

Matthew - Hospitable Matthew / Hostile Pharisees

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[0 : 00] Well, as God enables us, now we're going to revisit the passage we were exploring this morning! Matthew chapter 9. We have already looked at verse 9, and tonight we're going to navigate! navigate through verses 10 to 13. In verse 10, we read, as Jesus recalculates, at table in the house, many tax collectors and sinners came and were reclining with Jesus and his disciples. Now, we're going to consider two things, hospitable Matthew, hostile Pharisees.

Tonight comes with a more practical perspective on Matthew. Our title is Matthew Profiles Matthew.

Today, this morning, we considered his calling and evidence of his commitment to Jesus Christ.

Hospitable Matthew, take my life and let it be consecrated Lord to thee. Take my will and make it thine. It shall be no longer mine. The melodious personal testimony of Francis Ridley Havergal, words written back in 1874, but words which in many ways sum up Matthew's testimony.

Today, we looked at the A side. Tonight, it's very much the B side. Let's begin by recognizing that submission to Jesus always leads to service for Jesus. Matthew rose and followed Jesus, verse 9.

[2 : 23] Verse 10, so begins a life of consecrated service to his Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ.

So, the scene unfolds in verse 10. It's the domestic scene. We're taken into Matthew's home.

Notice two Fs, how following Jesus and fellowship with Jesus go together. They go hand in hand, following and fellowship. Matthew extends hospitality and organizes a house fellowship in his own home.

Now, in verse 10, we read that he invites many. Luke actually tells us in his account in Luke 5 that many looks like a large crowd of fellow tax collectors and various other men labeled sinners. Yes, those perceived to be, from the vantage point of the scribe and the Pharisee as notoriously wicked. Those who fell foul of God's law. You see, the Pharisees used the twofold gauge of self-righteousness and hypocrisy as they judged others. And this is no exception. But observe, if you will, the one who is at the very center of this fascinating mix of loathed and stigmatized, marginalized individuals having dinner together. It is, of course, the Lord Jesus Christ himself. And look at the picture that Matthew paints here. They are all seen reclining at table with Jesus along with his disciples. Now, let's be clear that this is a picture of open fellowship together. Oneness of fellowship, togetherness of fellowship.

Reclining at table is a picture of having dinner together, and it's powerfully symbolic. This is table fellowship at its most personal. It's a scene of friends reunited. They have so much in common. No icebreakers required. No awkward conversations here. Not at all. There is harmony in this fellowship. Yes, there is unity in its diversity, you might say. And Matthew doesn't hold back. Let's be clear. It's not a light meal that is being served here. Luke spells this out for us in his account. Luke 5, 29, Matthew made a great feast in his house. We're talking an extravagant banquet. It's not a budget meal. No, it's a la carte.

[6 : 05] And Jesus is Matthew's guest of honor. And isn't it fascinating, isn't it heartwarming, too, that Jesus doesn't decline Matthew's invitation to his infamous home, labeled ceremonially unclean.

No, he accepts Matthew's hospitality gladly. And in doing so, something significant happens.

Rabbinic regulations go out the window with immediate effect. Now, what do we mean by that? Well, by accepting this invitation, by reclining at table, by eating with this interesting group of men, it's immediately apparent that Jesus is not minded to comply with the rabbi's rulebook. Think of the Pharisee's code of conduct, which states clearly that any contact with sinners would make Jesus a sinner by association. But notice that there's so much more than mere contact here. There is personal interaction going on. Now, this kind of table fellowship was strictly forbidden. But for those who are reclining at table with Jesus, along with Matthew and the disciples, tax collectors, sinners alike, it is a powerful and personal symbol of

Jesus' friendship and fellowship and association and acceptance of such despised individuals.

You see, Jesus immediately identifies with this room full of outcasts. And he doesn't shy away from it. No, he engages with it. So picture this, if you will. Matthew here and his guests reclining on a couch that extends around the room.

[8 : 31] The host takes the central place. Yes, his name is Matthew. And the guest of honor is Jesus of Nazareth. And there he is by Matthew's side.

And the remaining guests, well, they form a semicircle. And every eye in Matthew's house is fixed on Jesus. They are hanging on to his every word.

Can you imagine how engaging the Q&A; would have been? The questions that they would have been asking Jesus? And the answers in response to their questions. Every question answered with clarity.

