

Outcasts, Misfits, and Sinners

Matthew 9:9-13

Introduction

We are picking back up shortly after Jesus healed the man that was sick of the palsy...Jesus was going forth from there.

Matthew 9:9 And as Jesus passed forth from thence, he saw a man, named Matthew, sitting at the receipt of custom: and he saith unto him, Follow me. And he arose, and followed him. "

Right here in verse 9 we see the first appearance of Matthew. This is the same Matthew who wrote the book of Matthew that we have been studying. He was one of the 12 apostles of Jesus. And this is his own account of him becoming a follower or disciple of Jesus Christ.

In Luke chapter 5 we can learn a little more information about Matthew...

Luke 5:27-28 And after these things he went forth, and saw a publican, named Levi, sitting at the receipt of custom: and he said unto him, Follow me. **28** And he left all, rose up, and followed him."

This is the same account from Matthew 9, but here we see that Matthew is referred to as Levi.

Just like Peter is known by different names, Simon, Cephas. Matthew was also known as Levi.

So Matthew, or Levi is referred to as a publican.

Luke 5:27 And after these things he went forth, and saw a **publican**, named Levi, sitting at the **receipt of custom**..."

A publican is someone that collected taxes for Rome. Rome had control over the jews at this time and the jews had to pay taxes to Rome.

Rome would give certain individuals the right to collect those taxes. Matthew was one of those tax collectors, also known as a publican. And it says that he was sitting at the receipt of custom. The receipt of custom is where the tax collectors would set up and collect taxes from the people. So Matthew was essentially on the Job, collecting taxes at the time.

It's important to understand that these publicans were greatly despised by the people. No one enjoys paying taxes but these publicans would often take advantage of people and were very greedy.

They would collect more tax than was actually owed so they can take for themselves. We can see an example of this in Luke 3...This is John the Baptist, and people were coming to him to be baptized.

""Luke 3:12-13 Then came also publicans to be baptized, and said unto him, Master, what shall we do? **13** And he said unto them, **Exact no more** than that which is appointed you.""

He is saying don't take more than what is owed. That was common practice for them. And the people looked down on publicans, treated them like outcasts. They were despised by the people because they were getting rich through unjust means.

This happens today as well. There are people that get rich because they take from the less fortunate and the poor.

For example, Churchill downs is working on a 900-million-dollar expansion project to add to their facilities...Where do you think they got that money from?

There are predatory lenders that lure you in with so-called quick-and-easy money and charge you enormous amounts of interest so you can never pay off your debt.

There are all kinds of schemes to take advantage of people. It's happening today just like the publicans were doing back then...

Imagine Jesus going to Matthew, who was a publican, a man that was looked down upon in the community, despised, an outcast.

Out of all the people Jesus could of went to, he went to a publican and said "Follow Me".

That shows you God cares about all people, whether rich or poor, outcast or despised.

And that's exactly what he did. Matthew actually had Jesus come over his house for a great feast.

""Luke 5:29 And Levi made him a great feast in his own house: and there was a great company of publicans and of others that sat down with them.""

So not only did Matthew invite Jesus and his disciples over, but there was also a great company of publicans that were at this feast...

""Matthew 9:10 And it came to pass, as Jesus sat at meat in the house, behold, many publicans and sinners came and sat down with him and his disciples.""

It was common for publicans to keep to their own. Publicans kept company with other publicans because no one else wanted to be around them.

""Matthew 9:11 And when the Pharisees saw *it*, they said unto his disciples, Why eateth your Master with publicans and sinners?""

So the Pharisees, the religious leaders, saw Jesus eating with this group of outcasts, the publicans, the ones that nobody wanted to be around. The ones that everyone hated.

They were wondering why he would do such a thing? Eating with sinners.

""Matthew 9:12 But when Jesus heard *that*, he said unto them, They that be whole need not a physician, but they that are sick.""

The pharisees were so puffed up with pride and so self-righteous, they were blinded to the fact that they were just as bad as the publicans were.

""Romans 10:3 For they being ignorant of God's righteousness, and going about to establish their own righteousness, have not submitted themselves unto the righteousness of God.""

People are ignorant of God's righteousness. We can't even fathom how holy and righteous God is.

We can't approach God or even look on Him because of our sinful flesh.

""1 Timothy 6:15-16 Which in his times he shall shew, *who is* the blessed and only Potentate, the King of kings, and Lord of lords; **16** Who only hath immortality, dwelling in the light which no man can approach unto; whom no man hath seen, nor can see: to whom *be* honour and power everlasting. Amen.""

""Exodus 33:20 And he said, Thou canst not see my face: for there shall no man see me, and live.""

