
Matthew and Thomas

Matthew 9:9-10

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Well, we have been discussing 12 remarkable individuals, men, handpicked by our Lord to be His disciples. Their mission? To spread the gospel of Jesus Christ to the world. And when you think about Him choosing 12, it's really intriguing to understand that the Lord would choose only 12 men for such a monumental task.

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unqualified men at that, but yet they had profoundly impacted the world.

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God can accomplish remarkable things at such tremendous odds with just a few men.

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God has never put stock into numbers. And we have examples of that in the Old Testament. Let me give you a few of them. Over in 1 Kings 18 and verse 40, we understand that God used Elijah single-handedly to defeat 450 false prophets. One man against 450, and who won?

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Over in Judges 15:15, he empowered one man, his name was Samson, to kill a thousand Philistines. And he did it with the jawbone of a donkey.

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How many did it take? Just one. In Judges 3:31, he enabled Samgar to overcome 600 Philistines armed with nothing but an ox goad. Now do you know what an ox goad is? All an ox goad is is a sharpened stick. That's it. And he killed 600 Philistines with a sharpened stick.

02:02

Many of us are familiar with Deborah and Barak. It mentions them in Judges chapter 4. They were leading their army with only 10,000 soldiers and they came against a very formidable Canaanite army which had as its commander, Sisera. Sisera had 900 iron chariots.

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And according to Josephus, he also boasted 10,000 horsemen and 300,000 footmen.

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and God defeated him with just ten thousand.

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incredible isn't it. In fact God defeated Sisera with a woman and a jug of milk because as he was fleeing the woman encouraged him to come into her tent and have a little bit of milk and rest. Well the worst thing you could give a man on a run is some warm milk because what's gonna happen he's gonna go fast to sleep in the moment he was asleep she took a tent peg and drove it through his

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And that day Israel got victory.

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Now God can achieve his goals with many or he can do it just with a few. It really makes no difference. And when we examine the apostles, that's exactly what we see. Twelve men who profoundly changed the world. You remember that the testimony in Jerusalem was, you have turned the world upside down with your doctrine. Just twelve men.

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And so in our study of the twelve disciples we've been asking a question what kind of people does God use because we're seeing these men that Jesus has chosen for himself and has commissioned to preach the gospel and as we learn what kind of men these were we discover that God uses common unqualified men and that's very helpful to us because we're common

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as well. But think with me of the people that he chose. These unqualified people, people like Simon Peter, who was strong, who was a bold leader, who took charge, who initiated, who planned, who strategized, who confronted, who commanded people to Christ. But he also made many mistakes, at one point rebuking the Lord.

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He also denied the Lord three times. He was very raw. He's the disciple that we say had the foot-shaped mouth because he was always sticking his foot in it. How many of you feel like that? Sometimes you just can't seem to get the right words out and your mouth just becomes the right size for your foot. You know what I'm talking about. How many times have you walked away from a conversation and said, I wish I didn't say that?

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wish I'd never said that, but now you did. You'll spend the rest of your time defending it. He uses people even like Andrew, who was humble, who was gentle and inconspicuous. He didn't seek any kind of prominence, but quietly brought people to Christ. And he also used people like James, the son of Zebedee, who was zealous. You remember they were zealous and passionate. They had earned the name

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sons of thunder. They were uncompromising, they were task-oriented, but they were also insensitive and ambitious. His brother was very similar. Again, the name sons of thunder was given to both of them, but he was, as we continue to see in the word, sensitive and tender and loving and people-oriented.

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He was an intimate truth seeker. He spoke about the truth so much. Then we see that God uses people like Philip. Philip was skeptical. He was analytical, mechanical. He had weak faith. He was visionless. He was pessimistic. He was insecure. And then there's Nathaniel Bartholomew, who was also a truth seeker, an honest man, an open man, a clear-minded.

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man, a meditative man, a man who is deeply surrendered. These are the people that we've looked at so far and now we come to two more, Matthew and Thomas.