What does this scene tell us about the host? What are we to glean about Matthew here? What does this tell us about his hospitality?

Well, it tells us, surely, that Matthew is on fire for Jesus. His heart burns within him. And having had his heart opened, melted by the love and mercy of Jesus Christ at the tax collector's booth, now we're beginning to see grace at work, expressing itself as it will.

[10 : 00] After all, faith without works is dead, James tells us. Well, that's not the case with Matthew. You see, from a theological perspective, faith that is not followed by action, by doing, in the Christian life is counterproductive.

It is of no use, and it is as good as dead. But that's not what we are witnessing here. His home has been, is now wide open.

First his heart, then his home in that order. What does this convey to us? You see, when we follow Jesus, when we follow Jesus, we instinctively, and this is what grace does, when we begin to follow Jesus, maybe you can recall this from your own Christian perspective, as you began your Christian pilgrimage.

Remember these early days when your heart was on fire for Christ. What do you recall? Well, we see it here. When we follow Jesus, we instinctively long to draw others into fellowship with us who know not Jesus.

You see, following Christ and Christian fellowship are complementary components, and we see it here. Again, we drew a comparison this morning between Matthew and Lydia in Acts chapter 16.

[11 : 43] You'll recall how, you'll recall how in Acts 16, we read of how the Lord opened Lydia's heart to respond to Paul's gospel message, and when she and the members of her household were baptized, Luke tells us of what happens next.

She invited us to her home. First her heart, then her home is opened. If you consider me a believer in the Lord, she said, come and stay at my house.

And Paul says, and she persuaded us. She said it like she meant it. And we gladly accepted her hospitality. Submission to Jesus and service for Jesus go together.

Notice too that Matthew extends Christian hospitality without discrimination. Notice here that his open heart is longing to provide an open home, particularly for the displaced, as he once was.

All are welcome. Nobody is barred. What does this say about Matthew's missional objective, and what can we glean from it? Well, his key objective is to introduce others to Jesus Christ.

[13 : 26] And notice that he wastes no time in witnessing to others. And notice this too. He doesn't turn his back on his former work colleagues or snub them in any way.

No, he reaches out to them. They are the ones who are invited for dinner and to have fellowship with Jesus Christ. And I believe that Matthew records this detail for us so that we too might be encouraged to do likewise.

There is something very winsome, very engaging, and attractive about Matthew's life, testimony, and witness, even at this very early stage of his Christian life.

Notice what he doesn't do. Matthew doesn't de-friend or ditch his work colleagues, former friends. They're not in any way cut off.

They are not cancelled. No. Instead, he strengthens his ties with them by welcoming them into his new home, into his new world, into his changed life of complete transformation.

[14 : 42] And notice that there is no bias. His door is wide open for all. He leads by example. Matthew's home is a beautiful drop-in center for anyone passing.

Come in, he says. Friendship have fellowship with us, and they all seem to accept his open invitation. And I believe that we are encouraged to follow Matthew's example.

We too are encouraged to retain friendships in the Christian life wherever possible. I know that when a person becomes a Christian, it's not always possible to retain every friendship.

Some ties must be severed. But many friendships can and should be retained. I sometimes get asked the question, did you lose many friends when you became a Christian?

Well, that's a good question. I suppose the answer to that is yes. to some extent, but that need not be the answer that rolls off our lips.

[16 : 07] I want us to ponder this. Loss of friendship can be self-inflicted when we are the ones who walk away and keep our distance.

reflect on that, if you will. Because Matthew doesn't disengage. He doesn't detach himself from those who were his former colleagues and friends, not at all, and neither should you and I.

There is unity in the diversity of this fellowship, as we said a moment ago. So, as we conclude this, our first point, it's been in the main positive, but we now come to a negative because not everyone is happy or feeling the harmony of this fellowship, and they are the hostile Pharisees we meet time and again on the pages of the Gospels.

Matthew's Gospel is no exception. We meet them across the terrain of Matthew, Mark, Luke, and John.

The Pharisees, verse 11. The scribes are there too. Mark and Luke tell us that, but they are one and the same. We see them lurking in the background.

[17 : 46] They prowl around, always keeping a close eye on the Lord Jesus, monitoring his every move and words with a very fine tooth comb.

They are forensic in their analysis, and they observe here with a contempt-filled hostility.

verse 11. The question. The question, why, they ask.

