

Palm Sunday | Matthew 9

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Preacher: Jonathan Camiré

[0 : 00] Hi, my name is George Sinclair. I'm the lead pastor of Church of the Messiah. It is wonderful that you would like to check out some of the sermons done by Church of the Messiah, either by myself or some of the others. Listen, just a couple of things. First of all, would you pray for us that we will open God's Word well to His glory and for the good of people like yourself?

The second thing is, if you aren't connected to a church and if you are a Christian, we really, I would really like to encourage you to find a good local church where they believe the Bible, they preach the gospel, and if you have some trouble finding that, send us an email. We will do what we can to help connect you with a good local church wherever you are. And if you're a non-Christian checking us out, we're really, really, really glad you're doing that. Don't hesitate to send us questions. It helps me, actually, to know, as I'm preaching, how to deal with the types of things that you're really struggling with. So God bless.

Jonathan, as you know, is joining us to preach the Word. And for those who don't know, Jonathan used to be, I believe, a ministry intern here, and now Jonathan and his wife are serving the Lord on the other side of the river. So thanks, Jonathan, for coming to preach.

Thank you. So just remaining standing, let us pray as we open God's Word to meditate upon it. Heavenly Father, I thank you for your presence where your Word has opened your speaking. And I pray your Holy Spirit would come upon the words that are spoken this morning, that you would direct my words, but also that you would help all of us to receive your words, the truth that you have for us today. I pray that you would touch our hearts in ways that we might have tried to hide our hearts, and that you would give us the grace to walk in the newness of life which the Gospel brings. And I pray these things in Jesus' name. Amen. You may be seated.

Amen. So it's a pleasure for me to be here. It's a joy to see very familiar faces, faces that I've, people that I've known for years, that many of you have played such a key role in my life. And it's such a joy to be here, open God's Word with you. As some of you know, my wife and I moved to Quebec, and just as I say, the other side of the river. It's along the river, but it's a little bit, it's on the other border, close to where Hawkesbury is. If you know the little town called Rego, we moved there a few years ago. And I've been working over the last couple of years as a cook and supervisor in a federal government training college. And so I work there, and it's been a joy to work there and be able to be a light as much as the Lord gives grace among the people there.

[3 : 03] And I want to share with you a brief story of what has happened there. So I work Thursdays to Sundays, but the deal is I work starting at two or starting at one or two to the evening, so I don't miss church Sunday mornings. But anyway, I get to work there. And one of the things that's pretty cool that happens is that on Sundays when I get there and I serve people their meals, they ask me, how was your day? What did you do today? And so it kind of pushes me to out of my comfort zone to say, well, I went to church this morning. And there was one guy in particular, I won't say his name, but he would often come. He was kind of like the life of the party and all that. But every time I would ask him, hey, how are you doing? How's it going? And he would kind of show up in the line, and he said, he would always say, well, I'm alive. To which I would respond, hey, I'm glad you're alive.

I'm glad you're here. It's good to see you. And we proceed to do that. And then he would ask me, well, what did you do this morning? How was your day? How was your weekend? And on one particular Sunday, I said, well, I went to church this morning. And he was kind of like, oh, interesting.

And I said, I taught Sunday school as well. And to which he responded, oh, that's really good. I guess if it makes you happy, like that's a very good thing. I know, to serve your community that way and all that. And he kind of explained away what was happening and kind of, you know, led the

conversation to a segue to something else. And, you know, for me as a Christian, my primary concern isn't necessarily being happy in life. Of course, I want to be happy in life. But there's another way around that. But I wasn't going to try to explain that to him. Like, the conversation is closed, buddy. Like, I'm not going to try to say, well, actually, that's not how I, like, he would just think that I try to be unhappy in life. And I go to church and associate church with pursuing unhappiness. And that's just kind of weird. The story that we're looking at today is a story about Jesus who is encountering someone who we might call a relativist, someone who kind of lives by his own law, his own preferences, his own ambitions. And his life is kind of centered around that. And Jesus is encountering him. And what do you think Jesus would say to someone like that? Would he say something like, hey, I'm so glad that you're doing what makes you happy in life? So let's look at the text. We're looking at Matthew chapter 9. I invite you to turn with me, if you have your Bibles, to chapter 9, verse 9, which goes something like this.

