
The Call to Follow Jesus

Mark 2:13-17

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00:01

Well, I'd like to invite you to take your Bible and turn to the Gospel of Mark. It's been about six months since our last study in the Gospel of Mark, so we're returning today. In our last time in this book, we looked at chapter 2, verses 1 through 12, where Jesus heals the paralytic. And so now we're going to pick up at verse 13, and it will take us down to verse 17.

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verses 13 through 17. Listen to what the Word of God says,

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He was reclining at the table in his house, and many tax collectors and sinners were dining with Jesus and his disciples. For there were many of them, and they were following him. When the scribes of the Pharisees saw that he was eating with the sinners and tax collectors, they said to his disciples, Why is he eating and drinking with tax collectors and sinners? And hearing this, Jesus said to them,

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those who are sick. I did not come to call the righteous, but sinners." What a wonderful passage of Scripture where we hear Jesus's call to sinners for salvation. The dramatic incident that is recorded in these verses illustrates a beautiful fact, and the fact is that there is no sinner beyond the reach of

01:59

Jesus was willing to save even the lowest of the low, a hated tax collector. Now that may be a description for yourself, not the tax collector part, but feeling like you've been the lowest of the low. I could feel like that, of course, when I came to Christ, but listen, I don't know if any of us was as bad as Matthew. And we've met a lot of bad people, I'm sure, in our lifetime. I know I have, and I hung around with a lot of them.

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But notice as the text opens in verse 13, which is usually where the translators end, but we hear about the main work of Jesus in verse 13. Listen again to what it says. And he went out again by the seashore, and all the people were coming to him, and he was teaching them. This was his main work, teaching them the Word of God, teaching them the Gospel.

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passage looks back all the way to chapter 1 and verse 16 when Jesus began his ministry in Capernaum. After he healed the paralytic, he went out from the house in Capernaum, began to teach again by the seashore. His teaching mostly occurred outside and we know the problem with him doing it inside because of the previous story.

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The crowd was so great, and if you remember, there was a paralytic with his three friends, and they were trying to get to Jesus because his three friends wanted Jesus to heal the paralytic. You remember that? And so because of the crowd, it tells us that they were unable to get to Jesus. So they cut open a part of the roof, and they let him down right in front of Jesus. And that demonstrated the greatness of their faith.

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they knew that Jesus could heal their friend. It also tells us about the faith of the paralytic. He knew that Jesus could heal him. Well, the story ends in verse 12, and now in verse 13 it picks up with Jesus leaving the house and going to a place where more people could hear him preach, because that's why he came. So the text tells us that he traveled along the shore of the Sea of Galilee,

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And as he did that, all the people were coming to him and he was teaching them. That is a very interesting phrase at the last part of verse 13. You have two words there, two verbs. The verb coming and the verb teaching. Imperfect tense in Greek. What's so interesting about that imperfect tense that it gives us a picture of alternating groups that just kept coming to Jesus. And as they kept coming, he kept teaching.

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That's why I said this was his main duty, this was his main work. And we know that because as you read the New Testament you find a reference to him teaching more than 50 times. Listen to some of the things that we notice about his teaching. I'm not gonna give you all 50, but just give you a few of them. First of all, if you go back to Mark 1-22, we find that when he taught, he taught as one having authority.

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It says, they were amazed at his teaching, for he was teaching them as one having authority and not as the scribes. What does that mean? Well, he didn't quote the scribes. He didn't quote anybody. The scribes would quote other people as their source of authority. But no, Jesus didn't need to quote anybody. He was the authority. He spoke with power. He spoke with great authority.

Could you imagine sitting there and listening to him speak? Oh, wait a minute, you can. Right here in the Bible.

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You can hear him speak. And not only did he speak with authority, but sometimes he taught with parables. Mark 4:2 says that he was teaching them many things in parables as he was teaching them. And not only did he teach with parables and teach with authority, but you know what he taught on any day of the week, including the Sabbath. He didn't let the Sabbatharians stop him from healing.

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people that were in need of healing. He didn't let them stop him from teaching them the gospel. Luke 4:31 says he came down to Capernaum, a city of Galilee, and he was teaching them on the Sabbath. You know, that stirred up the religious leaders. They didn't think that that was right. And he also taught them in the synagogue. John 6:59, these things he said in the synagogue as he taught in Capernaum.

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And he didn't just limit it to the synagogue, but he also taught in the temple. John 18:20, Jesus said, "I have spoken openly to the world. I always taught in synagogues and in the temple "where all the Jews come together "and I spoke nothing in secret."

