

# ***“Christmas & New Years Go Together”***

Matthew 9:9

December 28, 2025

## **INTRO:** 3 eternal, Christmas & new year’s Q’s...

1. What did you GET FROM Christmas?
2. What did you GIVE FOR Christmas?
3. What’s that got to DO with your NEW year(s)/future?

If asking ONE biblical character to help, other than Messiah, who do you think would relate to you & those questions?

## **Who would you pick?**

Maybe Matthew?

## **PRAYER**

## **CONTEXT:**

- Matthew’s Gospel on Jesus Christ’s Gospel...
- Scripture is a divine chain vs. string of pearls...
- Our Christmas AND New Year’s celebrations...
- Today’s context: Messiah, Matthew, & Mission...

**BIG IDEA:** Christmas & new years  
go together like the biblical Christ  
AND His missional Church!  
(A.K.A. “CHURCH” WITH NO PLURAL)

## PREVIEW:

1. Messiah
2. Matthew
3. Mission

## TEXT:

### Matthew 9:9

9As Jesus passed on from there, He saw a man called Matthew sitting at the tax booth, and He/Jesus said to him/Matthew, ***“Follow Me.”*** And he/Matthew rose and followed Him/Jesus.

## I. MESSIAH

- A. **Remember:** Genesis 1:1 & John 1:1
- B. **Remember:** Genesis 3:15 & John 3:16
- C. **Remember:** Isaiah 9:6-7
- D. **Matthew 1-9:8** ***Jesus IS Lamb, LORD, & Lion!***
- E. Messiah came in & went out to FIND Matthew...
- F. **Messiah FOUND & began to GROW Matthew...**
- G. ***Jesus commanded Matthew to FOLLOW Him...***
- H. Jesus was SHOCKING everyone yet again!
  - a. Loving, touching, calling, etc.
  - b. His compassion brought conviction...
  - c. **His witness led to both worship & warfare!**

**T/S:** This literally leads us directly to Matthew...

## II. Matthew

*He saw a man called Matthew sitting at the tax booth,*

### A. We know Matthew was a Tax Collector...

- a. Tax collectors were socially *hated betrayers*
- b. Tax Collectors lived *morally bankrupt* lives.
- c. Tax Collectors survived under **Rome's** cover.
- d. Tax Collectors were the *bottom of the barrel*.

### B. Matthew met Messiah at work...

- a. Where/when is Jesus inviting in your work?
- b. Jesus was not on Matthew's to-do list...
- c. Christ was not in his job description...

### C. Matthew heard Christ's call...

- a. Matthew was corrupt...
- b. Matthew was convicted
- c. Matthew was called.
- d. Matthew was chosen...
  - i. *Many are called* (hear The Gospel)
  - ii. *But few are chosen* (heed The Gospel)
- e. Matthew was commanded!
- f. Matthew was cleansed...
- g. Matthew was commissioned...
- h. Matthew was championing Christ's Gospel!
- i. *Matthew IS inspiring to all LOST sinners!*

**T/S:** This literally leads us directly to the mission...

# III. Mission

and Jesus said to Matthew, ***“Follow Me.”***

*And Matthew rose and followed Jesus.*

## WHAT DOES JESUS MEAN BY: FOLLOW ME?

- This word is LOADED with meaning & mission!

“Follow” pictures more than walking behind someone; it denotes a deliberate, whole-person response of attachment, obedience, and ongoing companionship. In the New Testament it serves as the **primary verb for discipleship**, encapsulating the life of one who hears Christ’s call, abandons competing allegiances, & continues in loyal fellowship with Him.

## In Matthew: Immediate, Costly Obedience

- Matthew stresses that true following is costly:
  - *“Whoever does not take his cross and follow Me is not worthy of Me”* ([Matthew 10:38](#));
  - *“If you want to be perfect, go, sell your possessions... then come, follow Me”* ([Matthew 19:21](#)).
  - The promise matches the cost: *“When the Son of Man sits on His glorious throne, you who have followed Me will also sit on twelve thrones”* ([Matthew 19:28](#)).

