

Matthew 9:9-13

Warming Up

1. Share with your group a time when you've been so sick or injured that you needed to depend heavily on other people. How did their help get you through the sickness/injury? How did you feel towards them after the experience was over?

Knowing the Gospel...

2. The Pharisees in Matt. 9:11 had a complaint about Jesus. What did their complaint reveal about how they saw the people Jesus ate with? What did their complaint reveal about how they saw themselves?

3. In Luke 18:9-14 Jesus tells a parable about a Pharisee and a tax collector who both went to the temple to pray. This parable gives us great insight into what was going on in Matthew 9:9-13. Read the parable and answer these questions:

- a. What was the main point and intention of the pharisee's prayer (v.11-12)?
- b. Why do you think the Pharisee "stood by himself" (v.11)?
- c. Why do you think the tax collector "stood at a distance" (v.13)?
- d. What was the point and intention of HIS prayer (v.13)?
- e. Why do you think Jesus told this parable (v.9)?
- f. What warnings do you see in this parable for people? What encouragements?

Living the Gospel...

4. Jesus ate with and befriended people who the culture saw as blatant sinners. Is it ok for believers to do the same? If you say yes, how does this square with passages like the following?: 2 Corinthians 6:14-17, 1 Corinthians 15:33, Ps. 1:1, Prov. 13:20. If you say no, how does that square with verses like the following?: (1 Cor. 9:22, Acts 26:17-18, 2 Cor. 4:5, 2 Cor. 5:19-20).

5. React to this statement: Believers should only pursue close friendships with unbelievers if their purpose is to share the gospel with them. True? False? Why? Why not? How does your opinion square with Scripture?

6. Who are the people in your life that fit the “tax collectors” and “sinners” category of Jesus’ day? How have you (can you) reached out to them with the love and mercy of Christ? What has been the response? Jesus gives a good example of what we can do for non-believers in our lives, even before we begin to reach out to them in John 17:20. Will you commit to doing this for specific people in your life?

Telling the Gospel...

7. Jesus said he came to call the “sick” not the “healthy”, “sinners” and not the “righteous”. What implications does that truth have for the way we share the gospel with people?

8. Take up the challenge to pray for someone in your life that you know is apathetic or even antagonistic towards Jesus. Take up the stiffer challenge to tell them you love them and are praying for them.

Next Week:

Matthew 11:25-30