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And next, he always taught what the Father told him to teach. He said in John 8:28, when you lift up the Son of Man, then you'll know that I am He, and I do nothing of my own initiative, but I speak these things as the Father taught me.

And as you look back at the text, we need to understand that Mark really gives no indication to what he was teaching, but we can certainly...

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surmise from chapter 1 and verses 14 and 15 that when he came into Galilee, it says he was preaching the gospel of God and he was saying, the time is fulfilled and the kingdom of God is at hand, repent and believe in the gospel. Everything that he had to say was saturated with gospel truth. Everything he had to say was

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From the Word of God, it was an exposure of man's sinful heart and man's need of him. Man's need of Christ. Man's need of forgiveness.

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Jesus developed such a reputation as a teacher that they actually called him the teacher. Remember that in John 11? But he also referred to himself that way. He was the teacher. And that title was very synonymous with being a rabbi.

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Notice one more thing. Every time he taught, he taught exact truth. There was never any deceit or manipulation or lies in anything that he said. He spoke 100% truth all the time because he said of himself that he was the truth, John 14 6. And since he is the truth and everything that he says is truth, he cannot lie.

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therefore you can believe everything that he has ever said. And we have it right here in the Bible. Now I know the Bible doesn't record every word that he ever

said, but what it does record for us, what is written down under the inspiration of the Holy Spirit, is what God wanted us to hear. This is exactly what God wanted us to have, nothing more and nothing less.

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Therefore, every word recorded is truth. Jesus even said in John 17, 17 to the Father, your word is truth.

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Now, we learned that after ministering along the shore, that Jesus made his way back into Capernaum. Notice verse 14, it says, as he passed by he saw Levi the son of Alphaeus sitting in the tax booth, and he said to him, follow me. And he got up and followed him. This verse gives us the heart of Jesus's message.

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The gospel is about following Jesus exclusively. It's not Jesus plus someone else, or anything else for that matter. It is a commitment. It's a commitment very similar to the commitment that we read in Ruth 1-16. You remember the commitment that she had to Naomi?

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She said that she wouldn't turn back from following her for where you go, I will go, where you lodge, I will lodge. Your people will be my people and your God, my God. I mean that's the kind of commitment, that's the kind of following that Jesus requires. That we follow Him with all of our heart, with all of our soul, with all of our mind, with all of our strength.

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We give Him every entire part of our life.

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He wants your will. The interesting thing about that is that you can't change it. You can't change your will. Only God can change your will. And the reason why we can't change our will when it comes to salvation is because Ephesians 2.1 says that we're dead in trespasses and sins, and dead people can't bring themselves back to life.

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So he has to change your will. He has to make you willing. Philippians 2.13 says, It is God who is at work in you both to will and to work for his good pleasure. Now, I want you to remember that all the gospel writers had the same purpose in what they wrote. They wanted to reveal who Jesus was. They wanted to prove that he was God by looking at his life, by examining his teachings, by seeing his miracles, by seeing how he handled temptation, by seeing how and why he died and rose again.

12:04

So you need to keep that in mind as we return back to the Gospel of Mark. If you remember in Mark 1-1, when Mark began his Gospel, he was telling his readers that Jesus Christ is the Son of God. And then all throughout the Gospel of Mark, he demonstrates that.

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Now I want you to notice, and I think that this is really the highlight of the text in verse 14.

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the calling of Matthew and the calling to follow Jesus. Matthew is identified by his Jewish name there in verse 14. He's called Levi, but Mark and Luke refer to him as Levi in the parallel passage, but it's Matthew himself, Matthew 9, 9, who identifies himself as a man called Matthew. Matthew means a gift of the Lord.

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this Greek name was either given to him by Jesus, like Jesus gave Peter a new name, or it was assumed like Paul did. You remember Paul first was Saul, his Hebrew name, and then he became came known by his Greek name, Paul, or he could have possibly used it to hide his past because he had been a tax collector.

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The text tells us here he was the son of Alphaeus, that's only mentioned by Mark. There's another man who is mentioned as a son of Alphaeus and that's James the less, but there's no indication that they were related. The name Alphaeus was really a common name and their fathers could have had the same name. We have that today. When the twelve are listed, they're never listed together like you would have James

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and John, the sons of Zebedee.

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Mark says that when Jesus saw Matthew, notice where he was at. Verse 14, he was sitting in the tax booth. He was sitting in the tax booth, and I tell you what, he wasn't sitting there doing his taxes.