## In Mark: The Way of the Servant

Mark 8:34 *invites anyone to deny self, take up the cross, & follow.*

## In Luke: Unconditional Kingdom Allegiance

Three prospective disciples each say *“I will follow,”* yet **only the one who acts immediately meets the standard** (Luke 9:57-62).

Luke also records social outcasts who follow joyfully, such as the once-blind beggar: *“Immediately he received his sight and followed Him, glorifying God”* (Luke 18:43).

## In John: Relational Knowledge and Life

John embeds Shepherd imagery: *“The sheep follow Him because they know His voice”* (John 10:4);

*“My sheep hear My voice; I know them, and they follow Me”* (10:27).

Post-resurrection, Jesus restores Peter with the repeated injunction *“Follow Me”* (John 21:19, 22), uniting love, service & martyrdom.

## Acts and the Early Church:

*“many of the Jews and devout converts to Judaism followed Paul and Barnabas”* (Acts 13:43)... See the principle & pattern...

## Revelation: Eschatological Fidelity

- *The 144,000 “follow the Lamb wherever He goes”* ([Revelation 14:4](#))
- **Death**, Hades, and demonic hordes likewise *“follow”* agents of judgment ([Revelation 6:8](#); 14:8-9).
- **Works** *“follow”* the saints into eternity ([Rev. 14:13](#)),

God's Word underscores that genuine discipleship bears fruit that survives final evaluation.

## *“Following”* **TRUTHS & THEOLOGICAL THEMES**

- 1. Discipleship** calls for Total Commitment!
- 2. Christ-like Obedience & Imitation** are at the heart of following...
- 3. Perseverance & Presence:** *“whoever follows Me will never walk .....in the darkness”* ([John 8:12](#)) ...guarantees guiding presence.
- 4. Mission & Multiplication:** *Biblical followers = missional fishers!*
- 5. Eschatological Reward:** *Following leads to eternal life* ([Mk. 10:30](#))

### Summary

Biblical “following” encapsulates the heartbeat of discipleship: hearing Christ’s summons, relinquishing former loyalties, staying in step with the Master, and arriving with Him in glory...inviting every generation to take its place in the long procession after the Lamb.

## **“FOLLOW ME” IS THE CALL OF CHRIST-MAS & THE PROMISE OF NEW EVERYTHING!”**

- New TEST of faith (Count the cost NOW)
- New FOCUS in life (glorifying God – 1 Cor. 10:31)
- New FAMILY to love (ecclesia in koinonia & homothoomadon)
- New MISSION to join (fishing: Find the Lost, Grow the Found)
- New PASSION to share (making disciples of ALL nations)
- New SACRIFICES to make (cross-carrying Luke 14:27)
- New WITNESS & LIGHT to shine (Acts 1:8)

## **WE, LIKE MATTHEW SHOULD BE READY FOR NEW!**

- BE The Church! vs. any & all other options!
- The Church's address = Christ's presence!
- The following family is the faithful Church!
- Making multiplying disciples = in new ways!
  - Praying locally, regionally, & globally!
  - Discipling in the same global context!
    - Adding mid-day Bible studies
    - Adding multi-generational studies
    - Adding global pod-casting tools
  - Fellowshiping in the very same way!
    - Adding cross-pollinating groups...
    - Adding global affinity groups...
    - Adding global fellowship meals...

## **As ALWAYS, CHRIST IS AT THE CENTER!**

## **CHRIST'S MISSIONAL RELATIONSHIP TO MATTHEW:**

- A. Jesus created Matthew – John 1:1
- B. Jesus chose Matthew – the unlikely choice...
- C. Jesus called Matthew – the Gospel necessity...
- D. Jesus commanded Matthew:
  - a. Informing
  - b. Inspecting
  - c. Inspiring
- E. Jesus co-missioned Matthew.

## **MATTHEW'S MISSIONAL RELATIONSHIP TO CHRIST:**

- F. Matthew responded to grace...
- G. Matthew repented of sin...
- H. Matthew counted the cost...
- I. Matthew went ALL-in...
- J. Matthew faithfully followed...
  - a. Immediately
  - b. Completely
  - c. Imperfectly
  - d. Passionately
  - e. Sacrificially
  - f. Dangerously
  - g. Missionally

**T/S:** Circle back to our context & Matthew's insights...



- What did Matthew GET FROM Christ-mas?
- What did Matthew GIVE FOR Christ-mas?
- How did those impact his new life & future?

