

A God-Lived Life – Month 3
Text Study: Matthew 9:9-13



Month 3 - The God-Lived Life is a Life of Hospitality

Key Concept: Stewardship of Talent - Hospitality

The God-lived life is a life of showing God's love. Last month, we focused on letting that shine in serving others, doing things for them. This month, the emphasis shifts a bit, and we look at the God-lived life as one that not just does for others but opens up our lives to them. As we invite people into our lives and our homes, God shows through us and gives us opportunities to share what we are all about, who we are all about. Through hospitality, as messy and dangerous as it can be, relationships are built and Jesus is shared.

Gospel - Matthew 9:9-13⁺ - Matthew's Party

Jesus shows ultimate hospitality in inviting the tax collector to follow him. Matthew responds with the God-lived life by inviting his friends to his house and to Jesus.

First Reading - Genesis 18:1-15* - Abraham Hosts the Three Visitors

Abraham demonstrates a God-lived life, sacrificing hours and possessions to welcome strangers to his home. Led by God, we ought not hesitate to sacrifice for hospitality.

Second Reading - Acts 2:42-47[#] - The Church in Jerusalem

Motivated by Jesus' life for them, the early believers naturally lived hospitable lives, sharing their possessions, meeting in their homes, showing what God looks like. And others took notice.

Psalms 133 - 134^{##}

Gospel Acclamation

Hebrews 13:2 - Do not forget to show hospitality to strangers, for by so doing some people have shown hospitality to angels without knowing it.

Note: If doing a full-length service, use the readings as appointed. If following the suggestion for in-service Bible Study, see below:

**This lesson is read during shortened service*

+This lesson serves as sermon text

#This lesson is the basis for 19-minute Bible Study

##This is dropped.

Hymns

Opening Gathering Rite (CW467)

Hymn of the Day - CW 494 - Blest be the Tie that Binds

Closing Hymn - CWS 773 – In Unity and Peace

Alternates/Hymns for daily devotions:

CW 454 – I Gave My Life for Thee

CW 496 – Glorious in Majesty

CW 484 - Brothers, Sisters, Let us Gladly

CW 499 – O God of Mercy, God of Might

Related readings:

Luke 14:12-24

James 2

CONTEXT OF THE READING:

Jesus had just left the region of the Gadarenes after driving out Legion, then came to his hometown, Capernaum and healed the paralytic lowered from ceiling. As he was moving on, he came to Matthew. This comes between the second and third triad of miracle stories in Matthew. Matthew describes Jesus' ministry in 4:23—teaching and healing/helping people. The Sermon on Mount gave great example of teaching (chapters 5-7) and now chapters 8-9 deal with the works of love Jesus was doing.

TEXT STUDY: MATTHEW 9:9-13

For each verse, a hyper-literal translation has been provided in italics to help communicate some of the thoughts hidden in the Greek vocables and grammar.

Matthew 9:9 -

Καὶ παράγων ὁ Ἰησοῦς ἐκεῖθεν εἶδεν ἄνθρωπον καθήμενον ἐπὶ τὸ τελώνιον, Ματθαῖον λεγόμενον, καὶ λέγει αὐτῷ· ἀκολούθει μοι. καὶ ἀναστὰς ἠκολούθησεν αὐτῷ.

And coming there, Jesus saw a man sitting at the tax collector's booth, called Matthew, and he says to him, "follow me." And after getting up he followed him.

As with Jesus' calling of other disciples, notice the power of Jesus' call. He calls, Matthew follows. The striking thing here is *who* he calls—a tax collector.

Notice two things about this interaction:

1) Matthew was a tax collector—the scum of the earth in the eyes of the Jews, traitors to their people, siding with the Romans—famous for dishonesty and making it rich on the backs of their own people.

2) Jesus is going through a tollbooth. The guy is doing his job. You'd think he doesn't

want to bother with this religious stuff. Sound familiar? “We shouldn’t talk about religion or politics at work, etc.” This is an invitation and real love to someone in the everyday (normally ignored) details of life. How many toll booths do you pass? How many people are there we figure wouldn’t want to hear—but are the ones that need to hear?

Chrysostom makes the point that he didn’t say that after Matthew cleaned up he was called—but even as he was in the midst of his wicked way of life—Jesus says, “I want you.”

Matthew 9:10 -

καὶ ἐγένετο αὐτοῦ ἀνακειμένου ἐν τῇ οἰκίᾳ, καὶ ἰδοὺ πολλοὶ τελῶναι καὶ ἁμαρτωλοὶ ἐλθόντες συνανέκειντο τῷ Ἰησοῦ καὶ τοῖς μαθηταῖς αὐτοῦ.

And it happened while he was reclining in the house and behold, many tax collectors and sinners having come, were reclining with Jesus and his disciples.