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Matthew is known also as Levi in Mark chapter 2 and verse 14 as well as Luke 5 27. But in his own gospel that bears his name, he refers to himself as Matthew.

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Now the Bible doesn't tell us where he was from, but tradition says it was from Capernaum. He's mentioned in each of the four lists of apostles. He is always in the same group with Philip and Bartholomew and Thomas. Very little is said about him in the Gospels. The only picture that we have is one incident. And that incident is found in

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Matthew chapter 9. So let me invite you to take your Bible and turn with me to Matthew chapter 9. Now the parallel to Matthew 9 is Mark 2 verses 14 to 17 as well as Luke 5 27 to 32. Now we've already looked at Mark 2.

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and the account that's found there so we're gonna consider it for Matthew 9 now I'm not gonna go into all the details of the story because there's just a couple things that I want to draw from it

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Notice Matthew 9. I want to begin reading at verse 9. And as Jesus went on from there, he saw a man called Matthew sitting in the tax office and he said to him, follow me. And he stood up and followed him. Then it happened that as Jesus was reclining at the table in the house, behold many tax collectors and sinners came and were dining with Jesus and his disciples.

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And when the Pharisees saw this, they said to his disciples, Why is your teacher eating with the tax collectors and sinners? But Jesus heard this. When he heard this, he said, It is not those who are healthy who need a physician, but those who are sick. But go and learn what this means. I desire compassion and not sacrifice, for I did not come to call the righteous but sinners.

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Now as I said in Mark chapter 2 we looked at this story and we looked at it in detail. But there are a couple things that I want us to focus in on as we look at it once again. The first thing I want us to see is his recognition of Jesus's forgiveness of sin.

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his recognition of Jesus' forgiveness of sin. Now in the first eight verses that we didn't read, Matthew gives a demonstration of Jesus' forgiveness. You remember that? You remember that there was a man who was a paralytic? They tried to get him to Jesus, but because of the crowd, they couldn't get close to him.

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And so what his friends did was they went up to the roof and they made an opening in the roof. Now, that had to be such a large opening to let their friend down. But they did and they made this opening and all of a sudden they lower their friend down right in front of Jesus, which demonstrated their faith as well as the man on the pallet, his faith. And in verse five,

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Jesus makes a statement after telling the man his sins are forgiven. The crowd was astonished that he would make a statement like that because only God can forgive sin. And so Jesus replies, he says in verse 5, For which is easier to say, Your sins are forgiven, Or to say, Get up and walk. But so that you may know that the Son of Man has authority on earth to forgive sins,

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Then he said to the paralytic, get up, pick up your bed and go home. Spiritual healing to the sin problem.

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So you have that context going on and then all of a sudden in verse 9, we hear about Matthew and then when we hear about Matthew he inserts himself into the narrative and the whole story demonstrates his understanding and his recognition of Jesus' forgiveness of sin because if he forgave this paralytic man then perhaps he would heal and forgive

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tax collector. Now that's very significant to know that he's a tax collector and I'll tell you why in just a moment but let me just say this that the Old Testament taught that the Messiah when he came would forgive sin.

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Let me just give you a couple places where it talks about that. Isaiah chapter 53 verses 5 and 6, it says that He was chastening for our peace fell upon Him and by His wounds we are what? Healed. Now that's not talking about a physical healing, it's talking about a spiritual healing because it has reference to sin. Look what all He has just said. He's pierced for our transgressions, trust for our iniquities.

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the chastening of our peace fell on him and it's by his wounds that we're healed. We were like sheep that have gone astray. Each of us turned to

his own way, but Yahweh has caused the iniquity of us all to fall on him. He took our sin, our iniquity, on himself. He took it in his own body. He was crushed. He was pierced. He was chastened.

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because of us.