- 1). Matthew GOT Christ & new life FROM Christ-mas?
- 2). Matthew GAVE his life FOR Christ & Christ-mas!
- 3). Matthew's life was eternally redefined & blessed!

**T/S:      How about you?**

Has Christ-mas brought you new life?

**HAS CHRIST-MAS TAKEN OVER YOUR LIFE?**

*Has Christ-mas transformed you & your new years?*

**REVIEW:**

Christmas & new years  
go together like the biblical Christ  
AND... the missional Christ-followers!!!  
(A.K.A. "CHURCH" WITH NO PLURAL)

## **CLOSE:**

I pray that we all watch for, listen to, and ultimately follow Christ as He calls, commands & commissions us. If you haven't heard Him... or if you have heard but rejected Him & begged Him to leave you alone...

**Hear Him today** as He shares this testimony of loving & saving sinners – BIG SINNERS... sinners like you & me.

It's no coincidence that we have 3+ amazing accounts of Jesus overtly and shockingly blessing tax collectors in the Gospel accounts... Even more, that **Jesus uses this tax collector, Matthew, to end His (Christ's) Gospel account with The Great Commission, as recorded in Matthew 28:18-20.**

This man, this sinner, KNEW the eternal blessing of **being miraculously delivered & missionally disciplined by The Messiah** – hence his righteous attempt to live and die as an ambassador for Christ.

May we be informed, inspected, & inspired between Christ-mas & New Years, all by God's grace, thru His Gospel, & for His glory. May we do & be the same as Matthew & Jesus – no more, no less, no matter what!  
**Amen & AMEN**

# **PRAYER**

## **Prime Time with God Daily Prayer Devotional:** 12/27/25

*Dear Father God,*

*Your love and power goes beyond my understanding.*

*In a time when hope can seem dim, I know that Your light is brighter than any darkness in my life.*

*I look to You for my hope, for today and for my future with You...*

***So we do not lose heart. Though our outer self is wasting away, our inner self is being renewed day by day. For this light momentary affliction is preparing for us an eternal weight of glory beyond all comparison, as we look not to the things that are seen but to the things that are unseen. For the things that are seen are transient, but the things that are unseen are eternal. - 2 Corinthians 4:16-18***

*Lord, the afflictions on this Earth are painful to witness and to experience, but Your strength to overcome is what I need.*

*Clothe me in Your Armor of God and help me to raise my shield of faith... Ephesians 6:10-20*

*Please draw near to me as I draw near to you so that I can seek and find You... James 4:8*

*As we enter the New Year, Lord help me to recognize you above all else.*

*Please open my ears so that I might hear You and notice how You are at work in my life... John 10:27*

*I love you and I need you today.*

*In the holy name of Jesus I pray,*

*Amen.*

## STUDY NOTES:

### ◀ Matthew 9:9 ▶

#### Text Analysis

[Go to Parallel Greek](#)

Strong's	Greek	English	Morphology
<a href="#">2532</a> <a href="#">[e]</a>	Καὶ <a href="#">Kai</a>	And	<a href="#">Conj</a>
<a href="#">3855</a> <a href="#">[e]</a>	παράγων <a href="#">paragōn</a>	passing on	<a href="#">V-PPA-NMS</a>
<a href="#">3588</a> <a href="#">[e]</a>	ὁ <a href="#">ho</a>	-	<a href="#">Art-NMS</a>
<a href="#">2424</a> <a href="#">[e]</a>	Ἰησοῦς <a href="#">Iēsous</a>	Jesus	<a href="#">N-NMS</a>
<a href="#">1564</a> <a href="#">[e]</a>	ἐκεῖθεν <a href="#">ekeithen</a>	from there,	<a href="#">Adv</a>
<a href="#">3708</a> <a href="#">[e]</a>	εἶδεν <a href="#">eiden</a>	He saw	<a href="#">V-AIA-3S</a>
<a href="#">444</a> <a href="#">[e]</a>	ἄνθρωπον <a href="#">anthrōpon</a>	a man	<a href="#">N-AMS</a>
<a href="#">2521</a> <a href="#">[e]</a>	καθήμενον <a href="#">kathēmenon</a>	sitting	<a href="#">V-PPM/P-AMS</a>
<a href="#">1909</a> <a href="#">[e]</a>	ἐπὶ <a href="#">epi</a>	at	<a href="#">Prep</a>

