

# The Day Jesus Called the Sick to Follow Him

*Disclaimer: this is an automatically generated machine transcription - there may be small errors or mistranscriptions. Please refer to the original audio if you are in any doubt.*

Date: 06 March 2022

Preacher: BK Smith

[ 0 : 00 ] Good morning, all. Good morning, all. Hey, that's the way. Isn't it not a good morning?

Sun is shining. Spring is almost here. COVID is almost dead, right? We hope, we trust.

Please turn in your Bibles to Mark chapter 2. Mark chapter 2 just says, Dave had said, if you don't have your Bible, you can request one. We'll gladly bring you out one because I want to be able to show you where the power of God is in.

It is in words. It's not my words. But just as I construct what God has so wonderfully and plainly led us to see, to read, to understand, we give thanks to God for this.

Just as you know, I'm going to be using Mark 2. We're looking at a story today that is included in three of the four Gospels. There's an importance to this story, and I want to hit on that importance.

[ 1 : 10 ] But before I go any further, let's go to him in prayer. Dear Lord, holy, heavenly Father, God, just as we come together, and I believe Jody, just in her tears, just in an understanding of what it means to be the Churchill Father, we come together in a community both to be blessed and to blessed.

There is power amongst those who fellowship with you, who worship you, who seek to know you, who are looking to know you more. And we give us thanks that you give this book, this Bible that instructs us in you.

It allows us to get a glimpse into your heart. And it doesn't cover everything about you, but it covers what you want us to know about you.

It teaches us that you're awesome, you're great. Teaches us that no one can actually see you and live because you are so holy and majestic.

Tells us that you have created the earth and the things in the earth which give us wonder, that we study through science that speaks of your talents.

[ 2 : 27 ] But also through your Bible, we come to know this man, this person who walked on this earth for three and a half years and he was your son.

He was totally without sin. He was you. And that we might know you through knowing him. And I just pray that we'd continue to be blessed by this study as we look into the lives and just the culture and what we can draw upon it for our own lives and have a greater sense of knowledge of you which leads to a greater worship of you.

So as we said, we're not here to believe in you, Jesus. We want to believe you, Jesus. So tune our hearts to you as we come to this word. Give my voice clarity. May it not be confusing.

And the ideas flow together. We ask you these things in your most holiest name. Amen. So as you all know, we're in this story of the life of Christ.

And we're in the part of what is called the Galilean ministry. We know that the Bible teaches us that Jesus ministered for three and a half years on this earth. And the second phase of his ministry is about one and a half years which he spends in the territory of Galilee.

[ 3 : 49 ] This is the place where he grew up. That is the place where there's the most Jews but there's also filled with every sort of Gentile around the world because it's a major trading hub that comes through Capernaum which is a city which he sets as his home base.

And Jesus has this plan and it's a threefold plan. The first plan is to saturate the land with the gospel of Jesus Christ. Now, there's this really important point.

If someone is going to reject the gospel, you want to make sure they understand it enough to be able to reject that. You with me? You have to know something about something in order to discard it or to turn away from it.

So that's one of the reasons why he's just going over this period of land over and over and over.

And he's also doing these incredible miracles. He's doing miracles for the crowds.

He's not doing them to play the crowds but people are coming to him that are sick, paralyzed. They have leprosy. They have withered hands.

[ 4 : 59 ] Some can't walk. Some can't talk. And people know that Jesus is this person who's powerful enough to do these miracles that he heals everybody that comes to him.

And he says, hey, don't look at the actions, these miracles as evidence that I am God. Use them as an authenticator to the words that I say.

The most important thing that I have to do here in Galilee is to preach the gospel that you can know my Father who sits in heaven for his kingdom will come.

And then the third element, he's calling people to follow him. Last week, we learned about a Roman who was a part of Herod's court who followed Jesus without even being asked.

God did a miracle in his life, saved his son, he was all in. We also looked at Mark chapter five, the man who was possessed by these demons and his sole response to Jesus healing him of the demons was that he wanted to be next to Jesus.

[ 6 : 18 ] That that was the man's overwhelming compunction was to be next to Jesus. Then we also looked at the patience Jesus had with some of his disciples that he kept calling.