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That's a common thing to see when you go into Walmart, isn't it? You have Jackson Hewitt set up right there. And you can't go anywhere without being reminded it's time to do your taxes. Well, he was sitting there. And why was he sitting there? He was sitting there because he was collecting taxes. He was there at the place where customs and dues were collected. Matthew was working for Herod Antipas, who was the ruler of Galilee.

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He was also seen as a trader of the Jews. The Roman taxes that were bought, or that he bought, was very reminiscent of all tax collectors. They were referred to as publicani. You probably have in your version publicans. These were men of great wealth and great credit. And the reason why they had great wealth and great credit was because they extorted

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the people for their wealth. In fact, the banquet that ensues in a few moments in the tax, you notice that it was many tax collectors and many sinners that were there along with Jesus and his disciples. And so, Matthew obviously had a pretty large house to host his friends in and host Jesus and his disciples.

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But we know that they were required to meet a certain quota for Rome, and anything that they collected that was beyond that, they could keep it. We know that's true because Luke 3:13 tells us that, 12 and 13, after there were some of the tax collectors that had believed and were baptized, they asked Jesus, Teacher, what shall we do? And He said to them, Collect no more than what you have been ordered to do.

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Tax collectors will always exist.

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But the kind that existed in that moment were traders, because they would take more than they were required to take.

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So they had a reputation. And that reputation wasn't any good at all. They were dishonest.

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They were those who had extorted the people. And some of the type of taxes that they were to collect, they were to collect the poll tax. They were to collect an income tax, about 1%. They were to collect a land tax, which was 1 tenth of all grain and 1 fifth of all the wine and the fruit. Then they would tax on transportation of goods and produce.

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using roads or crossing bridges, you know tolls on those bridges. You remember we had them and Every time you would drive across Jacksonville and you had to cross a bridge you had to come to a toll booth Somebody may remember that Linsky says that under the publicani there were chiefs of publicans like Zacchaeus who were in charge of an entire taxing district under these again common

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collectors of taxes. Matthew was most likely a common collector. When Jesus saw him, he was collecting taxes on the exports from Capernaum. Remember that was a very large fishing district. He was also collecting taxes on imports of

goods that would pass through there. And to get in the line of where things were

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He was at a perfect crossroads because you had to go through that area and come back through that area. And so they had these tax boosts set up. Now again, all publicans, all tax collectors, all of them were hated. And it's not just because people had to pay their taxes. I know, again, when we get around to April and taxes are coming around, we have to file, we understand our obligation and everything. And yeah, we all may hate paying our taxes, but we do it, right?

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But we hate it for a different reason. In this case, they had two reasons. They didn't just hate paying it, but they hated the ones that they were paying it to. Again, they were traders, exploiting the people, charging more than was necessary. For those who were unable to pay, that they would give them a loan. But they would charge them really high interest rates.

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Probably a more interesting thing about tax collectors is that they were considered unclean. They couldn't attend synagogue. They were prohibited from testifying in the Jewish court. They were actually put in the same class as thieves and liars, the most debased of sinners. One commentator said this, the Mishnah and the Talmud, although they were written later.

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register skating judgments of tax collectors, lumping them together with thieves and murderers. A Jew who collected taxes was disqualified as a judge or a witness in court, expelled from the synagogue and a cause of disgrace for

his family. Even the touch of a tax collector rendered a house unclean. It's almost as if these guys had leprosy. Jews were forbidden to receive money and even alms from tax collectors because the revenue was considered as robbery.

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So there was a lot of Jewish contempt of tax collectors, and it was really epitomized in the ruling that Jews could lie to tax collectors with impunity.

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Also, according to the Talmud, there were two kinds of tax collectors. There was the Gabai. The Gabai were responsible to collect the more general taxes, like the poll and land and income tax.

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And of course the others were collected by the Mokies. They would collect specialized taxes like the tolls that were used for the roads and the bridges.

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So you would have a tax booth, you would have this set up, this would be owned by a great Mokies, and then he would employ little Mokies. And Matthew was a little Mokie.

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only in that sense, but he wasn't little. He was a man of great wealth, just like Zacchaeus. And you remember when Jesus came to Zacchaeus, what did Zacchaeus say? He would give away up to half of everything that he had.

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Now from Mark's description, it's clear that Matthew was this type of person. He was always in contact with the people. He was always charging them as they passed by his toll booth. He could have been one of the most familiar and hated men in all of Capernaum.

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Now I want you to understand something. In spite of that, it says in verse 14 that Jesus said to him, follow me. That's monumental.

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Because rabbis would not tarnish their reputation by having any kind of association with a tax collector, or a sinner, as the Pharisees would call them. Certainly would not go and sit down and recline and eat dinner with them.

