

Bible Stories for Adults

Jesus Calls Matthew

Luke 5:27-32

Opening

Gathering: What occupations do we despise? How does God feel about the people in these jobs?

Today's Focus: Jesus reached out through the crowd and called Matthew personally to follow Him.

Key Verses: *Levi got up, left everything and followed Him.* Luke 5:28

It is not the healthy who need a doctor, but the sick. I have not come to call the righteous, but sinners to repentance. Luke 5:31-32

Opening Prayer

Lesson

WHERE Jesus Begins to Minister = Locate and trace on map, Discuss in class without looking up

Where did Jesus grow up?

Matthew 2:23 = Nazareth, a town in Galilee

Where did Jesus go to begin His ministry?

Mark 1:9 = From Nazareth to Judea to be anointed in baptism by John in Jordan

Where did He go after being baptized? = Judean desert is between Jerusalem and Dead Sea

Matthew 4:1 = Into the Judean desert to be tempted for 40 days

Where is Jesus the next time we see Him?

John 1:28-29, 35-36 = Back where John was baptizing - at the Bethany by the Jordan

Does He stay around John for a good while?

John 2:1-2 = No, He went to Cana, a town in Galilee by Nazareth

Did He then go back home to Nazareth? = Peter had a house there

John 2:12 = No, He went to Capernaum, a town on northern shore of Sea of Galilee

Why did He only stay there a few days?

John 2:13 = It was time to go to Jerusalem for the Passover

Did Jesus go home to Nazareth after the Passover was over?

John 3:22 = No, He began ministering in Judea

What caused Him to leave and where did He go? = Left to avoid conflicts from perceived competition

John 4:1-5 = Returned to Galilee - through Samaria; Met woman at the well

Where did He next spend time ministering? = Samaritans believed before Jews in Galilee heard

John 4:40-41 = Stayed two days at Sychar in Samaria

Where did He go after Sychar?

John 4:43, 46 = Returned to Cana; Healed official's son in Capernaum remotely

Did He stay in Cana to minister there?

Luke 4:14-15 = No, He traveled throughout Galilee

What is one of the places where He went to minister in Galilee?

Luke 4:16, 29 = His home town of Nazareth - He was rejected there

Where did He go then?

Matthew 4:13 = To live in Capernaum

Did Jesus settle in Capernaum and take a break from His continual travels?

Luke 4:42-43 = No, He continued to travel throughout Galilee (& Judea)

Since Capernaum served as the home base for His ministry, did Jesus consider it home?

Matthew 8:20 = No, He had *no place to lay His head*

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Jesus Gathers Disciples (*John 1:35-45*)

Where and when do we first see people following Jesus? = Andrew, Simon, John (& James)

John 1:35-42 = Two of John's disciples follow Him and bring their brother(s)

How soon do we see more disciples being added?

John 1:43-45 = The next day Jesus called Philip and he brought Nathaniel

Did these disciples follow Jesus on His travels, or did He meet different disciples in different places?

John 2:1-2, 12; 3:22 = They followed Him around

Did these men become full-time disciples from the beginning?

Mark 1:16-20 = No, they went to work; Jesus called them to be fishers of men, then full-time

Another Called Disciple (*Luke 5:27*)

What other disciple do we see specifically called by Jesus?

Luke 5:27 = Levi, a tax collector - Levi means "joined" - he was joined to sin in business

What other interesting point do we get from Matthew's account?

Matthew 9:9 = He was also called Matthew

Matthew - *gift of God* = Could be a second name, a Greek name or a name given by Jesus

Matthew calls himself Matthew, Mark and Luke call him Levi

How was this tax collector even further called by Jesus?

Mark 3:13-18a = He was chosen from among all Jesus' disciples to be a select apostle

What do we learn from Mark about this Levi?

Mark 2:14a = Son of Alphaeus

What interesting point do we find as we continue through the list of the twelve select apostles?

