

# Matthew 9:9-13. the Calling of Matthew and the Tax-Collector's Feast.

by Favell Lee Mortimer

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*The sermon explores the calling of Matthew, emphasizing Jesus' mission to save sinners and the importance of mercy over sacrifice.*

**Scripture:** Psalm 51:12, Matthew 9:9, Matthew 9:12, Luke 15:7, Romans 5:8

**Topics:** "Mercy And Compassion", "Repentance And Salvation"

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## Description

Favell Lee Mortimer delves into the calling of Matthew, a despised tax-collector, chosen by Jesus to be one of His apostles. Despite societal scorn, Jesus associated with sinners to save them, emphasizing the importance of mercy over sacrifice. The Pharisees' self-righteousness blinded them to the true meaning of compassion and mercy, contrasting with the angels' joy over repentant sinners. Like David and missionary Vanderkemp, true humility leads to a desire to save souls and share the joy of salvation with others.

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## Transcript

We have great reason to be interested in the calling of Matthew, for it was he who wrote the history of our Lord which we are now reading. It is supposed that his calling took place some time before the events we have lately considered; but we have deferred noticing it, because the feast to publicans and sinners was given at this period of the history; and it seemed most convenient to consider the calling and the feast at the same time.

The other name of Matthew was Levi, and that name is used by two of the evangelists. He was a tax-collector, or tax-gatherer. People of this class were detested by the Jews; because, as the taxes were paid to the Romans, by whom the Jews had been conquered, none but the worst kind of people would undertake the odious office of collecting them; and these people rendered themselves still more hateful by their dishonest practices. To this despised order of men, Matthew belonged at the time Jesus called him. He was found sitting by the sea-shore, receiving the duties upon the goods that were landed or embarked. Jesus saw him at the table, which was covered with moneys, and inclined his heart to obey his call, to leave all and follow him.

And why did he choose a tax-collector to be one of his apostles? Did he not, by exalting those whom the world despised, intend to stain the pride of all human glory?

Matthew made a feast to his old companions in office, (and who were probably his companions in iniquity also,) that they might partake in the high privilege of hearing the Lord converse. Nor did that gracious Lord turn away from these guests, polluted as they were by long habits of unrighteousness. The proud and envious Pharisees scoffed at him for keeping such company. But he answered their taunts by a divine lesson and reproof. He taught them in a short parable his object in associating with men; it was not to please himself, but to save them.

How does he save them? By healing their spiritual diseases; therefore he is called the Physician of souls. Would we obtain his notice, we must come and spread our sins before him. A good physician will not waste his time in visiting the healthy, however honorable, but flies to the relief of the poorest creature that is dangerously ill. Neither will the Lord grant his presence to the self-righteous, however high in man's esteem; but he will come and bless the humble and contrite soul, however deeply stained by crime, and degraded in the eyes of his fellow-creatures.

Do we understand what that means? "I desired mercy and not sacrifice," (6:6.) It is a verse in the prophet Hosea. The Pharisees knew the words well, but they understood not their meaning. Their behavior showed they understood it not. They blamed Jesus for showing mercy to perishing sinners; and instead of showing any themselves, they only gave God sacrifice, or outward service. And why did they act thus? Because they thought they were righteous. If they had really been righteous, they would have felt compassion for sinners. The angels, those spotless beings, take a deep interest in our fallen race, and rejoice over each sinner who repents. Though they have never felt the working of evil in their own hearts, yet they do not turn away from us with contempt and disgust. But men never feel compassion for their fellow-sinners, until they discover the wickedness of their own hearts. When David was deeply humbled by his transgressions, he felt anxious to save perishing souls. This was his prayer, "Restore unto me the joy of your salvation, and uphold me with your free spirit. Then will I teach transgressors your way, and sinners shall be converted unto you."

The missionary Vanderkemp gave a beautiful example of the same spirit. Not only did he go out as a missionary to the heathen, but he desired to make the voyage to Africa in a convict-ship. His wish was granted. He went with a depraved troop; but many of their hearts were melted during their voyage--some who had secretly filed off their chains, confessed what they had done, and quietly submitted to have them again riveted upon their hands and feet. Thirty-five died of putrid fever on the passage. Vanderkemp attended them in their last hours, and saw not a few, before they departed, full of joy and peace through believing in a crucified Savior.

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Source:

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