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Jesus didn't care about all that. It's very clear he didn't care about all of that. What he was interested in was the soul. He was interested in changing Matthew. And I want you to notice something here when you look at verse 14, that change was instantaneous because that's what salvation is. Salvation is instantaneous. Now you may remember things about your past

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as an unconverted believer.

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the Scripture says they were placed on Christ, they were cast into the sea of forgetfulness, where God would remember them no more. Praise God, right?

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So you'll notice there in verse 14, He said, follow me. Now that call is not just given to Matthew, that call is given to every unbelieving child, every unbelieving person. When we are out preaching the gospel to others, we're calling people to follow Jesus. We're not calling them to come join a church. We're not calling them to anything but

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follow Jesus. We can talk about where they go to church afterward.

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But this is the response that we are to have to the gospel. You say, well, what's the gospel? The gospel is just simply Jesus died in your place. Talks about substitutionary death. He died in your and my place. And our response is to follow him. Just like Matthew's response in verse 14, and he got up.

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followed him. That was huge because again you take everything that I just shared with you about Matthew's background, he left every bit of it behind.

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I remember when a brother was sharing Christ with me on several occasions. And I remember when he first started sharing with me, I knew what was at stake. I knew in order to come to Jesus as he was telling me, I needed to forsake everything.

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Is that easy? Is that an easy thing to do? No, not at all.

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But as I said earlier, God changes your will. Not only your heart, but He makes you willing. He regenerates you. When He regenerates you, you are coming. When He regenerates you, that is an opening up of your heart. That is the new birth.

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I think we've gotten it all wrong because we put the responsibility on the sinner when the responsibility is on God. Salvation is of God and everything about yours and my salvation is holy God. He is the one according to Ephesians 1 4 that elected us before the foundation of the world. Before we were even here, he decided whom he was going to save.

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It's very clear that not everyone is going to be saved.

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But let's don't put that on the responsibility necessarily of the center refusing to repent. Let's shift it in another direction.

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God didn't call him before the foundation of the world. I know that gets tough to swallow when you hear something like that, but what else does it mean? You

can't come to Jesus unless the Father first draws you. You can't wake up one day and say, well, I think I will get saved. No, it just doesn't work like that. He has to draw you. I mean, even when you take Lydia there in Acts 16, when Paul is speaking to

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the women that were there at the river, it says, the Lord opened the heart of Lydia. Paul didn't do that. What Paul was doing was preaching the life-changing message, right? And through the preaching of that life-changing message, God opens up her heart.

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convinces her of the truth.

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You know, Jesus gave this same call earlier to Peter. He also gave it to Andrew, James, and John in chapter 1 and verse 16 and following. He also gave this call to the rich young ruler in Matthew chapter 16 verse 24.

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And he said this to his disciples, If anyone wishes to come after me, he must deny himself and take up his cross and follow me.

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And then he said in verse 38 of Matthew 10, that he who does not take up his cross and follow after me is not worthy of me.

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Matthew immediately follows Jesus. He got up and followed him. Luke says in the parallel in Luke 5 28 that he left everything behind and got up and began to follow him.

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Now leaving everything behind, that's whatever it is that is in your way of following Jesus. Whatever that may be. To the rich young ruler, what was it? Riches. He told him to take what he had and give it to the poor. Come follow me and you have treasures in heaven. And it says he went away sorrowful. Why? Because he had many possessions. So he wasn't willing to give up those riches.

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to have salvation.

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Matthew's response was miraculous, just like our response was miraculous. Because it's a reflection of the supernatural work of God in regeneration that had taken place in our heart.

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One writer says this, Matthew had been a man of the world who had sold his soul for a lucrative career in a despised and dishonest profession. In that moment, Matthew was transformed from a tax collecting lover of money into a Christ following lover of God. Everything that controlled his life up to that point no longer had any meaning. The money, the power, the pleasure of the world all lost their grip on his heart.

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Under conviction, all he wanted was forgiveness. And he knew Jesus was the only one who could provide it. He had a new heart, new longings, and new desires. Does that describe you?

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And so Jesus says that to everyone who desires to follow Him. You have to deny yourself, take up your cross, and follow Him.

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Now I want you to notice in what follows that Matthew's transformation immediately led him to a celebration. Did you have a celebration after you came to Christ? I know for myself that after I got saved, I knew I needed a Bible and I wanted to go to some of the places where I used to hang out and share what had happened.