Mark 3:18b-19 = James the Less was also a son of Alphaeus (brothers?)

What stretch do some make about James? = This is the only mention of James the younger

Mark 15:40 = Some equate him with Mary's son & Joseph's brother, James the younger

What further stretch do some make beyond this?

John 19:25 = James' mother Mary was wife of Clopas, thus giving a second name to Alphaeus

Tax Collectors

What did Matthew point out that the other gospel writers leave out in their lists of apostles?

Matthew 10:3 = His occupation as a tax collector - Didn't want to forget his unworthiness

Two types of tax collectors - Gabbai and Mokhes

Gabbai - Collected regular taxes:

Ground Tax - 1/10th of all grain, 1/5th of all wine & fruit

Income Tax - 1 % of income

Poll Tax - Pre-set fee on all persons, slave & free (men 14-65, women 12-65)

Mokhes - Collected miscellaneous taxes on anything they could dream up

Imports, Exports, Sales, Bridge money, Road money, Harbor dues, Town dues, etc.

Expanded to include things like axles, wheels, pack-animals, pedestrians, roads, river crossings, bridges, market admission, licenses, etc.

Travelers were stopped & unloaded, everything was searched to determine tax

2½ - 5 % on goods, up to 12½ % on luxury items

Mokhes territories were auctioned to the highest bidder

Romans required a certain amount, Mokhes was able to charge and tax whatever he wanted

Mokhes could become very wealthy, especially in high traffic areas

Great Mokhes coordinated a network of little Mokhes'

Little Mokhes did the dirty work, personally sat at collector booth, directly approached people

Little Mokhes was the worst of the worst

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The Publican

Which type of tax collector was Matthew?

Luke 5:27 = He was a little Mokhes

Publicanus - Latin for a man who did public duty, most often referenced Little Mokhes
telones - Greek for "a farmer of the tax"

How did the "righteous" Jews feel about tax collectors?

Luke 18:11 = They hated and despised them, ranked with robbers, sinners, adulterers...

Why were tax collectors so hated by the Jews? Because they took their money like IRS agents?

Matthew 22:15-17 = Supported foreign power which occupied the land of Israel

Leviticus 25:36-37 = Became rich at the expense of his countrymen

Tax collectors would loan at high rates if person unable to pay tax right then

Acts 11:2-3 = They were in constant contact with Gentiles, always unclean

Rabbinic writings:

Tax collectors were virtually impossible to save

Tax collectors were banned from the temple as unclean

Okay to lie about your property to a tax collector

Forbidden to accept alms for the poor or use money for exchange from tax collectors (tainted)

A Pharisee who became a tax collector was expelled until he quit and repented

Tax collectors could never become judges and were inadmissible as witnesses

Did Jesus agree that tax collectors were great sinners?

Matthew 18:17 = Yes

Did Jesus agree that tax collectors could never be saved?

Matthew 21:31-32 = No, those who see no need to repent will not be saved

Did any tax collectors really respond to John's call for repentance?

Luke 3:12-13 = Yes, John told them to do their jobs honestly (not to leave their jobs)

What great example do we have of a tax collector responding to Jesus in repentance? = Great Mokhes

Luke 19:1-2, 5, 8 = Zacchaeus offered to pay back four-fold - beyond penalty of law for theft

Matthew's Job (*Mark 2:13-14*)

Where did Matthew serve as a Little Mokhes?

Mark 2:1, 13-14 = In Capernaum, Jesus' home base

Capernaum was a major hub on the trade route from the east (Persia, orient) to/from Tyre & Israel

Matthew would have had a toll booth on the highway into Gaulanitis (Golan Heights)

High traffic area would have made him very wealthy

Matthew had to be well educated for such a position

Likely the most educated of all of the apostles

Education allowed him to research Scriptures to show Jesus as the prophesied Messiah

Early church historians say his gospel was written in Hebrew to reach intended Jews

Tax collectors in Palestine typically had to speak Aramaic, Greek and Latin

God used Matthew's background in His service – just as with Joseph, Moses, Paul, etc.

