

Grace Lutheran Community, 11 June 2023:

Second Sunday After Pentecost

The sermon text for today is based on the text

Matthew Chapter 9 verses 9 – 13, 18-26

As Jesus went on from there, he saw a man named Matthew sitting at the tax collector's booth. 'Follow me,' he told him, and Matthew got up and followed him.

Have you been called? Just like Matthew have you been called to follow Jesus? Did you get up and follow at once?

The simple call on our life is that of Matthew and all people Jesus speaks to. To follow. To hear the very voice of Jesus and to respond. Jesus is not asking Matthew to follow perfectly, nor is He asking to follow after He completed some further study or until He had saved up enough money. You see Jesus calls us all, once when we first believed and continues to call us to follow Him. To listen to His voice and respond.

Today's text is certainly about following, Jesus calling us in our work, He calls us in our suffering and in our spiritual death to follow Him. Jesus didn't come to call the righteous rather the sick. We were all dead in our sin when Jesus called us. While we were sinners we are reminded Jesus died for us. To set us free, to forgive our sins, to save us from the power of sin, death and the devil and to offer us eternal life in His name. He calls you and me over and over again come, follow me. Come to me and I will give you rest, follow me. He calls us to take His unseen hand in faith and to go where He leads you.

Matthew responds in faith leaving His work behind. For us it may not be that we have to leave a particular job, but Jesus calls us to leave behind living for the world. Living in such a way that does not shine the light of the Messiah Jesus Christ into our workplaces or our volunteer roles or our everyday labours.

Jesus calls us to follow leaving behind a way we used to live for self and into a new way to live for Jesus. As we follow Jesus, listening to His voice in His word we grow in Him. We learn from Him to share His love more and more in all spaces and places He calls us to follow Him to.

While Jesus was having dinner at Matthew's house, many tax collectors and sinners came and ate with him and his disciples. How would we go in this situation? Would we welcome this house of the tax collectors (those associated with greed and dishonesty) and sinners too. A house of sinners? What about a church of sinners? Of broken people who gather to be with and to dine with Jesus? To participate in His holy meal? Would we be comfortable? Well we should be unless somehow you and I have actually become so good at living a perfect life and keeping all the commandments to the highest level without failing.

You see when we hear about those who are sinners, what do we think? What do you think when you hear that Matthew had a house of sinners and tax collectors dining together? What do you think if you knew that you were one of those sinners too?

See when you hear that Jesus called Matthew and then had a meal with sinners does that give you comfort? Or is it tempting to sit

alongside the Pharisees? When the Pharisees saw this, they asked his disciples, 'Why does your teacher eat with tax collectors and sinners?' On hearing this, Jesus said, 'It is not the healthy who need a doctor, but those who are ill. But go and learn what this means: "I desire mercy, not sacrifice." For I have not come to call the righteous, but sinners.'

So Jesus lays it on the table with a strong encouragement to go and learn what God desires from all of us. He desires mercy, He desires us to turn to Him and not focus on our efforts to please God through something we are doing.

While he was saying this, a synagogue leader came and knelt before him and said, 'My daughter has just died. But come and put your hand on her, and she will live.' Jesus got up and went with him, and so did his disciples. Just then a woman who had been subject to bleeding for twelve years came up behind him and touched the edge of his cloak. She said to herself, 'If I only touch his cloak, I will be healed.' Jesus turned and saw her. 'Take heart, daughter,' he said, 'your faith has healed you.' And the woman was healed at that moment. When Jesus entered the synagogue leader's house and saw the noisy crowd and the people playing pipes, he said, 'Go away. The girl is not dead but asleep.' But they laughed at him. After the crowd had been put outside, he went in and took the girl by the hand, and she got up. News of this spread through all that region.

The leader from the Synagogue shows us what it was that God desires mercy not sacrifice. He comes to Jesus in faith, asking for mercy for his daughter to be healed and knowing that Jesus could heal.

A woman we are told who was bleeding shows her faith for she only wants to touch Jesus cloak knowing the power of Jesus, she would be healed. Jesus calls her to follow, your faith has healed you, not the simple act of touching but by believing in Jesus she is healed.

The little girl is not dead but sleeping, Jesus calls her to follow by raising her from the dead.

We are called out of our sleep, out of our spiritual death and lifted up by Jesus to eternal life by faith. Follow me He says. We like the bleeding woman in faith can know that Jesus heals us eternally.

Follow me Jesus says. He came for you and me to save us, the sick and to give us life now fully and forever. We are set free from the suffering of sin, from sin itself and called to live a new life as a new creation day by day by Jesus Himself.

Today hear His voice, calling you to follow. Jesus says to you wherever you find yourself, follow me. Amen