

God's Grace for Humble Hearts – Part 1

Matthew 9:9-17 - NCBC, February 16, 2020

Main Point: **Jesus calls you to forsake all religious pride and follow Him.**

- Jesus rescues the humble (9-10)
 - Regardless of your story
 - Through repentance and faith
 - For good works and joy

Next Week (Part 2):

- Jesus rebukes the proud (11-13)
 - Jesus & His followers draw near to sinners
 - Love is the fulfillment of God's law
 - Self-righteousness is excluded from salvation
- Jesus rebukes false righteousness (14-17)
 - True righteousness is joyful union with Jesus
 - True righteousness is not following man-made rules
 - True righteousness is being made new by God Himself

Application: **Glorify God by humbling yourself and following Jesus**

Opening Announcements:

- **Men's Deer Fry** is scheduled for **March 7th at 6pm**. Men, invite a friend to join you for this amazing evening that includes grilled deer burgers, sides, speaker, and a chance to win door prizes in an outdoorsy atmosphere!

<<Jesus Paid It All>>



Jesus paid the penalty for all our sins. So let's continue our worship, and behold King Jesus with our Bibles open to **Matthew chapter 9**.



If you do not have a Bible with you, simply raise your hand. It would be our joy to give you a copy of God's Word this morning.

And while you're preparing for our Scripture reading from **Matthew chapter 9**, I want to thank Pastor Scott for his excellent sermon last week. Jesus' authority over storms, spirits, and sin proves that He is worthy of

following, since we always follow whoever we believe is the highest authority in our life.

It's always good to be taught by any of our pastors, and this year our elders will be inviting our associate pastors to preach more frequently than in the past.

There's 3 reasons why our elders believe it is good to regularly include all of our pastors in our preaching rotation. It's good for me, it's good for them, and it's good for all of us.

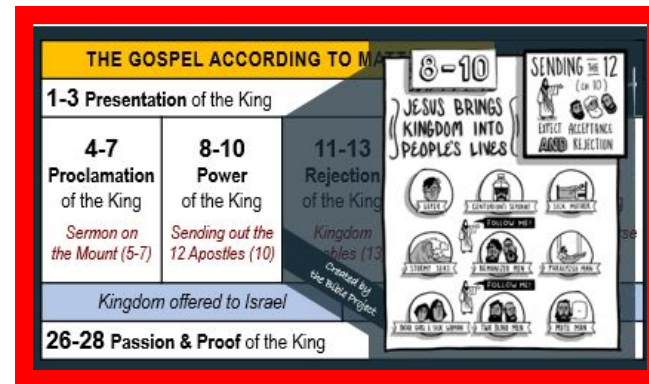
The first reason we want to regularly include our associate pastors in our preaching rotation is that it is good for me. I'm humbly aware that many godly men are able to preach twice or three times a week without much of a break for years at a time. But that's just not me. My shepherding responsibilities in this church are not limited to preaching, and I've noticed that my soul starts to become fatigued after I preach more than 5 weeks in a row. So regularly including the other pastors is good for my personal joy in our worship together.

Second, it is good for our associate pastors to get more preaching time. All of our pastors here are gifted preachers, but preaching is something that gets better with practice. Our pastors desire to preach, and giving them regular preaching opportunities is good stewardship of their gifts.

Finally, this is good for our church. In this age of celebrity pastors, it's not uncommon for people to have a stronger loyalty to one pastor than to their church. Some might even say I go to Bryan Chapell's church, or Ritch Boerckel's church, or Kevin Sauder's church. But of

course we are not consumers who attend church to hear a particular preacher or a particular personality. We gather to worship and respond to God's Word. So while it's counter-cultural to have a regular rotation in the pulpit, our elders believe this will be biblically good for me, our other pastors, and all of us.

So please pray for us as I now plan to preach approximately 60% of the Sundays, and the other pastors will preach the other 40%. May God bless all preaching from this pulpit for His greater glory among us.



Now today our Bibles are open to **Matthew chapter 9**. In **chapters 8-9** Matthew presents 9 different miracles in 3 groups of 3 – with two calls of discipleship in between each triad. **Verses 9-17 of chapter 9** present Jesus' second call of discipleship, which is our focus today.

