

## **Life and Ministry of Jesus Christ**

### **The Calling of Matthew**

Last time: the encounter with a paralyzed man and the power of God on earth to forgive sins  
Jesus Christ is the embodiment of God, the power of God, God's forgiveness of sin

This time: Jesus calls Matthew to follow Him and the subsequent controversy  
We will be in the Gospels of Mark, Luke, and Matthew...starting in Mark 2

#### **Mark 2:13-17**

Mark is our chronological marker

We will consider all 3 accounts of this event;  
let's read it in Mark 2 and then take a closer look at it  
v13-17

v13 by the seaside...multitude...taught them:

After His teaching and work in Peter's house,

- forgiving the sin of the man sick with a palsy/paralysis
- healing the body of that man
- declaring His Identity (Immanuel, the Lord God)

Jesus went to the shore of the Sea of Galilee.

The people thronged to Him (in this, His year of popularity)

Jesus never passed up a teaching moment and commences to teach the people.

What did He teach?

- Truth...not just things that were true
- Eternal matters...the things of God

This teaching moment is not recorded in either Matthew's or Luke's account

v14    Levi...receipt of custom...Follow me:

After teaching the multitude on the shore of the Sea of Galilee, Jesus passed by the Roman tax station and, seeing Levi there, invited him to “Follow Me.”

Roman tax collectors

- locals, citizens of the conquered nation, who knew everybody there and their business
- agents of Rome given a revenue target...anything collected above that target was all theirs...very prosperous
- despised and considered to be traitors by the people living under the heavy hand of Rome

To a Roman tax collector Jesus says, “Give up your worldly prosperity and follow Me to be prosperous in the Kingdom of God.”

A message diametrically opposed to that of today’s health-and-wealth preachers who are fleecing the flock and enriching themselves, just like Roman tax collectors did (false, antichrist teaching)

Levi responded immediately and becomes part of Jesus’ “team”  
More on him in the Matthew’s account

v15    in his house, many publicans and sinners...followed Him:

In context and with the benefit of the fuller picture provided by the other Synoptic Gospels as we shall see, Jesus is in Levi’s house for a meal

The people in Levi’s house

- were many
  - publicans...considered thieves and traitors
  - sinners...people who have fallen short of the glory of God
  - disciples of Jesus...not yet 12, perhaps 5, 6, or 7 at this point
- followed Jesus
  - Why?
  - Where?
  - When?

Time and trouble will tell

What happened first:

- Jesus came to sinners
- sinners got their act together and cleaned up their lives and then Jesus visited them?

What do the religions of man teach?

Speaking of religious teaching...

v16 scribes and Pharisees...How is it that He:  
Representatives of the religious leaders of the Jews are there too...  
they are “following” Jesus too  
Looking at this scene with contempt and disgust, they challenge the disciples of  
Jesus (PAJL, maybe PN) –

“Why is he doing this?!

A Rabbi eating and drinking with publicans and sinners!

This is scandalous, outrageous, totally unacceptable!”

v17 Jesus heard...whole...sick...righteous...sinners:  
With the healing of the man sick with a palsy as the backdrop and the context...  
1. Son, your sins are forgiven  
2. (To prove I have the power to forgive sins) Get up and go home  
what is Jesus saying?

- whole: spiritually healthy, no faults/blemishes, righteous, forgiven sin  
(Ecc1 12:13, Ps 24:3-5)
- sick: sinners, spiritual lepers, dead in their sin  
(1 Kings 8:46, Ecc1 7:20, Ps 14:2-3)
- righteous: the whole, made acceptable to God  
(Gen 15:6, Hab 2:4)
- sinners: the sick
- physician: Forgiver of sin, Spiritual Healer, God...Immanuel

Jesus did not come to condemn sinners but to call them to repentance  
John 3:16-17  
Turn from the world and Self and turn to Jesus Christ, Messiah  
A change of mind...to have their minds transformed into His mind

Jesus came...for me and for you, to heal us, to forgive us!