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Now that's what the Old Testament said many hundreds of years before Jesus even showed up on the scene. We're talking around 700 to 800 years. This was a prophecy about Jesus. We know it's a prophecy about Him because Peter directly quotes in 1 Peter 2, 24 and 25 this passage I just read to you. He says that Christ Himself bore our sins in His own body on the tree.

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so that having died to sin we might live to righteousness, for by his wounds you were healed, but we were continually straying like sheep, but now you have returned to the shepherd and the overseer of your soul." And here what Peter picks up is how he was crushed, how he was pierced, how he was chastened. It happened with him bearing our sin in his body.

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on the tree.

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Now he provided forgiveness. So when the Messiah would come through his sacrifice on the cross he would provide the ultimate sacrifice that would take away all sin. It would totally end the sacrificial system which it did. To this day they still do not sacrifice but they want to.

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because they don't believe many don't believe that Jesus is their Messiah they don't see him as the Lamb of God even though that there are three hundred and thirty three prophecies about Jesus about the Messiah about Jesus when he would come the Son of God has fulfilled more than half of them at His first coming

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but there are still many who are still looking for their Messiah. That's why in what we have been reading in the book of Revelation that there's going to be a man come on the scene who the scripture refers to as anti-Christ who will be able to sign a peace treaty with Israel and the Arab nations around them.

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I mean you're hearing right now where Iran has been flying missiles into Israel. This goes along with what the Hamas have been doing long before October the 7th, which of course we know October 7th was a massacre that took place in Israel. Listen to our world right now. All the anti-Semitism.

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taking place. It's going on in our universities. You know the last place that I'll ever send my kids now is the university. All they are is brainwashing schools. All they're doing is creating atheists. People that hate God. That's what's coming out of these institutions. You send them in there trying to make them to be a witness to unbelievers that are there and if they're not strong in their faith and they can't defend the faith.

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then they're in trouble. They're in huge trouble. The very moment that they're challenged by what they believe and they can't answer the questions, they get discouraged, they don't talk about Christ anymore.

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After a while, they start joining their friends in what they were doing. I know that. I did that. I thought I was saved at a young age and I was witnessing to some of my friends and they were laughing at me and things like that and after a while, you know, I just gave up. And I just joined them.

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and how it was so easy for me to do that is because I wasn't saved. If I was saved, I would have continued.

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The Messiah when he comes or when he would come, he would bring redemption. Now our forgiveness is based on a promise. It's found in Jeremiah 31 and verse 34 and it says this.

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And they will not teach again, each man his neighbor and each man his brother, saying, Know Yahweh. For they will all know me, from the least of them to the greatest of them, declares Yahweh. For I will forgive their iniquities, and their sin I will remember no more."

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God promised that when he would bring his people back, he would make a new covenant with them. And in this new covenant, he would write the law of God on their hearts.

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So Matthew...

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It's very apparent from looking at him he makes most likely or his sitting there at idle moments and reading from the Torah reading from the scriptures that he's learning these things but most likely it occurred in his upbringing because that's what every parent, every mom, every dad was to do with their kids was to teach them the law of God.

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So again, Matthew would have seen this, he would have heard this. He would have also have seen the story that I just recalled in the first part of Matthew 9 with the healing of the paralytic. Otherwise, he wouldn't have

inserted himself in the narrative. He saw all this taking place with Jesus. And when Jesus walks by him,

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at the tax collectors booth and says to him follow me what does he do he gets up and follows him and instantly is forgiven of all of his sin instantly.

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Now again, he would have seen that.

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He would have also have seen the forgiveness of a sinful woman over in Luke 7 36, who anointed Jesus' feet with perfume.

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He would have also been familiar with John 8, where the woman that was caught in adultery was brought before Jesus to see what he would do.

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Jesus tells her after her accusers went out because they could not throw a stone because He said, He who is without sin cast the first stone. So they honestly took for the first time a good look at themselves and said that they could not throw a stone because they were sinful. That was the first time they were honest with themselves.

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So they went out one by one, beginning with the older ones, and he was left alone with the woman when where she was in the center of the court, and he says to her, woman, where are they? Did no one condemn you?