Because of today's baptisms, I've going to break today's message into two parts – and we'll finish this message next week when we have more time.



So please stand in honor of the reading of God's Word, as I begin reading from **Matthew chapter 9, verse 9**, in the English Standard Translation:

⁹ As Jesus passed on from there, he saw a man called Matthew sitting at the tax booth, and he said to him, "Follow me." And he rose and followed him.

¹⁰ And as Jesus reclined at table in the house, behold, many tax collectors and sinners came and were reclining with Jesus and his disciples. ¹¹ And when the Pharisees saw this, they said to his disciples, "Why does your teacher eat with tax collectors and sinners?" ¹² But when he heard it, he said, "Those who are well have no need of a physician, but those who are sick. ¹³ Go and learn what this means: 'I desire mercy, and not sacrifice.' For I came not to call the righteous, but sinners."

¹⁴ Then the disciples of John came to him, saying, "Why do we and the Pharisees fast, but your disciples do not fast?" ¹⁵ And Jesus said to them, "Can the wedding guests mourn as long as the bridegroom is with them? The days will come when the bridegroom is 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 tears away from the garment, and a worse tear is made.

¹⁷ Neither is new wine put into old wineskins. If it is, the skins burst and the wine is spilled and the skins are destroyed. But new wine is put into fresh wineskins, and so both are preserved."

This is God's Word. Please be seated.

Let's Pray.

What group of people do you find most easy to judge?
Who are you quickest to condemn?

Perhaps it's people who embrace a different political agenda? Or you despise a particular brand of criminals? Or maybe you have little tolerance for a lazy fool?

Towards what kind of a person do you have the least amount of compassion or mercy?

Maybe you are prone to judge and despise certain family members who have disappointed you? Or a particular skin color? Or dysfunctional addicts? Or poor panhandlers?

If we're honest with ourselves, we all probably have a kind of person that we easily despise and condemn. Whether its our spouse or an unnamed class of person far away from us...we each sinfully believe that there is a kind of person in this world that does not deserve mercy, forgiveness, or God's grace.

We have held court in our minds, and serving as both the jurors and the judge, we have determined that we are

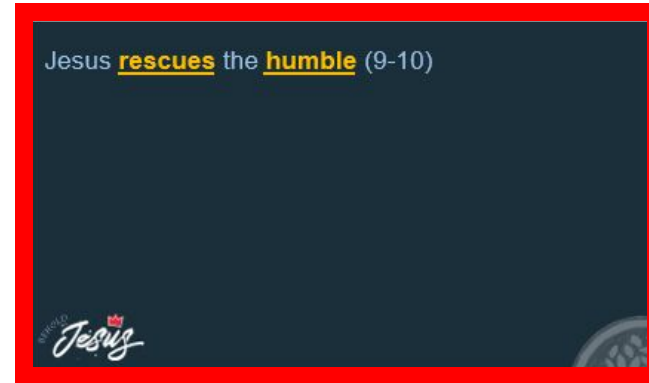
better than these kind of people – whomever they are. They are guilty, and simply do not deserve compassion or help from us anymore. But dear children of God, **Matthew chapter 9** comes to confront our pride. This section on discipleship – this section which reveals more of what it means to truly follow Jesus as one of His disciples – staggers our self-righteousness, and confounds our proud verdicts that we are so much better than “those others over there.”



In **Matthew 9**, Jesus calls you to forsake all religious pride and follow Him. Yes, *religious* pride is in focus in this text, because the response of Matthew the sinful tax-collector is contrasted with the response of the religious Pharisees and disciples of John the Baptist.