That's how holy God is...

Many people think, "I don't kill people", "I don't embezzle money", "I don't sell drugs", "I'm not as bad as those people over there".

Understand that one lie is an abomination to our Holy and righteous God.

""Revelation 21:27 And there shall in no wise enter into it any thing that defileth, neither *whatsoever* worketh abomination, or *maketh* a lie: but they which are written in the Lamb's book of life.""

People establish their own righteousness, or their own idea of what righteousness is.

But they fail to realize that the best that they can offer to God is like filthy rags.

That's why everyone is sick with the disease of sin. And we all need healing. And it only comes through faith in Jesus Christ.

So the pharisees had this mindset that they were good. They did not see themselves as needing a physician. They were right in their own eyes. They did not think themselves to be like those publican sinners. But they really were just as bad and even worse than the publicans.

Because the only thing that's worse than a sinner, is a self-righteous sinner.

That's why Jesus responded the way He did...

""Matthew 9:12 But when Jesus heard *that*, he said unto them, They that be whole need not a physician, but they that are sick.""

""Matthew 9:13 But go ye and learn what *that* meaneth, I will have mercy, and not sacrifice: for I am not come to call the righteous, but sinners to repentance.""

The pharisees were supposed teachers of the law, yet they completely ignored the scriptures, they ignored the prophecies, they ignored God's Word.

Jesus was saying go and learn what that means. Go back to the law, go back to the scriptures. Search for the truth. What do the scriptures say?

""Psalm 147:2-3 The LORD doth build up Jerusalem: he gathereth together the outcasts of Israel. **3** He healeth the broken in heart, and bindeth up their wounds.""

If they wanted to know the truth then they would have seen that Jesus was coming for the outcasts, he was coming to heal the broken in heart. To bind up their wounds.

The truth is that every person's heart is broken because of sin. We all need healing. But the pharisees were too lifted up with pride to see their need for a savior.

Question for you this morning...Are you too lifted up with pride to see your need for a savior? Don't be like the pharisees.

""**Ezekiel 34:11** For thus saith the Lord GOD; Behold, I, *even* I, will both search my sheep, and seek them out.""

""**Ezekiel 34:16** I will seek that which was lost, and bring again that which was driven away, and will bind up *that which was* broken, and will strengthen that **which was sick**: but I will destroy the fat and the strong; I will feed them with judgment.""

The fat and the strong in this verse is describing the pharisees, and all those that have established their own righteousness. They will be fed with judgement because they refuse to accept the righteousness of Jesus Christ through faith.

""**Matthew 9:13** But go ye and learn what *that* meaneth, I will have mercy, and not sacrifice: for I am not come to call the righteous, but sinners to repentance.""

Jesus is quoting the Old Testament scriptures here. Hosea 6

""**Hosea 6:6** For I desired mercy, and not sacrifice; and the knowledge of God more than burnt offerings.""

God delights in those that show mercy and seek after mercy and truth, over those that are just religious and following rituals.

""**Hosea 6:7** But they like men have transgressed the covenant: there have they dealt treacherously against me.""

The pharisees were teachers of the law, yet they could not understand that they have not kept the law. They transgressed the covenant. They cared more about sacrifices and burnt offerings than mercy and truth found in the scriptures. And obviously the scriptures are pointing to Jesus.

Jesus chose to eat with publicans and sinners. Why? Because they were the ones that wanted healing. They were the ones that were thirsting after the righteousness that can only be found in Jesus Christ.

There is a lot we can learn from this passage. I want to give you four simple truths that you can take away from this lesson today.

1. God is Not a Respector of Persons

""2 Chronicles 19:7 Wherefore now let the fear of the LORD be upon you; take heed and do *it*: for *there is* no iniquity with the LORD our God, nor respect of persons, nor taking of gifts.""

What does it mean to be a respector of persons?

When you show partiality, favoritism, or unfair preference toward certain people based on external factors like wealth, status, race, appearance, power, or position.

The pharisees were respector of persons. They looked at the publicans and were disgusted by them. We too can do the same things if we are not careful.

We have an example of this in James 2

""James 2:1-4 My brethren, have not the faith of our Lord Jesus Christ, *the Lord* of glory, with respect of persons. **2** For if there come unto your assembly a man with a gold ring, in goodly apparel, and there come in also a poor man in vile raiment; **3** And ye have respect to him that weareth the gay clothing, and say unto him, Sit thou here in a good place; and say to the poor, Stand thou there, or sit here under my footstool: **4** Are ye not then partial in yourselves, and are become judges of evil thoughts?""

Sometimes we as Christians might not outwardly display partiality, but inwardly we can become judges of evil thoughts. In our minds we can have that respect of persons.

