

**Rev. T. Jefferson Rogers Jr.**  
**Matthew 9:9-13**  
**Jesus Calls the Unlikely!**

Intro:

Capernaum is located on the north shore of the Sea of Galilee on a highway, between Damascus and Jerusalem. It is a major commercial center.

Immediately prior to Jesus calling Matthew, He healed a paralytic (9:1-8). Verse 9 begins with the phrase, "As Jesus passed by from there." The phrase "As Jesus passed from there," is a transitional phrase that serves to switch from the miracles Jesus performed in the house to the person He called to follow Him. Following Jesus is Christian discipleship.

According to verse 9, Matthew was sitting at the receipt of custom. The receipt of customs in postexilic days usually referred to a place of toll (road toll). The Romans imposed tribute or tax on Jews as on all subjects for the maintenance of their local or regional government.

**I. Jesus Called Matthew:** Verse 9 As Jesus passed by from there, He saw a man called Matthew sitting at the receipt of custom. Jesus spoke to words to Matthew, "Follow Me." Matthew arose and followed Jesus. Jesus called Matthew to demonstrate that God loves and wants to redeem every person. There is no one out of the reach of God's grace to save!

A. Matthew is an unlikely candidate for Christian discipleship according to Jewish belief. Jews despised tax collectors. Tax collectors were perceived as greedy and collaborating with the Roman government. Tax collectors were people who aided and abetted the occupying power, often using their position for personal gain. Tax collectors were social outcast. William Barclay said, "Tax collectors were barred from the synagogue, and considered the moral equivalent of robbers and murderers" (The Daily Study Bible, "The Gospel of Matthew," Vol. 1) (Edinburgh: The Saint Andrew Press, 1956, pp337-338).

The eyes of the Pharisees were blinded by prejudice and social bias. When they saw Matthew, they only saw a tax collector. But, when Jesus saw Matthew, He saw a man and a student of His word. Jesus does not look through eyes blinded by prejudice and social bias. The eyes of Jesus are laser like eyes. He looks with a penetrating gaze. He can see the core being. Jesus saw more than a tax collector; He saw a disciple and apostle.

Matthew represents unlikely people. Unlikely people are people some feel God is unlikely to call. Unlikely people are improbable, questionable people. People you look at and say there is no way God can use them, there is no good that can come out them. Unlikely people are people that have been written off.

There are two things I want you to glean from this....

1) Unlikely people can be saved: regardless of what one person thinks about another person, Jesus is able to save unlikely people. Stop writing certain people off, stop doubting what God is able to do in the life of a sinner.

Jesus proved that He can save unlikely people, when He saved you and me. We were unlikely people. I am glad that Jesus sees people as people regardless of the outward circumstances that may disguise their true value and ministry significance. I am glad the Bible says, whosoever will let him come. The universal call of “whosoever will” is an amazing aspect of the gospel of salvation the “whosoever will” includes you. It includes everyone and anyone. No one is excluded.

John 3:16 *For God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life.*

Acts 2:21 *And it shall come to pass, that whosoever shall call on the name of the Lord shall be saved.*

Revelation 22:17 *And the Spirit of the bride say, Come. And let him that hears say, Come. And let him that is athirst come. And whosoever will, let him take of the water of life freely.*

- 2) Unlikely people can serve: God loves using unlikely people to do His work because then there’s no way they can boast before Him. He gets all the glory.

1 Corinthians 1:26-29 *For we see your calling, brethren, how that not many wise men after the flesh, not many mighty, not many noble, are called: But God hath chosen the foolish things of the world to confound the wise; and God hath chosen the weak things of the world to confound the things which are mighty; and base things of the world, and things which are despised, hath God chosen, yea, and things which are not, to bring to naught things that are: That no flesh should glory in His presence.*

2 Corinthians 4:7 *We have this treasure in earthen vessels, that the excellency of the power may be of God, and not of us.*

Jesus called Matthew and Matthew followed Him.

Notice the immediacy of Matthew in response to Jesus’ call. Matthew did not procrastinate, hesitate, or postpone. He instantly followed Jesus.

Notice the separation of Matthew in response to Jesus’ call. Matthew abandoned his lucrative occupation knowing that he could never regain it. Matthew’s response is example of absolute commitment. He forsook all to follow Jesus.

- II. Jesus Ate With Publicans and Sinners:** Verses 10-11 say, *“And it came to pass, as Jesus sat at meat in the house, behold, many publicans and sinners came and sat down with Him and His disciples. And when the Pharisees saw it, they said unto His disciples, Why eateth your Master with publicans and sinners?”*

Jesus eating with sinners was to challenge to the Pharisees and others snobbish people of that day. Jesus showed that His followers have a mission to the downtrodden as well as to others.

The Pharisees directed their questions to Jesus' disciples instead of Him. They were attempting to wedge a gap between Jesus and His disciples.

Verses 12-13 ***But when Jesus heard that, he said unto His disciples, They that be whole need not a physician, but they that are sick.*** Jesus responded to the Pharisees with irony. The Pharisees were the sickest people of that generation. Jesus came to minister spiritual healing to all men. The sickest of men refuse spiritual healing because they refused to see themselves as sick and unhealthy spiritually. The Pharisees could not see their own condition because they were too busy looking at the condition of other men.

Verse 13 ***But go ye and learn what this means, I desire mercy, and not sacrifice: for I came not to call the righteous but sinners.***