

Intro: Remember when you were a child in grade school...and they were "Picking sides?"

Do you remember the feeling of standing there as other kids were being chosen...hoping...praying...NOT LAST!
I think that is what is going on to some degree in Matthew's heart as Jesus is walking by one day.
At this point in Jesus' ministry a number of the disciples have been chosen...at least 4-6 (Peter, Andrew, James and John)
And because of where Matthew is located...at the customs booth...where EVERYTHING took place...probably knew it
And somewhere in his heart Matthew must have been thinking...what if he CHOOSES ME!? Will I go?
Do I want to go? Do I want to leave this behind...Am I worthy to be one of His followers?

You see, Capernaum was a very significant city in that day and time...and Matthew held a very lucrative job...
Yet, if he was to follow Jesus...become one of His disciples...it would cost him everything....

Look with me at Matthew 9:9ff...and let's see what happened

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1. The Man: Look With Me At Matthew: The Man Jesus Saw That Day.

Vs 9

- **Jesus Saw Him:** Just like he "saw" the paralytic last week: Not just surface: Really SAW
- **Matthew:** "gift of God" Levi:
Not unusual to use two names...One within the Jewish community...One more Greek or Roman...Business name
- **Publican:** Tax Collector: Working for the Romans
Traitor, Sellout; Extortionist, Greedy, Dishonest, Unclean: Not accepted "polite" society
- **Likely very wealthy:** Capernaum was a VERY influential city, For a lot of reasons
 1. One of three major tax cities: Most significant trade/caravan route (Caesarea/Jericho)
 2. Because of its location, his position...Matthew could charge whatever he wanted
- **Social Outcast:** Romans didn't respect him...He was one of the "Jews" Not a citizen of Rome 2nd class
Jews didn't respect him, loathed him...he took advantage of them, unclean!

So while Matthew probably had "everything" He was a man without a country...Likely the only friends he had...like Him!!!
I'm willing to bet (with a little holy imagination) that when Jesus came by, Matthew thought..what would it be like to be disciple

2. The Call: Matthew's Call: Follow Me!

Vs 9

For us these are just two simple words...But for Matthew...and others that heard Jesus say them, it carried a LOT of meaning

- **Be my disciple:** Not just used of Jesus: Many spiritual/religious/philosophical leaders (Socrates, Plato)
- Meant to leave behind your old way of life, and exchange it for something new, different
- Meant to give yourself to the beliefs, the teachings, the lifestyle and the goals of your leader
- Means that you are accepting that the one you follow knows the "right way" and you are there to learn from them
- For a follower of Jesus: Meant to accept Him as the messiah, the promised deliverer of Jewish people
- For Matthew...it means he is leaving behind his livelihood, his income, his family, his everything!
- With all of that...Seemingly without hesitation that's just what he does! Luke 5: ABANDONED EVERYTHING!

Today, when we think of following Jesus...we think of something much less radical...much more socially acceptable!

Illus: Following a question on social media right now that is worth looking at: Why is religious commitment declining

I think a large part of that...is we aren't asking for true commitment...We say, its ok, just follow as you are comfortable
Jesus call was to a radical, whole hearted, sold out commitment to Him...and Matthew bought it! Not fall back, plan B

3. The Concerns: Matthew's Concern, Jews Concern, Jesus Concern!

Vs 10

- **Matthew was concerned for the people that he knew...his friends and acquaintances:**
 - >Matthew didn't want to follow Jesus alone! What he had come to know was so life changing he wanted to share it!
 - >Came up with an ingenious plan: Throw a party...invite everyone he knew...AND JESUS!
Illus: Years ago I had someone do that. Owned a business...invited me...walked me around room: Pastor!
 - >Matthew was so sold out...He didn't care if people thought he had lost his mind...Wanted them to meet Jesus
Illus: When I became a follower of Jesus...all my friends...thought I had a bad drug trip!
They simply couldn't understand the change...when I told them...lost many...some listened
 - >Look at who Matthew invited: Publicans...and Sinners
 - Publicans:** People like him
 - Sinners:** Those the Jewish leaders looked down on because they didn't follow their laws!
 - >Matthew was concerned for people He knew: He wanted them to know Jesus the way he did: Change their life too
- **Jews had concerns as well:**
 - >Vs 11: Why does your "teacher" (The one you are following...who knows the right way; claims Messiah) Eat with Tax Collectors and Sinners? To Eat means:
 - Friendship:** Accepted into relationship (to sit at the table is to be welcome to their social circle)
 - Fellowship:** Meet as equals, Peer to Peer, (to sit at table is to meet "face to face" as equals)
 - Equality:** On the same social setting (Something the Jews would NEVER do with Gentiles) Dogs!