As Jesus passed on from there, he saw a man called Matthew sitting at the tax booth. And so we'll pause here. We'll just kind of unpack who are the characters, what is the setting. Jesus has just healed a paralytic person. And so he did a miracle, very clearly a miracle. He wasn't there with, you know, surgical kind of equipment or anything. Like, it was a miracle. He spoke, and the man was healed. And it was kind of like a play on words. Which one is easier, to say your sins are forgiven or take up your mat and walk? Jesus was just really highlighting the power of his word, which is something which belongs to the creator. And now he's here. He's going across, you know, just some of the different territories in Rome, in the Roman Empire. And he's crossing a border, and he finds someone called Matthew. Now, Matthew is a Jewish man. The other gospels of Mark and Luke tell us that his name was Levi. But Matthew decided to abandon that name and associate with the new name that is Matthew. And so Jesus is calling Matthew. And Matthew is a Jewish man. He is working for the Roman Empire. And so already you get a sense that he is an asymmetrical character. Is that too big a word? He's kind of like, he's Jewish in his being, but he puts on Roman clothes and works for Rome. And at that time, the Jewish people were seen as the oppressors, or the victims, and the Romans were seen as the oppressors of the victims. You know, it's kind of like this weird thing happening where Matthew is just kind of working for the bad guys, if you will.

[7 : 25] And so there's something asymmetrical about him. There's something strange about Matthew. And the text doesn't say exactly what it is, but I get the impression that Matthew was just tired of being on the losing team. You know, maybe he just wanted to work for the winning team. He would want his efforts to go forward. You know, he maybe had a skill that he wanted to contribute in the world. And so as a tax collector, which is actually originally someone who would work in the border and would receive kind of the shipping, and he would kind of add taxes to whatever cost the shipping would be. And that way, he would gain money. And the way that people did that back in those days is that they would add extra fees that he would keep the money. That was something that the Roman Empire kind of valued. So Matthew was this character who was not prized by the Jewish people. He was not someone who was well-received, appreciated. He basically cut himself off of his tribe to pursue his ambitions.

And so in that sense, we can see him as a relativist. So what would Jesus say to someone like that? What would Jesus say? Would he say like, my friend, hey, I'm so glad you're just, you know, doing what makes you happy in life. You know, someone who's like stealing, someone who's not honest in his dealings. Like, would Jesus actually say that? Like, just to affirm him? Like, that's the Canadian thing to say. What would Jesus say? He says here in verse 9, and Jesus said, follow me. Jesus said, follow me. Now, there's something about human beings that we are followers.

And if you're here thinking, I'm a follower of no one. I am my own person, and I just do whatever I do, and whatever I want to do. Well, from the time you were a baby, you were actually following your mother's cues. You were looking at her eyes. You're following her smile, trying to understand the world through your experience of your mother. So chances are, if you've had that experience, you're a follower. And if you ever go on YouTube, you definitely hear the call to click, like, and subscribe to get more of this content. And so the whole world, in a sense of the whole media world, is based on this premise that we are followers, that we follow things. And me as a cook, I like my, I have my certain chefs. I have my Greek chef that I follow online, the Indian chef, and all these different chefs that I kind of learn my recipes from, because I'm kind of learning on the fly. I didn't go to chef school. So I'm definitely a follower, and I'm sure some of you, maybe in ways that you're conscious of or unconscious of, are followers as well. And so there's something human, that we are

followers, and we follow either someone or someone's or something or some things. That is really what we are, and it's not wrong to follow things. That's not the point that I'm making here. There's nothing wrong with following. But when we make following someone or something the ultimate in our life, that's when it becomes murky waters. And so Matthew was a relativist who would have followed his happiness, maybe the happiness of being prosperous, wealthy, famous, appreciated and applauded by Rome.

