

**Matthew 9:9-13:** As Jesus passed on from there, he saw a man called Matthew sitting at the tax booth, and he said to him, "Follow me." And he rose and followed him. <sup>10</sup> And as Jesus reclined at table in the house, behold, many tax collectors and sinners came and were reclining with Jesus and his disciples. <sup>11</sup> And when the Pharisees saw this, they said to his disciples, "Why does your teacher eat with tax collectors and sinners?" <sup>12</sup> But when he heard it, he said, "Those who are well have no need of a physician, but those who are sick. <sup>13</sup> Go and learn what this means, 'I desire mercy, and not sacrifice.' For I came not to call the righteous, but sinners."

**Intro: Isaiah 43:3, 11; 49:26:** I am the LORD your God, the Holy One of Israel, your Savior . . . I am the LORD, & besides me there is no savior . . . I am the LORD your Savior, & your Redeemer, the Mighty One of Jacob.  
- **1 Timothy 1:15:** The saying is trustworthy and deserving of full acceptance, that Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners, of whom I am the foremost.

In Matt chaps 8 & 9, we've seen that Jesus has all authority over disease & sickness; He has all authority over His disciples & all people; He has all authority over all nature & calamity; He has all authority over demons & devils. Last week: He even has authority to forgive sins! He has all authority in heaven & on earth! He has the authority to save us from what we need saved from most: our sins & the wrath of God! He came to do this! He came to save sinners! Jesus loves sinners; He spent time with sinners; He ate with sinners; He died & rose for sinners!

### **1. We Meet Matthew The Tax Collector**

**Matthew 9:9:** As Jesus passed on from there, he saw a man called Matthew sitting at the tax booth

#### **a. Jews in Jesus' day were under the oppressive rule of the Roman government:**

- **Matthew 2:16:** Then Herod [Herod the Great], when he saw that he had been tricked by the wise men, became furious, and he sent and killed all the male children in Bethlehem and in all that region who were two years old or under, according to the time that he had ascertained from the wise men.

- **Matthew 14:10-11:** He sent and had John beheaded in the prison, and his head was brought on a platter and given to the girl, and she brought it to her mother.

- This is the government that crucified the LORD of glory!

**b. Tax collectors were viewed as traitors, thieves, and supporters of this Roman oppression:** Matthew was a Jew who was collecting taxes from his own people for the Romans (so viewed as a traitor); They often collected more taxes than necessary – stealing from people – (**Luke 19:8:** And Zacchaeus stood and said to the Lord . . . "if I have defrauded anyone of anything, I restore it fourfold.") (they were thieves); and they did their work for the Roman oppressors.

Tax collectors were thought to be in the same category as prostitutes, even by Jesus Himself: **Matt. 21:31:** Jesus said to them, "Truly, I say to you, the tax collectors & the prostitutes go into the kingdom of God before you."

Tax collectors were called robbers; they were lumped together with murderers; **Edwards:** A Jew who collected taxes was disqualified as a judge or witness in court, expelled from the synagogue, and a cause of disgrace to his family. The touch of a tax collector rendered a house unclean. Money given by tax collectors to the synagogue was not accepted because it was viewed as stolen money.

### **2. Jesus Calls Sinners To Follow Him**

**Matthew 9:9:** and he said to him, "Follow me." And he rose and followed him.

**a. Jesus' call – "Follow me":** Normally, Rabbi's didn't go out looking for students. Students came to Rabbi's. So it was sort of like applying for college. You apply for Harvard, they don't come looking for you! & here you have a reject of Jewish society, a reject of religious society, a traitor in cooperation with the Romans, & Jesus is calling him to be His follower! It would be like a pastor going to the toughest, hardest, most evil place in Philadelphia & calling a hardened, drug using, robber who is a spy for a foreign enemy to follow him & be a church intern!

**JMac:** Now this is shocking. This is really, really shocking, because this one is a tax collector . . . This is scandalous beyond comprehension. No self-respecting teacher of any kind would want anything to do with a tax collector. It would literally be the biggest stain on anyone's career to have a follower and an intimate [friend] who was a tax collector. That was the worst of the worst, the dregs of human society in Israel.

**Jesus' Call, "Follow Me!":** Come and be with me; Come and learn from me; Come and see how I live and imitate me; Come and hear my Words; Come and trust in me; Come and obey me; Come and go wherever I go

**Theologian:** The cross is laid on every Christian. The first Christ-suffering which every man must experience is the call to abandon the attachments of this world. It is that dying of the old man which is the result of his encounter with Christ. As we embark upon discipleship we surrender ourselves to Christ in union with His death—we give over our lives to death. Thus it begins; the cross is not the terrible end to an otherwise god-fearing and happy life, but it meets us at the beginning of our communion with Christ. When Christ calls a man, He bids him come and die. It may be a death like that of the first disciples who had to leave home and work to follow Him, or it may be a death like Luther's, who had to leave the monastery and go out into the world. But it is the same death every time—death in Jesus Christ, the death of the old man at his call.