<a href="#">3588</a> <a href="#">[e]</a>	τὸ <a href="#">to</a>	the	<a href="#">Art-ANS</a>
<a href="#">5058</a> <a href="#">[e]</a>	τελώνιον, <a href="#">telōnion</a>	tax booth,	<a href="#">N-ANS</a>
<a href="#">3156</a> <a href="#">[e]</a>	Μαθθαῖον <a href="#">Maththaion</a>	Matthew	<a href="#">N-AMS</a>
<a href="#">3004</a> <a href="#">[e]</a>	λεγόμενον, <a href="#">legomenon</a>	named.	<a href="#">V-PPM/P-AMS</a>
<a href="#">2532</a> <a href="#">[e]</a>	καὶ <a href="#">kai</a>	And	<a href="#">Conj</a>
<a href="#">3004</a> <a href="#">[e]</a>	λέγει <a href="#">legei</a>	He says	<a href="#">V-PIA-3S</a>
<a href="#">846</a> <a href="#">[e]</a>	αὐτῷ <a href="#">autō</a>	to him,	<a href="#">PPro-DM3S</a>
<a href="#">190</a> <a href="#">[e]</a>	Ἀκολουθεῖ <a href="#">Akolouthēi</a>	Follow	<a href="#">V-PMA-2S</a>
<a href="#">1473</a> <a href="#">[e]</a>	μοι. <a href="#">moi</a>	Me.	<a href="#">PPro-D1S</a>
<a href="#">2532</a> <a href="#">[e]</a>	καὶ <a href="#">kai</a>	And	<a href="#">Conj</a>
<a href="#">450</a> <a href="#">[e]</a>	ἀναστὰς <a href="#">anastas</a>	having arisen,	<a href="#">V-APA-NMS</a>
<a href="#">190</a> <a href="#">[e]</a>	ἠκολούθησεν <a href="#">ēkolouthēsen</a>	he followed	<a href="#">V-AIA-3S</a>

<a href="#">846</a> <a href="#">[e]</a>	αὐτῷ. <a href="#">autō</a>	Him.	<a href="#">PPro-DM3S</a>
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## ◀ 190. akoloutheó ▶

### Lexical Summary

akoloutheó: To follow, to accompany

**Original Word:** ἀκολουθέω

**Part of Speech:** Verb

**Transliteration:** akoloutheó

**Pronunciation:** ah-ko-loo-THEH-oh

**Phonetic Spelling:** (ak-ol-oo-theh'-o)

**KJV:** follow, reach

**NASB:** followed, follow, following, follows

**Word Origin:** [from [G1 \(α - Alpha\)](#) (as a particle of union) and keleuthos "a road"]

1. (properly) to be in the same way with, i.e. to accompany
2. (specially) to accompany as a disciple

### Strong's Exhaustive Concordance

follow, reach.

**From a (as a particle of union) and keleuthos (a road); properly, to be in the same way with, i.e. To accompany (specially, as a disciple) -- follow, reach.**

see GREEK [α](#)

### NAS Exhaustive Concordance

**Word Origin**

from [alpha](#) (as a cop. prefix) and keleuthos (a road, way)

**Definition**

to follow

**NASB Translation**

follow (35), followed (36), following (17), follows (1).

### Thayer's Greek Lexicon

STRONGS NT 190: ἀκολουθέω

**ἀκολουθέω**, (ᾠ; future ἀκολουθήσω; imperfect ἠκολούθουν; 1 aorist ἠκολούθησα; perfect ἠκολούθηκα ([Mark 10:28](#) L T Tr WH); (from ἀκόλουθος, and this from a copulative and κέλευθος road, properly, walking the same road);

