

THE CALL OF MATTHEW

TEXT: MARK 2:13-20

Introduction:

1. We are going to look tonight at the call of Matthew and to understand his call we have to understand a little about his background.
2. Matthew was a tax-collector, a despised publican (Mark 2:16; cf. Matt. 18:17; Luke 18:9-14).
3. Matthew is introduced to us as Levi, his Jewish name (cf. Luke 5:27). It was his job to collect taxes for the Roman government.
4. Matthew wrote the first book in the NT, and in his own account, he does not refer to his original Jewish name Levi (Matthew 9:9).
5. You may recall in Luke 19:2 we are told that Zaccheus was “the chief among the publicans, and he was rich.”
6. The publicans were known for being hard-hearted, crooked extortioners. In the NT, they are always lumped together with the worst of sinners (cf. Matt. 9:10, 11; 21:31, 32).
7. But the Lord saved Matthew and I would like to preach a simple message tonight on the call of Matthew.

I. HE OBEYED THE CALL (2:14).

II. HE “LEFT ALL” (LUKE 5:28)

III. HE TRIED TO GET HIS FRIENDS SAVED

I. HE OBEYED THE CALL.

1. Jesus said to Matthew, "Follow me," and the Bible says, "he arose, and followed Him" (Mark 2:14).
2. I sometimes wonder how many more souls would be saved and how many more Christians would be blessed and how many more churches would be established if every man, woman, boy and girl who claims to be a Christian would simply obey God.
3. Matthew "followed Him" (Mark 2:14). Following Jesus means to accept Him as your Lord and Saviour. Have you done that?
4. Following Jesus requires faith. Following Jesus means taking a stand for Him. That is what baptism is all about. Lord willing, next week we will have a baptismal service.
5. I heard a preacher give an illustration about the wedding ring. He said the wedding ring is a symbol or token that you are married. But just putting on a ring does not make you married.
6. Baptism does not save anyone. But by being baptized, the convert tells the world he is a follower of the Lord Jesus Christ.
7. Following Jesus means taking a new direction with your life. Matthew was going one way and our Lord was going another way. Jesus said, "Follow me," and so Matthew had to change direction.
8. If you are saved tonight, your life should be moving in a different direction from those who are lost (cf. Matt. 7:13, 14).
9. "Therefore if any man be in Christ, he is a new creature: old things are passed away; behold, all things are become new" (II Cor. 5:17).

II. HE "LEFT ALL" (LUKE 5:28).

1. The words "he left all" are not found in Matthew or Mark's account.

2. It cost Matthew something to follow Christ. He chose to give up his wealth and lucrative business to become a Christian. Many people are not willing to give up their careers for Jesus.
3. Some people are not willing to give up anything for the Lord.
4. God is calling people but many of them are not answering the call. How tragic! There is no greater joy than in serving Jesus.
5. It also cost Matthew his companions and social standing when he followed Jesus. Now those of us who know our Bibles realize that Matthew's worldly companions and worldly social status were not very desirable but do you think Matthew understood that when he first got saved?
6. No, this was all new for him but he gladly gave up his friends and social standing to follow the Lord. And the Lord gave Matthew better companionship – fellowship with the Lord and with the Lord's people.
7. No matter what we give up for Christ, it is not a sacrifice because what we receive in return is infinitely better. Occasionally I will hear some Christian testify how he gave up this or that when he became a Christian, and I wonder. Doesn't he realize he is far better off now?
8. How can you compare a job, worldly friends, a nice house, and some money in your pocket with forgiveness of sin, salvation, the joy of serving Jesus, and eternity in heaven?
9. Our Lord said in Matthew 6:20, "But lay up for yourselves treasures in heaven, where neither moth nor rust doth corrupt, and where thieves do not break through nor steal."
10. Our Lord also referred to storing up treasure in heaven in Matthew 19:21; Mark 10:21; Luke 12:33; and Luke 18:22.

11. We often sing “Is Your All on the Altar?” but sometimes it is a bit sad for me because I know that we have some members who have not put it all the altar.
12. Matthew “put it all on the altar for the Lord.” Luke says he “left all” (Luke 5:28).
13. Matthew arose and followed Jesus (Mark 2:14).
14. Beloved, the best place to be, the safest place to be, the most rewarding place to be, and the most exciting place to be is in the perfect will of God.

III. HE TRIED TO GET HIS FRIENDS SAVED (Mark 2:15-20).

1. Not long after his conversion – “And it came to pass” (Mark 2:15a), Matthew gathered together his unsaved friends and co-workers and proposed to tell them how Jesus saved him.
2. To new converts: now is the best time to get your unsaved friends saved. Eventually they will drift away.
3. To those who have been saved for awhile: there are still unsaved co-workers, neighbors, and literally thousands of unsaved people right here in Elmont.
4. If you are filled with the Holy Spirit and seeking to follow Jesus, there will always be some Pharisee around to discourage you (Mark 2:16).
5. In Matthew’s account, our Lord quoted from Hosea 6:6. Note: “But go ye and learn what that meaneth” (Matt. 9:13), and “But if ye had known what this meaneth” (Matt. 12:7).
6. This suggests two things: the Pharisees did not understand the Bible because they were lost and had no spiritual discernment, and they were not merciful. God “will have mercy, and not sacrifice (ritual).

7. Those that are trusting in their good works to save them cannot comprehend grace. We see this as we go from house to house knocking on doors.
8. Religion without genuine repentance can never lead to salvation. Our Lord called “sinners to repentance” (Mark 2:17).
9. Our Lord’s statement about fasting in Mark 2:19, 20 indicates that His followers would fast after He ascended into heaven.

CONCLUSION:

1. Suppose Matthew had not responded to the call from Jesus? Then today there would be no Gospel of Matthew in our Bible!
2. You might not think God can use you but I’m sure many thought the same thing about Matthew. Remember, he was a despised, disreputable tax collector.
3. Someone has said, “God sees the oak in the acorn.”
4. Now try and think of the vast amount of good that has not been done because men and women have refused to follow Jesus.
5. One day, Hudson Taylor, the famous missionary to China, saw a Chinese man drown because some unsaved fishermen would not stop what they were doing to go and rescue the man. When Hudson Taylor would tell this story back in England, his listeners would be filled with indignation.
6. And then Hudson Taylor would say, “But you are far worse! That drowning man went to heaven but there are multitudes of sinners slipping into hell every day and you sit back and do nothing!”