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He says, I do not condemn you either go and from now on sin no more. Now he would have been familiar with all of this because he would have seen this.

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And what can be worse than anyone committing these sins? We categorize sins as good, bad, and worse. I don't know, none of them are good. They're all bad and they get worse. But we know that there are sins that are worse than others, right?

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murders worse than stealing that's for sure

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But what about a tax collector?

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tax collectors worked for the roman government

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The Jewish people saw them as traitors.

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They had a practice of collecting more than what was required of them and keeping that excess. That made them wealthy. We know Matthew was wealthy because he threw this reception in his house, so he obviously had a house, and it was big enough to have a lot of people.

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So he got it through his means.

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made him wealthy but he was also corrupt he was also greedy they also refer to them as publicans that's from the latin publicanus it means a tax farmer you do for a living your tax farmer

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We have another tax farmer in scripture that also received the forgiveness of sin besides this group that was there with Matthew. And his name was Zacchaeus. You remember Zacchaeus. Zacchaeus has got a hit song going on that's been going on for many, many moons, right? Zacchaeus was a wee little man and a wee little man was he. He climbed up in a sycamore tree for the Lord he wanted to see. You know the words. You sit there going.

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You've known those words probably more than you knew John 3 16. They've been around us for a long time.

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But Zacchaeus, he wasn't just any tax collector, he was the chief tax collector. As a chief tax collector, he oversaw other tax collectors.

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Well, like I said, he experienced forgiveness as well, and he even said to Jesus in Luke 19, eight, behold, half of my possessions, Lord, I will give to the poor. And if I have extorted any one of anything, I will give back four times as much.

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four times as much you know people that are running around today in trying to be very religious in very pious with their giving they're all hung up on the certain percentage amount scripture doesn't leave anybody just in one place of one percentage i mean this is more than fifty percent is that he is is offering here

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And what is it that people run around today and say, well, I give my 10%. For some, 10% is not a sacrifice at all. But for others, it is. In this case, giving four times, that certainly was something he could do. Jesus responds in verse 9 and says, today's salvation has come to this house because he, too, is a son of Abraham.

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for the Son of Man has come to seek and to save the lost.

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So Zacchaeus came to know the Lord, and he was also, as I said, a tax collector like Matthew, despised by the people.

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but he had that glorious response. He responded to Christ's invitation. You know, we tend to take those invitations for granted. People that don't know Christ and they maybe come to church and they sit there week after week and they hear the gospel week after week and they say, well, you know, one day I'm gonna do that. One day I'm gonna give my life to Christ and that one day never comes because death came before that one day.

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Well, listen to his response. Going back to Matthew 9 and verse 9, it says, and Jesus went on from there. He saw a man called Matthew sitting in the tax office, and he said to him, follow me. And he stood up and followed him. It was immediate. Luke 5 28 says, he left everything behind and rose up and began to follow him. So whatever he had,

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In that tax collector's office right then, he just got up and walked away from it.

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That's salvation.

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When Jesus said, come follow me, that was a call to salvation. And then of course we know after he calls him he throws this reception for Jesus and his disciples. Luke 529 says, Levi gave a big reception for him in his house and there was a great crowd of tax collectors and other people who were reclining at the table with them. These were Matthew's friends.

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These were Matthew's co-workers. And I mean, if you see something here, he met Jesus. These others didn't meet Jesus until something happened. And what was that that happened? What did Matthew do that opened up an opportunity for his friends to meet Jesus? What was it? Very simple.

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He invited them over.

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He gave him an invitation to come to his house.

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Jesus and his disciples were coming. He gave his friends who were tax collectors and other people with other trades. He said, you come too.

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He invited him word of mouth.

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I said that last week in our meeting. One statistic says that.

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90% of people who invite people to church come.

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You don't invite anybody.

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They're not gonna come.