**b. Matthew's response:** Immediate trust and obedience – he rose, just like the paralytic, and followed Jesus.

**Dorani:** In chapter 4, Matthew tells us that Jesus called Peter, Andrew, James, & John, the inner circle of Jesus' disciples. In chapter 10, Jesus calls all twelve disciples. But between the first list & the full list, Matthew places himself. The great Dutch painter Rembrandt portrayed the crucifixion . . . he portrayed all the characters one might expect . . . the thieves, the crowd, the women. But down in a corner, Rembrandt placed his own face in the crowd, as if to say, "I was there, too. I witnessed, I caused, His death." . . . Matthew does something similar. He says, "When Jesus came to call sinners, he called me. When he called tax collectors, he called me, because that is what I was." Like the author of a military history who describes a battle in which he fought, Matthew says, "I was there."

Matthew trusted Jesus; Matthew obeyed Jesus; Matthew desired to be with Jesus; Matthew made great sacrifice for Jesus; Matthew introduced others to Jesus; Matthew was transformed by Jesus.

**c. The vilest of sinners that truly believes that moment from Jesus a pardon receives!** Jesus can save anyone!

**d. Jesus' call is unstoppable:** Effectual Calling, Irresistible Grace: **John 6:37:** All that the Father gives me will come to me, and whoever comes to me I will never cast out.

**e. Matthew was transformed: 1 Cor 6:9-11:** Do you not know that the unrighteous will not inherit the kingdom of God? Do not be deceived: neither the sexually immoral, nor idolaters, nor adulterers, nor men who practice homosexuality, nor thieves, nor the greedy, nor drunkards, nor revilers, nor swindlers will inherit the kingdom of God. & such were some of you. But you were washed, you were sanctified, you were justified in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ & by the Spirit of our God. (Are you following Jesus? GOSPEL!)

### **3. Jesus Spent Time With Sinners**

**Matthew 9:10:** And as Jesus reclined at table in the house, behold, many tax collectors and sinners came and were reclining with Jesus and his disciples.

Eating together was considered an intimate activity that communicates friendship and love. And it could even imply the approval of beliefs and behavior. Jesus did/does love sinners. Jesus did/does befriend sinners. But Jesus never approved or approves of sinful beliefs or behavior.

**John 5:14:** [Lame man at Bethesda] See, you are well! Sin no more, that nothing worse may happen to you.

**John 8:11:** She said, "No one, Lord." & Jesus said, "Neither do I condemn you; go, and from now on sin no more."

**We should be careful: 1 Corinthians 15:33:** Do not be deceived: "Bad company ruins good morals."

We should learn from Jesus' example here. We should know sinners, be friends with sinners, love sinners, and seek to win the lost souls of sinners to Jesus. Do you have any meaningful friendships with lost sinners? Do you have any friends who are drug addicts? Prostitutes? Gay and Lesbian? Muslim? Hindu? Buddhist? Roman Catholic?

Pray for these kinds of friends. Pray for opportunities to tell them the Gospel. Pray for sinners. Pray that we would be known as friends of sinners like Jesus. (**Dever's book:** *The Gospel And Personal Evangelism*)

#### **4. The Pharisees Disapproved Of Jesus' Unrighteous Company**

**Matthew 9:11:** And when the Pharisees saw this, they said to his disciples, "Why does your teacher eat with tax collectors and sinners?"

The Pharisees viewed themselves as righteous, they looked down on others, and despised others. They were self righteous, arrogant, ungodly, and unloving – children of the devil and children of hell.

**a. The Pharisees didn't understand who Jesus was and what He came to do: D. A. Carson:** The Pharisees were not as healthy as they thought; more important, they did not understand the purpose of Jesus' mission. Expecting a Messiah who would crush the sinful and support the righteous, they had little place for one who accepted and transformed the sinner and dismissed the "righteous" as hypocrites.

**b. The Pharisees had wrong priorities: R. T. France:** The difference between Jesus and the Pharisees lies in their conception of priorities in the will of God, for the Pharisees the first priority is obedience to regulations, for Jesus a mission to people.

May God protect us from being so caught up in certain man made regulations that we lose sight of our mission to glorify God and reach people for Christ!