We need to guard our thoughts and our minds.

""James 2:5-9 Harken, my beloved brethren, Hath not God chosen the poor of this world rich in faith, and heirs of the kingdom which he hath promised to them that love him? **6** But ye have despised the poor. Do not rich men oppress you, and draw you before the judgment seats? **7** Do not they blaspheme that worthy name by the which ye are called? **8** If ye fulfil the royal law according to the scripture, Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself, ye do well: **9** But if ye have respect to persons, ye commit sin, and are convinced of the law as transgressors.""

Jesus went to Matthew regardless of his status as a publican. If we show partiality to anyone, we are committing a great sin. It's not our job to pick and choose who we will preach the gospel to.

If we refrain from giving the gospel to someone because of their outward appearance... that could have been that person's last chance to be saved.

God is not a respecter of persons, and we need to follow that example that Jesus gave us.

""Matthew 21:28-32 But what think ye? A *certain* man had two sons; and he came to the first, and said, Son, go work to day in my vineyard. **29** He answered and said, I will not: but afterward he repented, and went. **30** And he came to the second, and said likewise. And he answered and said, I go, sir: and went not. **31** Whether of them twain did the will of *his* father? They say unto him, The first. Jesus saith unto them, Verily I say unto you, That the publicans and the harlots go into the kingdom of God before you. **32** For John came unto you in the way of righteousness, and ye believed him not: but the publicans and the harlots believed him: and ye, when ye had seen *it*, repented not afterward, that ye might believe him.""

Having respect of persons stems from one source. That source is pride.

2.No One is Exempt from the Sin of Pride

We like to pick on the Pharisees because they obviously were very prideful and lifted up. But the fact is we all face that same danger of being prideful and looking down on others no matter what social status we are.

You can be the richest person in the world, or you can be the poorest person in the world. You are still in danger of being prideful and seeing yourself as better than others.

We often talk about how people here in west Louisville are more humble than other places where people have an abundance. And that is true...

""1 Corinthians 10:12 Wherefore let him that thinketh he standeth take heed lest he fall.""

You can find people that have absolutely nothing to their name. Completely and utterly homeless. Yet they still exalt themselves above others and are lifted up with pride.

""Romans 12:3 For I say, through the grace given unto me, to every man that is among you, not to think *of himself* more highly than he ought to think; but to think soberly, according as God hath dealt to every man the measure of faith.""

""1 Corinthians 4:6-7 And these things, brethren, I have in a figure transferred to myself and to Apollos for your sakes; that ye might learn in us not to think *of men* above that which is written, that no one of you be puffed up for one against another. **7** For who maketh thee to differ *from another*? and what hast thou that thou didst not receive? now if thou didst receive *it*, why dost thou glory, as if thou hadst not received *it*?"

Understand that everything you have, God allows you to have it. The only one you should be glorying in is God.

Often times we can use fear to mask our pride and our attitude towards different groups of people. For example, many people say they are afraid to come to west Louisville.

But a lot of times they are leaning on fear as an excuse because in their minds they have lifted themselves up above the people here.

""Isaiah 2:11-12 The lofty looks of man shall be humbled, and the haughtiness of men shall be bowed down, and the LORD alone shall be exalted in that day. **12** For the day of the LORD of hosts *shall be* upon every *one that is* proud and lofty, and upon every *one that is* lifted up; and he shall be brought low:"

3. Seeing Yourself as the #1 Sinner Will Fix Many Problems

If your life is filled with arguments, disputes, physical fights and chaos. Then it's time to take a step back and realize who you are.

The reason I say that is because pride is the underlying problem to all those things. When we think ourselves to be better than other people, then we tend to place our opinion above everyone else.

We set ourselves on a pedestal, so when someone or something goes against what we want or say, it turns into fighting and chaos.

When you take a step back and understand who you are and what you have done in your life. You start to realize "Hey, the world doesn't revolve around me. I'm not the greatest thing in this world."

""1 Timothy 1:15 This *is* a faithful saying, and worthy of all acceptance, that Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners; of whom I am chief."

Paul saw himself as a sinner above all. He did not elevate himself. He said I am the chief sinner. The worst of the worst.

When we humble ourselves before the Lord and other people, we are inviting peace, blessings, and safety into our lives.

""Proverbs 22:4 By humility *and* the fear of the LORD *are* riches, and honour, and life.""

For an example, when a husband realizes he is a sinner and humbles himself before God and before his family. He's inviting peace into his home because he is setting an example for his family to follow.

When everyone in the home esteems each other better than themselves. There is going to be peace and happiness.

But if everyone is filled with pride and cannot lower themselves. There will be fighting, there will be contention, strife, and chaos.

