

## House Church Gathering Discussion Questions

**Sunday January 18, 2026**

**“Love First, Then Trust God”**

### Scripture: Matthew 9:9–13

<sup>9</sup> As Jesus went on from there, he saw a man named Matthew sitting at the tax collector’s booth. “Follow me,” he told him, and Matthew got up and followed him.

<sup>10</sup> While Jesus was having dinner at Matthew’s house, many tax collectors and sinners came and ate with him and his disciples. <sup>11</sup> When the Pharisees saw this, they asked his disciples, “Why does your teacher eat with tax collectors and sinners?”

<sup>12</sup> On hearing this, Jesus said, “It is not the healthy who need a doctor, but the sick. <sup>13</sup> But go and learn what this means: ‘I desire mercy, not sacrifice.’<sup>[a]</sup> For I have not come to call the righteous, but sinners.”

**Summary:** The passage above didn’t begin with a lecture—it began with an invitation. Jesus shared tables before sharing teachings. This passage reminds us that the kingdom of God often enters lives through something as ordinary as a meal, a conversation, or a relationship. Love opens the door. Trust builds the bridge. And God handles the transformation.

### Discussion Questions:

1. Matthew was encountered by Jesus in the middle of his ordinary—and messy—life. When have you experienced God’s presence before you felt “ready” or “cleaned up”? How does that shape the way you see people who may feel far from God today?
2. Jesus communicated belonging at the table before calling for belief. Think about a time you felt welcomed—or unwelcome—in a new environment. How can the church (and your own life) better make love its first language rather than correction or expectation?
3. The sermon reminds us that transformation is God’s work; our role is faithful presence. Who is someone you could intentionally sit with, listen to, or invite into relationship this week?  
What fears or habits might keep us from trusting God with the transformation instead of trying to control the outcome?