And we recognize in the fishermen, especially Matthew, or not Matthew, but we saw James and John and Andrew and Peter who were following John the Baptist and they would come with Jesus, listen, kind of pull back, kind of go with him again, show up, kind of pull back till finally Jesus says, hey, listen, cast your net out in the sea.

They cast the net. Hundreds of fish come out. They've got to divide the net. They catch it so big.

And then they finally, like this lightning bolt happens this moment.

You are God. And they bow down. We are not worthy to be with you. And he simply says, follow me. And what did they do? They got rid of everything and they followed after him.

Next week, or before I say that, so for today and next week, I want to look at the different types of follow me that we find in scripture.

[ 7 : 31 ] Because there's some very different moments where Jesus is saying the same words, but he's meaning simple things, similar things or different things. The first type of follow me that we see in scripture is when he says to follow me, he wants you to believe and acknowledge himself as Messiah and the son of God.

That's what he's talking about. He wants you to turn away from your false religion and follow me.

And this is largely given to the crowds. And he wants them to be reconciled to him.

And he gives these invitations. And we're going to look at that because they're largely after the sermon at the mount. But it's like, wide is the gate to destruction. But narrow is the gate to me.

He's putting them in a choice, right? You can build your house on the sand or you can build your house on a rock. So he's going to start using these stories to demonstrate what it means to follow the world or follow me.

And obviously, he's calling them. If they believe the words that he says is true, the answer is the narrow gate and on the rock. The second type of follow me is to follow Jesus as a disciple, to travel with them.

[ 8 : 52 ] In the Old Testament, a lot of, or the New Testament at that time, if I was a rabbi, a teacher, I was known as a rabbi if people followed me. It was quite simple.

So you'd work during the day and at night, you'd come over to my house and I would teach and we would go about doing activities and you'd be learning. Remember, not as many people were educated at these times and rabbis would go along doing these things.

And then, we come to this third calling. This third type of call is the one that he gives to the apostles. Now, if you're unsure what the difference is between a disciple and an apostle, let me explain it to you right now.

To say that you are a disciple of Jesus Christ simply means you are a follower of Jesus Christ. You with me on that one?

[ 9 : 51 ] We today are known as disciples of Jesus Christ. If you're a Christian, you follow him, right? That's the whole point. Now, an apostle was a specific designation given to 12 specific men who were not only to follow Jesus but to really follow Jesus.

That they would follow him literally unto death. And their role was to take in all of Jesus' teachings.

So, for the next two and a half years of their lives, we believe right now in the text, we're at the end of Jesus' second year of public ministry and now he's starting to gather and solidify the names of

these men and women that follow him.

We believe that there's a greater group of about 72 disciples who followed him everywhere and within that group there's these 12. Right?

You with me on that so far? So, a disciple is everyone who follows after Jesus. An apostle is someone who is a disciple who's been personally called by Jesus to follow him.

[11:13] So, I'll just read you a couple of passages. Luke 6 verse 12. It says, In those days Jesus went out to the mountain to pray and all night he continued in prayer to God.

When day came he called his disciples and chose from them 12 whom he named apostles. Simon whom he named Peter Andrew his brother James and John Philip Bartholomew and Matthew and Thomas and James the son of Alphaeus and Simon who was called the zealot and Judas the son of James now Judas Iscariot who became a traitor.

So, he's personally calling these 12 individuals to follow him. Mark has the same story but it tells us and he gave them the authority to cast out demons and to do works in his name.

So, basically these 12 men will go on as specific representatives of Jesus Christ after he dies.

So, you with me on that so far? Simple? Disciples and then there's apostles and that these apostles are going to give the power to do miracles that Jesus did to authenticate their message.

[12:37] So, all apostles are disciples but not all disciples are apostles. Why am I teaching this right now? Because there's some people today who believe that there are apostles that live today and that these men are able to pass on their abilities to someone else.

Scripture doesn't say that at all. In fact, there's an interesting story in scripture where you remember Judas Iscariot he leads Romans to Jesus he ends up committing suicide and he dies in his sorrow and in his shame and so the apostles are sitting there, well there's only 11 of us.