Συνανέκειντο – imperfect Middle indicative—“reclining with”—the implication is that they are sharing a meal—there was a statement of closeness being made according to that culture—eating with someone was a big deal.

See Gibbs’ discussion (Concordia Commentary) on “sinners,” as he understands that as those who openly violated the Torah, not just tax collectors, but anyone whose lifestyle publicly violated the will of God, including, but not limited to prostitutes, etc. They were “reclining together” or “feasting together.” All of these sinners were part of the banquet. To the Jews they were considered unclean and weren’t allowed in the synagogue. The Jews could have no religious or social contact with them according to the rabbis. Imagine what an impact this would have had on them. Think of how powerful the kind word and the positive conversation with the “nobodies” in your life can be.

Matthew 9:11 -

καὶ ἰδόντες οἱ Φαρισαῖοι ἔλεγον τοῖς μαθηταῖς αὐτοῦ· διὰ τί μετὰ τῶν τελωνῶν καὶ ἁμαρτωλῶν ἐσθίει ὁ διδάσκαλος ὑμῶν;

And the Pharisees, seeing, said to his disciples, “on account of what is your teacher eating with the tax collectors and sinners?”

τῶν τελωνῶν καὶ ἁμαρτωλῶν – two groups with one article indicates connection between two groups. Wallace suggests that tax collectors were subset of larger group “sinners”.

Jesus was breaking the rules of the rabbis and the Pharisees were always eager to call him on that—how dare he? They speak with his disciples. Were they trying to sway them??

How often aren't we afraid of what people will think? "We're cooler than that—or they may think of us as Bible bangers if we talk about that." Jesus was called on it. Look at how he handled it...

Matthew 9:12 -

ὁ δὲ ἀκούσας εἶπεν· οὐ χρείαν ἔχουσιν οἱ ἰσχύοντες ἰατροῦ ἀλλ' οἱ κακῶς ἔχοντες.

And hearing he said, "The strong/healthy do not have need of a healer (common term for doctor), but the ones having badly (idiom—who are sick)

Jesus makes a good point. It would be foolish for a doctor to stay away from his patients because they are sick. That's exactly why the doctor exists, to help the patients. Yet notice the difference between this and Psalm 1. This isn't hanging out with them to stoop to their level, but to help them. We need to remember that too.

First of 95 theses - Luther said that when Jesus commanded us to repent, he meant that the whole life of a Christian be one of repentance—a constant "Lord have mercy"

Matthew 9:13 -

πορευθέντες δὲ μάθετε τί ἐστίν· ἔλεος θέλω καὶ οὐ θυσίαν· οὐ γὰρ ἦλθον καλέσαι δικαίους ἀλλὰ ἁματωλούς.

Going, learn what it is: "I desire mercy and not sacrifice," for I did not come to call righteous ones but sinners.

Jesus quotes Hosea 6:6. Gibbs (Concordia Commentary) calls it "dialectical negation," where the thing negated is done so to emphasize the other. Hosea clearly understood that God did want Israel to keep the law he had given them, which included the sacrifices, but this figure of speech highlights that he did not want ONLY sacrifice. He DID want mercy. The second half of verse 6 in Hosea makes that clear: "I desire... knowledge of God *more than* burnt offerings."

Notice, he tells the Pharisees, who were supposed to know what God says, "Go and learn." They weren't getting it at all. And he shows that this was a common problem, referring to the Israelites who had missed it as well.

HOMILETICAL NOTES:

Malady: Writing people off. It's really easy to judge those different than you, with a different set of problems. It's really easy to close off your life to them. The Pharisees (and we) need to learn what it means: "I desire mercy, not sacrifice." Generosity is not just writing a check. It's opening our lives to someone. Sin is not doing that.

Telic Note: Jesus came not to call the righteous, but sinners—even us when we still need to learn the lesson he teaches here. Jesus came to heal the ones sick with sin.

ILLUSTRATION/HOMILETICAL IDEAS:

Note: Jesus today calls us to banquet with him at the Lord's Supper, where he also changes our relationship with him, gives us a foretaste of heaven, not because we had status, but because he changed our status as we came forward with those words on our lips—"Lord, have mercy."

Generosity Breeds Generosity (and I'm not talking about money)
Possibility of writing a check without being generous

Really easy to make excuses for hospitality:

- My house isn't clean enough (pride)
- We just don't have the time (translation: I have better things to do/or I don't think you worth the time to get ready)

Kids give example of hospitality—I want to spend time with this person. Can they come over? That's it. Care for the person trumps every other motive.

Biblical hospitality is radical. Consider what Abraham does in OT Lesson (3 seahs of flour – 93 cups of flour/slaughtering a steer to eat—that takes some time). Consider the Second Reading—how radically generous the believers were, selling stuff to give away more.

Biblical hospitality—literally “love of strangers” not tolerance of strangers, but love of strangers. It's treating others as family—“strangers.”

