

# INCLUDING THE OUTCAST

## Matthew 9:9-13 / Luke 5:27-38 / Mark 2:13-17 : §48

Next Week: Matthew 9:14-17 / Mark 2:18-22 / Luke 5:33-39 : §49 Phil de Martimprey / 9-8-19

Imagine a situation, where you despise someone so much, that to even sit down across the table with them was unthinkable. And not just that it was unthinkable, but you believed that any contact with them would make you less acceptable to God. It is difficult to even imagine feeling that strongly about someone, yet that is exactly what we find when we come into our passage today.

Jesus had just claimed the authority to forgive sins and validated that claim by healing the paralytic. He did this in front of the delegation which the Sanhedrin had sent to observe him as his popularity continued to grow rapidly. This was a clear claim of equality with God, and there was simply no place for a God-Man in the minds and theology of these religious leaders. In that moment, Jesus began to escalate the conflict with these religious leaders, and in our passage today he is going to add more fuel to the fire.

### THE INCLUSION OF AN OUTCAST (MATTHEW 9:9)

Tax-collectors were absolute outcasts in Jewish society. Their job was to take taxes from their own people in service to the pagan Roman government. Not only had they betrayed their own people, but often times they were robbing from their fellow Jews by inflating the taxes beyond what Rome required to line their own purses! As a result of his career choice, Matthew's life was that of a "sinner". He was unable to go to synagogue, and unable to fellowship with other Jews (except other "sinners") In the eyes of the religious leaders, and this delegation from the Sanhedrin, no Rabbi, much less the Messiah, should have anything to do with a tax-collector. Jesus clearly didn't agree with these leaders as he saw Matthew at his toll booth, and called him to "Follow me".

We don't know what Matthew knew about Jesus, or what Jesus "saw" when he looked at Matthew, but we do know that Matthew, this outcast, was ready for an invitation from Jesus, as he immediately got up, left everything, and became a disciple of Jesus. He became one of the twelve closest men to Jesus for the rest of Jesus' time on earth. In that moment, he had been given a new life, one of acceptance, love and forgiveness. For some of us, we don't have to imagine that feeling, for we have tasted of that same new life, that same new identity, and we won't be surprised by Matthew's joyous response to this acceptance. It was time to celebrate!

Part 1.	The Coming of the King
Part 2.	The Authentication of the King
	→ Including the Outcast
Part 3.	The Controversy over the King
Part 4.	The Training of the Twelve by the King
Part 5.	The Opposition to the King:
Part 6.	The Preparation of the Disciples by the King
Part 7.	The Official Presentation of the King
Part 8.	The Preparation for the Death of the King
Part 9.	The Trial of the King:
Part 10.	The Death of the King
Part 11.	The Resurrection and the Ascension of the King

## **THE SINNERS CELEBRATION (MATTHEW 9:10)**

In his new found freedom, Matthew threw a huge celebration in his house and invited seemingly all his friends. At this point in Matthew's life, all his friends are in the same boat he, outcasts. This party was made up of other tax-collectors, "sinners", Jesus, and his six other disciples. The term sinners seems to be referring to anyone that the religious leaders excluded from their community due to a lack of adherence to the Mosaic AND/OR Oral law. As such, all these party goers (with the exception of Jesus and disciples) were not fit to be in contact with, much less share in table fellowship! In the eyes of the Pharisees, this action would have certainly disqualified Jesus from being the Messiah, much less a Rabbi. This delegation is not ready to engage Jesus directly yet, but they are certainly willing to come after His disciples. The question they put to the disciples is not from a place of neutral curiosity. They are disgusted at Jesus for calling Matthew to be his disciple, and now sharing table fellowship with this house full of sinners.

## **THE SELF-RIGHTEOUS QUESTION (MATTHEW 9:11))**

They approached the disciples with a question that poorly veiled a dual criticism. "Why does your teacher eat with tax collectors and sinners?" The first criticism is sarcastically aimed at Jesus as "their teacher". Jesus has violated their Oral Law and tradition and therefore is certainly no true teacher. Secondly, if Jesus is no true teacher, they, as his disciples, are no true disciples. They have dropped all to follow a man who doesn't adhere to their rules and has led His disciples into a house full of people one should never associate with! Certainly they know that they are now unclean and unrighteous! We don't know if the question is in disgust, shock, pride, or a desire to drive a wedge between Jesus and His disciples, but Jesus heard it and responds to these self-righteous accusers directly.

## **THE SAVIOR'S RESPONSE (MATTHEW 9:12-13)**

There are two truths planted in Jesus' response to these Pharisees. First, he is reminding them and all who can hear what his purpose is as the Messiah. As the angel had prophesied to Joseph some thirty years earlier, (Matthew 1:21) Jesus would save his people from their sins. His quote from Hosea 6:6 revealed the heart of God toward his covenant people, particularly those who had wandered from practicing their faith, these "sinners". He came to show mercy to all who would respond to his invitation, he came to welcome them into the kingdom, not reinforce the fences that would keep them out. This leads us to the second truth in this response, which was to reveal to these self-righteous Pharisee's, that even though they think they are righteous/healthy, they are certainly not.

In their desire to follow the Mosaic Law (a great thing) they had created the Oral Law to help them keep the Mosaic Law (another great thing) but then they had elevated the Oral Law equal to the Mosaic Law (not good) and imposed both Law's onto the Jewish people (not good) creating an entire group of people who were "sinners" and unwanted. Their attitude toward those outcasts wasn't one of sadness and merciful hope and prayer that they would repent and return to God, rather it was self-righteous,

exclusive and divisive. There was no place for this in Jesus' ministry. For He knew that it is only those who recognize their need for a doctor who can be healed, and only those who recognize their sin can be saved.