He was pursuing happiness. And in that sense, happiness, when we follow it as the ultimate, becomes a tyrant. Now, I know I sound a bit extreme as I'm saying that. But I am guessing that maybe some of you here might have this similar experience where whenever you feel angry or whenever you feel sad, you feel guilty. I shouldn't be feeling this. And there's something about, you know, I should be feeling happy. Or I should brush this off and pursue happiness right away. And maybe if you're a parent, you've experienced this as well. Your children are crying and you're like, no, no, no, cover the tears.

Let's stop this right away. As soon as possible. This is uncomfortable. Or if your child is screaming, no, no, no, no, let's stop this. Let's calm this right down. Let's try to find happiness together. And in a sense, happiness has become an idol. Why? Because happiness is just a fraction of our human experience. Happiness is just a small part of what it means to be human. And if you read the book of Psalms, you get a sense that the human experience is way more. The emotional spectrum of what it means to be human is way bigger. And so happiness is a good thing. Happiness is a very good thing.

[12:13] It's a gift of God. But pursuing happiness as the ultimate, as the ultimate thing, the very guiding principle of our life, that's when it becomes a tyrant that we cannot experience the rest of what it means to be human. And it's impossible not to feel it when you're pursuing happiness. And I am wondering if Matthew felt this when Jesus came up to him and said, follow me. Follow me. Jesus has two words to Matthew. And we see that Matthew has a type of conversion experience. When you look at it from a symbolic, choreographical point of view, we see in verse 9, Matthew rose and followed him.

You think of Isaiah 60 or Psalm 1, when people are, when it says that, blessed is the man who walks not in the counsel of the wicked, nor stands in the way of sinners, nor sits in the seat of scoffers.

Matthew was sitting in those who were oppressing the people of God. He was sitting in that sense, but he decided he saw Jesus, he heard the words of Jesus, and he got up. And he got up and he followed Jesus. And I want to share with you my first point here, if we can have that on the screen. Jesus' word is healing power. Jesus' word is healing power. Now why healing power? We're in the context of the gospel of Matthew here, where Jesus is doing healings. He's doing multiple healings. And he healed the centurion's servant, where the centurion asked Jesus, would you say one word and my servant will be healed? And Jesus says, go, he's healed. And same thing with the paralytic. He says one word and he's healed. And this whole rhetoric of what Matthew is doing here that he's showing, showcasing the authority of Jesus' word. And what kind of authority is that?

The authority to break us and crush us? No, the authority to heal, to bind what is broken. And so how does this look like? How does this work? That Jesus' word brings healing.

[14:25] See, we're made for God's presence. We were made to behold God, to know God, to behold him as the highest possible being, the highest possible pursuit, the highest goodness, the highest beauty.

That is our original relationship, the intention that God made us for. And you read that in the early pages of scripture. That is God's intention for us, to know him and behold him. But what our original ancestors did, Adam and Eve, is that they, having heard the word of the serpent, Satan, they decided to turn and they didn't follow God anymore. They followed their own selves, their own ambitions. The devil said that you could be gods if you just eat from the tree of the knowledge of good and evil. You will be gods. And so they decided to follow their own selves, their own self-interest, their own autonomy. They became followers of self. And in that sense, they became distorted. In that sense, there was a breaking off from God. There's no way to have relationship with God when we follow our own selves, when God is other-oriented in his own being and in his relationship to his creation. And so in the garden, there was this exile where Adam and Eve were cast out of the garden. And every human being afterward has experienced this exile of not being in fellowship, not beholding God, not being in the presence of God. And that has characterized the

rest of humanity ever since. So when Jesus called Matthew, he invited him back into this original knowing and beholding. There's something about Jesus's words, maybe Jesus's face, the blending of the two, that Matthew saw, the face of God. And he thought, whoa, I need to follow this man. I need to follow his man. And as someone who would have worked at the border, I'm sure he would have heard the stories, the miracles of what Jesus has done. But his time came when Jesus said, follow me. And Matthew, who is the writer of this gospel that we're looking at, he wrote this down because he has tasted and seen the goodness of Jesus, the goodness of knowing God and beholding him. He wrote this down so that we could participate in the same thing. And I don't know where you find yourself today. Maybe you're not a follower of Jesus. You're a follower of happiness, maybe, or a follower of your pursuit of wealth or fame, your work, whatever it is, your relationship. You're a follower of something. I know it.