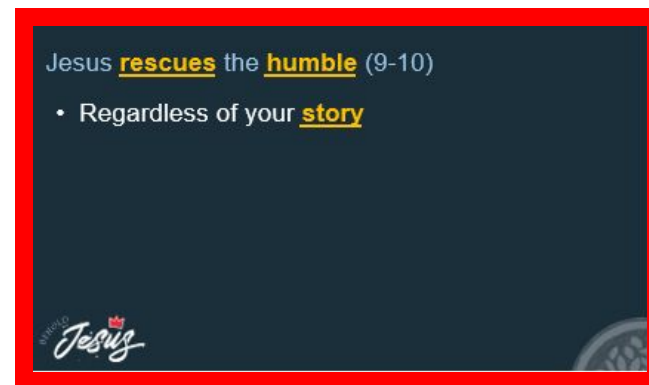
You see, in **Matthew 9**, Matthew himself is the most despised and condemned one. He is the irreligious, the sinner, the profane and publicly despised. It's the Pharisees and the disciples of John who are the religious ones who believe that their religious efforts have made them better than sinners like Matthew.

But God is calling us to forsake all religious pride,
Page **4a** of 12



For Jesus rescues the humble.

God gives grace to the humble, but He resists the proud.¹ And so Matthew's own conversion in **verse 9** gives proof that Jesus rescues the humble,



Regardless of your story.

¹ C.f. 1 Peter 5:5; James 4:6

Now I know I already introduced you to Matthew at the beginning of this sermon series,² but let's quickly review Matthew's life story.

We know from the parallel gospel accounts³ that Matthew was born a Jew. His dad Alpheus named him Levi at birth, perhaps with aspirations of Levitical priesthood in his son's future.

Levi received his education from the Capernaum synagogue, where he memorized the Hebrew Scriptures, and learned to speak fluently in Hebrew, Aramaic, and Greek.

But at some unknown point in life, Levi turned his back on his Jewish upbringing and education. For by the time Jesus meets him in **verse 9**, he's sitting at a tax booth, having purchased the rights to be a tax-collector for the Roman Empire at a busy intersection right outside town.

Now remember, tax-collectors were mob boss criminals. They were the lowest of the low. The most despised, the most condemned. These publicans,⁴ as they were called, had the full authority of Rome's military behind them as they were authorized to collect whatever tolls or duties they deemed appropriate from every person who traveled by their booth.

For the Jewish people at this time, tax-collectors were political and religious traitors. Tax-collectors were liars

and thieves of the worst kind. Tax-collectors were good for nothing scum – prohibited from even worshipping in the Jewish synagogues. They were social outcasts – friends only to the prostitutes, criminals, and most base riffraff of society.

This is Matthew's story. But while the religious community rejected him, Jesus came to rescue him!

Verse 9 is cryptic in its details...but we can surmise that Matthew must have started hearing stories along the road of this miracle-worker in Galilee who claimed to be God's Messiah! And in a way that the Scripture doesn't reveal, Matthew's heart must have started to believe in Jesus as God's Spirit brought back so many of the Old Testament Scriptures he would have memorized as a young boy.⁵ All we know is that when Jesus Himself finally passes by Matthew's tax-booth,

He said to him, "Follow Me." And he rose and followed him.

Dear friend... it doesn't matter who you are, or what you have done! Jesus commands you to follow Him! Anyone can come...as long as you are humble and poor in spirit.⁶ For Jesus rescues the humble,

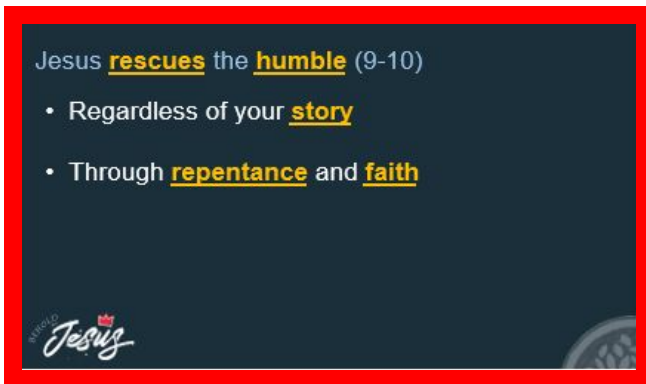
² C.f. the sermon entitled, "Matthew – Behold King Jesus" preached on 2/10/19 at New Castle Bible Church.

³ Mark 2:13-17 and Luke 5:27-32

⁴ From the Latin, "Public servants"

⁵ Romans 10:17

⁶ Matthew 5:3



Through repentance and faith

No matter how dark your own life story is, Jesus can save your soul and transform your life into something for His glory. You only must humble yourself, and respond to Jesus' call with the humility of repentance and faith.

