

UNEXPECTED CALL

Lesson 1

Matthew 9:9–13

INTRO

What are 5 words you would use to describe Jesus from the stories about Him in the Gospels?¹

BIG IDEA

Jesus spent time with people who defied social norms and who the religious leaders avoided. He modeled how to love everyone, regardless of economic status, lifestyle, or reputation.

CONTEXT

Jesus called Matthew, the tax collector,² to follow Him not long after Jesus had given His now famous Sermon on the Mount.³ Jesus went on to heal many people and spoke about the great cost of following Him.⁴ He shocked His listeners when He revealed He came not only to heal bodies but to forgive sins.⁵ Jesus wouldn't have been a stranger to Matthew. Matthew would have been very aware of this new and revolutionary rabbi.

¹ Matthew, Mark, Luke, and John

² As a reminder, “Matthew, also called Levi, was one of the 12 disciples and the author of the first Gospel. When Jesus called him, Matthew was sitting in the tax collector’s booth collecting taxes for Rome. Other Jews probably considered him a traitor, since collecting taxes meant cooperation with the Roman occupiers of Palestine. Because tax collectors were free to take as much personal profit from people as they liked, they were widely regarded as the worst of sinners, often categorized along with prostitutes (see **21:32**). In his Gospel account, Matthew presents Jesus as the Davidic King who has come to fulfill the Old Testament, especially its promises of everlasting salvation.” Packer, J. I., et al. *Global Study Bible: English Standard Version*. Crossway, 2018. Bible Gateway Plus

³ **Matthew 5–7**

⁴ **Matthew 8:18–20**

⁵ **Matthew 9:1–8**

READ MATTHEW 9:9–13

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?" 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.' For I have come to call not those who think they are righteous, but those who know they are sinners."

QUESTIONS

1. Summarize Matthew's experience of being called to be Jesus' disciple. (**Matthew 9:9**)
 - a. Matthew was despised by his fellow Israelites. In fact, "By Jewish law a tax-gatherer was debarred from the synagogue; he was included with things and beasts unclean, and **Leviticus 20:5** was applied to them;⁶ he was forbidden to be a witness in any case; 'robbers, murders and tax-gatherers' were classed together."⁷ How do you think the other disciples felt about Matthew joining them?⁸

⁶ **Leviticus 20:5** says, "I myself will turn against them and their families and will cut them off from the community. This will happen to all who commit spiritual prostitution by worshipping Molech."

⁷ Barclay, William. *The Gospel of Matthew*. Vol. 1, Westminster Press, 1975. 330

⁸ Jesus had already called Simon (Peter), Andrew, James & John in **Matthew 4**.

b. Why do you think Jesus called Matthew to be part of His 12 disciples?

2. Who was at the dinner with Jesus at Matthew's house?
(9:10)

If you were to imagine this dinner today, who would be at the table?⁹

3. "In the minds of the Pharisees, for Jesus to share a meal with these types of persons indicates that he includes them within his own fellowship; it also suggests to them that he condones their behavior."¹⁰

a. Do you believe Jesus was condoning the behavior of everyone He was dining with? Why or why not?

b. How would Jesus' actions be perceived today?

⁹ **Mark 2:15** describes this dinner and adds that there were many "people of this kind" among Jesus' followers.

¹⁰ Wilkins, Michael J. *Matthew: The NIV Application Commentary from Biblical Text to Contemporary Life*. Zondervan, 2004. Bible Gateway Plus

- c. Who do you typically have around your table?
- d. “At Matthew’s house there gathered a crowd that Jesus could not reach in the synagogues. The tax collectors had been excommunicated.”¹¹ Today, there are people who are not as welcome in the church. Since we are called to follow Jesus’ example, what does this mean for us?
4. How did the Pharisees respond to Jesus’ interactions and willingness to engage with sinners? **(9:11)**
5. In response to the Pharisees, how did Jesus describe His calling and mission? **(9:12–13)**
- a. What does it mean to you that Jesus came not for the healthy but for the sick?

¹¹ Barton, Bruce B. *Life Application Bible Commentary: Matthew*. Tyndale House Publishers, 1996. 178

- b. “Jesus was saying, ‘I did not come to invite people who are so self-satisfied that they are convinced they do not need anyone’s help; I came to invite people who are conscious of their sin and desperately aware of their need for a saviour.’ He was saying, ‘It is only those who know how much they need me who can accept my invitation.’”¹²
As you think about your day-to-day life, how much would you say you need Jesus?

- c. How is Jesus calling you to respond to Him?

6. Jesus was saying that He went where the need was greatest.¹³ Where do you see the greatest need today?

In what ways could you partner with Jesus to address this need?

¹² Barclay, William. *The Gospel of Matthew*. Vol. 1, Westminster Press, 1975. 334

¹³ *Ibid.* 333

7. In **Matthew 9:13**, Jesus quoted **Hosea 6:6**: *“For I desire mercy, not sacrifice, and acknowledgment of God rather than burnt offerings.”* (NIV)

What is the difference between mercy and sacrifices?¹⁴
(9:13)

a. Underline what else God desires more than sacrifices in the following Scriptures:

i. **1 Samuel 15:22**

*“What is more pleasing to the LORD:
your burnt offerings and sacrifices
or your obedience to his voice?
Listen! Obedience is better than sacrifice,
and submission is better than offering the fat of rams.*

ii. **Psalms 40:6–8**

⁶ *You take no delight in sacrifices or offerings.
Now that you have made me listen, I finally
understand—you don’t require burnt offerings or sin
offerings.*