Besides calling a despised tax collector, how else do we see Jesus reaching to Matthew in grace?

Mark 2:13-14 = He was teaching a large crowd and called Matthew personally in passing

When Jesus first approached Matthew, crowd probably expected Him to condemn the sinner

How did Matthew respond to this call of grace? = Left his great wealth and livelihood

Luke 5:28 = He *got up, left everything and followed him*

Note: Other disciples could always go back to their occupations at any time - fishing...

Matthew would be immediately replaced - He truly left everything

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Guess Who's Coming to Dinner (*Luke 5:29-30*)

How else did Matthew respond to his calling? = Very wealthy to have large house to hold great banquet

Luke 5:29 = He threw a great feast in Jesus' honor

Being outcast from society, who was Matthew able to get to come to this party?

Mark 2:15 = Other outcasts from society who didn't follow scribal law (sinners)

Besides honoring Jesus, what was the key purpose of Matthew's feast?

Acts 4:20 = He was excited about introducing others to Jesus - Are we likewise excited?

Did anyone have trouble with this celebration?

Mark 2:16 = The "devout" Pharisees had trouble with a rabbi having fellowship with sinners

Wouldn't the Pharisees become unclean by going into Matthew's house to see this?

Luke 5:30 = Yes, they saw from outside and complained to Jesus' disciples

The Doctor Is In (*Luke 5:31-32*)

How did Jesus respond to the comments of the Pharisees? = Acknowledged need for repentance

Luke 5:31 = *It is not the healthy who need a doctor, but the sick*

ischyo - Used in Matthew & Mark for healthy - Greek for able, strong, healthy

hygiaino - Used by Dr. Luke - Greek for opposite of diseased, root for hygiene

How did Jesus explain His purpose?

Luke 5:32 = *I have not come to call the righteous, but sinners to repentance*

How did Matthew show that Jesus was trying to make certain that the Pharisees understood Him?

Matthew 9:13 = *Go and learn* was common rabbi saying to get a student to study text closer

Why did Jesus say "I desire mercy, not sacrifice"?

Hosea 6:4-6 = Pharisees would recognize call to faith over ritual obedience

Micah 6:6-8 = Pharisees would recognize call to justice and mercy toward repentant

How did Jesus further explain this later?

Matthew 25:40 = We are to show God's mercy to others

Closing Prayer

Response - Consider and meditate on one each day this week

1. Am I proud of the work I do? Is it pleasing to God?
(*Luke 5:27-30; 18:11; Ecclesiastes 5:18-20; Matthew 18:17; John 6:27; 9:4; Ephesians 4:16; Colossians 3:23; 1 Thessalonians 4:11-12; 2 Timothy 3:16-17*)
2. When have I felt more righteous than someone else?
(*Luke 5:30; 14:7-14; Proverbs 3:34; Matthew 23:5-12; Romans 3:9-20; 12:3; Galatians 2:15-16*)
3. When have I shared with others the joy I have of knowing Jesus?
(*Luke 5:29; 7:16-17; 8:38-39; John 4:28-30; 5:15; Acts 4:20; 5:41-42; 8:4; 26:12-23*)
4. In what ways am I sick and in need of the eternal healing power of Jesus?
(*Luke 5:31-32; 2 Chronicles 7:14; Isaiah 1:4-6; 58:8; Jeremiah 33:6; Hosea 14:1-4; Matthew 11:1-6, 28-30; Romans 3:21-24*)
5. Do I try to please God with displays of sacrifice or with showing His mercy?
(*Matthew 9:13; 12:1-8; Proverbs 15:8; Isaiah 1:10-20; Hosea 6:4-6; Amos 4:4-5; 5:21-24; Micah 6:6-8; Hebrews 10:1-18*)