

Introduction:

- Mt 9:9-ff
- In chapter 9, Matthew asks three questions. These questions are designed to demonstrate a shift in understanding from that of the Temple to that of the Kingdom of God.
 - The first question Matthew asks is: Who does he think he is, God? vs 3
 - The second question Matthew asks is: Why does he eat with such scum? vs 11
 - The third question Matthew asks is: Why don't your disciples fast like we do? vs. 14
- I want to encourage us with our relationship with those who have not yet made Jesus Lord of their life. (outside of Christ).
- We will look at Jesus' relationship with sinners, then apply those insights to our lives.

I. As Jesus Walks

- A. Jesus calls a tax collector. *"As Jesus was walking along, he saw a man named Matthew sitting at his tax collector's booth. "Follow me and be my disciple," Jesus said to him. So Matthew got up and followed him."* (Matthew 9:9, NLT) A rather casual statement, "As Jesus was walking..." but yet a powerful one. It says, *"This is my life with the people I have been sent to."* Another day in the life of the Son of God.
1. We see from watching Jesus, that what He is about to do is a lifestyle. *"As he was walking."*
 2. We also see that this lifestyle is connected with the Great Commission, Mt 28:18 *"When ever you go, where ever you go, how ever you go make disciples."*
- B. The visible movement of Jesus in our passage happens in three stages. Three distinct movements of Jesus.
1. He saw a man. vs. 9.
 - a) If we are going to reach people for Christ, we have to first recognize them as people and that God has interest in them. I do not think it a small thing that Matthew writes that Jesus saw a man, named Matthew. (He is writing about himself, here.)
 - b) It also does something to the human heart when someone notices you...when you are not just a number, or a problem for them, or an inconvenience.
 2. He said to the man. vs 9. Follow me. Let us walk together. What Jesus did, was an honor to the man. He was invited to follow a Rabbi! IE. that is like a scholarship to go to school.
 - a) If we are going to reach people for Christ we have to say something to them. And we say it in such a way that calls/invites them to follow us.
 - b) Start a conversation. In talking with new people there are some things you talk about. "How long have you been coming to FCC, vss. Are you a first time visitor? Then you talk about their home, where do you live? What is your line of work? Family? How did you hear about us?"
 - c) Can I also point out here that Jesus is recognized as a Rabbi, a religious person. Tax collectors are not the kind of people that religious leaders relate to. So this has to be a shock that Jesus would be 'kind' to this man. Hmmm...amazing how far kindness goes.
 3. He went with the man. vs 10

- a) The man follows Jesus and in the course of going invites Jesus to his home.
 - b) I want you to see that your world has to integrate into the world where people live if you want to reach them for Jesus.
 - c) After all Jesus subjected himself to our world. The world we created through sin. Sin can be messy.
- C. He ate with the man and all of his friends.
- 1. It is true for most of us when we encounter Jesus we are conflicted (we do not know what to think.) So be aware of that when you talk with people. Let them get to know you and that you genuinely care about them.
 - 2. Also, look at the people Jesus reached through just this one man! You never know who you are meeting and the potential followers of Christ that can be reached by them!

II. Jesus A Friend of Sinners

- A. In verse 10 we find Jesus eating with tax collectors and ‘other’ disreputable sinners. *“But when the Pharisees saw this, they asked his disciples, “Why does your teacher eat with such scum?””* (Matthew 9:11, NLT) IE. Jabba the hut, *“HaHa, you are my kind of scum...”* It is the religious who ask, *“Why does Jesus eat with such scum?”*
- B. What is this scum?
- 1. Tax collectors were Jews. Once they became tax collectors they were considered traitors. No longer Jews, but servants of Rome. They were crooked. And kicked out of the synagogue.
 - 2. The other disreputable sinners were simply anyone who were not like the Pharisees. IE. Jonathan Swift poem: *“We are God’s chosen few, All others will be damned. There’s room enough in hell for you, We can’t have heaven crammed.”*
 - 3. What about the Pharisees?
 - a) They saw themselves as the standard bearers, which was their call. They were called to be separate from the world but were managing to do that only by their works and not by faith. Action only—not in heart.
 - b) They too, were ‘sick’ as Jesus states but they just did not know it.
- C. Jesus declares to the Pharisees, *“The sick need a doctor”* In other words you will find among sick people a doctor. or... find a doctor among sick people. It is what you expect!
- 1. His point: an effective ‘healer’ must expect to get his hands dirty and sometimes the doctor has to go to the patient. Jesus *“said, in effect, ‘You are right. These people are sick. These people do hurt. They are troubled men. Their style of life has damaged them deeply. There are many things about life they do not see right. They are covering up many evils; they are compromising with many sins. You are right. They are sick men, but where else would a doctor be found? I have come to heal hurting men. So I have to be where hurting people are. I have come not to call the righteous, but sinners to repentance”* (Schubert 34).
 - 2. His second point: Jesus tells them *“go learn from this...I want you to show mercy not offer sacrifice.”*
 - a) *“For I desire steadfast love and not sacrifice, the knowledge of God rather than burnt offerings.”* (Hosea 6:6, ESV)