How about we choose someone else from amongst the 72 that have been kind of around Jesus this whole time and we're going to call him an apostle and that was Matthias was his name.

They cast lots which is kind of like lots were these piece of carpet but leather material and it had a different color and if you tossed it and both the same color came up you knew that was the choice.

So if you're trying to get overly technical you say well Brian you know there's another story for this but the reality is Jesus didn't name Matthias as an apostle and if you go to Acts chapter 9 you don't have to turn there but that's the story of remember Paul he's on the road to Damascus he's going to go kill Christians and God appears to him.

[14:14] Saul, Saul why are you persecuting my people? And then he leads Paul Paul, Paul's blinded and he goes to this man named Ananias and this is what the Lord Jesus says to Ananias he says go for Paul is a chosen instrument of mine to carry my name before the Gentiles and kings and the children of Israel for I will show him how much he must suffer for the sake of my name.

what's important in that text is that it is God saying I am choosing this man and we believe in that time I believe specifically that it was Jesus Christ instructing Paul alone giving him the same instructions the earlier apostles had to prepare him for his ministry.

Alright so that's the difference between these disciples and apostles. Now today I want to get into the specific call of a very specific apostle who goes by the name of Levi or Matthew.

Many of you might know and I've actually preached on this subject before but I know there's many of you that are new here but I think it's such a wonderful story and it really fills in a lot of the blanks for us about the type of people Jesus calls to follow him.

You alright with that? Okay so if you say you've heard it before amen that means you were listening last time but if not there might be a problem.

[15:49] Alright so let's take a look at Mark chapter 2 and I want you to look at verse 13. So I'm going to read you the harmonized portion but you guys will be able to follow it okay.

It says then he Jesus went out again by the sea and all the multitude came to him. Remember by this time the crowds are so big and massive he can't even enter into towns and at every opportunity he says he taught them.

After these things he went out and as Jesus passed from there he saw a tax collector called Levi the son of Alphaeus sitting at the tax office and he said to Matthew follow me.

So he being Matthew left all rose up and followed him. So the scene is that Jesus has been preaching outside Capernaum he's walking through the town he sees Matthew at this tax office and he calls to him.

When we look at that text it's a little bit thin. What do we learn? We learn that his name is Levi the son of Alphaeus in the gospel of Matthew it tells us his name is Matthew. His profession is that of a tax collector and we're going to learn what that really means at that time.

[17:07] Jesus gave him a command to follow him and his response was to follow Jesus. This is the question that I want you to consider for a second.

Last week we saw Jesus ask James, John, Andrew, and Peter to follow him and now we're seeing asking Matthew to follow him.

That's only five of the disciples. Do you ever wonder why is there not seven other stories within the gospels of how the other people followed after Jesus?

And I'll tell you why I believe there's only these two stories because I believe these stories represent bookends of the type of people Jesus Christ calls to him.

You with me on that? There's one side. Let's just think politically. One person's at the far right, one person's at the far left. And you might be saying, how is one at the far right and the far left?

[18:19] And I'm not saying they're liberal, conservative, or Democrat, or Republican, or any of that. I'm just saying they were really far extremes of Jews that lived in Israel.

And this is what I want to accomplish this morning. I want you to understand the type of person Matthew is so we can better understand the type of people Jesus calls to follow him.

So, in the list of apostles, Matthew calls himself Matthew the tax collector. And makes reference to James the son of Alphaeus.

History actually tells us that the name Alphaeus was one of the most popular names that existed in Judaism of the time. So, no scholars led to the point to say that they are related.

What we know is that he's this man sitting at a tax booth and he gets this call. And this call will create a stir in the people that follow him.

[19:29] All right, first thing, he's a tax collector. What does that mean? I'm going to give you a quick overview of the Roman tax system. You're in Rome. You have this huge empire and you need to collect taxes from all over the world in order to fund your armies and your world conquering and all that sort of thing.

So, they divide all the territories into a map, into these sections and say, X amount of gold needs to come from this part of the land.

And what was really interesting in studying this, large companies were actually created, like we see today, made up of many wealthy people because they would have to buy those tax rights from Caesar.