You say, where do we see repentance and faith in **verse 9**?

I'd suggest that repentance from sin and faith in Jesus Christ as Lord and Savior is evidenced by the words,

And he rose and followed Him.

This immediate obedience is quite different from the responses of the scribe and the disciple back in **chapter 8**. They were both religious, but one was too quick to follow, the other was too slow to follow Jesus, and our assumption is that neither of them ended up actually following Jesus! But here – the despised irreligious Matthew, immediately evidenced the obedience of faith.

Remember, Matthew's life of organized crime had made him extremely wealthy. He had a home large enough to

host a community event in **verse 10**. Of all Jesus' disciples', Matthew is the one who left the most wealth behind to follow Jesus.

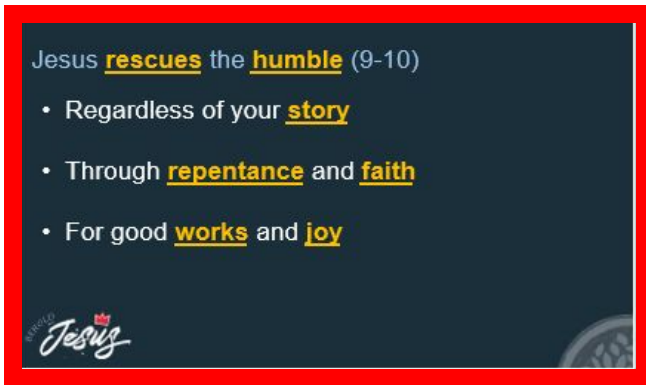
This was no casual choice. This was an extremely costly decision for Matthew. **Luke 5:28** specifically says,

"He left everything behind."

If he left the tax-booth, he'd be an enemy of Rome. Of course he was already an enemy of the Jews; they would never welcome him back. So Matthew was all-in for Jesus. There was no plan B.

He was leaving his life of sin – that's repentance, and believing that Jesus truly was the Anointed One who was able to rescue people from their sins – that's faith.

Dear sinner – see the hope of Matthew's conversion for your own soul this morning! Yes, following Jesus will cost you everything. You can only be rescued if you repent and turn from your sins, and believe that Jesus' death paid for all your sins. Believe that Jesus' resurrection is sufficient to grant you new and eternal life! You only need to humble your pride...and come. For Matthew's testimony teaches us clearly that Jesus rescues the humble regardless of your story, through repentance and faith,



For good **works** and **joy**

I love how **Luke** fills in some details that Matthew leaves out of his own story here. **Luke 5:29** says,

And Levi made [Jesus] a great feast in his house, and there was a large company of tax collectors and others reclining at table with them.

When humble hearts are rescued by Jesus, they become active worshippers of Jesus. Saving faith works! In fact one of the evidences of salvation in a humble heart is wanting all your friends to meet Jesus and be rescued as well!! Saved hearts share!!

Notice Matthew's joy... His repentance from sin and faith in Jesus as His Lord and Master set him free from sin's condemnation and guilt. And so he prepares a great feast – and invites everyone he knows – which are mostly other tax collectors and sinners, to have a party together and to meet Jesus.

We assume many Jews were also invited...for we find the Pharisees and the disciples of John the Baptist

looking in from the outside. But their religious pride wouldn't allow them to attend such a party at such a person's home.

Would you go to this party? There's going to be drunks there, and lots of wine. There's sexual perverts. There's druggies. There's violent men. There's liars and thieves. And Jesus... Jesus is going to be there.

Dear friends, Jesus calls us to forsake all religious pride and follow Him. Jesus and His disciples draw near to sinners...never to join with them in their sin, but to love them well and help them come to know Jesus as their Savior and Lord.

I can't wait to finish studying this compelling call to discipleship next week together.



In verses 11-13 we are going to see how Jesus rebukes the proud, and in **verses 14-17** how Jesus rebukes false righteousness. There's much we still need to learn as Christ-followers about the priority of humility in our relationship with Jesus.