The issue of which Jesus is speaking: forgiveness of sin  
Ps 51

Jesus is the Jewish Messiah, the Savior of the whole world...  
so let's take a closer Jewish look at this event

## **Matthew 9:9-13**

The Gospel of Matthew is written to the Jews

v9 Jesus passed forth...Matthew:

As Jesus is leaving the shore of the Sea of Galilee after teaching the multitude,  
He sees Matthew (“gift of God” aka Levi) sitting in the Roman tax station

Hebrew names Nathaniel and Nathan and Greek name of Theodore also  
mean “gift of God”

As we read in Mark, Jesus invited Matthew to follow Him...  
and Matthew dropped everything to do just that

Few would have had as many opportunities to hear the teachings of the  
Prophet of Nazareth as Matthew did

- the teaching with power and authority
  - to the multitude from Peter’s boat
  - in the synagogue
- eyewitness Jesus’ power
- hearing other eyewitness accounts of Jesus’ power
- the teaching on the sea shore just prior
  
- daily interacted with those on the Via Maris
  - walking
  - conducting commerce by trade caravans
  - conducting commerce by Sea
- have known Peter and Andrew, James and John
- hear everything people were talking about
  
- as He moved about town and beyond, Jesus would frequently taken the  
Via Maris, the trade route upon which was Matthew’s tax station
  
- have much time to think on these things

Matthew sitting in the receipt of custom is significant...  
for this reason (access to so much information about Jesus)  
as well as for another (the issue at hand...the forgiveness of sin)

Rome employed

- General tax gathers
- Custom house officials
  - much more “taxing”...in their assessments and invasions
  - exacted taxes (objectively and subjectively) on
    - everyone passed thru the Custom house
      - used the road
      - passed over the bridges
      - entered the harbor
    - everything passed thru the Custom house
      - imports and exports
      - cart, beast of burden, ship, container examined
  - very much unscrupulous oppressors of the people
  - direct officials of the heathen power Rome
  - made huge personal profits off the backs of the people

Matthew (a Levite no less!) was one of those most hated guys...  
a Custom house official

Repentance for such a Jew like Matthew stressed the Rabbinical religious system  
to its breaking point – repentance and acceptance for such a sinner was  
next to impossible in their religion

Yet...Jesus walked by and invited such a one to be one of His disciples!  
Jesus was nothing like the Rabbis, scribes, Pharisees!  
Jesus looked at Matthew with love and forgiveness in His eyes instead of  
contempt  
Jesus’ look penetrated into Matthew’s very soul,  
knowing his heart and his thoughts  
Jesus’ heart of Love and grace swallowed up all the filth of  
Matthew’s past

To Matthew, Jesus’ invitation, His offer to follow, was

- more than Matthew would ever hear from any other Rabbi
- too good to pass up
  - a new world
  - a new life
  - a fresh start with God
  - a loving relationship
  - escape from a condemning religion
  - hope

Surprised to hear the invitation, this Jewish man made the easiest decision he ever  
had to make

As a result of Jesus' loving invitation and Matthew's eager acceptance,

1. We hold one of history's most important documents – the Gospel of Jesus Christ (Jewish Messiah) to the Jews
  - God the Holy Spirit is the Author
  - Matthew is the recorder
  - As the Word of God, it is inspired, inerrant, infallible
2. We are given a clarion example of how to follow Jesus
  - Matthew counted the cost of following Jesus Christ
  - It was VERY significant cost – a lucrative business
  - Matthew left it all behind in order to not be left behind
3. Another controversy arises in the ministry of Jesus Christ... a controversy that started last week: forgiveness of sin
  - The embracing of a publican, a man rejected and utterly despised by the nation its religious leaders
  - The forgiveness of a publican

Jesus Christ freely invited all sinners...

