

Strengthened by God's Word

[Matthew 9:9-13](#)

"A Meal With Jesus" – April 3, 2022



Introduction

With whom would most like to have dinner? You can pick the circumstances and choose ANYONE you like – no one is off limits. Imagine what it would be like to have dinner with them. Next, with what kind of person could you least imagine having dinner? What would you talk about besides how you disagree with them or dislike them? What if you ended up enjoying their company once you got to know them, or how would you communicate your disapproval or disagreements with them?

Here in Matthew 9, Jesus' choice of dinner companions is ruffling a few feathers. He is hanging out with tax collectors and sinners. He wasn't merely tolerating them. He was eating with them, and the Pharisees were appalled. These people were sinners with a capital "S."

Pray

Before you begin, take some time to ask God to help you understand His word, to reveal what needs to change in you, and for the grace to follow Him in response. To help, use [Psalm 119:33-40](#) as a prayer for God to open His word up to you.

Read & Discuss

1) Read 9:9-13

What if Jesus came into our town in 2022? What would His agenda look like? How do you think that most evangelicals would respond if Jesus had conversations with a leading LGBTQ or abortion activist?

When the Pharisees pose their accusing question, Jesus compares Himself to a physician. He is explaining His mission to us. Here is God Himself - come to earth - taken on flesh - telling us that He came to call sinners to repentance. He is calling them to leave all the things that separate them from God and come to Him for rest and a reconciled relationship with God. Jesus went where they were because He knows that they wouldn't come to Him. This project of calling sinners would cost Jesus His life.

This story is meant to give us an idea of what it means to be a disciple of Jesus. Here are three observations:

1. The demands of being Jesus' disciple are far more rigorous than we think. The only way to follow Him is on His terms. He places a 100% claim on our life. His call has priority.
2. Jesus gives a warning to the self-righteous. Jesus is reminding them what He really wants - not religious programs, but loving, caring people. The Pharisees were awesome at following the rules, but they were missing love and mercy.
3. When we follow Jesus, we become more like him. We will love what He loved and do what He did. We need to befriend people who don't know Jesus. Have dinner with them. Be kind to them. Tell them what Jesus did for you. We who have experienced the mercy of God should rush to show mercy. As we see God's standard more clearly, we begin to see how far short we fall. Is that your experience?

Do you see yourself as righteous or do you see and feel the depth of your sin? As a believer, are you aware of your spiritual inadequacy? Are you critical and judgmental, or are you regularly amazed at the grace of God? Is there one unbelieving person in your sphere of influence that can you befriend and with whom you can share the love of Christ? Who are they?

Additional Reading: Hosea 6:6, Matthew 15:11-32

Prayer of Response

1) After hearing God's Word, what sin do I need to confess? From what do I need to repent?

2) How should my life be lived this week based on what I have heard? What should I *understand, believe, desire, or do*?

Spend time praying together in response to God's word asking for His help and greater faith to follow Him in the week to com.

If you missed the sermon on Sunday or would like to listen again, visit our website at <https://fbcum.org/sermons-new/>

***Next week's sermon text:** we turn to [Genesis 6:9-8:22](#) "The Flood"