

In August of 1997 I began to teach the 4 Gospels of Matthew, Mark, Luke and John simultaneously in one unit called “The Harmony of the Gospels”.

In October of 1998, after 14 months, we finished that study.

We began to go through the Harmony of the Gospels for the second time in November of 2005.

We placed this study on hold in September of Last year when I went back to the Philippines to bring Melinda Home.

This morning I want to pick up where we left off in our study of Jesus Life in the 4 Gospels with Jesus calling of Matthew to come and follow Him...

If you have ever felt like you are not really worthy to follow Jesus after you have examined your life, then you will be greatly encouraged by Matthew and what Jesus has to say about him.

- ☞ **Jesus never sees you** the way that you see yourself.
- ☞ **He sees you** the way that He is going to make you.
- ☞ **Jesus never sees you** with all of your imperfections.
- ☞ **He sees you** the way you have become since He cleansed all of your sins, perfect, without spot, without one sin, if you have come to Him and asked Him to cleanse your life of your sins.

Matthew 9:9-17

9 As Jesus passed on from there, He saw a man named Matthew sitting at the tax office. And He said to him, **“Follow Me.”** So he arose and followed Him.

10 Now it happened, as Jesus sat at the table in the house, that behold, many tax collectors and sinners came and sat down with Him and His disciples.

11 And when the Pharisees saw it, they said to His disciples, “Why does your Teacher eat with tax collectors and sinners?”

12 When Jesus heard that, He said to them, “Those who are well have no need of a physician, but those who are sick.

13 But go and learn what this means: “I desire mercy and not sacrifice.’ For I did not come to call the righteous, but sinners, to repentance.”

14 Then the disciples of John came to Him, saying, “Why do we and the Pharisees fast often, but Your disciples do not fast?”

The Harmony of the Gospels Bible Commentary by Rob Robinson

15 And Jesus said to them, "Can the friends of the bridegroom mourn as long as the bridegroom is with them? But the days will come when the bridegroom will be taken away from them, and then they will fast.

16 No one puts a piece of unshrunk cloth on an old garment; for the patch pulls away from the garment, and the tear is made worse.

17 Nor do they put new wine into old wineskins, or else the wineskins break, the wine is spilled, and the wineskins are ruined. But they put new wine into new wineskins, and both are preserved.

Matthew is called to follow Jesus

- ☞ **A little background on Matthew:** Matthew is a Jew who works for Herod Antipas under the Roman government as a tax collector.
- ☞ **Most of the people at this time had at least 3 different names:** A Jewish name, a Roman name and a Greek name.
- ☞ **You will hear** Matthew referred in the New Testament as "**Levi and Matthew**".
- ☞ **Levi** is his Jewish name, **Matthew** was his Roman name, **Matthaios**, was his Greek name.

As the people would pass from other towns through Capernaum where Matthew lived, there was a **customs station**. As the people passed by this customs station, they would be required to pay a fee or tax on any merchandise they brought in to town, as well as a tax on each citizen that passed through this area that has now been occupied by Rome.

- ☞ **Tax collectors** hired by the Roman government **were paid a commission** on the taxes they collected, so the collectors usually overcharged the travelers and kept the profits.
- ☞ **As a result**, the people hated the tax collectors because they cheated their own people and were seen as traitors to the Roman government, that had taken away Israel's land and the right to rule themselves.
- ☞ **Matthew** was undoubtedly one of the most hated and despised men in Israel.

The tax collectors booth was an elevated platform where the people had only a head's view of the top where the tax collector sat.

- ☞ **Because Matthews booth** was located at the entrance to Capernaum, his home town, everyone knew who he was.
- ☞ **Matthew was responsible** for collecting the taxes of the commercial fishermen who fished the sea of Galilee nearby, guys like Peter, and his brother Andrew.
- ☞ **Jesus had most likely seen Matthew** several times as he passed through Capernaum where he lived with Peter.