even a publican now, later a woman caught in adultery and a prostitute...  
and assured them of God's complete forgiveness and acceptance...  
of being made whole

But the Rabbinical religious system of the Jews offered only despair for sinners  
Even if a sinner genuinely repents, he must expect to die  
A sinner might turn from evil but it was impossible for him to hold onto  
the good and do it  
Remember: they did not think themselves as sinners but  
holy and acceptable to God

v10-11 Why eateth your Master:

In the Jewish culture, to eat a meal with someone was very intimate

“Family style”

- everyone double dipping or triple dipping from the same dishes
- touching/tearing the same food
- drinking from the same cup
- ‘what's mine is yours and what's yours is mine’ from a micro-organism perspective

To share a meal with someone was symbolic of becoming “one” with them  
And according to the Law, the clean would be made unclean by the unclean

So the “holy” and “clean” Pharisees (“separated ones”) were indignant and/or horrified that this Rabbi Jesus of Nazareth would become one with these nasty filthy publicans and sinners...

something they would NEVER do!

- they would never welcome a sinner into their house
- they would never go into a sinner’s house
- they would never share a meal with a sinner

The difference between Jesus Christ and all the religions: relationship

- Love vs condemnation
- Grace vs condemnation
- Forgiveness vs condemnation
- Acceptance of sinners vs condemnation of sinners
- Made clean/whole vs “misery loves company”
- Life vs death

What do the religions of man preach and offer?

Condemnation and death...bondage

What does Jesus Christ preach and offer?

Love, grace, forgiveness, made clean, acceptance, eternal life...freedom

What do these religious leaders do?

Attack Jesus

How do they attack Jesus?

With great cunning, stirring up doubt in the minds of His disciples in order to destroy their confidence/trust in Him

They are...children of the devil (Gen 3:1)

v12-13 when Jesus heard:

When Jesus is questioned or challenged, Who answers for Him?  
Jesus

How do we defend the Bible, the Word of God?  
Let the Bible, like a lion, defend itself...we just “let it out”

His response in the Gospel written to the Jews gives additional details that would be “appreciated” by a Jewish audience as burdened spiritually by the Pharisees as they were materially by the Romans:

- Go and learn
  - study the Scriptures you so arrogantly say you keep
  - interpret the Scriptures using Scriptures instead of the traditions of men
- I will have mercy and not sacrifice
  - Hosea 6:6...which stirs remembrance of
    - Micah 7:18-19
    - Micah 6:8
    - 1 Sam 15:22-23
  - forgiveness of sin is more important than offerings for sin
  - compassion and mercy are pleasing, religious observances are not
  - I want Life, not death
  - I want a loving relationship, not a lifeless religion
  - I want an inward turn to Me, not an outward show for men
  - I know these are sinners...I AM the Physician

And the call to sinners is: Come to Me! Follow Me.  
Gonna have to turn!

And for these children of the devil trying to undermine the confidence of PAJMM in Him, Jesus will have a word  
Luke 18:9-14



## **Luke 5:27-32**

v27-29 after these things:

After the healing of the man sick with the palsy and after the teaching on the seashore, Jesus invites Levi/Matthew to follow Him

Notice: publicans and “others” vs “sinners”...all men are sinners  
Gospel of Luke is written to the Gentiles/Romans  
Jesus is the Savior of all mankind

And with thanksgiving and immense gratitude, Matthew threw a feast to

- say “Farwell world and old friends, hello Lord and new friends!”
- express his unspeakable gratitude by sharing his “wealth” (Jesus) within his sphere of influence

v30 murmured against:

“Their” scribes and Pharisees...Gospel of Luke is written to the Gentiles/Romans

The religious leaders are bird-dogging Jesus and His disciples and they have picked up on a scent

They murmur...not good

God of Israel has a very low view of murmuring/grumbling/complaining

They murmured against...the disciples

This is an attack on Jesus’ disciples

“ye”...plural “you” (KJV is the most precise English translation)

Are you talking to me?!