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So we got in our cars and we rode down to the local mall and bought a Bible and my friends bought some tracks. I didn't know what any of that was about at the time, but... and then we went and we stood outside some of the bars that I used to play my music in. People that I knew coming in and out, and I remember they were coming in and out and they're like, you know, what are you doing? Why don't you come on in and party with us? No thanks. But trying to share Christ with them, trying to share tracks with them of the gospel, just...

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whatever opportunity that I had to do that, and they were laughing, and they didn't want anything to do with that.

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But see, when you come to Christ, you want others to come too, right? You want to have a celebration. I mean, it's just like in Luke 15 when the prodigal son came back to his father. And what did they do? They killed the fattened calf and they had a celebration. Because his son, who had once been dead, was now alive.

31:18

So he held this large reception for Jesus, and it was at his home. Now, depending on what version or translation that you have, when you go back to looking at this, when it says that he was reclining at the table and so forth, and it talks about where they were at location-wise, some think that Jesus was back at his house in Capernaum, and people were there with him there.

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But others believe, no, this was the house of Levi. I lean toward the house of Levi. But take your pick. The point is that he held this reception, he brought all of his friends together so that they could meet Jesus, so that they could hear Jesus. That's the point.

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And you know we need to do that. You know frankly that's what we try to do when we invite people to church. We want them to come to a celebration. We want them to come to a place where they can hear Jesus, right? And that should be true in your home. So he held this large reception and the people that came were tax collectors and sinners.

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and Jesus was the guest of honor.

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And so he had a house full of social outcasts.

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From the perspective of the self-righteous religious leaders, these people represented the dregs of society. Really from Jesus' viewpoint, they weren't the dregs of society. They were the mission field. They were sinners and knew it. They were the very kind of people that Jesus came to seek and to save. They were not like the self-righteous scribes and Pharisees and Sadducees who did not believe they needed a physician.

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They didn't even believe that they were sick. And I'm talking about spiritually sick.

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And as I said earlier, just for Jesus to be there and to share a meal, that was a statement of social acceptance. He was accepting them because he was presenting to them the good news. And so for the Messiah to eat with these kinds of people, that was just beyond outrageous in the minds of the religious leaders. But you know,

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Jesus receives all who repent, right? He says the one who comes to me I will not cast out.

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So, if you're here this morning and you have never embraced the Savior, but you're repentant, you're desiring the Savior, regardless of what you have done, then Jesus accepts you.

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And so this kind of really led me to a question. What do you do besides do a celebration? What are you doing in that celebration? What are you doing once the Savior saves you? Well, immediately you began evangelizing others. You don't have to be told to do this. You just start doing it. Because again, the great things that have occurred in your life where your life now is transformed and you're not the same person anymore.

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You begin evangelizing, telling others. You can't keep the news to yourself. You can't hide it, and you don't want to hide it. You want everybody to know.

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I was thinking about that, I was thinking that at the news of the birth of Jesus that was given to the shepherds by the angels, remember that? Well after they saw and confirmed what the angels said, it said in Luke 2 17 that when they had seen this they made known the statement which had been told them about this child. They just began everywhere telling everyone about it, because you can't hide the good news. Why would you want to hide the good news? You know, bad news is usually what we hide.

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You come home from work one day and say, honey, I got some bad news. You wait as long as you can before you have to share it, right? I used to pick on my

wife so much early on. I don't pick on her now. I'm just kidding. She's back there. I remember coming home one day. I didn't like the job I was at. And I came home, and I had convinced her I quit my job. And I had to stop when the tears started coming. And I went, oh, no, I'm in trouble now. Because I was teasing.

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That was a really bad tease, wasn't it?

36:02

after Jesus had healed the man with leprosy.

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He was told to tell no one, but he couldn't stop, right? Mark 1-45, he went out and began to proclaim it freely and to spread the news around. And the reason why Jesus didn't want him to tell anybody is because of the popularity that he had gained, and it would make it difficult for him to go into those areas, and so he had to go into unpopulated areas.

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Even after Andrew had spent the day with Jesus, John 1, 41 and 42 tells us that he found first his own brother Simon. He told him, we have found the Messiah, which means the Christ, and he brought him to Jesus.

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Well, the same is true here about Matthew. Verse 15 says, And it happened that he was reclining at the table in his house, and many tax collectors and sinners were dining with Jesus and his disciples, for there were many of them, and they

were following him. So Matthew invites his friends, people just like him, to come and have dinner with Jesus and his disciples.

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And because it was a feast and they would recline at the dinner, He would be involved in the main work of teaching them the truth.

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and they would have the opportunity to converse back and forth.

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The end of verse 15 says, and they were following him.