Matthew 9:9-13

9 As Jesus passed on from there, He saw a man named Matthew sitting at the tax office. And He said to him, "**Follow Me.**" So he arose and followed Him.

- ☞ **The question for us is why would Jesus this kind of man to follow Him?**
- ☞ **Answer:** That is why Jesus came, to save the lowest of the low.

Hebrews 7:25

Therefore He is also **able to save to the uttermost** those who come to God through Him,

We like to say that “Jesus is able to **save to the GUTTERMOST**, those who come to Him.”

If Jesus was going to come to earth to save those who deserved to be saved, He wouldn't find anyone to save!

☞ **Mathew** was considered to be the worst of the worst in this society, but Jesus said to Matthew; “**follow me**” and Matthew did so immediately .

Jesus is saying that to all of us here this morning, no matter how much you might have messed up your life, or no matter how much someone else messed up your life..Jesus says to you this morning: “*Follow Me*”.

☞ **The message for us** is that Jesus will accept you no matter who you are or what you have done.

But don't miss this important fact; To follow Jesus will cost you EVERYTHING. If you are not willing to give up everything else to follow Jesus, then don't follow Him.

Matthew 10:37

He who loves father or mother more than Me **is not worthy of Me**. And he who loves son or daughter more than Me is not worthy of Me.

☞ **The cost of following Jesus** for Matthew was tremendous. Tax collectors were very wealthy individuals.

☞ **Matthew not only lost his fortune** financially, he also would be forever prohibited from serving the Roman government again.

☞ **When Matthew got up** from his booth as a tax collector and followed Jesus, it cost him everything.

☞ **But when he was called** he went immediately and never looked back, what about us?

Today, pastors and evangelists are teaching a “Fluffy gospel” that has this important part missing from it: **If you want to come and follow Jesus, you had better be willing to give up everything.**

Listen, It cost Jesus everything to make forgiveness and eternal life possible for us, we should at the very minimum, also be willing to give up anything to come and follow Him.

There was another guy about 6,000 years ago that asked that question: “**What is it going to cost me...**”

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It seems that when the Lord wanted to create someone to complete Adam that He informed him that it would be necessary to take **One arm and One leg** from Adam's body in order to make the perfect woman for Adam...

Adam Scratched his head and said "Gee Lord that sounds like it will cost me a lot, what can I get for 1 Rib?"

And the rest is history...

That's Okay ladies when Adam asked the Lord why He had made Eve so dumb, the Lord told Adam, "That is so that she would love you Adam!"

[Matthew 9](#)

10 Now it happened, **as Jesus sat at the table in the house, that behold, many tax collectors and sinners came and sat down with Him** and His disciples.

- ☞ **Notice what Matthew does** as soon as He begins to follow Jesus, he gathers all of his tax collector friends in his home to meet Jesus.

These were a group of people that the religious leaders in Israel, and most of society would have nothing to do with, these guys were outcasts.

- ☞ **All tax collectors had been excommunicated from the synagogue**, so it was impossible for Jesus to meet any of these men if it had not been for Matthews invitation to dine with him and Jesus at Matthew's home.
- ☞ **The Lord is ready** to meet you this morning **right where you are**.
- ☞ Are you an outcast? Feel like you don't fit in? Have you done things in your life that you are ashamed of? **Jesus wants to come to your house tonight and have dinner with you!**

[Matthew 9](#)

10 Now it happened, **as Jesus sat at the table in the house, that behold, many tax collectors and sinners came and sat down with Him** and His disciples.

- ☞ **The word "sinners"** here is "Hamartalos" in the Greek Language, (**ham-ar-to-los**)—literally, someone who's entire life is devoted to sin.
- ☞ **"Hamartalos"** was used of the **immoral people**, and the **pagans**.
- ☞ **Where is the King of Heaven?** Sitting right next to them at the dinner table!