No, I’m talking to ye!

v31-32 Jesus answering:

Who stands up for the disciples of Jesus Christ when they are attacked?

Jesus Christ

Acts 9:1-5

To attack the Body is to attack the Head

To attack the Bride is to attack the Bridegroom (one)

The calling of Matthew...a controversy and a confrontation with the Pharisees regarding the forgiveness of sin

An old preacher was dying.

He sent a message for an IRS agent and his Lawyer, both church members, to come to his home. When they arrived, they were ushered into his bedroom.

As they entered the room, the preacher held out his hands and motioned for them to sit on each side of the bed.

The preacher grasped their hands, sighed contently, smiled, and stared at the ceiling.

For a time, no one said anything.

Both the IRS agent and the Lawyer were touched and flattered that the old preacher would ask them to be with him during his final moment on earth.

They were also puzzled; the preacher had never given them any indication that he was particularly fond of them.

They both remembered his long, uncomfortable sermons about greed and covetousness that made them squirm in their seats.

Finally the Lawyer said, "Preacher, why did you ask the two of us to come?"

The old preacher mustered up his strength and said, "Jesus died between two thieves... that's how I want to go too."

In Jesus' case, one thief repented and the other cursed Him

As it is here: The calling of Matthew (IRS agent, repentant thief) and the confrontation with the Pharisees (lawyers, cursing thieves) – the issue is the forgiveness of sin

The One calling sinners to Himself is the Friend of sinners, the Lover of all mankind

1 John 4:19

Rom 5:9

Jesus frees us from the bondage/oppression of sin, religion, the world

What does Jesus Christ say to us?

1. Truth (eternal)
2. Follow Me (invitation to all sinners)
3. Repent (the call to sinners, to have a change of mind)

What is the most rational response to Jesus Christ?

1. To obey – immediately
2. To repent – completely
3. To follow – wherever, whenever with courageous faith
4. To share Him in our sphere of influence...expression of gratitude as loud as our sin as we say "Farwell world and old friends, Hello Lord and new friends"

What is the most irrational response to Jesus Christ?

1. No – determined disobedience, unbelief, rejection
2. Following Him, but looking for justification for #1

What is your response to Jesus' call?

It is a matter of the greatest urgency!

We have seen tight linkages between Russia and Iran...never before in history

We are watching Russian tanks, planes, drones, soldiers in Syria

We are watching Russia, Iran, and Syria establishing military posts in Iraq

Ezk 38:7-8, 18-19

fury rising on God's face...wrath

1 Thes 1:10

Jesus has delivered us from the wrath to come

1 Thes 5:9

God has not appointed us to wrath but salvation by our Lord JC

Rev 2-3

Letters to the Churches...history of the Church as His witness

Rev 4:1

open door for those of little strength who have kept His Word and  
not denied His name  
followed by the wrath of God

The Pharisees see themselves as "whole" and "righteous"...

the offended God most certainly does NOT, as revealed in His Word!

Beware all ye who are following a false teacher named Francis! (etc)

Pay attention, end times Church!

Rev 3:14-18

Will you follow Jesus to His Father's house (John 14:1-3)

- leaving behind all the things of the world
- with all the other sinners made whole by faith in the Physician

If you decide to not leave everything behind and you get left behind during the worst history of mankind

Days of Noah – wrath of God, global

AND

Days of Lot – wrath of God, local

Matt 24:21 – the worst time in the history of man, God's culminating wrath

while the counterfeit christ makes war against you,

will you then follow Jesus to your death...

losing your life to gain your life

assuming it is not too late and you have not

- been given a strong delusion
- taken the mark of the beast?

Best choice: Repent now and follow henceforth and forevermore

Luke 21:28

Look for Jesus Christ – He is coming...to the clouds for His Bride

Don't look for the counterfeit christ...and Jesus Christ will answer the attacks on

Him and on His people