So, they would go and say, let's just say Squamish, for instance. We're going to go to Sea to Sky. We're going to be from Squamish to Whistler. Here, someone's going to say, you know what, it's worth \$10 million, and these rich people say, we'll pay you that \$10 million.

Now, those guys are then given a contract where they have the rights to collect the taxes for those five years from all the people that live between Squamish and Whistler.

[20:40] If they don't raise enough, Rome doesn't care because they've already got their money. You had to pay money to get that area. So, you would earn that area.

These rich people would come together because one person would not have the money to gather. Then he would create smaller little areas. So, there'd be a tax collector for Squamish, Brackendale, downtown, Garibaldi Heights, right?

So, these guys would bid for their rights for those tax situations. So, it's kind of like this multi-level marketing scheme of taxation.

You with me on this? So, you always have to keep the guy at the top above you heavy because he owes the money and you've got five years to bring it together.

And if you don't bring that money, usually you don't go to court. Usually your body is found dead somewhere. Okay? Like this is a ruthless tax system.

[21:40] So, we're in this area and there's two types of tax expert in Squamish. The first is the typical tax collector.

His role is to collect one percent of any working individual in Squamish. And this is what we have from history. Every person had to pay one percent of their income to Rome.

If you were a farmer, you had to give ten percent of your grain. And if you happen to have fruits or wine, you'd have to give twenty percent to Rome.

Okay? So, if there's a war in some other part of the country and Caesar says, hey, we need more corn and we happen to be a corn producing area, Rome has the right to come and take our corn. All right? So, there's this tension. Like, if there's a drought, you can't grow your fruit. Like, it's really intense. You have to pay. The taxman or the Roman soldiers show up, take you as a slave, and take all your land.

[ 22 : 46 ] So, there's this tax pressure that's going out at all times. Then we have a second type of tax collector.

And this is who Matthew is. He's called a custom house official. And of all the tax collectors that existed in Israel, he was the most hated of them all.

His was the job to place duty on imports, exports, he would have the one to collect tolls on roads, bridges, harbors, and any other element.

And I'll tell you why they were the most hated. Because they could tax anything they wanted to. You're coming into town, and we believe his territory was from the Mediterranean.

There was a road that went to Capernaum and went up to Damascus. And it goes through two major fishing centers. And he's in the middle of it. So he would have henchmen, for lack of a better word, muscle working for him, making sure they collected as much money.

[ 23 : 57 ] You showed up. What he's going to do, he's going to assess how much you can afford to pay. It could differ any kind of time. If you had extra bags, he could go through your bags, take some of your fruit, take some of your fish, and he could just arbitrarily name a number.

And this position left a lot of opportunity for abuse. He could charge by how many animals you brought, how many kids.

He could say, we're even charging extra for brown-eyed people today. Anything he wanted to make more money that day, he would do it. How good was Matthew?

He was exceptionally good at what he does. We read later the house party, the festival that he has, there's not just a few people there, there's dozens of people that are able to come to his house.

So he's got an ability to buy or build his own house, and he's able to host dozens of people. So Matthew is someone who's quite wealthy, he's quite successful at what he does, which means he's probably really crooked.

[ 25 : 07 ] They had the power to nickel and dime you for anything they thought they could get out of you. In fact, the Greek word for the type of tax collector Matthew was, was associated with oppression and injustice.

In fact, this tax system demanded enterprising, greedy individuals who were not averse to using underhanded means to get their money.

This is Matthew, and he's hated by all people who come through Capernaum, and notice he's looking at you, trying to figure out how can I get extra dollars from you.

There's another reason why Matthew is hated. He's hated because he's a Jew, and not simply because he's a Jew.

He's actually a Jew that works for Rome. He's actually a Jew that works for Rome against his own people.

[ 26 : 19 ] probably one of the worst sins that you could do as a Jewish person was to collaborate with the enemy. The Jews detested such people, not only on account of their frequent abuses and tyrannical spirit, because this Jew collecting their taxes was a constant reminder that they were under the thumb of a foreign government.