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Sometimes you have to invite people more than once. There's somebody I've been working on, probably invited them a good dozen times. I just keep doing it. I just keep doing it over and over and over. I know Paul, he tells me people he invites. We just got to do it, you know, and talk to them.

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Well, these tax collectors, they were outcast. Matthew wanted them to understand that they too could be forgiven of all of their sin because he now understood what it meant to be forgiven too. The Lord forgave me back in 1984.

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first thing I wanted to do was to tell somebody about what he did and that's what we did hung out outside one of the bars that we used to go to and we started talking to our friends that were going in and out of the bar we had some tracks I didn't know what a track was until that night we had those with us and I remember there were people going in and out of the bar and they were like what what are you doing out here what are you doing all this stuff out you come on in here party with us like we

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just did the other night that's what they wanted

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Matthew understood what it meant to be forgiven and he found that forgiveness in Jesus.

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And if you've never been forgiven of all your sin, you can be forgiven right now by putting your trust in Jesus. By confessing your sin to Him. He will forgive you.

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What kind of people does God use? Does He use stained glass saints? No. He uses vile, wretched, rotten sinners.

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He uses the most despicable people in society as long as they repent from their sins and are willing to be forgiven through faith in Jesus.

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How did God use Matthew? Well, you're holding a Bible, aren't you? What's the very first book in the New Testament called? Class? Matthew.

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He also used him to preach. As a martyr, that was because he was preaching.

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One account says he was stabbed to death with a spear in the city of Nabda, which would be present-day Ethiopia. Another tradition says that he was killed by a sword in the city of Hierapolis. That would be present-day Turkey.

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That's Matthew. And how he wanted to be known was as Matthew the tax collector. He wanted people to know that Jesus forgave him and removed all of that stigma that came along with his occupation.

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Now there's another one in the list and his name is Thomas. Not much mentioned about him but there are three passages I want to mention before we close. Many people when they think of the name Thomas they think of what? Doubting Thomas. Well he's got a lot of bad rap on that. But I don't think doubt is the right word for him and let me show you why.

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There are three passages, so the first one's in John chapter 11, so let me have you to turn to John chapter 11.

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John chapter 11, Lazarus is sick.

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Jesus heard that he was sick and purposely did not go to him.

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He did this because he wanted to increase the faith of his disciples.

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He told his disciples that Lazarus is sick.

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And then shortly after that he tells them that Lazarus is asleep. And sleep was a euphemism for death. He plainly said he died. And we need to go back to him. Now they had just come from Jerusalem and people were ready to take Jesus' life by this point.

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But they couldn't because this time hadn't come.

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And so he tells them, I'm glad for your sake, verse 15, that I was not there so that you may believe, but let's go to him. Therefore Thomas, who is called Didymus, or the twin, said to his fellow disciples, get this, and let me ask you the question, are these the words of a doubter? Let us also go so that we may die with him.

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with him. Well, they believed that if they went back toward Jerusalem that's exactly what was going to happen and Thomas said let's go even if it means that we die.

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And so when they did, Lazarus had already been in the tomb for four days. Four days. Here's a principle I want you to pick up on this. Thomas was willing to die for Jesus. He was willing to die for Jesus. Are you willing to die for Jesus? Am I willing to die for Jesus?

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Now we are talking about physical death here. I'm not talking about just dying daily because we're supposed to do that too. We die to our desires, die to our plans, our dreams, because our life is wound up into the will of the one who saved us, right? So whatever he has planned for our life, that's what we're after. But he was willing to die and I want you to see that there in verse 16.

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Something else I want you to see and is found in Chapter 14. So just go over to Chapter 14.

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In chapter 14, Jesus tells the disciples that He is leaving, and they're sad. And He tells them to, let not their hearts be troubled. You believe in God, believe also in Me. My Father's house are many rooms, if it were not so, I would have told you. I go to prepare a place for you, and if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again and receive you to Myself, that where I am, there you may be also.

34:37

What does Thomas say?

