

Expository Thoughts On Matthew - Matthew

9:1-13

by J.C. Ryle

Transcript

Let us notice, in the first part of this passage, our Lord's knowledge of men's thoughts. There were certain of the scribes who found fault with the words which Jesus spoke to a man sick of the palsy: they said secretly among themselves, "This man blasphemeth." They probably supposed that no one knew what was going on in their minds: they had yet to learn that the Son of God could read hearts, and discern spirits. Their malicious thought was publicly exposed: they were put to open shame. Jesus knew their thoughts. There is an important lesson for us here. All things are naked and open unto the eyes of Him with whom we have to do. (i.e. Hebrews 4:13). Nothing can be concealed from Christ. What do we think of, in private, when no one sees us? What do we think of in church when we seem grave and serious? What are we thinking of at this moment, while these words pass under our eyes? Jesus knows. Jesus sees. Jesus records. Jesus will one day summon us to give account. It is written that "God shall judge the secrets of men by Jesus Christ, according to my gospel." (i.e. Romans). Surely we ought to be very humble when we consider these things: we ought to thank God daily that the blood of Christ can cleanse from all sin; we ought often to cry, "Let the words of my mouth, and the meditation of my heart be acceptable in your sight." (i.e. Psalm). Let us notice, in the second place, the wonderful call of the apostle Matthew to be Christ's disciple. We find the man, who afterwards was the first to write a Gospel, sitting at the receipt of custom. We see him absorbed in his worldly calling, and possibly thinking of nothing but money and gain; but suddenly the Lord Jesus calls on him to follow him, and become his disciple. At once Matthew obeys. He makes haste, and delays not, to keep Christ's commandments (i.e. Psalm 119:60). He rises and follows him. We should learn from Matthew's case that with Christ nothing is impossible. He can take a tax gatherer and make him an apostle. He can change any heart, and make all things new. Let us never despair of anyone's salvation. Let us pray on, and speak on, and work on, in order to do good to souls, even to the souls of the worst. "The voice of the Lord is mighty in operation." (i.e. Psalm 29:4). When he says by the power of the Spirit, "follow me," he can make the hardest and most sinful obey. We should observe Matthew's decision. He waited for nothing. He did not tarry for a convenient season. (i.e. Acts 24:25); and he reaped in consequence a great reward. He wrote a book which is known all over the earth. He became a blessing to others as well as blessed in his own soul. He left a name behind him which is better known than the names of princes and kings. The richest man of the world is soon forgotten when he dies; but as long as the world stands millions will know the name of Matthew the publican. Let us notice in the last place, our Lord's precious declaration about his own mission. The Pharisees found fault with him because he allowed publicans and sinners to be in his company. In their proud blindness

they fancied that a teacher sent from heaven ought to have no dealings with such people. They were wholly ignorant of the grand design for which the Messiah was to come into the world, to be a Saviour, a Physician, a healer of sin-sick souls; and they drew from our Lord's lips a severe rebuke, accompanied by the blessed words, "I have not come to call the righteous, but sinners" to repentance. ■ Let us make sure that we thoroughly understand the doctrine that these words contain. The first thing needful in order to have an interest in Christ is to feel deeply our own corruption, and to be willing to come to him for deliverance. We are not to keep away from Christ, as many ignorantly do, because we feel bad and wicked and unworthy; we are to remember that sinners are those he came into the world to save, and that if we feel ourselves such, it is well. Happy is he who really comprehends that one principal qualification for coming to Christ is a deep sense of sin! Finally, if by the grace of God we really understand the glorious truth that sinners are those whom Christ came to call, let us take heed that we never forget it. Let us not dream that true Christians can ever attain such a state of perfection in this world as not to need the mediation and intercession of Jesus. Sinners we are in the day we first come to Christ. Poor needy sinners we continue to be so long as we live, drawing all the grace we have every hour out of Christ's fullness. Sinners we shall find ourselves in the hour of our death, and shall die as much indebted to Christ's blood as in the day when we first believed.

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