People are *loved* toward belief. The way to love is not just words but invite them into heart of your life, even those who can't help you.

You want people to meet your family so that they can meet your Father. You invite people into your family and maybe God makes them a brother or sister in Christ. Think about it. People are normally loved toward belief. They aren't argued into the kingdom of heaven. The way to love is not just words but invite them into heart of your life, even those who can't help you.

PARALLEL ACCOUNTS:

Mark 2:14-17 - ¹⁴ As he walked along, he saw Levi son of Alphaeus sitting at the tax collector's booth. "Follow me," Jesus told him, and Levi got up and followed him. ¹⁵ While Jesus was having dinner at Levi's house, many tax collectors and "sinners" were eating with him and his disciples, for there were many who followed him. ¹⁶ When the teachers of the law who were Pharisees saw him eating with the "sinners" and tax collectors, they asked his disciples: "Why does he eat with tax collectors and 'sinners'?" ¹⁷ On hearing this, Jesus said to them, "It is not the healthy who need a doctor, but the sick. I have not come to call the righteous, but sinners."

Luke 5:27-32 - ²⁷ After this, Jesus went out and saw a tax collector by the name of Levi sitting at his tax booth. "Follow me," Jesus said to him, ²⁸ and Levi got up, left everything and followed him. ²⁹ Then Levi held a great banquet for Jesus at his house, and a large crowd of tax collectors and others were eating with them. ³⁰ But the Pharisees and the teachers of the law who belonged to their sect complained to his disciples, "Why do you eat and drink with tax collectors and 'sinners'?" ³¹ Jesus answered them, "It is not the healthy who need a doctor, but the sick. ³² I have not come to call the righteous, but sinners to repentance."

Theme brainstorm: *(In case you want to pursue a slightly different angle)*

The God-Lived Life is a Life of Hospitality

Jesus calls sinners (to life / to work)

Follow Me (Jesus to Matthew / Matthew to Jesus / Matthew to friends)

It's party time (Jesus calls a sinner like me / We want to share that joy / Jesus is doctor for the sick)

Why do you eat with sinners?

"Follow Me" Causes "Follow Me"s

Generosity Breeds Generosity (and I'm not talking about money)

Possibility of writing a check without being generous

Eating with sinners

- Jesus' love changes Matthew's status
- Matthew has party so people can meet Jesus
- Who are we eating with (mercy not sacrifice / not calling righteous but sinners)

INTRODUCTION IDEAS:

Consider the high school cafeteria, table picking—important—pick a table so that people think something about me. Pick a table because I get something out of it. I like being around these people. I don't want to be associated with the nerds, or the whatever...

Forrest Gump bus scene—momma's boy cripple with braces on his legs gets on the bus, looking for a seat. As he makes his way... "Can't sit here," "seat's taken."

There are a lot of things that we put up in the way of connections—and usually it's pride. You'd have no problem sharing your bus seat with the beautiful captain of the cheerleaders or letting the "cool kid" who throws all the best party sit at your table. And we don't outgrow it. A little ambition makes the dinner invite from the boss, who can promote you a little more attractive than the beet-farming co-worker.

But in our Gospel Lesson today, Jesus flips that all on its head. He calls the scum of the earth. He goes to eat with him. And Matthew teaches a lesson in it too. He opens up his home so people can have a relationship with Jesus.

Intro facts

Forrest Gump. It's number 13 on IMDb's list of Top-Rated Movies of all time. The Hollywood Reporter has it number 14 on Hollywood's 100 favorite films. It shows up on just about every list like that. It won six Academy Awards including Best Picture. It's the story of an outcast. If you've seen it, you'll probably remember his first day of school getting on the bus and hearing from everyone, "can't sit here."

CHILDREN'S SERMON IDEA: BULLYING

(Have picture of kids picking on a kid)

Good morning,

I have a picture here I want to show you. What do you think is going on here? You know what this is called? Bullying. Have you ever heard of that? It's when people pick on other people because they are different. Sometimes they do it with their words, calling them names. Sometimes they do it with their strength, beating them up or picking on them. Sometimes they even do it on the internet, saying things about people. Is that a good thing to do?

No way. But, anytime we think that we are better than others because we are different, we're kind of doing that. If you look down on someone because their skin is a different color or if they don't have as much money as you or because they have a whole bunch of money, or maybe its because they like a different sports team or they don't get as good of grades as you. There are a lot of ways the devil tempts us to look down on others.

Today Jesus teaches us not to look down on someone who is different, but to love them, to make an effort to get to know them better, so that they can get to know you and your Savior. You see, he makes us all better than we ever could be. He made us perfect because he died to take away our sins—even when there wasn't anything in us to like.

Let's pray, thanking Jesus for that—and ask him to help us love others like that too.