**c. The Pharisees should have been pursuing the lost sheep; they were bad shepherds: Ezekiel 34:1-4, 11-12:** The word of the LORD came to me: "Son of man, prophesy against the shepherds of Israel . . . Ah, shepherds of Israel who have been feeding yourselves! Should not shepherds feed the sheep? You eat the fat, you clothe yourselves with the wool, you slaughter the fat ones, but you do not feed the sheep. The weak you have not strengthened, the sick you have not healed, the injured you have not bound up, the strayed you have not brought back, the lost you have not sought, & with force and harshness you have ruled them . . . For thus says the Lord GOD: Behold, I, I myself will search for my sheep & will seek them out. As a shepherd seeks out his flock when he is among his sheep that have been scattered, so will I seek out my sheep, & I will rescue them from all places where they have been scattered on a day of clouds and thick darkness.

The Pharisees should have gone after the lost sheep – the sinners!

**d. Jesus is the Good Shepherd – the God-Man – Who comes to save His sheep:** Notice what God Almighty says in **Ezekiel 34:11:** Behold, I, I myself will search for my sheep and will seek them out.

Jesus is God in the flesh, and He came to seek out the lost sinner-sheep and save them! He's the Good Shepherd Who gave His life for the sheep!

We must not be like the Scribes of the Pharisees! We must not turn our noses up at sinners. May we imitate Christ!

#### **5. Jesus Came To Save Sinners**

**Matt 9:12-13:** But when he heard it, he said, "Those who are well have no need of a physician, but those who are sick. Go & learn what this means, 'I desire mercy, & not sacrifice.' For I came not to call the righteous, but sinners."

**a. Jesus is the Great Physician:** Jesus did come & heal physical sickness. Jesus will fully & finally heal every one of His children of all of their sicknesses someday. But first and foremost, He came to heal us of the sickness of sin.

**V. 12:** Those who are well have no need of a physician, but those who are sick: Everyone is sick, but everyone doesn't realize they are sick! If you realize you are sick, even that is God's mercy!

**b. Jesus speaks an Old Testament verse: Hosea 6:6:** For I desire steadfast love and not sacrifice, the knowledge of God rather than burnt offerings.

Jesus told them, the ones who are supposed to know God's Word best, you need to go figure this out! You need to go study the Bible! Learn the Bible! See what the Bible says! And rightly interpret the Bible!

**V. 13:** I desire mercy, & not sacrifice: God desires that we show mercy, love, and grace to others, not that we participate in vain, heartless religious rituals. Sacrifices are good, but not when done in vain. And God desires that we obey His commandments (the two greatest commandments) more than offering sacrifices for our sins.

**D. A. Carson:** Through Hosea, God said that the apostates of Hosea's day, though continuing the formal ritual of temple worship, had lost its center. As applied to the Pharisees by Jesus, therefore, the Hosea quotation was not simply telling them that they should be more sympathetic to outcasts and less concerned about ceremonial purity, but that they were aligned with the apostates of ancient Israel in that they too preserved the shell while losing the heart of the matter, as exemplified by their attitude to tax collectors and sinners.

We can do religious rituals: come to church, read our Bibles, pray, check off all the religious boxes and feel really good about ourselves, while we fail to show love, compassion, and mercy toward others in need and really pursue the knowledge of God and a true, vital living relationship with Him that leads to loving others!

**Matthew 15:8:** This people honors me with their lips, but their heart is far from me

**c. Jesus loves sinners and came to save sinners: V. 13:** For I came not to call the righteous, but sinners.

- **Hosea 3:1:** And the LORD said to me, "Go again, love a woman who is loved by another man and is an adulteress, even as the LORD loves the children of Israel, though they turn to other gods and love cakes of raisins."

- **Malachi 1:1-2:** The oracle of the word of the LORD to Israel by Malachi. <sup>2</sup> "I have loved you," says the LORD.

- **Ephesians 1:4-6:** even as he chose us in him before the foundation of the world, that we should be holy and blameless before him. In love <sup>5</sup> he predestined us for adoption through Jesus Christ, according to the purpose of his will, <sup>6</sup> to the praise of his glorious grace, with which he has blessed us in the Beloved.

**Doriani:** Accepting love and transforming love. (*Gentle & Lowly: 151-152*)

**The Cross: Romans 5:8:** but God shows his love for us in that while we were still sinners, Christ died for us.

**1 John 4:10:** In this is love, not that we have loved God but that he loved us and sent his Son to be the propitiation for our sins.

Christ Jesus Came Not For The Well  
But For The Sick And Sinners Frail  
In Love And Grace He Does Excel  
He Ate With Those Who'd Go To Hell  
To Love And Serve And Good News Tell  
For He Would Die, Take Every Nail  
And Suffer All The Pains Of Hell  
Then Rise And Over Death Prevail

Now Sinners Come Within The Veil  
By Faith Alone Judgment Farewell  
For He's Our Righteous Citadel  
From Us All Sin He Will Expel  
For In His Presence We Will Dwell  
Where Joys Unknown Forever Swell  
Since He's Our Treasure Praise Compel  
Our God Loves Sinners In Detail!