Why does your teacher, they ask the disciples of Jesus, why does your teacher eat with tax collectors and sinners?

Now, the point of emphasis in the question is that three-letter word eat. Why is it so significant?

[18 : 52] Well, it doesn't go unnoticed, does it, that Jesus is eating with tax collectors and sinners. You see, the act of eating is so, so significant because it's tangible evidence that Jesus is cementing his fellowship with outsiders, with the outcast.

Eating together in table fellowship mode is in effect, and I quote, extended interpersonal association.

and it's taboo from a rabbinic perspective. Think, for example, of how Luke chapter 15 begins before we come to the three-fold parable of culminating with the lost son, the prodigal son.

How does Luke begin that chapter? Now, the tax collectors and sinners were all gathering round to hear Jesus, but the Pharisees and the teachers of the law grumbled.

Why? Why were they grumbling, you might ask? They grumbled because, in their own words, this man, and isn't the tone so disparaging, this man receives or welcomes sinners and eats with them.

[20 : 35] As if to say, how outrageously offensive, how unorthodox in the extreme. And if you're going to continue reading Luke's gospel, it's not insignificant that there is much grumbling again from the scribes and the Pharisees just four chapters later, you come to Luke chapter 19 where Jesus is seen going into a certain house to be a guest.

Now, house, guest, houseguest, again implies hospitality, food, and the act of eating.

He is going into a certain house to be a guest of a man who is a sinner and the sinner's name, you've guessed it, Zacchaeus. His occupation, not insignificant, chief tax collector, in a similar mode to Matthew, *deja vu*.

Jesus interacts personally with Matthew's guests. That's the other thing that's so striking about this passage. notice that he doesn't discriminate against any of those who are in the room, unlike the scribes and the Pharisees.

You can't help but draw comparisons. You compare, you contrast. You see, Matthew's friends, most if not all of them, when it comes to professional reputation, believe me, they had the poorest of professional reputations.

[22 : 23] But does that hinder the Lord Jesus? No, he will not distance himself from the outcast. He will by no means cast out the outcast.

Instead, he reaches out to them. He befriends them lovingly and graciously. It's remarkable. And again, I believe that we are encouraged from a practical perspective to do likewise.

Do you know, sometimes we are inclined to distance ourselves from those whose reputation goes before them. Sometimes our hearts just ooze with prejudice and discrimination.

We're afraid to befriend that certain individual so we will give him or her a wider berth. We're afraid of how that person might react to any attempts on our part to reach out to them.

There might be a backlash. There might be a negative reaction. We do it all the time. But you see, behind a veneer of poor or bad reputation as we see here, the very individuals that we are detaching ourselves from may well be the very ones who are more receptive to the gospel and need to hear and may even long to hear the message of the gospel and have the love and tender mercy of Jesus Christ extended to them.

[24 : 09] So let me just digress just for a moment. Remember Nathaniel? Nathaniel in John chapter 1, Philip reaches out to him, but Nathaniel's reputation goes before him as someone who is somewhat skeptical of not bordering on cynical.

But Philip doesn't give up on him. Nathaniel is somewhat rude and indifferent. As Philip tries to reach out to Nathaniel, the moment he speaks of Jesus of Nazareth, Nathaniel says in that disparaging tone, really?

Can anything good come out of Nazareth? Are you serious, Philip? That's ridiculous. That's outrageous. So what does Philip do?

Does he write him off? Does he walk away? No, he says, Nathaniel, I insist that you come and see. Come and see for yourself.

Follow me. You see, befriending Nathaniel is clearly challenging for Philip, but Philip is rewarded for his prayerful persistence and perseverance.

[25 : 33] He persuades Nathaniel to come to Jesus. And Nathaniel ultimately becomes, doesn't he, a disciple of the Lord Jesus Christ.

Even when someone is less than receptive, when our one-to-one evangelism is intentional and purposeful, and if we're prepared not to give up too easily, we see fruit for our labor.

Anyway, back to the scribes and the Pharisees, as they clearly feel, don't they, that Jesus should have at least understood that it was unorthodox for him to recline a table and eat with contaminated men in this ceremonially unclean, filthy environment.

By comparison, if you had attended a high-end dinner party hosted by a Pharisee and a scribe and a Sadducee, well, they were likened to an exclusive society for the righteous, for the holier-than-thou brigade, like-minded, upright, pious men of standing and for nobody else.