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So the call to follow me that began with Matthew is extended to the tax collectors and sinners.

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And there, Matthew is telling them also to follow Jesus. Look at what he did in my life. Look at what he would do in your life.

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they were following him. John MacArthur gives us this note. The banquet at Matthew's house became a revival. It was a celebration held to honor Jesus and to proclaim the story of forgiveness as Matthew had shared his testimony and as the Lord personally interacted with Matthew's friends. The crowd of society's most unsavory characters

38:31

considered unsalvageable by the religious establishment were befriended by Jesus for the purpose of saving them. They were sinners in need of God's grace. The Messiah Himself extended that grace to them and many of them believed in Him.

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RC Spro adds, contact with sinners is seen as defiling Jesus since rabbinic regulations specifically prohibited such table fellowship, but on the other hand the sinners will see it as a gesture of acceptance. Well just with anything that's good, you also have evil following and what happens next?

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It's seen there in verse 16, when the scribes of the Pharisees saw that he was eating with the sinners and tax collectors, they said to his disciples, Why is he eating and drinking with tax collectors and sinners? And hearing this, Jesus said to them, It is not those who are healthy who need a physician, but those who are sick, I did not come to call the righteous but sinners.

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So you have in this occasion of him coming and following Jesus at Jesus' command and he shares with his friends and Jesus extends that call to them. And then all of a sudden, then you have the Pharisees and the scribes and they show up. These were the false teachers.

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Even though they were pious about God and pious about God's law, they were false teachers.

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There are people like that today, false teachers have been around a long time, and they're there today. And they're pious for God, they give that impression that they're pious for God, but when you examine what they're saying, what they're teaching, they're false teachers.

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So in these verses we hear Jesus now encountering these false teachers. And who were they? They were the scribes of the Pharisees. They were the blind leaders of the blind. Jesus said about these blind leaders, that every plant which my heavenly Father did not plant should be uprooted. Let them alone. They are blind guides of the blind. And if a blind man guides a blind man, both will fall into the pit. Matthew 15 13.

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Verse 1 tells us that he was speaking to some Pharisees and scribes, and these of course were people that were dangerous. All false teachers are dangerous. And why is that? Well, Jesus said because they come to in sheep's clothing. They come in an appearance as believers, and some people believe that the text there is talking about coming in the garb of a shepherd. They come disguised.

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But isn't that exactly what the devil does? He comes as an angel of light. And so he disguises his people after him. But Jesus said, inwardly, they're ravenous wolves. This is what Paul warned the church at Ephesus about, that savage wolves would come in once he departed. And they needed to be on the alert.

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These are the kind of people, as **Matthew 15-3** says, that transgress the commandment of God for the sake of their tradition. Their tradition is more important than the people of the world.

42:05

then obeying the commandment of God.

42:09

say, well who were these Pharisees? There were about **600** of them about around this time. Historically they were the theological descendants of Hasidim, which was a second century movement, a movement of piety and learning and faithfulness to the Mosaic law against any kind of pagan influence.

42:34

These were people that were opposed to the Sadducees because they were very lax in their interpretation of the law.

42:43

But these were the people that were judging Jesus and His disciples, all because He was eating with tax collectors and sinners. John Phillips says this, the Pharisee's idea of a holy man, it could be summarized in the word separation. A good man would not want to be contaminated by associating himself with traitors.

43:13

by such association. Publicans? Sinners? We can hear the horror and the contempt in their voices. We can see the disgust on their faces. Why? Such people were moral lepers. They were outcasts, untouchables. Not one of the members of the religious establishment would even so much as dream of having his name

43:42

Here was this young prophet from Nazareth, attending a party convened by the scum of the neighborhood. They could not gainsay his miracles, but now they began to question his morals. They challenged his disciples to explain this very peculiar behavior of their prophet. Surely a prophet's task was to denounce and damn such people, not to dine with them.

44:10

So the text tells us instead of them going directly to Jesus, they do what a lot of people do.

44:17

They go to people that are friends with Jesus. They go to his disciples. And they ask his disciples, why is he eating and drinking with tax collectors and sinners?

44:30

Well, Jesus heard that and He responded. Look at what He said, it's not those who are healthy who need a physician, but those who are sick. I did not come to call the righteous or the self-righteous, but sinners, some versions have to repentance, but to repentance is not in the better manuscripts, but

44:58

He did come to call them to repentance, so we certainly would disagree with that. You see, the healthy don't need a doctor. I know that doctors today provide preventative medicine and things like that, but usually I know for myself, I don't go to prevent something, I go to fix something. Something is now wrong, and that's why I'm there.

