

LEVI IS CALLED AND FOLLOWS JESUS

Matthew 9:9-13

Intro: We remember when Peter was called Simon and when Paul was Saul. Mark 2:14 tells us that Matthew was once Levi. That the name of this newly called disciple went from Levi to Matthew indicates a change.

Here is a man whose new name means “the gift of God.” In the changing of his name, the Lord Jesus indicated the worth of this man to him. For this man, now called Matthew, was truly a gift to Jesus from God the Father.

Every believer is God’s gift to His Son (John 10:28-29; 17:9,21). Because the believer is a gift of the Father to the Son, the believer receives the gift of eternal life (Romans 6:23).

I. VS. 9a THE MAN OF THE CALL

A. This man, Matthew, was sitting at the receipt of customs when Jesus saw him.

1. The Greek word for saw in Matthew 9:9 is *eido* which can mean seeing, perceiving and understanding.
2. But when we go over to the Gospel according to Luke, we have the Greek word *theomai* meaning “a sense of visiting, close and penetrating look.” The Lord Jesus took notice of Levi as he sat and received tolls from goods shipped on the Sea of Galilee. I am glad he took notice of me, an unworthy sinner.

B. Matthew does not say Jesus saw Levi, nor does He say He saw a Publican as the other writers do. Matthew says: “He saw a man.” Jesus knew what this man did, and who his father was, and that his name was Levi; but none of this is what attracted Jesus to him. It was the fact that Matthew was a man— a man in need of salvation, a man in need of a Savior. The fact that Jesus took notice of Matthew and passed over others shows His sovereignty. Aren’t you glad he called you?

II. Vs. 9b, THE MANNER OF THE CALL

A. “And he saith unto him, Follow me.”

1. We remember that the employment of Levi was that of a tax collector. Peter, James and John were fishermen. Angels announced the birth of Jesus to shepherds keeping watch over their flocks. Saul was tending his

father's donkeys when he was called to be king of Israel. Rebecca, Rachel, and Zipporah met their husbands, who were men of God, as they drew water from the well. The woman of Samaria was saved while at the well. Levi was saved at the receipt of customs.

2. Nothing is by chance. Was this meeting between Jesus and Matthew an accident? No, it was a divine call, an effectual call.
3. William Jay says: "There is nothing accidental in the conversion of a sinner. If a man be saved, and called with a holy calling in time, it is according to God's purpose and grace given him in Christ Jesus before the world began" (541).

B. "And he arose and followed him."

1. He that set the stars in their sockets, the moon in its place, and commanded light to come forth out of darkness is the one who called Matthew.
2. The same God who saved Matthew is the God who called me to salvation and to ministry. The man of God is nothing more than an earthen vessel called out of darkness to be a light in a dark and wicked world (2 Cor. 4:6-7).
3. His obedience was prompt. He did not say: "I'll see you in two years when I get everything in order." He forsook every carnal pursuit to serve Jesus. This does not mean that he did not keep a home in Capernaum or there about. Nor does it mean that he did not save some of his resources for future use. He had enough to invite Jesus and others to his home. We are to be good stewards of what God has given us.
 - a. The king's business requires haste! Matthew immediately followed Jesus. At the bidding of Jesus, may we arise to serve and not shirk our responsibility in service of the King.
 - b. Psalm 27:8: "When thou saidst seek ye my face; my heart said unto thee, Thy face LORD, will I seek."

III. VS. 10, THE MATTER OF THE MEAL

- A. Matthew now saved, calls his friends to a meal with Jesus as the honored guest. His heart had been opened, and now his

house for this is the way that it is with the regenerate.