Nobody else is welcome. But look at verse 12. Look at how Jesus responds to their hostility.

[27 : 21] Isn't Jesus forthright? And isn't it peppered with irony? because Jesus goes on to draw a telling comparison between the Pharisee and those with whom he is having fellowship.

Now, this is how we're going to conclude tonight, but it's worth looking at in a little detail. Let's just, again, remind ourselves of what Jesus says in verse 12.

Those who are well, who have no need of a physician, but those who are sick. Now, tax collectors and their associates, they are the sick, the spiritually ill, and here they are gathering in Matthew's home.

He, the Lord Jesus Christ, is the good physician they need and he will attend to them. He will bring healing to their troubled souls.

Yes, here we see Jesus, the good physician, the good shepherd, the good physician, because from his surgery comes salvation for the lost.

[28 : 46] He has come to seek and to save the lost. From his dispensary, from his divine dispensary, comes the remedy of redemption for those considered beyond redemption.

By contrast, those who consider themselves to be healthy, in other words, perfectly well, under the guise of false piety, and have in their own considered opinion, no need for cleansing from sin, see no need whatsoever for the healing intervention of this heavenly physician who is passing by.

Such was the attitude of the religious leaders we are engaging with here, because the scourge of self-righteousness is theirs.

They are blinded to their leprosy of sin within. Yes, the very ones who will label the leper unclean, blinded to their leprosy of sin within.

They live their religious lives on a self-elevated pedestal of contradictory piety. They are deluded and they are in denial, and the Lord Jesus say so without holding back.

[30 : 14] No filter here. Jesus declares that he has come not to call the righteous, the self-righteous scribes and Pharisees.

No, he has come to call sinners, those who fully recognize their urgent and pressing need to repent of their sins and find salvation in Jesus Christ and be clothed with the imputed righteousness of God.

Now, we read from the beginning of this chapter. Why? Well, think of the phrase that the title of some of Calvin's commentaries on the Gospels, a harmony of the Gospels.

And there is harmony here, there always is. There is logic to chapter 9 beginning with the episode concerning the paralytic. And then we transition to Matthew and into Matthew's home.

The words of Jesus speak into a much wider context. And more often than not, it's like that as we read through the Gospels.

[31 : 35] So, verse 1 here in chapter 9, let's just follow it briefly. When a paralyzed man, carried by four friends, is lowered to Jesus through an opening in the roof of a house dug by those carrying him, what happens?

Jesus responds to their faith by healing the incapacitated body of the paralytic. Is that it?

No. By no means. Notice where Matthew places the emphasis here. The key issue is the paralytic's spiritual sickness.

It's his sinful condition that comes under the spotlight. Primarily his soul. The secondary issue is his physical situation, his incapacitated body, disabled as it is.

But look at how Jesus, the good physician, intervenes in verse 2. Take heart, my son, your sins are forgiven.

[32 : 48] Bishop Ryle, J.C. Ryle, calls Jesus in this context, the healer of sin, sick souls. And so he is. Because the paralytic we see here, yes, he's restored to health.

Physically, he's on his feet. But in particular, especially, you might say, from a spiritual perspective, which is the key point of emphasis in his personal encounter with Jesus.

In other words, it's not the self-declared healthy who need a doctor, but those who are ill. And those who are unable to see with clarity their illness for what it is.

Sick here points to outcasts who recognize that they have a pressing, urgent need for healing. You see, Matthew was just like the paralyzed man we're introduced to at the beginning of chapter nine, just like him discriminated against, by the righteous, the self-righteous teachers of the law, who have no spiritual discernment or compassion for sinners.

They don't. Not an iota. But Jesus Christ does. Unclean Matthew has been cleansed.

[34 : 25] He has been forgiven through Jesus Christ. as was the paralytic before him. You see, the spiritual blindness, pride, and prejudice of the Pharisees means that they fail to recognize who Jesus really is.

Verse 6, the Son of Man who has authority on earth to forgive sins. The Son of Man is the Son of God.

God manifest in the flesh, God incarnate, but He is. We see Him here in Matthew's home. He is Emmanuel. He is God with us.

So again, verse 7, one final reference to the paralytic. because whilst the healed paralytic took up his mat and walked out in full view of them all, what happens?

Everyone praises God in unison? Not quite. The scribes and the Pharisees beg to differ.