45:23

It's only those who are sick that need a doctor.

45:27

He didn't come to call the self-righteous. The self-righteous are those who don't see their sin. They don't grieve. They don't repent over their sin. Only those who see themselves as sinners see their need of spiritual healing, which is what Jesus came to do. And His time with them was to call them and turn them from their sinful ways. That's what you need. You need a Savior.

45:57

You need someone who can turn you from your sinful ways because you and I can't turn ourselves in a lost condition.

46:10

That should be our purpose too.

46:14

No statement of Jesus in this Gospel is more profound than this one. This writer says this, the doctor ministers not to healthy persons but to sick, so Jesus came not to call the righteous but sinners. Not merely people who refuse to carry out the details of the law but those who are alienated from the life of God. His call

is a call to salvation and in order to share it there must be a recognition of need. A self-righteous man is incapable of recognizing that need that a sinner can.

46:46

The whole purpose of the Ten Commandments is to expose sin.

46:53

I don't know why we've gotten away from sharing the Ten Commandments in our Gospel presentation. I love Ray Comfort and Kirk Cameron's ministry, The Way of the Master and what they've done there and bringing that back to our attention. Because when you study church history, the law was used, as Paul said in Galatians, it's the schoolmaster to bring us to Christ. It's in being shown the law of God that you have broken the law of God, that you are a sinner.

47:25

But instead what we do most of the time is that we start talking to people and we tell them the benefits of the gospel. We tell them the good news. We don't tell them the bad news so they don't know how to appreciate the good news. You start with the bad news that they are doomed sinners going to hell. And then when you talk about the good news, that's going to make a lot of sense, isn't it?

47:54

R.C. Sproul says, what good is a doctor who associates only with well people? It's a good thing for doctors to be involved in preventive medicine, but we need doctors even more when we are sick. Of course, not everyone who is sick and needs a physician realizes that such were the scribes and the Pharisees. And there was some irony, he says, in Jesus's words when he said the scribes and Pharisees.

48:20

to them that I did not come to call the righteous but sinners to repentance. He says the implication was that these religious leaders themselves needed to repent of their sin, they were the sickest of the sick, all the while thinking that they had no need of a physician. So these self-righteous Pharisees are looking at the tax collectors and sinners as those who are the scum of the earth and failing to realize that they equally are the scum of the earth.

48:50

Again, they were self-righteous.

48:56

Now Matthew adds a few other words to the end of this in his gospel, Matthew 9:13. He says to them, go and learn what this means. I desire compassion and not sacrifice. See, they weren't compassionate toward the tax collectors and sinners. They weren't compassionate that they needed to hear the message that Jesus was given.

49:25

They had no compassion for the unsaved. They didn't care that they were under the wrath of God. They didn't care that they needed the gospel of grace.

49:42

Let me close with these words by William Hendrickson. He says, the passage makes clear that the invitation to salvation, full and free, is extended not to righteous people, that is not to those who consider themselves worthy, but rather to those who are unworthy and in desperate need. It was sinners, the

lost, the straying, the beggars, the burdened ones, the hungry, and the thirsty whom Jesus came to save.

50:12

What about you? Does any of that describe you?

50:18

Or are you not compassionate to the lost? And need Jesus? Or do you just look at their sin?

50:34

We need to have compassion for the lost. We need to have compassion for the unsaved. And when I'm saying compassion, I'm saying we need to go to them and give them the gospel.

50:44

We need to give the gospel to everybody. Years ago, Rick Ward came out with this book called *The Purpose Driven Church*, and it was a Target ministry kind of thing, and I told you some time ago that there was a pastor that I had met, and first thing he said to me is, who is your target? And I knew where he was coming from, and I was kind of grieved by that statement. I said, well everybody, I want to reach everybody for Christ. Shame on you if you don't.

51:12

In fact, I would go even further to say you should resign your pastoral.

51:18

you should get out of the ministry if you're not willing to give the gospel to everybody.

51:26

Jesus did. Don't we want to be like our Master?

51:33

Quit being preferential. And who you gonna give it to? Jesus came to call sinners to repentance. Call them to repentance.

51:50

And if you're here today and you've never repented, I'm calling you to repent. I'm calling you to confess with your mouth that Jesus is Lord. I'm calling you to believe in your heart that God raised him from the dead.

52:05

because that's what has to happen in order for you to be saved.

52:11

You have to believe the truth. You have to believe the right truth, the right things. And when I say right truth, there are a lot of people out there saying, this is the truth, and it's not.

