

Walking with Scum

Matthew 9:9-13 (NLT) : Jesus Calls Matthew

9 As Jesus was walking along, he saw a man named Matthew sitting at his tax collector's booth. "Follow me and be my disciple," Jesus said to him. So Matthew got up and followed him.

10 Later, Matthew invited Jesus and his disciples to his home as dinner guests, along with many tax collectors and other disreputable sinners. 11 But when the Pharisees saw this, they asked his disciples, "Why does your teacher eat with such scum?[a]"

12 When Jesus heard this, he said, "Healthy people don't need a doctor—sick people do." 13 Then he added, "Now go and learn the meaning of this Scripture: 'I want you to show mercy, not offer sacrifices.' [b] For I have come to call not those who think they are righteous, but those who know they are sinners."

Luke 18:9-14 (NLT): Parable of the Pharisee and Tax Collector

9 Then Jesus told this story to some who had great confidence in their own righteousness and scorned everyone else: 10 "Two men went to the Temple to pray. One was a Pharisee, and the other was a despised tax collector. 11 The Pharisee stood by himself and prayed this prayer[a]: 'I thank you, God, that I am not like other people—cheaters, sinners, adulterers. I'm certainly not like that tax collector! 12 I fast twice a week, and I give you a tenth of my income.'

13 "But the tax collector stood at a distance and dared not even lift his eyes to heaven as he prayed. Instead, he beat his chest in sorrow, saying, 'O God, be merciful to me, for I am a sinner.' 14 I tell you, this sinner, not the Pharisee, returned home justified before God. For those who exalt themselves will be humbled, and those who humble themselves will be exalted."

Romans 3:10 "There is no one righteous, not even one."

Mark 2:13-17 (NLT): Jesus Calls Levi (Matthew)

13 Then Jesus went out to the lakeshore again and taught the crowds that were coming to him. 14 As he walked along, he saw Levi son of Alphaeus sitting at his tax collector's booth. "Follow me and be my disciple," Jesus said to him. So Levi got up and followed him.

15 Later, Levi invited Jesus and his disciples to his home as dinner guests, along with many tax collectors and other disreputable sinners. (There were many people of this kind among Jesus' followers.) 16 But when the teachers of religious law who were Pharisees[a] saw him eating with tax collectors and other sinners, they asked his disciples, "Why does he eat with such scum?[b]"

17 When Jesus heard this, he told them, "Healthy people don't need a doctor—sick people do. I have come to call not those who think they are righteous, but those who know they are sinners."

Luke 5:27-32 (NLT): Jesus Calls Levi (Matthew)

27 Later, as Jesus left the town, he saw a tax collector named Levi sitting at his tax collector's booth. "Follow me and be my disciple," Jesus said to him. 28 So Levi got up, left everything, and followed him.

29 Later, Levi held a banquet in his home with Jesus as the guest of honor. Many of Levi's fellow tax collectors and other guests also ate with them. 30 But the Pharisees and their teachers of religious law complained bitterly to Jesus' disciples, "Why do you eat and drink with such scum?[a]"

31 Jesus answered them, "Healthy people don't need a doctor—sick people do. 32 I have come to call not those who think they are righteous, but those who know they are sinners and need to repent."

Video: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=39fHwaR2P40>

Thesis: We often have preconceived notions about who can follow Jesus, and often we are wrong. Jesus calls the sick, not those who think they are healthy to follow him.

OPENING QUESTIONS: What was the worst job you could have? Why?

Job Ranking Activity: This is to help see how we can judge people based on their jobs, and not who they really are.

- Create a list of 10 jobs.
- Create a list of 10 adjectives to describe people.
- Rank the jobs from best to worst.
- Connect an adjective with a job that best describes the type of people that do that type of job.
- Discuss and debrief the lists.

ASK: What do you know about tax collectors during Jesus time?

Matthew collected taxes for the Roman puppet government the Jesus detested so much. He worked for Herod, someone who thought of himself as king of the Jews. Tax collectors were known locally as 'sinners,' a label to stick on those who didn't conform to the strict religious requirements of the law or the strict political expectations of opposition to Herod and Rome. (Adapted from NT Wright)

Read Matthew 9:9

As Jesus was walking along, he saw a man named Matthew sitting at his tax collector's booth. "Follow me and be my disciple," Jesus said to him. So Matthew got up and followed him.

- What does Jesus say to Matthew and how does he respond?
- Why do you think Matthew immediately leave his tax collectors booth to follow Jesus?
- What does that say about Jesus?
- What does that say about Matthew?

Say: Matthew responds to Jesus call in his life by throwing Jesus a party!

- If you were to throw a party for Jesus, who are three would you invite? Why?
- Who is one person you not invite? Why?

Read Matthew 9:10-11

Later, Matthew invited Jesus and his disciples to his home as dinner guests, along with many tax collectors and other disreputable sinners. But when the Pharisees saw this, they asked his disciples, "Why does your teacher eat with such scum?"

- Who does Matthew invite to his party?
- Why do you think Mathew invites these people?
- Why are the Pharisees so offended by the guest list?
- Why might they refer to them as scum?
- Would you agree with their assessment?

Read Matthew 9:12-13

When Jesus heard this, he said, “Healthy people don’t need a doctor—sick people do.” Then he added, “Now go and learn the meaning of this Scripture: ‘I want you to show mercy, not offer sacrifices.’ For I have come to call not those who think they are righteous, but those who know they are sinners.”

- How does Jesus respond to the Pharisees’ indignance?
- Jesus rebuked the Pharisees by saying, “Healthy people don’t need a doctor—sick people do. I have come to call not those who think they are righteous, but those who know they are sinners.” Why might this offend the Pharisees?

Watch this Video from SON OF GOD

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=39fHwaR2P40>

How does the video give you a deeper insight into the heart of Jesus, Matthew, and the Pharisees?

Read Luke: 18:9-14

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13 “But the tax collector stood at a distance and dared not even lift his eyes to heaven as he prayed. Instead, he beat his chest in sorrow, saying, ‘O God, be merciful to me, for I am a sinner.’ 14 I tell you, this sinner, not the Pharisee, returned home justified before God. For those who exalt themselves will be humbled, and those who humble themselves will be exalted.”

- How would you describe the Pharisee’s prayer?
- How would you describe the tax collector’s prayer?
- Why is the tax collector justified before God and not the Pharisee?
- How do these men’s prayers reflect Jesus’ comment on the righteous and the sinner?

Righteous: (*adj*) acting in an upright, moral way; virtuous

APPLICATION: MAKE IT PERSONAL

Romans 3:10 says, "There is no one righteous, not even one."

- Do you see yourself as someone who is sick or someone who thinks they are righteous?
- How does that shape how you view other people?
- Are there people you might consider scum, and are too far from God's grace?

So often we approach God like a So often we think that we need to have it all together before we start walking with Jesus. We forget we are all sinners in need of Jesus's love and grace.

- Confess the ways that you have unfairly seen and treated people, and the way that you have arrogantly viewed yourself.
- Ask God to help you see people how he does, as His beloved child.