But these things are temporary. And so when we follow something that's temporary, these pursuits die when we die. The value is ephemeral. It's gone when we're gone. I was talking with one of my colleagues, co-workers, someone that I supervise. And I asked her, like, look, for this type of job, you need to have a vision that's higher than merely washing dishes, putting the food out, serving the people, putting a smile on, and just kind of closing the day, closing the kitchen.

Like, you need to have a vision that's higher than that. And I know that you want to buy a car with the money that you make, and that's a good vision, but you need something that's even higher than that. Something that will not perish. Something that will bring you to the next point in your life that you will carry with you. And once you figure that out, I give you a week to think about it. Once you figure it out, come tell me so that I can help you reach that goal. We all need to aim for something that is high. Why not aim for the highest thing? Why not aim for Jesus? If you're not following Jesus, I want to encourage you that Jesus is the highest possible pursuit in this life. Your life will never be the same. He will transform it for the good. And I want to invite you to consider that. Hopefully, as we unpack the rest of the sermon, you'll understand a little bit more what that entails.

But Jesus is good. Jesus is good. He's good for all of us. From wherever background you come from, he is good. Or maybe you're a follower of Jesus, but you're cold or dull. However, you may feel that in your heart of hearts. Maybe if I would ask you, how are you doing? You'd say, I don't really know.

[18 : 56] I'm just kind of like, I don't know. I just kind of go on and on and on, not really knowing and kind of in the fog about where you are with Jesus. I would call on you to wake up. Wake up from the slumber. Maybe you're following idols. Maybe it's the happiness thing that's kind of overtaken your pursuit of Jesus. You kind of pursued Jesus and happiness, Jesus and something else. Get rid of the idols. Get rid of these things, these pursuits that don't fill you, that don't give you eternal life.

Turn from them and follow Jesus and ask Jesus to search you and to know you. And in the words of the great 1980s band, take a chance. Take a chance on Jesus. I'm thinking of Abba. Maybe it's not a great example, but take a chance on Jesus. Like, if you need to wake up, take a chance. Like, ask Jesus what it is and just take a chance. Just go up to someone who's in need and give. Like, honestly, take a chance. Make it tangible, fleshly, real. Make your faith real, incarnate.

Live it out. Or maybe you're a solid follower of Jesus. Well, praise God. I praise God with you for that. But don't give up. Keep going. Keep bearing fruit in line with the repentance that you've originally started with.

And be thankful to Jesus. Cultivate thankfulness. Keep going. Cultivate thankfulness. Or lastly, maybe you're a discouraged follower of Jesus. Maybe you've been mocked. People have laughed at you.

Maybe you've suffered loss. I don't know what it is. But as it says in the book of Acts, and I know you've been going through the book of Acts, rejoice in that you're accounted worthy of suffering for the name, the name of Jesus.

[20 : 46] There's no greater honor in suffering for doing good in the name of Jesus. That is a good thing. And we want to follow Jesus because His word is health. His word is healing power. And His healing power is what brings us into and fits us for this friendship with God the Trinity, the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit.

As Jesus heals us, as we get to see Jesus, we behold Him, we hear His voice, we receive it, and we trust in Him. What happens is that it's not just kind of like, you know, me here, Jesus there.

It's that Jesus sends His Holy Spirit. The very Spirit, the very presence of God to indwell us. So our life is not the same, you know. It's really not Jesus my buddy.

It's really God in me. And as the Holy Spirit works in us, our gaze, our sight is set upon God the Father in Heaven. And we're no longer just kind of just walking like this, looking at the next task, looking at the next pursuit, feeling bogged down because it didn't work out, or feeling good because it worked out, but feeling anxious because you feel it's going to be taken away from you at any moment.

We're following God, the triune God, who gives new life. And now what does that look like? Friendship with God. We get a beautiful picture of Matthew beholding Jesus in the beauty of the gospel in the next verse.

[22 : 17] Let's look at verse 10. It says, And as Jesus reclined at table in the house, behold, many tax collectors and sinners came and were reclining with Jesus and His disciples.

So Matthew, presumably out of humility, he left some details out which we find in Luke and in Mark. It says that Matthew held a great feast, a great banquet.