But for today, simply ponder the wonder of how Jesus relates to Matthew. Yes, Matthew – the most despised and condemned by those who are religious. Jesus rescues Matthew through the humility of his repentance and faith. And grants him great joy as he immediately begins to share Jesus with all of his friends.

Do you and I possess Matthew’s humility and joy that fuels our bold witness to other lost sinners like him?



Today Jesus calls us to glorify God by humbling ourselves and following Jesus. We must repent of our pride. Specifically this application is two-sided:

If you are still an outsider to grace, and you are lost in sin...join Matthew...leave the tax-booth of your sin, and joyfully submit to the Lordship of Jesus Christ! Come follow Jesus with us!!

If you are already rescued by grace, then today’s application is for you to follow Jesus as He calls you to draw near to other sinners for the sake of your witness of love and righteousness.

Too many of us isolate ourselves from other sinners in a way that Jesus never would. We too often refuse to attend class reunions or participate in community functions when invited, out of self-righteous concern for our own image or reputation.

We must not think so highly of ourselves. We are no better than any other sinners around us. What good do we have that God Himself has not given us?⁷ Humility and a broken-spirit are the pathways into joyful blessedness with Jesus. Anyone can come and be saved...if only we will humble all our religious and irreligious pride.

So here’s what I’d like to do this morning. Humble people pray. By definition, humility is prayerful dependence upon God more than self.

So in response to Matthew’s conversion and immediate evangelistic zeal, I’d like for us to take some time this morning to pray for ourselves, and for those “Matthews” we all know in our life. Who are the people that you are quickest to despise or condemn? Who do you justify judging as someone who is lost and far from God?

Jesus and His followers draw near to these kind of people. And the first way God teaches us to draw near to them is through prayer. After all, evangelism first talks to God about people, before it ever talks to people about God.⁸

So I’m going to ask our musicians to come up and play

⁷ 1 Corinthians 4:7

⁸ Colossians 4:2-6

some background music for us as I lead us in a time of corporate prayer together for our lost loved ones.

As they come I want to just pray **James 4:6-12** over us to shepherd our hearts into this prayer time. Will you bow in prayer with me now?

Heavenly Father, You are the God of Grace! You are the God who opposes the proud but gives amazing grace to the humble. So Lord, help us to be a people who submit ourselves freely to You. Help us to resist the Devil and all of His subtle attempts to make us proud. Help us to resist pride, knowing that the Devil will flee from us as we draw near to You O God. Please draw near to us. Help us to cleanse our hands, for we are sinners who do not deserve your mercy. Purify our hearts Lord. For we are double-minded. We claim we love and follow You but we often love ourselves more. So Lord, please grant your children today a spirit of genuine repentance. Help us to mourn our religious pride, and weep over our self-righteousness. Please dear Lord of grace, grant us a spirit of faith and humility, that we might humble ourselves before You, trusting that You will exalt us in the proper time.

Forgive us Father where we have spoken evil of others, and established ourselves as your judges on this earth. We acknowledge that You Lord are the only true Law-giver and Judge. So help us to follow You, that we might genuinely love our neighbors as we have first been loved by You. We ask this in Jesus' Name, Amen.

It is so good to pray together isn't it, church? So now here's what I'm inviting you to do. Find some space on your worship folder this morning and list out all 7 days of

the week. Write them in a list, Sunday, Monday, Tuesday, etc...for all seven days of the week. If you don't have a writing utensil, you can make a list on your phone.

But what we want to create is a simple prayer calendar that can help you pray for those that you know who are far from God. Peter Lindell taught our men this at the Challenge Breakfast earlier this month, and it is so simple and yet helpful that I want all of us to benefit from this today.

Once you've made a list of all 7 days of the week, go back and write the name of someone you know who is far from God that you could pray for alongside each day.

Evangelism starts with prayer...the church breaks out of its walls when God's people start to sincerely pray for the lost – for every Matthew that God has placed in our lives for the purpose of our joyful witness and love.

So write a name of someone far from God that you will commit to pray for on each day of the week. It might be a family member. It might be a coworker or a fellow student. If you don't know their name, you could just write down, "my neighbor in the tan house." Or "the barista at my coffee shop," etc. But take some time now while the music plays to write down a name for someone you can pray for on every day of the week – someone who is far from God – someone who is a contemporary Matthew, who you would like to introduce to Jesus.

