

Jesus is the Source of... Calling Matthew 9:9-13

Could you imagine someone coming up to you and saying, "Come, follow me"? What would your response be? I know mine would be, "Why?" In addition, "Where," "How far," "What time will I get back," "Am I going to need to take a sick day off from work?" We are attached to so many things in life that the idea of just getting up and leaving on a whim just simply wouldn't work for us... some of us, maybe, but not all of us. We see the same in Jesus day. Just as there were those who left everything and followed Jesus, many more did not. As we continue to look to the Gospel of Matthew, we will see this reality. But, what we will always find is that those who answer Christ's calling, whatever that calling may be, are far more blessed than those who do not because Jesus is the source of calling.

In this passage, we find two people who are called to the same calling. The first is Matthew and his "sinner" friends. In the eyes of the Jewish people, Matthew was a trader. Not only did we work with their enemy, the Roman Government, but he took much money from them on a regular basis, much, much more than he should have. The Jews felt this was a sinful lifestyle, and yes, the morals were wrong, however, the felling was, "Once a tax collector, always a tax collector." For one mistake, one false choice in occupation, he was marked for life. People like Matthew were told by most everyone that God could never love him... that is... until Jesus came along. Jesus was not like the rest of the Jews. Whereas they passed Matthew by, Jesus called him out. And that's all it took. One time to experience the calling of the Lord changed his life forever.

What Matthew never heard from any other teacher, preacher, or religious leader of his day was that there was way out of his sin. That there was a way to be loved by God. Though everyone else said no, Jesus said yes. To find forgiveness, to find change, Matthew had to leave his life of sin and follow Jesus.

At dinner, many people gathered to see Jesus, to hear him, because they were like Matthew; they too had sin they needed to leave in the past and follow Jesus. These people were the tax collectors, "sinners," and the teachers of the law. Yes, even them. They too were in sin, because even though they were religious leaders, they did not lead all people to the throne of God, and God wants all. We know this to be true through the words of the Prophet Ezekiel as he says, "'Do I have any pleasure in the death of the wicked,' declares the Lord, 'rather than that he should turn from his ways and live?'" (Ezekiel 18:23, NIV). Jesus as the Great Physicians calls all men to himself. When broken and bruised by the world, we realize our need of grace in him. They had not yet answered that call.

No matter how different the sin may be, God's grace is the same for all, even for you. So, what is he calling you to? What is he calling you from?