He splurged. And what did he do? What did he splurge on? Well, he received Jesus and His disciples as well as sinners and tax collectors.

And this is a reflection of God's own hospitality which we celebrate at communion, that we celebrate that God receives us and that God feeds us with His own body, His own life.

But Matthew is transposing that into what it means as a human being. And so as the gospel grips us, as the gospel grips us, we begin to consolidate our lives.

[23 : 19] That's where the Holy Spirit leads us. We begin to consolidate our lives. We see that Matthew, he consolidates his time, his treasure, his talents. He looks at what he has, does an inventory, a stock inventory.

He looks at who he knows and he brings them together. We see his old friends, maybe his, you know, if you work in an office building, maybe his smoking buddies at the bottom of the building at the entrance or his, you know, his drinking buddies after work.

He says, come along, I have something to show you. And he brings his new Jesus with them and together they share in a meal. And there's something absolutely beautiful, Jesus reclining with them.

It's a very kind of ancient way of just, you know, being with people that you would recline at the table. But being reclined, you know, if you're reclined, you're not really going anywhere.

Like, Jesus is not there kind of looking at the door like, okay, when's the next, when's the perfect exit moment? Like, when is the conversation kind of dying so I can gun out? And I showed my presence, people know that was here and then, phew, he's out.

[24 : 26] No, he's reclining at table. He's eating with them. He's enjoying their very presence. There's something absolutely beautiful with that. Now you might think, okay, if I did that, like, my friends would reject me.

Like, I would get pushback. My neighbors, if they saw me do that, like, if they saw me receive these sinners, tax collectors, with, you know, people with the tattoos or people who smoke or people who smell different, like, if they saw me do that, like, I would get pushback.

And they'd probably say something like, like, what is up with you and, like, this Jesus stuff? Like, you're going a little bit off the rails here. Like, that's a bit too much. At least move upward. At least try to invite people that are higher than you in your work or higher than you in society so that way you can kind of move your way up with them.

Like, that's a good idea. That's a wise idea. That's what wise, sophisticated people do. Well, that's exactly the criticism that Jesus and Matthew receive in verse 11.

Let's read it. Verse 11. It says, And when the Pharisees saw this, they said to his disciples, Why does your teacher eat with tax collectors and sinners? There you have it.

[25 : 43] Why does your teacher eat with tax collectors and sinners? And I'd like to have my second point just so we can expound on this. What is happening here? What is happening here is that Jesus eats and fellowships with sinners.

He is clean. He is mercy of God. I'll say this again. Jesus eats with sinners and eats and fellowships with sinners. He is clean.

He is mercy of God. He is the very definition of what he means to be clean. He's the very definition of the mercy of God. And this is what we see happening here in this story. Jesus makes very little of

externals in case you're wondering, in case maybe you have forgotten.

The externals, not so much. Jesus cares for the heart. He goes towards the heart of each and every single one of us. And this is a picture, Jesus eating with and fellowshiping with his disciples and with sinners and tax collectors.

This is a picture of what the cross accomplishes. So that when Jesus comes down, you know, he's not going up the ladder. He's coming down. And in a sense, he came down from heaven as we read earlier.

[26 : 58] Came down from heaven to be with people who are hungry, people who are in need. And as he is there, he is fellowshiping with them to show the ultimate reality of what is going to happen in the glory of the resurrection.

That we will have fellowship and we will eat with Jesus. That we will have a good future with Jesus. So that when he went to the cross, he took everything that made us poor and needy and weak upon him.

So that we could have the riches of Jesus. And the riches is the very fellowship of Jesus. The very knowing of God himself. That is the cross and that is what Jesus accomplished at the cross.

And this picture of eating is a picture of eternity. When you put your trust in Jesus. When you put faith in Jesus. Now Jesus is not this distant hero with no time or interest in you.

In the people in the story. He is literally eating. Literally eating with them. He knows human beings but he knows you.

[28 : 13] He knows your thoughts. He knows your experiences. He knows your pursuits. Your ambitions. He knows what kind of imagination you have. What you dwell on when you're sitting quiet.