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Verse 5, Lord we do not know where you are going. How do we know the way? And Jesus says to him, I am the way. I am the truth. I am the life. No one comes to the Father but through me. And if you've come to know me, you will know my Father also. From now on you know me and have seen me.

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What do we get from this? Not only was he willing to die for Jesus, but he wanted to be with Jesus. Wherever Jesus was going, he wanted to go. In fact, they all did.

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Till it came to the garden when they came to arrest him, they were scattered and didn't go with him, because they were afraid.

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So before you call him a doubter, let's look at another passage, and that's John 20.

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And you remember there were two appearances of Jesus to the disciples. The first appearance, Thomas wasn't there. And after that, they were

telling Thomas that Jesus appeared to them. And Thomas saying, I don't want to believe that.

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They were saying, we've seen the Lord and he says, in verse 25, unless I see in his hands the imprint of the nails and put my finger

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Again, they were in the room and Jesus appears. The door had been shut and He tells them, Peace. Now, He'd have to say that to them because again, they were in the room, the doors were shut, and all of a sudden Jesus appears. The last thing they had was peace by that demonstration of Him coming to them. But immediately He turns to Thomas and He says, Bring your finger here and see my hands.

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and put it in my side and do not be unbelieving but believing.

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And what does Thomas say?

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Well, he says, my Lord and my God, those are not the words of a doubter.

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And by the way, every one of the other disciples didn't believe until after the resurrection either. So before we throw Thomas under the bus, which we have for so many years by referring to him as Doubting Thomas, again, just remember, all of the disciples were in the same boat.

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They did the same thing, but God used Thomas to make the greatest proclamation about Jesus. And what was that? My Lord and my God.

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Those are monumental words.

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So Thomas was melancholy, he was moody, he was pessimistic, he was comfortless, he was shattered, but when he saw Jesus, he gave the greatest testimony ever given. In fact the one little statement, my Lord and my God destroys the lie that Jesus is not God. All those who say Jesus is not God are put to silence by Thomas.

37:56

Now tradition says that Thomas also died as a martyr. Now when I say tradition, keep in mind we don't know if the stories are true. It's stuff that's passed down over time. We don't have anything really written out. It was in India. Some say it was in Parthia. Parthia would be modern-day Iran, modern-day Iraq, as well as... He can use you. And he can use me.

38:24

and what you need to do is ask how he wants to you. The day that Jesus saved you, He gave you His Holy Spirit, and the Holy Spirit in turn gave you spiritual gifts. All you need to do is find out what that gift is that He gave you and get busy and use it. You say, well, I don't know how to do that. Well, the way I would suggest is several things. You can listen to our study on spiritual gifts. That's one thing. Number two, you could try out the gifts.

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and see if any of them are your gift. Number three, you can look at your desires and what is it that you really desire to do for the Lord and see if that matches up with any of the spiritual gifts. Either way, just get busy for the Lord.

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We tend to be less busy.

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But I'll tell you, evangelism is a responsibility that we all have.

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have that toward those who are outside the church. The one and others that we find in the New Testament, those are for our ministry in the church, the spiritual gifts that's our ministry in the church.

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but God can use you but first do you know him? Is he your savior? Is he your Lord? Is he your master? Have you repented and put your faith in him? Because that's the first thing that has to happen.

40:01

My prayer is, if you're sitting here today and you have not truly trusted in the Savior, that you'll trust in Him right now. Let's pray. Our Heavenly Father, we thank you for this time that we've had in your Word, and we thank you for this opportunity for us to study it together. And my prayer is for any that are in here today that don't know you.

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that today what they've heard about you.

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was enough for them to cry out to you and say, Lord, help my unbelief.

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Lord, I believe, help my unbelief. Draw them to yourself, I pray right now, Father. That they would experience what Matthew experienced, what Thomas experienced, what all the disciples experienced. That forgiveness that's found in you.

41:00

We thank you, Lord Jesus. In your precious name we pray, amen.