

THIS WEEK'S MESSAGE

MAY 2ND-3RD, 2020 // BOOK OF MATTHEW

THE TAX COLLECTOR (MATTHEW 9:9-13)

BREAKING ANOTHER SOCIAL TABOO

We have read about Jesus breaking several social/cultural taboos, and with the calling of Matthew we see another. When Romans would conquer a people, they would recruit some natives to be tax collectors. The locals saw these people as traitors and the lowest of the low.

NOT JUST MATT, BUT ALL OF HIS PEEPS

Jesus not only went to Matt's house, but ate with many "tax collectors and sinners." Eating together was the deepest form of social intimacy and when the Pharisees saw this **they asked the disciples** "Why does your Teacher eat with tax collectors and sinners?"

WHY NOT ASK JESUS?

The educated Pharisees were trying to pit the not as educated disciples against Jesus. Isn't this how slander and gossip works?

- Jesus **heard the divisive talk and met it with righteous anger**. He sarcastically tells the religious leaders that He was there for the sick sinners and not the healthy religious people.

THERE ARE NO HEALTHY PEOPLE

Jesus' sarcasm was aimed at the idea that any human is good without God's help. The people Jesus came for are **the ones that realize they are sick and lost**.

- **Humility is the lynchpin. Without true humility and self-awareness we fail to see how depraved we are, therefore denying salvation.**

"GO AND LEARN WHAT THIS MEANS..."

Jesus tells the religious people to go learn that God "desire[s] mercy and not sacrifice." **Sacrifice means religious action and mercy means the heart behind what we do**. It is good to go to church, serve, take communion, etc., but **God wants our hearts to be in the proper place first**.

A NEW WAY (MATTHEW 9:14-17)

WE CAN EASILY BECOME LEGALISTIC

John the Baptist's followers approached Jesus and asked why His disciples didn't fast more often. What had happened over time is the religious community made fasting **a regiment more than a conviction**.

- **All Christians can easily fall into the trap of legalism**. We must always go back to the mercy (heart) in v13.

THERE WILL BE A TIME FOR FASTING

Jesus doesn't say that fasting is bad, but that it has appropriate times, and it wasn't time for His people yet. Jesus also foreshadows His death in v15. He is warning everyone that hard times are coming, and fasting will be necessary.

BUT RIGHT NOW, SOMETHING NEW IS TAKING PLACE

Jesus wanted His followers to pay attention because a new era of how God and man connect was beginning to take place. Jesus spoke several mini parables. The new "wineskin" Jesus was referring to was the church. **Jesus was going to build a people that would share the salvation message with the world**.

ASLEEP (MATTHEW 9:18-26)

BACK TO HEALING PEOPLE

Not all religious leaders were hostile to Jesus. V19 says as Jesus was sharing His mini parables, "one of the leaders came and knelt down...saying, 'My daughter just died, come and lay Your hand on her and she will live.'" We don't know the leader's attitude, but **desperation tends to break down even the harshest skeptics**.

A FIRST ON THE WAY TO A FIRST

Jesus followed the leaders on His way to do a first, raise the dead. On His way, another first happens, a woman with a bleeding issue touched His robe in the hopes of being healed while being discreet. Touching the dead and a woman with a bleeding issue would've made Jesus religiously unclean.

DESPERATE TIMES

Jesus didn't care about social norms and neither did the woman. She was already a social outcast, but she was willing to risk it all just to touch Jesus and be made well.

- **It was both the touch and word of Jesus that saved this woman through her faith. We need to pursue, let Him touch us, and apply His word!**

"...AND A CROWD LAMENTING LOUDLY."

As Jesus got to the leader's home, He saw the hired flute players and mourning friends and family. He tells the crowd to leave because the girl "is not dead but asleep."

- Jesus wasn't interested in crowds, He wanted to heal the girl. Once the crowd was gone, He raised her from the dead and the news spread like wildfire.

TWO BLIND MEN (MATTHEW 9:27-31)

THE NOTORIETY WAS STIRRING THE OPPOSITION

The raising of the leader's daughter set the stage for the Pharisees to ramp up their opposition.

- The healing of the two blind men in v27-31 is more of the same miraculous healing that fulfilled prophecy (Isaiah 35:5-6) and drew more glory to God through Jesus' ministry.

THE BLIND RECOGNIZED HIM

It is ironic that two blind men recognized Jesus as the "Son of David," meaning the prophesied Savior, when the religious leaders could not.

- Their faith was the key to Jesus' ability and willingness to heal them. **It is only by faith that we can see Jesus and be saved and healed.**

OBVIOUSLY, THEIR MOUTHS WERE WORKING

Jesus warned them not to talk about the miracle because it would foster more opposition from the Pharisees. Jesus wasn't afraid of opposition, but He wanted the fewest distractions possible in order to train His disciples.

DEMONS (MATTHEW 9:32-34)

DEALING WITH DEMONS AGAIN

Shortly after healing the blind men, a demon-possessed man that was unable to speak was brought to Jesus to be delivered.

- Similar to the 2 demoniacs in 8:28-34, we see that demonic oppression can affect people physically. We also see how quickly Jesus' word drives demons out.

THE PHARISEES THOUGHT HE WAS POSSESSED

Jesus says in Matthew 12 that a "house divided cannot stand." This means logically, Satan doesn't benefit by casting out demons, so their accusation makes no sense. Christianity is a balance of faith and simple logic. The teachings and actions of Jesus make sense on the most practical levels.

THE HARVEST (MATTHEW 9:35-38)

CONSTANT WORK FOR HUMANITY

Jesus went from town to town "teaching...preaching...and healing." Matt writes, "When He saw the crowds, He felt compassion for them because they were distressed and dejected like sheep without a shepherd." This shows that **God is not some distant cosmic force, but a loving relational Father that cares for us**.

WHAT IS THE ROLE OF THE SHEPHERD?

A good shepherd **feeds, comforts, heals, guides, and protects** their flock. Jesus saw that the religious leaders weren't doing that, so He was preparing a new kind of shepherd.

- **Ultimately, Jesus is our Shepherd, but we're also called to shepherd others into a relationship with THE Shepherd.**

THE IMPORTANCE OF DISCIPLESHIP

At this point, the disciples start to take on a greater importance in the narrative of the Gospel. Jesus sees the huge need, so He prepares His followers to go out and meet that need.

- **God building up His church to meet the needs of the community is still His prime objective.**

MENTOR AND MULTIPLY. DON'T JUST PERFORM.

Jesus could have just performed miracles, healed the sick, and even forgiven sins, but He knew that to cover the earth with His message He needed to make disciples.

- He also acknowledged that many people will not **"work the fields" because they are selfish or scared, two things true Christians are not.**

...BUT THE WORKERS ARE FEW

The call of the church (everyone that claims to be a Christian) is to **feed spiritually and physically, comfort the broken and hurt, heal through prayer and counsel, guide people through the Bible, and protect each other from evil by holding each other accountable**. Jesus didn't view non-believers as threats, He loved them and offered them a relationship. We are to do the same! **We are called to insulate not isolate**. This means we go out and be the light without compromising our biblical integrity. We must deeply **love** people, we must **know our faith** (Bible), we must **live** our faith, we must **speak** our faith and we must **mentor and multiply**.