He knows all those things. And he wants to have a relationship with you. And you may be wondering yeah but what if I'm what if I'm disordered?

Like what if I'm financially just kind of off the rails? What if just my my luck in life I just I don't have it? What if what if I'm not beautiful?

What if I'm not successful? What if I always get turned down? What if my sexuality is just I don't even have a definition for it. I don't even have a word for it. I don't even know where I am. What if what if and what if Jesus is clean.

He is mercy of God. And as we put our faith in him we receive his cleanliness. And that's the beauty of what the cross accomplishes. You see in the Old Testament there was this concern that the the innermost sanctuary of the presence of God could be contaminated because sin and uncleanness would go and creep towards like a serpent towards the inner sanctuary of the temple or the tabernacle.

[29 : 32] That was the concern. That was what all the regulations were about. But these regulations are expired because Jesus who is the very presence of God he is clean and like a mountain has water dripping all along it and it's unstoppable.

I live on a mountain and come springtime I have to make sure that my water pump is functioning because my basement will be flooded in a matter of seconds. The water is so powerful and you look at it flow down the mountain and it's unstoppable.

And that's the picture of the Holy Spirit coming out of Jesus. And a few chapters later in this account we see the unclean woman the woman with the issue of blood she comes to Jesus and she touches Jesus and what happens?

Power comes out of Jesus and she is made clean. And it's the same thing same principle that as we come to Jesus frail faulty as you may be Jesus is clean and makes clean.

He is mercy of God. What he is showing and that picture he is showing for us what might be for us if we come to him. And this this is made clear in verse 11.

[30 : 47] Let's look at verse 11. This relationship with God and how he makes us clean. Verse 11 says And when the Pharisees saw this they said to his disciples why does your teacher eat with tax collectors and sinners?

And verse 12 but when he heard it he said those who are well have no need of a physician but those who are sick. What is going on here? The Pharisees are not catching on.

They think that okay I can make myself clean by my religiosity by obeying rules obeying laws pleasing God like this. I don't really need Jesus' power or cleanliness.

I don't need the mercy of God. I can leave that to the others. I follow the principles of God. I follow the laws of God. Therefore I am clean and I'm good. And that's the very religious spirit. That's very contrasted with the relativist spirit which is I don't need really what to I don't need really any laws or any principles to follow. I'm just going to follow myself and whatever else other leader I can find on the internet.

[31 : 54] So you have these contrasts. We have the relativist who is all heart passion but no external conformity and you have the religious who is all external conformity but no heart.

And their hearts are whatever heart that they have is revealed in calling Jesus teacher. See with a teacher you learn things and you climb your way up.

You go up the ladder and you move towards one degree of glory if you will one degree of healing of wholeness to another to another. And that's anyway that's the hope that's the anticipation that's why people kind of go into it in the first place.

But Jesus counters that he says in a sense Matthew you're not going to be you're not a relativist anymore but I'm not going to allow you to become a religious person. You're going to follow me. And what that looks like is that Jesus corrects the Pharisees by saying those who are well have no need of a physician but those who are sick. In a sense Jesus says you're going to relate to me as a physician.

[33 : 03] You're going to relate to me not as a teacher first but as a physician. And so here's my third point. The world says follow teachings for your healing and Jesus says I will heal you then teach you.

So you see it's completely different. Jesus is not offering a religion. He's not offering relativism. He's offering a relationship. a lively relationship with your maker with your creator.

He is your creator come to you come to us this morning calling follow me. He's saying follow me to you to me so that we would commit ourselves to him and maybe recommit ourselves to him.

And Jesus has a special insight into the human person. His word play here is really masterful. He's talking about those who are well have no need of a physician but those who are sick.

He's talking about these deep realities of what it means to be a human in real time in real space.

He's saying that we're sick. He's saying that it's not good enough to be religious.

[34 : 13] It's not good enough to try harder. It's not good enough to have walked with Jesus for many years having believed the gospel and now saying I got it. I've got this.

I can just go on and continue with my own thing and have my own mind about reality. Jesus says we're sick. There's something sickly about us, about each and every single one of us which is called sin.