And this Jew showing up every so often to collect his taxes was a constant reminder that we are not free people.

In fact, the populace considered tax collectors to be like harlots or gamblers or thieves, money lenders.

collectors. In fact, you couldn't even take money from a tax collector. It was considered defiled money.

And what's interesting, when you made that choice to become a tax collector, you're essentially giving up your Jewish identity. You know what?

[ 27 : 35 ] Today, some of you may have kids that follow a career that you might be a little embarrassed by or not doing what they want to do. But in that society, that's a shame based society, what your son is doing or your daughter, it would actually be better to disown them than let it be known that they are a tax collector or the daughter married a tax collector.

So by becoming a tax collector, you were giving away your Jewish identity. You were losing any type of social status you had.

Remember, they had a synagogue, much like a gathering place like today. You were not welcome. In fact, the rabbinical writings said that, like I said before, their money was tainted and defiled anyone who accepted that.

But they were seen as such deplorable citizens that they couldn't even be witnesses in the court of law. You with me on that one? Like that is how low people thought of Jewish people who were tax collectors.

So what does Jesus do? He walks over to the tax booth and he says, follow me.

[ 29 : 10 ] What do you think James, John, Andrew, and Peter were thinking at that moment? You see, these guys were following John the Baptist before Jesus Christ.

You remember? They were there in John chapter one. They were looking for the Messiah. These would have been the kind of men that showed up at our synagogue every week.

They were the kids that grew up. These were the good religious people who were doing all the things that they admired or what their religion demanded of.

So in their mind, at least it made sense that Jesus asked them to follow him. But all of a sudden, it's almost you can picture Jesus with those guys.

He says, hey, wait a second. Walks across the courtyard, points to the guy in the tax office that everybody hates. Follow me.

[ 30 : 19 ] And what does Matthew do? he follows Jesus. He gets out of that tax office and he literally leaves it all behind.

In fact, when Jesus asked James, John, Peter, and Andrew to follow him, they have this fishing business that they can leave with their father to take care of. They can go back to it.

So if this Jesus guy doesn't work out, they've got something to fall back on. Matthew, when he receives that invitation, he's leaving something that he can never go back to.

He's not going to be able to reclaim that prestige, that office that he had, even with his owners. because tax people are always going to fill that void with other people who are going to collect the taxes.

So it tells us something. Why would Matthew do something like this? What did he see represented in Jesus Christ that he was truly willing to leave all behind?

[ 31 : 40 ] right? And Simon Peter, Andrew, James, and John, like I said, they were the good little Jewish boys. They observed the holidays. They came from respectable families.

And then you have this man here who's probably the most hated man in the whole city. Text doesn't tell us this, but I believe that Matthew started out more Jewish than any of the other apostles to follow Jesus Christ.

And I base this on several reasons why. One, his name is Levi. That's the name of the high priestly line. If you were going to call someone Levi, you were letting him know your heart set that they would be given over to work in the temple.

people. Number two, the reason why I believe this is in order to be a tax collector, you had to have means and money.

And in order to be good at collecting, you needed to know the language of business. And we see in the gospel of Matthew, which Matthew wrote, he knows how to speak, read and write Greek, Hebrew, Aramaic, and obviously he knows how to read and write Latin because that would have been the business with Rome.

[ 33 : 04 ] This wasn't a poor schlep, quote unquote, muscle man who couldn't think that was behind the tax booth. This was a very clear thinking, planning, methodical man who knew how to make money and he did what he needed to do to make it.

When we read the gospel of Matthew, we read a man who had an intimate knowledge of all the Old Testament. In fact, the book of Matthew quotes the Old Testament over 99 times, which is more than any other gospels combined.

He's able to quote freely from the law, the Psalms, the prophets, everywhere he had this intimate knowledge of the Old Testament. And if you were a Greek scholar, of which I am not, yes, I've taken four years of Greek, I still am not a scholar at it, but if you really knew your Greek vernacular, you automatically tell when you read the gospel of Matthew, it is a better Greek than Mark, John, and Luke.

It's just better, fancier. So it tells you something about this man that he grew up in that religion, grew up with that faith, knew everything about the Old Testament, knew everything about the Psalms, the prophets, the Old Testament.