⁷ *Then I said, “Look, I have come.
As is written about me in the Scriptures:*

⁸ *I take joy in doing your will, my God,
for your instructions are written on my heart.”*

iii. **Psalms 51:16–17**

¹⁶ *You do not desire a sacrifice, or I would offer one.
You do not want a burnt offering.*

¹⁷ *The sacrifice you desire is a broken spirit.
You will not reject a broken and repentant heart, O
God.*

¹⁴ “The Hebrew word for ‘mercy’ is close in meaning to ‘faithful covenant love,’ which, according to Hosea, is more important than ‘sacrifice’ (an aspect of ritual worship). As applied to the Pharisees by Jesus, therefore, the Hosea quotation was not simply telling them that they should be more sympathetic to outcasts and less concerned about ceremonial purity, but that they were being aligned with the apostates of ancient Israel in that they too were preserving the shell while losing the heart of the matter, as exemplified by their attitude to tax collectors and sinners.” Barker, Kenneth L., et al. *The Expositor’s Bible Commentary*. Zondervan, 2004. Bible Gateway Plus

iv. **Jeremiah 7:22–23**

²² *When I led your ancestors out of Egypt, it was not burnt offerings and sacrifices I wanted from them.*

²³ *This is what I told them: ‘Obey me, and I will be your God, and you will be my people. Do everything as I say, and all will be well!’*

v. **Hosea 6:6**

*I want you to show love,
not offer sacrifices.*

*I want you to know me
more than I want burnt offerings.*

vi. **Amos 5:22–24**

²² *I will not accept your burnt offerings and grain offerings.*

I won’t even notice all your choice peace offerings.

²³ *Away with your noisy hymns of praise!*

I will not listen to the music of your harps.

²⁴ *Instead, I want to see a mighty flood of justice,
an endless river of righteous living.*

vii. **Micah 6:6–8**

⁶ *What can we bring to the LORD?*

Should we bring him burnt offerings?

*Should we bow before God Most High
with offerings of yearling calves?*

⁷ *Should we offer him thousands of rams
and ten thousand rivers of olive oil?*

*Should we sacrifice our firstborn children
to pay for our sins?*

⁸ *No, O people, the LORD has told you what is good,
and this is what he requires of you:*

*to do what is right, to love mercy,
and to walk humbly with your God.*

b. Why do you think all of these things are viewed as greater than sacrifices?¹⁵

c. What does this mean for us who are no longer under the sacrificial system?¹⁶

8. Jesus told the Pharisees to go and learn the meaning of the Scripture He quoted from **Hosea 6:6**. “Go and learn” was something Rabbis said to their students who did not fully grasp the Scriptures or apply them accurately. By telling the Pharisees to “go and learn,” Jesus was suggesting they did not know the words spoken through the prophet Hosea as well as they thought they did.¹⁷

a. Are there areas where you feel like you need to “go and learn”? What are they, and how might you go about learning more?

¹⁵ “Hosea’s words were not a blanket condemnation of the sacrificial system of the Jewish nation at the time; rather, God was condemning a thoughtless, mechanical approach to sacrifice. ... God did not want the Israelites’ rituals; he wanted their hearts.” Barton, Bruce B. *Life Application Bible Commentary: Matthew*. Tyndale House Publishers, 1996. 180-181

¹⁶ In the Old Testament, the people of Israel were made right before God by offering animal sacrifices to cover their sins. God made it clear that without the shedding of blood, sin could not be forgiven (**Hebrews 9:22**). However, the Old Testament sacrificial system is no longer in place because Jesus came and shed His blood to cover the sin of the whole world. Moving forward we are forgiven and made right by His death and resurrection. (**Hebrews 9:11–28**)

¹⁷ Barton, Bruce B. *Life Application Bible Commentary: Matthew*. Tyndale House Publishers, 1996. 180

- b. The religious leaders knew what was right but they didn't live it out, which is why Jesus told them to "go and learn." How does learning help us connect what we believe to our behavior?
9. "[Matthew] lost a comfortable job, but found a destiny. He lost a good income, but found honour. He lost a comfortable security, but found an adventure the like of which he had never dreamed."¹⁸ What did you have to lose/give up to follow Christ?

What have you found?

10. Each of these stories tells us more about Jesus. What is one thing you have learned about Jesus from this lesson and how will it impact how you live?

¹⁸ Barclay, William. *The Gospel of Matthew*. Vol. 1, Westminster Press, 1975. 331

SPIRITUAL PRACTICE

Like Matthew, we have been welcomed to the table with Jesus. In turn, we can offer the world a safe place to experience the love of God. Hospitality is a spiritual practice that can lead into mission in a very natural way. “Our world desperately needs safe people and safe places. Hospitality is one way we become God’s welcoming arms in a big and often hostile world.”¹⁹

When have you been so deeply received that the welcome touched your soul?

Who models hospitality and welcome for you?

How might Jesus want to use your heart and home as a shelter for others?

¹⁹ Calhoun, Adele Ahlberg. *Spiritual Disciplines Handbook: Practices That Transform Us*. IVP Books, 2015. 162

ON MISSION

“[Matthew’s] story teaches us to be very careful of separatism. True, Christian disciples are called to a different lifestyle. But it’s wrong to think that we witness to Jesus’ gospel when we refuse to associate with people who don’t believe, or believe in ways not quite to our preferences.”²⁰

Who do you struggle to engage or interact with?

What could a first step look like to begin interacting with them?

²⁰ Barton, Bruce B. *Life Application Bible Commentary: Matthew*. Tyndale House Publishers, 1996. 180

PRAYER REQUESTS

SERMON NOTES

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