

Sunday, June 7, 2026

Pentecost 2 Proper 5A

Matthew 9:9-13

Grace to you from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ, amen.

“[Jesus] said to him, “Follow me.”

And he rose and followed him.” (Matthew 9:9c).

“For I came not to call the righteous, but sinners.” (Matthew 9:13c)

My friends,

The first half of the church year is completed.

From Advent to Ascension,
we focused on Christ's life,
death and resurrection.

We focused on all that He did for us.

At Pentecost,
we started the second half of the church year.

Now,
we focus on what Christ **continues** to do for us.
Through the gift of the Holy Spirit,
Christ continues to work in the world.
He works through His Holy Spirit-empowered disciples.

So this half of the church year

is a season of discipleship.

We walk with Jesus day to day.

From Him we learn the way
of love and mercy.

During Pentecost,
we will be looking at
what discipleship is.

In other words,
what following Jesus looks like.

And if we are following,
that means that Jesus must make the first move.

That is precisely
what He does in today's Gospel Reading.

1.

My friends,

“As Jesus passed on

*from [healing & forgiving the paralytic in Nazareth],
He saw a man called Matthew sitting at the tax booth,
and He said to him,
'Follow me.'
And he rose and followed Him.”* (Matthew 9:9.)

Matthew is minding his own business.

He's living his own life.

Until Jesus shows up.

Jesus sees Matthew,

and Jesus calls Matthew.

Matthew follows.

It's pretty bare-bones, isn't it?

This account isn't the way we tell stories.

We like all sorts of details.

What tone of voice did Jesus use?

Did His eyes twinkle merrily?

Or was He stern and disapproving?

And what about Matthew?

Did Matthew look stunned?

Did he waver for a split second

between the piles

of money on his table

and Jesus?

Did he leap up with joy?

What was Matthew thinking?

What was Matthew feeling?

Details!

Give us the details, man!

And it's not like

the Gospel writer didn't know these details!

Matthew **is** the author!

This is “The Gospel according to St. Matthew”
that we are reading.

The St. Matthew,
who was a tax collector.

St. Matthew,
who Jesus saw
and called.

St. Matthew,
who followed Jesus.

St. Matthew will be mentioned
in the list of the disciples
in the next chapter.

But after that,
we never hear
about St. Matthew again.

Matthew tells us all we need to know.

“[Jesus] said to him, “Follow me.”

And he rose and followed Him.” (Matthew 9:9c).

“For I came not to call the righteous, but sinners.”

What do we need to know?

All we need to know
is that **Jesus** saw and called Matthew.

Jesus called him

—while Matthew was *“a tax collector and sinner”* (v.11).

And Matthew followed **Jesus**.

The important thing—the crucial part—is **Jesus**.

Matthew was obviously
doing his own thing until **Jesus** showed up.

Just like you.

You were oblivious,
doing your own thing.
Being a baby.
But then water poured over your head.
Jesus called you
in the name of the Father,
and of the Son,
and of the Holy Spirit.

Or when you were just a kid.
You were busy doing normal bratty kid things.
Until you ended up at Bible Camp or VBS.
And Jesus called you through the preaching of the Gospel.

Or you were a typical adult.
Doing typical adult things like paying bills.
And a friend shared the gospel with you.
Invited you to church.
And Jesus called you
through the preaching of the Gospel.
Water was poured on you
in the Name of the Father and the Son and the Holy Spirit.

However, whenever it happened:

Jesus saw you.
Jesus called you.
The crucial thing is that **Jesus**
chose and called you.

St. Matthew doesn't tell us about a personal decision.

Doesn't tell us what he thought.
How much he meant getting up from the table.
How much he understood.
How committed he was.
Or how remorseful or repentant he felt.
St. Matthew doesn't tell us about feeling God's love.
He doesn't tell us about any intentions to make amends.

He just tells us Jesus' word.
"Follow Me."
 'Cause that was enough.
 That was all that was necessary.
 Christ's word.

Jesus saw Matthew.
 Jesus called,
 and Matthew followed.
 We are not told what Matthew thought,
 said, or felt,
 or how committed he was.
 No.
 We are simply told
 that Jesus came
*"not to call the righteous,
 but sinners."* (Matthew 9:13.)

There is nothing Matthew did
 that merited Jesus' calling.
 The Gospel writer doesn't even tell us
 how well Matthew followed.
 We don't know how much he understood,
 if he even understood anything.
 It's just enough to know
 that ***Jesus*** called him.
Jesus miraculously called
 a despised tax collector
 away from his tax booth.

Jesus saves sinners.
 Not people who are dedicated enough,
 or know enough
 or believe strongly enough
 —no.
 Jesus saves sinners because He alone is enough.
 Jesus calls the sinners to follow him.
 For Jesus is the doctor who heals sinners into righteousness.

Discipleship doesn't depend
 on how good **we** are
 at getting saved.
 Discipleship depends
 on how good **Jesus** is
 at giving salvation.
 And that's something Matthew would find out
 —and one day write about.
 He wrote the good news of Jesus Christ,
 who was delivered up for our trespasses
 and raised for our justification.

2.

My friends,
 Jesus saw Matthew and called Matthew.
 But what did Jesus call Matthew to?
"And He said to him, 'Follow me.'"
 Jesus called Matthew to Himself.
 He called him away from everything the world had to offer.
 Christ called Matthew to everything that Jesus is and has.
 Jesus' word created faith
 —created trust—
 in Matthew.
 And as a sheep follows
 the shepherd it trusts,
 Matthew followed Jesus.
 He left the tax booth behind
 and went with Jesus.