[35 : 37] They are furious. They are incensed at what unfolds. Back to verse 13 here. We have the rebuke and it is sharp.

What does Jesus say to them? Go and learn what this means. And then He quotes the prophet Hosea.

Chapter 6, verse 6, I desire mercy, not sacrifice. Whoa! Reality check.

It's such a sobering call to reflection and serious consideration. You see, Jesus, as He quotes the words of the prophet, highlights the danger of a religious persuasion that is purely external in which ritual ceremonial demands take the place of mercy.

Now, the word mercy is taken from the vocabulary of covenant theology. It's a key Hebrew word. We sang it repeatedly tonight in our Psalms.

[37 : 01] It's the word chesed. it's the language of loving kindness, tender mercy, faithfulness, steadfast love.

Mercy, not merit. And it's conspicuous by its absence, isn't it, in the scribe and the Pharisee.

mercy. But anyway, it's not about them, is it? Let's conclude. This is all about the personal dynamic of the gospel.

That's what we've explored this morning and this evening, and let's now home in on the final sentence we have in this paragraph. What does it say?

we are reminded, aren't we, in no uncertain terms, that Jesus came not to call the righteous, but sinners, but sinners.

[38 : 07] Ordinary individual, fishermen, tax collectors, paralytics, lepers, and so on and so forth.

You know, as you read of Matthew, you might say that long, long, long before John Newton penned the words that we're so familiar with, Matthew would have been saying that evening as he closed the door as the last guest leaves, and as he turns the lights out, he might have said, amazing grace, how sweet the sound that saved a wretch like me and others like me in this room this evening, for I once was lost, but now I'm found, I was once blind, but now I see.

I mention John Newton, his gravestone is telling. In Olney, in England, you will find John Newton's tombstone, as it's often called, and if you read it, it's a fascinating read.

John Newton, Clark, once an infidel, and Libertine, that's someone who is riotous in the extreme, a profligate, a servant of slaves in Africa, was by the rich mercy, the chesed, of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ, preserved, restored, pardoned, and appointed to preach the faith he had long labored to destroy.

Now, before you close your Bible, look at how chapter 10 in Matthew's Gospel begins. Notice there that the names of the twelve apostles are highlighted.

[40 : 33] Simon, who is called Peter, Andrew, his brother, James, the son of Zebedee, and John, his brother, Philip, and Bartholomew, Thomas, and Matthew, the tax collector.

Hmm. Matthew, the tax collector. We said this morning that names stick, but it's also a wonderful reminder of the one who saves to the uttermost.

Yes, tax collectors too are numbered in the register of which we sang earlier in Psalm 87.

Can you imagine a gravestone on the outskirts of somewhere in Galilee, the gravestone of Matthew, the tax collector?

Can you imagine what might have been written on it? Probably something similar to John Newton, you might say. Matthew, Levi, once a publican, a tax collector, so he was, was by the rich mercy of our Lord and Savior preserved, restored, pardoned, and appointed as one of the twelve, an apostle no less, and commissioned to write under the superintendence of God the Holy Spirit, the gospel according to Matthew.

[42 : 05] Amen. Let's pray together. gracious God, we praise you for your faithfulness and for your covenant love, steadfast, unailing.

We praise you for how you have given us such moving accounts of individuals like Matthew who came to faith and as he followed so he reached out to others longing to bring whoever might come into fellowship with Jesus Christ.

A wonderful example for us to follow and may we be moved this evening to live our lives for Jesus Christ so that we too might say for to me to live is Christ and to die is gain for we ask these things in his name and for his sake amen well let's exalt the name of Jesus as we sing psalm 72 to his praise the Scottish Psalter version of psalm 72 at verse 17 on page 314 his name forever shall endure last like the sun it shall men shall be blessed in him and blessed all nations shall him call in conclusion to his praise!

his name his name forever!!!!!!

!!!! Son it shall Then shall be Blessed Who are blessed All nations Shall Him fall Now blessed Be the Lord Lord our Lord The God of Israel For He alone Th Th Wondrous Word Then glory Th Excelled And blessed

[45 : 28] Be His Glorious Day To all Eternity The whole Earth Let Amen.

So let it be. The grace of the Lord Jesus Christ, the love of God the Father, and the fellowship of the Holy Spirit remain with us all.

Amen. Amen.