Have you been to the infirmary yet? Well, I suppose you visited it on the camp tour during your orientation period. Beyond that, no one likes to spend their time at camp in the infirmary—that is unless you're really sick. Then you're glad it's there.

Usually any staff person or camper who has to stay in the infirmary has quit caring what other people think about the situation. The symptoms of their sickness, injury, or disease are more powerful than the desire to eat in the dining hall, join the activities, or be with others. There is a spirit of resignation driven by an overwhelming desire to get better.

Of course there's always the camper who keeps going to the infirmary because of a tummy ache, when in reality she would just rather sit in the air conditioning than play an organized game in the sun. She has a different issue that needs to be lovingly addressed. That's not what I'm talking about here. Nor am I talking about the boy who keeps getting "hurt," but everyone's pretty sure it's an attempt to get attention. Rather, Jesus' words in Mark 2:17 remind me of the person who limps into the infirmary humbly seeking help because he's seriously ill or in great pain.

Jesus says this is a picture of a sinner coming to him for salvation. What is needed is humility—a confession that personal righteousness is no good and an admission that personal sinfulness needs divine help. For such a person there is a great doctor. The humble sinner, aware that he needs divine help, is freely invited to God's infirmary. The doctor is Jesus.

Jesus knows that the proud sinner—the one who is righteous in his own eyes—needs salvation also but will never come. He's like the counselor who is running a 103 temperature but won't ask for help. Or the camper who is obviously homesick but won't admit it. Jesus says instead, "I came for the sinner. I came for the one who knows he's a sinner and wants my help." [JCR]