- b) *I want you to show love, not offer sacrifices. I want you to know me more than I want burnt offerings.* (Hosea 6:6, NLT)
 - c) *"I'm after love that lasts, not more religion. I want you to know God, not go to more prayer meetings."* (Hosea 6:6, The Message)
 - d) This passage echoes with "relationship". He is our friend and awaits us to acknowledge His presence and availability.
 - e) "What was happening was not so much that Jesus was hanging out with sinners. Sinners were hanging out with Jesus! Part of the amazing attraction of Jesus' ministry is that the outcast WANTED to be around Him."
- D. His purpose is to call sinners. They know they are lost. (It not easy for the (religious) "righteous" to know if they are lost.) The point of calling sinners is that they would become righteous.
1. This is the 'go' part of the great commission.
 2. Each of us have a mission to reach people with this Gospel.
 3. With Jesus, sinners have a place to go. Are you someone they can come to?

III. Let Us Walk As Our Lord

- A. We are called by Jesus and by His example to relate to those outside the Kingdom. So what can we learn?
1. Our text shows us that the Pharisees were seeing what was wrong with people and Jesus was seeing what was right! Praise God!!! (They are God's creation and He loves them.) He sees our potential and what we can become.
 - a) The call to Matthew is almost like this: "Matthew, tax collecting is not who you are. Follow me and I will give you a whole new identity."
 - b) IE. In Zambia at the leadership conference. A man stands up, gives his name, and says, "I am a headman, a drunkard and a polygamist. How can I have integrity." He had professed Christ earlier in the day. I took him back to his new identity. I showed him what he needed to live free of the alcohol. I helped him with how to lead forward in his village as marriage to be between one man and woman.
 2. This controversy of our text reveals the startling perspective on the new values of the Kingdom which is putting the religious community at odds with the Kingdom of God. These values have not changed. Kingdom people must receive them for they are how the Kingdom of God operates.
 3. The amazing thing in this passage is the number of sinners who are actually following Jesus and not just Matthew.
 4. "The wise could not find Him (Pharisee), yet he revealed himself to the humble. We need to remember this when talking with strangers and lost friends. Never underestimate how much God is at work!
- B. " 'Following' is an act that involves risk and cost; it is something one does, not simply what one thinks or believes"

1. It cost Matthew to follow Jesus! It cost Zacheus to follow Jesus. But...the reward is more than worth it. He left behind the known to find the unknown. Bill Johnson, *"God is not hiding things from us. He is hiding things for us!"*
2. The relationship with God becomes very personal as it did with Matthew. When that relationship begins..."we Go!"

Conclusion:

- Like Matthew, Jesus is calling us today, despite our shortcomings.
- Jesus sees in us the people who we can become. We are His workmanship (Eph. 2:10)
 - In Florence, Italy, a marble block arrived for Donatello but it had some imperfections on it and was set aside. Later, another sculptor saw the block and decided to work on it for 2 years. On January 25, 1504, the veil was dropped to reveal that the stone of imperfection had become a work of art. It became known as Michelangelo's David.
- Jesus "comes to us in our need; He makes a perfect diagnosis; He provides a final and complete cure; and He pays the bill!" (Wiersbe 1:116)
 - If you are not already a follower of Christ become one today.
 - If you are already a follower of Jesus, reach out to others on his behalf.