[Matthew 9](#)

11 And when the Pharisees saw it, they said to His disciples, "Why does your Teacher eat with tax collectors and sinners?"

Listen, you might want to think twice about telling people that you go to Calvary Chapel!

"Oh Really! You go there! In that old Bar that was converted into a church? You know I hear that they handle snakes in their services, and the pastor is a real weirdo?"

Take a look around, we are all just a bunch of misfits aren't we? A bunch of sinners sitting down to eat with our Lord, as often as we can.

But notice how the religious may treat you if you hang out with the likes of us:

Matthew 9

11 And when the Pharisees saw it, they said to His disciples, "Why does your Teacher eat with tax collectors and sinners?"

For the religious Jew, eating a meal with someone was the most intimate thing a person could do.

- ☞ **They believed** that as you both partook of the same food and that food became a part of your body, you were becoming a part of the other persons who were eating with you also..
- ☞ **For Jesus to sit down** in the home of a despised tax collector and other sinners and eat a meal was unbelievable to the religious leaders.

They saw Jesus eating with sinners as Jesus seeking to become one with them!

- ☞ **Hello!**, that is exactly what Jesus wants to do with you, be one with you, have close intimate, personal fellowship with you.
- ☞ **He becomes a part** of every part of your life, and you have no other life except that Jesus is a part of all of it.

The religious leaders are probably very confused, Jesus spoke and taught the scriptures with such authority, in a way they had never witnesses before, and yet, **here He is eating with Tax collectors and Sinners!**

- ☞ **They believed that if Jesus was truly sent by God**, then He would not associate himself with these kinds of men?
- ☞ **They had always been taught** to separate themselves from the "Unclean", the "Gentiles" and the "Sinners".
- ☞ **The answer to why they were wrong**, and why Jesus is the friend of Sinners is found in the next verse:

Matthew 9

12 **When Jesus heard that**, He said to them, "**Those who are well have no need of a physician, but those who are sick.**

- ☞ **Notice in verse 12 that Jesus "heard" the conversation of the Pharisees**—the results are recorded for us here in verse 12.

Jesus is sitting at the table of Matthews house with his tax collector friends. The Pharisees come to see what is going on and ask some of the disciples who are sitting at the table also...

- ☞ **In verse 13** Jesus answers the religious leaders from one of their own proverbs about the healthy and the sick.

Matthew 9

13 "**But go and learn what this means: 'I desire mercy and not sacrifice.'** For I did not come to call the righteous, but sinners, to repentance."

- ☞ **A doctors office** is filled with people who are sick, **they know they have a need**, they have come to someone they believe can make them well.
- ☞ **The doctor** only spends his time trying to help those **who want to get well**.
- ☞ **This is the reason Jesus came**, to help those who want to get well from the heavy burden and guilt of their sins.
- ☞ **They know they are sick**, they know that something is wrong with them, and they believe that Jesus has the power to cleanse them of their sins and their guilt.

The religious leaders just don't get it!

- ☞ **Then Jesus tells them**; "*Go and learn what this means*";

"I desire mercy and not sacrifice.' For I did not come to call the righteous, but sinners, to repentance."

- ☞ **Whenever a rabbi** had a student that was just not grasping what he was teaching, he would say to the student: "*Go and learn...*"
- ☞ **The student** needed to go back and study the scripture the rabbi was teaching until they grasped the meaning behind it.
- ☞ **The religious** leaders **thought they knew the scriptures** but Jesus is telling them to go back and learn, "*You have missed something guys...*"

"I desire Mercy..."

- ☞ **Jesus is referring** to the correct meaning of the scripture from Hosea 6:6

Hosea 6:6

6 For I desire mercy and not sacrifice, and the knowledge of God more than burnt offerings.

We can appear to do everything right on the outside, but on the inside everything is terribly wrong.

Just about everything that the Pharisees did, they did for how it looked to other people.