52:27

They're wrong.

52:34

This is why we have empty churches.

52:40

teaching truth?

52:45

Now, there are also other reasons why churches are empty.

52:50

let's leave it at that main one. We're going to preach the truth. There are either going to be people that embrace it or not, and sometimes the truth is very uncomfortable, right? But it had to get that way for us to understand the gospel, right? To appreciate the good news.

53:09

You say, well, I don't know if they're one of the elect. I love what Spurgeon said.

53:16

if they want the truth.

53:19

If you want the truth, if you want Jesus,

53:26

That's because you are one of the elect. Not because you're not.

53:32

if you've ever thought about it that way.

53:37

Because if you weren't one of the elect, you wouldn't want the truth.

53:43

I pray that today

53:49

not going to talk and broaden it like we would say, well in this new year, sometime this year, no let's just start today. When you leave today, purpose in your heart to share the gospel with somebody. Call them to repent, call them to follow Jesus.

54:11

That's what we're calling them to. Follow Jesus.

54:20

Father, I pray for each of us today that that is the burden of our hearts.

54:29

that we come to the Word of God and we call all people to the gospel. We call them to repent.

54:45

Lord, as we have this opportunity today to come to the Lord's table and to remember your sacrificial death, your substitutionary death on our behalf.

55:00

This reminder.

55:03

constantly display before us the sacrifice that you paid, the reminder of the awesome price, and what we're proclaiming every day. Lord, may we be that kind of church that we proclaim the truth, the Word of God, every day. And we pray this in your precious name. Amen.

55:32

Before we conclude our time together, I'm going to ask my brother to come up here. We're going to share in the Lord's table together. And as we do this morning, as I prayed my prayer, as we're told in the Scripture, that each time we do this, we're proclaiming the Lord's death until He comes.

56:01

This is a reminder for you.

56:05

Every time we do this, remind you of what Jesus did and what you need to share with others.

56:17

So as we do this this morning, would you maintain an attitude of prayer? And would you do this, as Jesus said, in remembrance of Him?

56:33

Father, once again we pray.

56:38

that we will remember you in this table that we're partaking in.

56:46

Amen.

56:52

you receive the elements, one thing I need to mention to you that I found out last time, on the bottom of the cup is a white piece for you to tear off that has the bread in it.

57:09

real easy to get out and then you flip the cup over and that has the juice in it. So it's all a combined one thing and very easy to open.

57:46

Paul wrote to the Corinthians.

57:50

and he was of course dealing with many issues that were going on in the church. One of those issues in chapter 11 was the rich.

57:59

were hoarding the food. When they would come to the communion, they were drunk. Because during that time, the communion was part of the Love Feast.

58:13

But history tells us that it was quickly separated because of that.

58:24

And so when you would have the love feast in the future, communion wasn't a part of it. To protect the communion.

58:35

And so in 1 Corinthians 11...

58:39

Paul rebukes them for what they were doing, and he tells them that when you come to the Lord's table, you have to examine yourself first to make sure that you don't take of the table in an unworthy manner. He's not telling you not to

take of it. He's saying don't take of it in an unworthy manner. Because when you go to what he says in verse 24,

59:05

where he says, do this in remembrance of me, that is an imperative in Greek. He's commanding us to do this. So if you're thinking, well, I'm not worthy. I can't take of this. The remedy is repent. The remedy is confession. The remedy is obedience.

59:34

not to further compound your disobedience by not partaking.

59:42

So my understanding is, when you come to the table, prepare your heart, prepare yourself, to make sure that you're not doing this in an unworthy manner. You're coming with the wrong purpose. I mean, if you've got kids and you're letting them do it and they think that this is nothing but a snack, they're not ready for this. They don't understand this.

01:00:04

It took a while just reading these accounts to my kids before I'd let them do it. They understand it.

01:00:18

So let's just take a moment.

01:00:22

you take this opportunity to talk to the Savior.

01:00:46

Lord, I know after hearing a message about Matthew and hearing about tax collectors and sinners and I know we tend to put people in different classes and those that are worse than others and that is true, there are those that are worse than others. But when it comes to our sinful state, we're all in the same place until you give us the new birth.

01:01:17

And when you give us the new birth, that changes everything.

01:01:24

So this morning, Lord, as we close out our time together, and as we eat together this bread and drink together this cup, to proclaim the Lord's death until you come, that we've examined ourself first.

01:01:45

so that we not do it in an unworthy way.

01:01:50

Thank you for the sacrifice, Lord Jesus, that you made and paid on our behalf. Thank you for dying for us.