- B. The guests at this meal are said to be publicans and sinners. These are the folks that Matthew knew; and now that he is born again, he desires that they meet Jesus as he had. Could he have reasoned in his heart: “the one who opened my heart may speak and open the heart of one of my former associates”?
 - 1. Moses said to Hobab of old: “Come thou with us and we will do thee good” (Numbers 10:29).
 - 2. David said: “O taste and see that the Lord is good” (Psalm 34:8).
 - 3. The woman of Samaria said: “Come see a man” (John 4:29).
- C. We need to reach out to others with the Gospel. Yes, we can be sociable without being repulsive. Yet, we are not to partake of the evil of the world. 1Corinthians 9:22 says: “To the weak became I as weak, that I might gain the weak: I am made all things to all men, that I might by all means save some.” John Wesley said: “Do all the good you can, by all the means you can, in all the places you can, at all the times you can, to all the people you can, as long as you ever can.”

IV. VS. 11, THE MEANNESS OF THE PHARISEES

- A. Notice that the Pharisees do not say this to Jesus but to his disciples. As one old writer said: “Satan loves to get over the hedge where the fence is lowest.” This is why Satan tempted Eve while Adam was away.
 - 1. The Devil wants to get at you and raise questions about the work of the Lord just as these Pharisees did with the disciples.
 - 2. Remember the admonition of scripture: “Be sober, be vigilant; because your adversary the devil, as a roaring lion, walketh about, seeking whom he may devour” (1 Peter 5:8).
- B. These Pharisees were religious, but not spiritual. They had a holier than thou attitude. Isaiah 65:5: “Which say, Stand by thyself, come not near to me; for I am holier than thou...”
- C. Let us not be as the Pharisees. We need to see ourselves as wretched and weak. We need to have mercy on our fellow man, for the Lord had mercy on us. Yet, let us not compromise in morals or in doctrine.

1. May we cry out with Paul: “O wretched man that I am! Who shall deliver me from the body of this death?”
2. Let us pray that God will help us to hate sin yet love the sinner.

V. VS.12, THE MASTER PHYSICIAN IS FOR THE SICK

A. Matthew invites his former friends and associates to eat with the Lord so that they too may hear from the one who has most recently changed his life. He desires that their sin sick souls be healed as his had been. Jesus came to seek and to save the lost (Luke 19:10). Mixing with undesirables is not desirable in itself; yet, they must hear to be saved. The physician goes among the sick and Jesus is here among the sick of soul.

1. Jesus could have been in heaven with the Father, but He was where the physician was needed— amongst the sick and dying.
2. The sick are the ones who need a physician, not the whole ones.

B. The world is sick and needs a physician sorely.

1. Man is diseased by sin, he has moral problems.
2. The soul as well as the body needs healing, and the soul is in greater need than the body. The consequence of physical sickness is temporal— death. The consequence of spiritual death is eternal death and damnation. Both are the result of the fall.

C. “They that be whole need not a physician...” No one is really whole. For “all have sinned”, yet there are those who because of pride, self-righteousness, or willful ignorance ignore their sin sickness and turn from the remedy. The Pharisee that went up to the Temple to pray is a case in point for he said: “God, I thank thee, that I am not other men are, extortioners, unjust, adulterers, or even as this publican” (Luke 18:11).

1. The church at Laodicea could not see their spiritual need, their sickness . In Revelation 3:17 says of them “Because thou sayest, I am rich and increased with goods, and have need of nothing; and knowest not that thou art wretched, and miserable, and poor, and blind, and naked.”
2. Proverbs 30:12 speaks to our present generation: “There is a generation that are pure in their own eyes, and yet is

not washed from their filthiness.”

- D. Those who see their sin sickness have need of the Great Physician. They see that they are in a bad way; they are convicted of depravity and helplessness. These cry out: “What must I do to be saved?” Is this you today, oh sinner friend? Are you tired of the path of sin you have trod and find no pleasure therein? Look to the Savior who died, was buried, and rose again the third day according to the scriptures.
1. Will you today put your case in His care, the care of the Great Physician?
 2. The Psalmist said: “...LORD be merciful unto me: heal my soul, for I have sinned against thee” (Psalm 41:4).

Conclusion: “Come every soul by sin oppressed, There’s mercy with the Lord, And He will surely give you rest By trusting in His word. Only trust Him, only trust Him, only trust Him now, He will save you, He will save you, He will save you now.”

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