<<Music plays>>

Now we're going to take some time together to pray for these people on your list... but before we do, we need to write down the time each day when you would be able to pray for your assigned name each day. Perhaps, like me, it's early in the morning after you first get up. Perhaps for you, this is a list you can post in your car, so you can pray for the person of the day on your commute? Or perhaps your time is at lunch, or at dinner? Whenever works best for you, write down the time of day that you want to pray for the assigned name each day.

Then, let's take time now to just pray together for these names. Find someone near to you, and pair up to pray together through both of your lists of names. Pray for God to draw their hearts to Christ. Pray for God to open their eyes that they might know Christ. Pray for God to draw near to them. Pray for God to save them, and use you however He would desire to be part of the answer to your prayers.

So pair up with another person or two this morning, and while the music plays, pray aloud for God to save your loved ones. Then after a few minutes, I'll close our time together.

Please pair up, and pray together now.

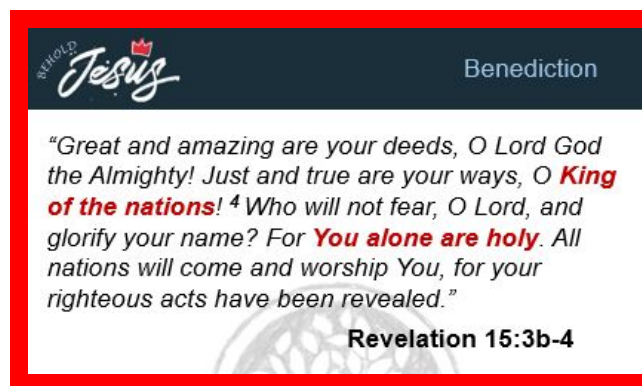
<<Music plays>>



Let's pray.

<<Come, Ye Sinners, Poor & Needy>>

Let's pray our benediction together as we dismiss.



Great and amazing are your deeds, O Lord God the Almighty! Just and true are your ways, O King of the nations! 4 Who will not fear, O Lord, and glorify your name? For you alone are holy. All nations will come and worship you, for your righteous acts have been revealed.
Revelation 15:3b-4



After 2nd Service Only

Recommended Resources on God's Grace for Humble Hearts:

- Psalm 34:18; 45
- Proverbs 3:34
- Isaiah 54:5; 62:4-5
- Hosea 2:16-20; 6:6
- Amos 5:21-24
- Matthew 5:3,17-20; 6:15; 11:19; 18:23-35; 21:1-10

- Mark 2:13-22
- Luke 5:27-39; 15:1-32; 18:10-14
- John 8:21, 24
- Romans 3:10-12
- Galatians 3:3
- 1 Timothy 1:15
- James 4:6
- 1 Peter 5:6

- <https://www.9marks.org/article/10-flavors-of-works-based-salvation/>
- <https://vimeo.com/48673319> "From Pride to Humility" Stuart Scott
- <http://gcbc.mn/SScottPrideHandout>

- *Pride & Humility*, Stuart Scott
- *The Whole Christ*, Sinclair Ferguson

Growing Deeper: Life Group Questions

1. Read each of the parallel accounts of Matthew's conversion: Matthew 9:9; Mark 2:13-14; Luke 5:27-28. What most interests you about Matthew and his personal life story? What evidences of Matthew's humility do you see in his own biographical account in Matthew 9:9?

2. Read Hosea 6:6, Matthew 9:13 and 12:7. Compare these two passages where Jesus quotes Hosea 6:6 and consider the relevance of the quotation in both places.

3. Read James 4:6-12. How would you define religious pride? How does religious pride typically manifest itself? In light of Matthew 9:13, what were the Pharisees missing?

4. Read Galatians 5:13-15ff. Who do you find most easy to judge? What kinds of sinners do you have the least patience for? Discuss why religious pride is so deceptive (Galatians 6:3). Pray for God to forgive your self-righteousness, and grant you the grace to crucify your flesh and walk in the spirit of His love.
5. Read Colossians 4:2-6. Whose salvation is God calling you to pray for this week? For what does this Scripture teach us to pray?