- ☞ **All** of their righteousness was external.
- ☞ **They thought** that if they had not killed anyone, they felt that they had kept the law.
- ☞ **If they had not committed** the physical act of adultery, they had done what God required.

Later Jesus explained to them that what the Lord was looking for was not a change in external behavior, a change in habits, He was looking for changed hearts.

When hearts change, habits change...

Matthew 5:21-22

21 “You have heard that it was said to those of old, ‘You shall not murder, and whoever murders will be in danger of the judgment.’

22 But I say to you that **whoever is angry** with his brother without a cause shall be in danger of the judgment. And whoever says to his brother, “Raca!” shall be in danger of the council. But whoever says, ‘You fool!’ shall be in danger of hell fire.

Matthew 5:27-28

27 “You have heard that it was said to those of old, ‘You shall not commit adultery.’

28 But I say to you that whoever looks at a woman to lust for her has already committed adultery with her in his heart.

Everyone that has ever lived is guilty of being angry with someone, and I don’t believe there is a man that has ever lived that has not looked at a woman one time to lust after her.

- ⊕ **So what** is Jesus saying?
- ⊕ **That the real issue** is the condition of our hearts, **have they been changed?**
- ⊕ **The world tries** to change or modify our behavior, but they neglect the heart, the place where the behavior originates.

Matthew 15:19

For out of the heart proceed evil thoughts, murders, adulteries, fornications, thefts, false witness, blasphemies.

This is why Psychology and behavior modification does not work.

- ⊕ **They address** the physical person, but not the Spiritual.
- ⊕ **They ignore** the Inner person, the heart, where the problem originate.
- ⊕ **This is why** Jesus ignores the physical part of us, and goes right to the Spiritual part of us.

Luke 6:45

A good man out of the good treasure of his heart brings forth good; and an evil man out of the evil treasure of his heart brings forth evil. For out of the abundance of the heart his mouth speaks.

But the amazing thing is that when any person realizes who Jesus is and surrenders their life to Him, and they are “**Born Again**”, that old heart instantly changes and becomes new, then Goodness begins to flow out of that Good Treasure of their new heart.

The Pharisees claimed that they were righteous because they had kept the law of Moses, but Jesus showed them that their hearts were still the same, even though they looked righteous on the outside.

- ☞ **The lesson here** is that bad **behavior** cannot be corrected **permanently** by good effort.
- ☞ **That Religion is not Salvation**, in fact being religious can be a tremendous hindrance to being saved.
- ☞ **That the heart** of a person is the real problem, not their behavior.
- ☞ **If you want** to truly make lasting changes in your own life or see them happen in the heart of another person, **Pray that God would change their heart.**

If you struggle with a sin, or a bad behavior, seek to have the Lord change your heart, allow Him to show you what is truly wrong in your inner person, then let Him change your heart.

- ☞ **Then all of the behaviors** and attitudes will change as a natural part of having your heart changed.

Jesus told a similar story about another Pharisee and another Tax collector in Luke chapter 18:

Luke 18:10-14

10 “Two men went up to the temple to pray, one **a Pharisee** and the other **a tax collector**.

11 The Pharisee stood and prayed thus with himself, “God, I thank You **that I am not like other men**—extortioners, unjust, adulterers, or even as this tax collector.

12 I fast twice a week; I give tithes of all that I possess.’

13 And the tax collector, standing afar off, would not so much as raise his eyes to heaven, but beat his breast, saying, “**God, be merciful to me a sinner!**”

14 I tell you, **this man went down to his house justified** rather than the other; for everyone who exalts himself will be humbled, and he who humbles himself will be exalted.”

What was the difference between the two men:

- ☞ A changed heart.
- ☞ A prideful heart.

Pride will keep us from admitting that there is something terribly wrong with our heart, when the reality is that heart is deceitful above all things.

Pride will keep us from humbling our self and saying Lord, my heart is not right, and that is the real problem with me...