The Jews would NEVER...Associate with THAT kind of People!

In their eyes Jesus has compromised himself...demonstrated that he could never have been good Jewish man: Messiah?
They dismissed him out of hand...because he interacted with these people

- **Jesus concerns**

- 1. Concerns for those who were “Sick” Sinners:**

Notice he didn't downplay who and what they were (Vs 12 he calls them sinners)
He was simply offering them a way out: He acknowledged them as spiritually sick
He just said, yes they are sick....but I'm the spiritual doctor...I've come to make them well!
Meeting them on their own terms, Accepting them...loving them...Welcoming them
And Just like Matthew, I have no doubt he said: Follow me: Leave your old life behind!

Illus: This was a hallmark of Jesus ministry. This isn't the ONLY time He reached out to “those people!”

- a. Woman that anointed his feet and dried them with her hair (Simon: knew what kind of woman)
- b. Luke 7: Called him a friend of sinners!;
- c. Luke 15; Publicans and Sinners crowded around
- d. Zacchaeus: When he went to his house..accused of going to house of sinner!
Jesus regularly went to, welcomed, interacted with and reached the outcast, unclean, unacceptable

- 2. Concern for the disciples:**

Notice that the Jews attacked them...”Why does YOUR master eat with those people?”
But it was Jesus that answered them.
He never defended himself...but he often went to the defense of his followers!
He made sure that he answered when they couldn't

- 3. Concern for the Jews! Because look...they didn't Get it!**

He heard their judgment (Notice they asked the disciples...Jesus answered!)
Go and learn the meaning of “I desire mercy and not sacrifice!”

Quote from Prophet Hosea:

Jesus is saying: Learn the heart of God...It isn't found in dry; dull, meaningless routines
What God wants is a broken and contrite spirit. He is searching for those that aren't just going through motions
He is looking for those whose heart is near to him...not just someone who has all the answers!

Applic: Here is something interesting: Jesus routinely taught the Pharisees...Corrected them,
But they NEVER responded! They were so set in their own ways...

That even when God himself explained the OT scripture to them...they refused to listen!
Pay attention to that...Truth...must be mixed with faith...and obedience....
Not just a matter of going through the motions.

Look at this...The sinners were closer to God than the religious leaders....

CONCL: A couple of places where the scripture challenges us this morning

- 1. God sees you:** Just like he saw Matthew. Far from Him, Lost in his sin, pursuing everything but God
Counting his money...pockets full but his heart empty....Jesus sees him...Calls Him

- 2. God calls you to follow him as well.** Not some soft, easy believe whenever its convenient path: Journey with him
Follow him even if I means you lose your life...just like Matthew did!
Lay it all down...leave it all behind...and walk...run...after him!

- 3. Who are you bringing with you? Who do you have concern for?**
Matthew didn't want to walk into heaven alone...He sought to bring everyone he knew
He didn't care if they thought he had slipped over the deep end. He cared enough to reach out
He threw a part...invited them all...(EVEN the JEWS! They were there...that or they crashed!!!)

Applic: In a couple of weeks we are going to have BYB: Throw a part...

Each week something special/different: Music night with Pete, Another w/worship team

Firepit one night...maybe a movie night...funnel cakes...snowballs

Best part of all..opportunity to fellowship..have a spiritual conversation with someone

My challenge...but like Matthew! Invite everyone you know to the party!

Work friends...Neighbors...Religious people...non religious...

You don't know who God will touch...if you will just reach out

Find the most unlikely...The one who feels like Matthew...the furthest away...Love them unconditionally..just like Jesus and Matthew did