He's using another layer as he's describing in verse 13. Go and learn what this means. I desire mercy and not sacrifice.

For I came not to call the righteous but sinners. Those who are sick, those who are sinful are one and the same. He's describing each and every one of us and he's saying that he is the physician of our souls.

He is the only one who will make us right with God and he's the only one who will make us right with others, right with this world. Jesus is the physician of each and every one of us.

[35 : 18] Now Jesus is also centering in on what it means to have a relationship with him. I mentioned the relativists have internal kind of some heart passion but no external conformity whereas the religious have external conformity but no heart really whereas a relationship with God starts with the heart and moves outward into external conformity.

We see this in verse 13. He says having said that he is the physician now he says go and learn what this means. I desire mercy and not sacrifice.

He's quoting from the Old Testament and he's saying I desire God desires from God's own heart his own being what he wants from us is to share in his own being.

God is love and he wants us to share in that love. In your translation it probably says mercy and in the original language from which this is quoted the word is chesed which is to say God's covenantal love God's faithfulness the very fact that God has been faithful when Israel has been unfaithful the very fact that God has been faithful when you and I have been unfaithful that he is there he's pouring out his love upon him upon us upon the Holy Spirit as the Father pours his love upon Jesus Jesus pours his love back to the Father and the very love is the love of the Holy Spirit which wraps us in into this eternal dance of God do you know this love is this love living in you that is the ministry

of the Holy Spirit to participate in the eternal love of God and what is absolutely beautiful and stunning and riveting of this story is that you're never too far you're never too poor never too ugly never too shameful never too old never too young never too disordered never too clumsy never too weak never too lost for Jesus to receive you and to heal you but it starts with following Jesus and that's a form of worship I'll put it this way following Jesus begins with beholding him seeing him looking at him our face is the window of our soul and the way in which our face is directed shows where our attention is and where our attention is is where our allegiance is and where our allegiance is where our actions will follow and so we need to look to Jesus our whole life is found in him so as we look to Jesus we follow him and then as a matter of discipleship we learn to discern Jesus' mercy towards each one of us as the true physician of your souls Jesus is always more willing to receive us to heal us if you're going to go to Jesus and say Jesus you're the healer of my soul would you receive me I'm broken and I've been following you for ten years like I don't know why but I'm just in this place of unclarity and lack of truth and I've just been in the same sins [38 : 40] Jesus is not going to go I'm your teacher bad student no he's the physician he will say yes come I'm so glad you've come back I will make you clean I will show you the mercies of God and lastly as a matter of mission learning God's mercy for you and for others we see this pictured Matthew he lived it out he received the mercy of Jesus and he showed it to others he consolidated his life he brought his old friends his new Jesus together and it's a matter of mission of being ambassadors of Jesus in this world of knowing the mercy of God and showing it to others and that is carried out by the fruit of the spirit you don't need to be an extravagant missionary who knows all the perfect zingers and lines on how to have people reconsider Jesus you just need to bear fruit in the Holy Spirit that enough is strange in this world showing love peace patience kindness gentleness faithfulness that is strange

I tell you just doing that is far reaching and so as we consider these things to follow Jesus discern his mercy as well as learning his mercy for us and for others extending it to the world as we consider these things we'll pray and we'll close I invite you to stand and I have a final point which is a prayer and maybe wherever you are in this walk this prayer applies I've tried to make it so that wherever you are this prayer is relevant let's pray this together Jesus you alone are the physician of my soul I renounce all idols in my life and receive your cleansing mercy today help me to follow you first and foremost and to show the same mercy to those around me in your name Jesus amen and if maybe if it's the first time that you're doing this come talk with me or come talk with someone just let's talk about this let's talk about this new

Jesus thing and let's bow our hearts father in heaven I thank you for your mercy revealed to us in the person of your son Jesus and I thank you that you are not distant but you're close that you indwell us that you come in us through your Holy Spirit and I pray that as we consider these things as we meditate upon these truths that you would give us great hope in knowing that you are the physician of our souls and that you would give us just the grace to take action to take a chance for you to cast our whole lives upon you to not rely upon our own strength but to seek after you to set our gaze upon you and I pray that in Jesus mighty name amen