“Lord please change my heart and be merciful to me a sinner...”

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The other main difference between these two men was that one man looked at everyone else's behavior and compared himself to them..."I am not as bad as those guys...I do this good thing and that good thing..."

And the Other never looked up at all, He just looked at himself and said...I am the problem...Lord change me!

Then Jesus finishes with two last illustrations of what He has been teaching.

- ⊞ No doubt that some of the guests at this dinner in Matthews's home had old clothing with patches on them.
- ⊞ Certainly there were wineskins filled with new wine at this dinner.
- ⊞ So Jesus, as He often did, would use illustrations from things that people were familiar with:

Matthew 9

16 No one puts a piece of **unshrunk cloth on an old garment**; for the patch pulls away from the garment, and the tear is made worse.

17 Nor do they put **new wine into old wineskins**, or else the wineskins break, the wine is spilled, and the wineskins are ruined. But they put new wine into new wineskins, and both are preserved.

Wineskins were containers for wine made from the skin of animals.

- ⊞ **Once the New unfermented wine** is placed into the animal skins, it begins to ferment expanding the skins.
- ⊞ **If you were to take New wine** and place it into an **Old wineskin** that had already been expanded by the fermentation process, then having new wine placed in it, going through the fermentation process a second time, would expand the skins past the point of tolerance and they would burst.
- ⊞ **Even as taking a new piece of cloth** that has not been shrunken yet, and placing it on a old pair of Jeans, the patch would shrink and tear the pants.

Both of these illustrations by Jesus are saying the same thing that we have already been talking about this morning:

- ⊞ **When a person accepts Jesus** death on the Cross as the payment for their sins and asks Jesus to be Lord of their life, an amazing thing happens.
- ⊞ **That person is** "Born Again" by the Spirit of God. (John 3:16)
- ⊞ **They may look** exactly the same on the outside, but on the inside, a complete transformation has taken place.
- ⊞ **Where on the inside?** The heart, the Spirit, the eternal part of the person, that once was dead, now comes alive.

Jesus is saying that you cannot take this New Wine, this new life that He has given you, and place it back inside the old Wineskins of your old life.

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You must take your new Nature that is Born Again and place it into a new life, that is free from the old vices and habits.

- ☞ **Jesus makes your Spirit Born Again**, **you must make new choices** of what to say and do with your old body.

Another important point is that this new Relationship with the Father through Jesus Christ is also no longer compatible with the Old Religion of man.

- ☞ **Salvation comes** by personal relationship with Jesus Christ, not by Religious activities.
- ☞ **You are not saved** by going to church, praying, reading your Bible or Giving your Tithe, you are saved by putting your total trust in Jesus Christ.

If you try to have a new Relationship with God through Jesus Christ and mix it with the Old religions of this world, it doesn't work, it tears like the patchy, it bursts like the wineskin, and it is a mess.

If you have given your life to Jesus Christ, **you are no longer the same person** that you used to be, don't try to mix this new life with the old life, the old friends, the old vices, you will be miserable and you will irritate your old friends.

So, Jesus is calling you just like He called Matthew.

- ☞ **To leave** your old life behind and come and follow Him.
- ☞ **In order to follow Jesus**, you must be WILLING to leave everything else behind.
- ☞ **He wants to change you**, from the inside out.
- ☞ **In order for that to happen**, you must be willing to come to Him and honestly ask Him to change your heart.

There may be some old things that will have to go.

- ☞ **Perhaps today** there are some remnants of your old life that you are still holding on to.
- ☞ **You have been trying** to put Jesus New Wine into your old wineskins.
- ☞ **Maybe you have been trying** to mix the Old religion with the New Relationship.

I want to encourage you this morning to let go of the old things and cling to the new life. Let go of the Old religious traditions, and cling to the New Life.

Be honest with the Lord this morning and allow Him right now to search your heart and make any changes that He is desiring....