Following Jesus will involve separation.

We all have a “tax booth” to leave behind.

Idols we fear and trust in.

A habit that weakens our faith,
an attitude like pride or resentment,
or distractions such as comfort,
possessions,
or seeking approval from others.

It may also be a busy schedule
that leaves little time for prayer, worship, or service.

Consider this:

what might Jesus be asking you to leave behind
so you can follow Him more closely?

Being a disciple of Jesus

means turning away
from sin

and turning to the Saviour
who saves sinners.

You no longer rely
on the money in your booth (or bank account).

You rely on Jesus.

You follow Jesus and not the money.

Instead of relying on our intellect and choices,
we trust and follow Jesus.

Rather than placing our confidence
in our reputation and the praise of others,
we rely on Jesus.

We follow Christ,
and not the crowd.

Instead of believing

our desires and pleasures
will bring happiness,
we depend on Jesus for our joy
—and follow Him.

Instead of our own self-righteousness
and ability
to follow the rules,
we rely on Jesus
and follow Him.

We bank
on His righteousness
and not our own efforts.
We leave our false gods
and follow the true God instead.
We follow Jesus.
We know that the words
of His *mouth*
are better
than thousands of gold and silver pieces. (Psalm 119:72)
We leave the tax booth
for what is truly good:
We receive Jesus by faith.
We follow Him.

But following Jesus doesn't mean
we leave the world
(not yet, anyway).
That day two thousand years ago,
following Jesus led Matthew
to a surprising place.
Matthew followed Jesus
to Matthew's own house.
Jesus reclined at the table
in Matthew's house.

And "*behold,*
many tax collectors
and sinners came
and were reclining
with [Jesus] and His disciples."
Following Jesus
can lead to your own house.

Matthew invited his coworkers and friends
to Jesus.

Matthew's table became Jesus' table.

There,

forgiveness was offered.

The sinners were healed of their sins.

Jesus called the sinners

to Himself through Matthew.

Matthew's love for Jesus

became a love for His friends and coworkers.

Matthew gathered the tax collectors and sinners

so that they could meet Jesus.

Last week I read a satirical news article.

The title read,

**“Father Of 3 Wonders
When He'll Get Chance
To Influence Others
For Christ.”**

It said:

"I just wish God
would place a few people
in my life
for whom I could make
an eternal difference,"

Harbaugh told reporters,
his head in his hands.

"I just don't have time
to do anything for the Kingdom of God
while I provide for my family
and spend time with my three boys."

"Surely the Lord will have something important
for me to do someday,"
he added sadly.

You don't have to go
to the other side of the world
to do something important for Christ.
Often, Jesus leads you to your own house.
Your own family.
Your own friends.
Your own neighbour.
Your own coworkers.

Following Jesus is walking in love.

Jesus said the greatest commandment is:
*"You shall love the Lord your God
with all your heart
and with all your soul
and with all your mind.
This is the great and first commandment.
And a second is like it:
You shall love your neighbour as yourself.
On these two commandments
depend all the Law and the Prophets."* (Matthew 22:37–40)

There is no greater love you can show your
neighbour than the love of Jesus.
Jesus laid down His life
to rescue them from sin, death and hell.
Being a disciple of Jesus
means following Jesus
in calling the sinners and tax collectors.
We call them to hear Jesus' voice in the Word.
Following Jesus,
we invite others to recline at the table
and listen to Jesus.
Because Jesus is enough—and Jesus is all that matters.

Jesus is enough.

This account in our Gospel Reading
(and its parallels in the other Gospels)
is all the Bible tells us about Matthew.
Jesus saw him, called him, and he followed.
Jesus reclined at his table
with many sinners and tax collectors.
We are left knowing almost nothing about St. Matthew.

But that's okay.

Matthew gave us everything he knew about **Jesus**.
It's been two thousand years.
And here we are,
reading the Gospel according to St. Matthew.
It shows that when it is all said and done,
a disciple's testimony about Jesus
matters most in making an impact.

Matthew first gave his testimony by talking.

The Early Church father,
Chrysostom, tells us that:
Jewish followers of Christ
asked Matthew
to write down the teachings
he had shared with them
by word of mouth,
so they would be preserved.

Therefore, talk to each other about Jesus.

Follow Jesus to your own home.
In informal,
everyday conversations,
talk about Jesus.
Even sharing about Jesus during dinner
can create and strengthen faith
in those who listen.

We live and love
 as disciples
 through word of mouth
 as well as in action.
 Do you want to follow Jesus?
 Do you want to positively impact the world around you?
 It's essential
 that you recognize
 that speaking to others
 about Jesus
 is the most powerful expression of love.
 Every other act of love
 plays a supporting role
 to the main action.
 The main action
 is speaking
 the wonderful words of Christ.

*

In his Gospel,
 Matthew makes it clear
 that it is actually **Jesus'** Gospel.
 The good news is about Jesus.
 Jesus sees and calls sinners to follow Him.
 And that is enough
 —Jesus Christ and Him crucified
 —is enough.

Jesus loves you.
 He has called you.
 He invites you to follow Him in faith.
 He invites you to depend on Him,
 trust him,
 and bank everything on Him.

Disciples are called by Jesus.
They are saved by Jesus.
They are led by Jesus in love
—and that is enough.
Jesus is enough.
Jesus is enough for you.
Jesus calls you His own.
Rest on that, and follow Him.

Now may the peace of God, which surpasses all understanding, keep your hearts and minds in Christ Jesus, amen.