He knew all those things, but he recognized it wasn't for him, and he left the religious life, which would have been high prestige, to become scum of the earth.

[ 34 : 42 ] Why? Why? In doing so, he turned his back on his heritage, he turned his back on his family, he turned his back on his future, and he used his education and ability to make dark money.

This is why I believe Matthew did it. I believe Matthew knew what the Old Testament said, and what he saw lived out in the temple was a disgrace in his eyes, and he did not want anything to do with it. If you're one of those people who earlier rejected Christianity because you saw some hypocrisy or some person in there was selfish or rude to you, and you now hated the church, if there was someone that could identify you of the apostles, Matthew's your guy.

He had a problem with that religion. What's interesting, the rabbis wrote that someone like Matthew could never repent.

They posited that the only real repentance he could have is if he repented and died immediately because that would have been justice for the life that he lived.

[ 36 : 27 ] I believe that Matthew is no fake. I believe that Matthew is an authentic type of person who likes to be true to what he is. So when Jesus commands Matthew to follow me, Jesus at that time knows Matthew has had enough not only with the Jewish false religion, but he knows that Matthew is finished with the world of riches.

Matthew's come to the conclusion that religion didn't fill his soul, neither does the money. But Jesus knowing his heart, Jesus knew that Matthew longed for more.

He longed to ultimately have his sins forgiven. And when offered the opportunity to follow Jesus, Matthew jumps at it.

I believe for the second time in his life, Matthew makes a decisive, definite break from his past. How does he know that Jesus is legit? Think of him. His tax office is in the middle of where Jesus Christ has been doing ministry for over a year.

[ 37 : 48 ] over. All the sick people are gone. People are bringing in all the hurt, the sick, the paralyzed. Jesus just keeps healing them. And he hears Jesus speak over and over and over.

And he would know he'd be connecting the dots as he shows to us in the Gospel of Matthew that Jesus Christ is indeed the Messiah. Messiah. And he says to this Messiah, I can give my life to. So how does Matthew respond to Jesus Christ? Take a look at verse 15 of Mark chapter 2. He holds a party. And he invites Jesus.

And it says, as he reclined at the table in his house, many tax collectors and sinners were reclining with Jesus and his disciples.

For there were many who followed him. Luke 5 29 says, Levi held a great banquet for Jesus at his house and a large crowd of tax collectors and others were eating with them.

[ 39 : 10 ] I usually find people respond two ways after they've been a Christian.

They usually have nothing to do with their past friends, family, they were part of that life because it's too tempting and they don't want to do anything to do with it. Or they are so desperate to see those people have the bread and water, living water, living bread, that they do everything in their power to get those people right to the point where they were saved as well.

Whether it's watching a Christian movie or coming to church or a Bible study, they want to invite those people in. Why? Because they know that these people were just as lost as he was and desperately need Jesus like he needed Jesus.

Matthew, his first action is he immediately makes his identification with Jesus. The word sinner that is used in verse 15 actually means reprobate.

They just weren't sinners that people who sin, they were the ones who don't just sin a bit. It says these were the ones who fundamentally sinned against the law purposefully.

[ 40 : 37 ] They didn't care. They were going to live the way they lived and just did not care. So here is Matthew holding a banquet with Jesus.

Jesus is the honored guest. The place where he invites his harlot friends, the tax collector friends, the gamblers, the thieving, the morally contemptuous, and by the way, they were now known as richly unclean.

To go into the home of a tax collector made you richly unclean. In Jesus, the text says he is reclining at the table.

what it means is he is comfortable with them. He wasn't being polite.

He was literally enjoying himself and his company as he brought the same truth to them that he had been giving to the others.

[ 41 : 47 ] Now take a look at verse 16. And the scribes of the Pharisees, and remember these are the religious ones. The scribes were the ones that were attached to the synagogues who would do the readings of the text.

And it says, when they saw he, Jesus, was eating with sinners and tax collectors, they said to the disciples of Jesus, why does he eat with tax collectors and sinners?

sinners. You see, they've lived their whole entire life so that when the Messiah finally came, guess who the Messiah would eat with?