If you want peace in your life. You need to examine yourself and cut the sin of pride out of your life.

And it starts with the men. We have to step up and lead by example.

Instead of the pharisees looking down on the publicans, they should have realized that they were chief among sinners. We all need to think that way.

4. God uses the Lowly and the Weak

If you are someone that is struggling to find your purpose, if you feel unworthy like you don't measure up or that God couldn't possibly use someone like you.

Understand that you are the very kind of person that God delights in using.

Matthew was a publican and an outcast. Many of the disciples were fisherman, just ordinary men. God chooses the weak and lowly to reveal His great power.

There is example after example in the scriptures of God using people that are of low esteem to do mighty works.

Gideon

God called Gideon to deliver Israel from the Midianites...

""Judges 6:15-16 And he said unto him, Oh my Lord, wherewith shall I save Israel? behold, my family is poor in Manasseh, and I *am* the least in my father's house. **16** And the LORD said unto him, Surely I will be with thee, and thou shalt smite the Midianites as one man.""

Gideon gathered **32,000 soldiers**, but God said that was too many. Through a series of tests, God reduced Gideon's army to only **300 men** so that Israel would know the victory came from God, not from their own strength.

God used Gideon and only 300 men to defeat an army of over 135,000 Midianites.

Rahab

Rahab was a **Canaanite harlot** living in the city of **Jericho**. When two Israelite spies came to scout the city, she **hid them** and helped them escape, risking her life.

Why did she do that? Because she had **heard of the God of Israel** — and she **believed** in Him.

""Hebrews 11:31 By faith the harlot Rahab perished not with them that believed not, when she had received the spies with peace.""

Because of her faith, Rahab and her family were **spared** when Jericho was destroyed. She later **joined the people of Israel**, married a man named **Salmon**, and became the **mother of Boaz** — placing her in the **direct lineage of Jesus Christ**.

David

David was the **youngest son of Jesse**, a humble shepherd boy from Bethlehem. When the prophet **Samuel came to anoint a new king**, everyone assumed it would be one of David's older, stronger brothers.

""1 Samuel 16:7 But the LORD said unto Samuel, Look not on his countenance, or on the height of his stature; because I have refused him: for *the LORD seeth* not as man seeth; for man looketh on the outward appearance, but the LORD looketh on the heart.""

God chose David not because of how he looked, but because of his **heart**. And he went on to do great and mighty things for the Lord. And ultimately Jesus Christ came from the seed of David according to the flesh.

There are many outcasts, misfits, and sinners throughout the Bible that God used constantly. Maybe you feel like an outcast in your life. Understand what God can do through you when you choose to have faith and put all your trust in the Savior Jesus Christ.

""**1 Corinthians 1:25-29** Because the foolishness of God is wiser than men; and the weakness of God is stronger than men. **26** For ye see your calling, brethren, how that not many wise men after the flesh, not many mighty, not many noble, *are called*: **27** But God hath chosen the foolish things of the world to confound the wise; and God hath chosen the weak things of the world to confound the things which are mighty; **28** And base things of the world, and things which are despised, hath God chosen, yea, and things which are not, to bring to nought things that are: **29** That no flesh should glory in his presence.""

Closing Thoughts

If there's one thing we need to remember from this passage, it's that **Jesus didn't come for the perfect. He came for the broken.** He didn't come for those who thought they were whole. He came for those who realize they are sick.

He came for Matthew, a despised publican.
He came for the outcasts, the misfits, and the sinners.
And He came for you and me.

But the sad reality is — many people will **miss the mercy of God** because they're too busy pretending they don't need it. The Pharisees thought they were whole. They thought they were righteous. They had no use for a physician, so they rejected the cure.

So the question for you as we close.

- Do you see your need for a Savior?
- Or are you still comparing yourself to others, saying, "At least I'm not like them"?
- Are you too proud to admit you're sick?

Humble yourself today and believe on the one and only savior Jesus Christ.

He's not looking for sacrifice. He's looking for mercy. He's looking for the broken in heart who will say, "*Lord, I need You.*"

See yourself for what you really are: a sinner in need of grace.

See others for what they really are: souls that Jesus died to save.

And see God for who He really is: a merciful Savior who came not to call the righteous, but sinners to repentance.

Let's be a church that is not a respecter of persons. Let's be a church that is not puffed up with pride. Let's have meekness and humility the same way Jesus did.

So remember these 4 truths:

1. God is Not a Respector of Persons
2. No One is Exempt from the Sin of Pride
3. Seeing Yourself as the #1 Sinner Will Fix Many Problems
4. God uses the Lowly and the Weak

Let's Pray