Them. They believed that the Messiah was coming, but they actually believed that Messiah would want to be with them.

not the prostitutes, the tax collectors, and they're baffled by this. And they won't enter the house because as we've just said, it would make you unclean.

[ 43 : 01 ] So for them, this is actually the ultimate insult to the Jewish leaders. In fact, Luke 7 and Matthew 11 says, Jesus was called a friend of tax collectors and sinners.

The rabbinic tradition at the time said, let not a man associate with sinners even to bring them near to the Torah. The implication is if you were to share the good news of God's message based on the Torah, that person would have to make themselves clean to be worthy of the message they had.

With Jesus, it's totally the opposite. You don't have to make yourself clean. You come to me and I clean you. You see, this was the life that Matthew rejected.

This was the teaching that Matthew rejected. Take a look at verse 7. Jesus obviously hears their thoughts, their words, and he said, when Jesus heard it, he said to them, those who are well have no need of a physician, but those who are sick, I came not to call the religious, but sinners.

This is who Matthew accepted. You see, the Pharisees, the religious rulers, based their purity not on just what they ate, but who you ate with.

[ 44 : 44 ] Now, the Pharisees were attracted to Jesus. They saw that Jesus preached with authority. They saw that Jesus had authority over demons, disease, infirmity. He had the authority to make clean and unclean.

So, shouldn't it be us that Jesus wants? One author on the subject says, this is the scandal of grace.

This is the scandal of Jesus' ministry that will ultimately lead to his death. The one who claimed to be the Lord of heaven and the Messiah was comfortable with sinners.

sinners. You see, my friends, this is the glory of the gospel. Paul writes in Romans chapter 4 verse 3, Abraham believed God and it was counted to him as righteousness.

Now, to the one who works, his wages are not counted as a gift but as his due. And to the ones who does not work but believes in Jesus who justifies the ungodly, his faith is counted as righteousness.

[ 46 : 08 ] Just as David also speaks of the blessing of the one whom God counts righteousness apart from works. verse 7, blessed are those whose lawless deeds are forgiven and whose sins are covered.

Blessed is the man against whom the Lord will not count his sin. I conclude with this thought.

My friends, the glory of the gospel is not that God gives salvation to the people who earn it or he gives salvation to the people who achieve it or the people who are good enough or righteous enough or holy enough.

But Jesus in fact gives salvation to the ungodly, the unholy and the unrighteous who believe in Jesus and repent.

This is the scandal of the grace and it scandalizes every work, every other righteousness system in existence. This is what makes Christianity different from every other religion.

[ 47 : 25 ] Every other religion points to you to do the work in order to be worthy. Christianity begins by saying, you're not worthy, you don't even start with the work, come to me, I will do the work for you.

So this is the gospel that Matthew experienced so many years ago along with the rest of his reprobate friends.

For those of you who have may grown up in a religious home and left thinking that this wasn't for you, that there was some conflict with what you saw in Jesus and there was no way anyone could understand you, let me tell you this day there is one who understands you, his name is Matthew and there's another, his name is Jesus Christ and he's willing to hear from you.

Let me pray. Dear Lord, Heavenly Father, sometimes there's so much going on in these stories and the texts that sometimes we lose some of the power or maybe not the power but the true understanding of what is going on.

Matthew heard your call would eventually become an apostle when Jesus died and rose again from the dead and after he ministered to the apostles he left to heaven Matthew continued his work amongst the Jews to a point where they actually killed him for teaching the gospel of grace which simply states all that religious mumbo jumbo is not enough to save you.

[ 49 : 28 ] That salvation comes solely from belief in Jesus Christ who is a friend of sinners.

So Father I pray that you would open up spiritually blind eyes who may not understand this message. The first way to finding yourself to Jesus is to first understand where you are on a map to Jesus.

if you don't get the beginning right you'll never get to the end point. It's simply understanding like Matthew and all the rest we're simply lost sinners without you.

And that you call to us with your cross that salvation can be had by simply putting our trust in faith in you.

And in that moment we are born again. Thank you Jesus for dying for a sinner like me. And God's people said Amen.