**1. to follow one who precedes, join him as his attendant,**

**accompany him:** [Matthew 4:25](#); [Matthew 8:19](#); [Matthew 9:19](#); [Matthew 27:55](#); [Mark 3:7](#); [Mark 5:24](#) (Lachmann); (R G); [Luke 22:39, 54](#); [Luke 23:27](#); [John 1:37f, 43](#) (); , etc.; [Acts 12:8](#); [Acts 13:43](#); [Acts 21:36](#); [1 Corinthians 10:4](#); distinguished from προάγειν in [Matthew 21:9](#); [Mark 11:9](#); tropically, τά ἔργα αὐτῶν ἀκολούθει μετ' αὐτῶν, their good deeds will accompany them to the presence of God the judge to be rewarded by him, [Revelation 14:13](#); on the other hand, ἠκολούθησαν αὐτῆς αἱ ἁμαρτίαι ἄχρι τοῦ οὐρανοῦ, [Revelation 18:5](#), but here for ἠκολούθησαν G L T Tr WH have restored ἐκολλήθησαν; (σημεῖα τοῖς πιστεύουσιν ἀκολουθήσει ταῦτα, [Mark 16:17](#) Tr WH text (where others παρακολουθέω, which see)). to follow one **in time, succeed one:** [Revelation 14:8f](#). (Herodian, 1, 14, 12 (6) τά γοῦν ἀκολουθήσαντα, others). Since among the ancients disciples were accustomed to accompany their masters on their walks and journeys — (others derive the usage that follows from the figurative sense of the word directly; cf. e. g. 2 Macc. 8:36 τό ἀκολουθεῖν τοῖς νόμοις; M. Antoninus 1. vii. § 31 ἀκολούθησον θεῷ, and Gataker at the passage), ἀκολουθέω denotes

**2. to join one as a disciple, become or be his disciple; side with his party, (A.**

**V. follow him):** [Matthew 4:20, 22](#); [Matthew 9:9](#); [Matthew 19:27](#); [Mark 1:18](#); [Mark 8:34](#); [Luke 5:11, 27](#), etc.; [John 8:12](#) (where Jesus likens himself to a torch which the disciple follows); οὐκ ἀκολουθεῖ ἡμῖν he is not of our band of thy disciples, [Mark 9:38](#) to cleave steadfastly to one, conform wholly to his example, in living and if need be in dying also: [Matthew 10:38](#); [Matthew 16:24](#); [John 12:26](#); [John 21:22](#). This verb is not found in the Epistles except in [1 Corinthians 10:4](#). As in the classics, it is joined mostly with a dative of the object; sometimes with μετὰ τίνος, [Luke 9:49](#); [Revelation 6:8](#) (Treg. marginal reading dative); ; (so also in Greek writings; cf. Lob. ad Phryn., p. 353f; (Rutherford, New Phryn., p. 458f)); ὀπίσω τίνος, [Matthew 10:38](#); [Mark 8:34](#) (where R L WH Tr marginal reading ἐλθεῖν), Hebrew לָלֶךְ אַחֲרָיָהוּ, cf. [1 Kings 19:21](#); see Winers Grammar, 234 (219); (Buttmann, 172 (150), cf. ἀκολουθέω κατόπιν τίνος, Aristophanes Plutarch, 13. Compare: ἐξακολουθέω, ἐπακολουθέω, κατακολουθέω, παρακολουθέω, συν ακολουθέω).

## Topical Lexicon

### Essential Idea

Strong's Greek 190 (akoloutheō)  
pictures more than walking behind  
someone; it denotes a deliberate,  
whole-person response of  
attachment, obedience, and  
ongoing companionship. In the New  
Testament it serves as the primary  
verb for discipleship, encapsulating  
the life of one who hears Christ's call,  
abandons competing allegiances,  
and continues in loyal fellowship with  
Him.

Old Testament and Jewish Background

**THE SEPTUAGINT OFTEN RENDERS HEBREW**  
**EXPRESSIONS SUCH AS “WALK AFTER” (HALAK**  
**ACHAR) WITH AKOLOUTHEō (FOR**  
**EXAMPLE, [NUMBERS 32:15](#); [1 KINGS 14:8](#)).** ISRAEL  
**WAS REPEATEDLY COMMANDED TO “WALK AFTER**  
**THE LORD YOUR GOD” ([DEUTERONOMY 13:4](#)), AN**  
**INJUNCTION THAT COMBINED DEVOTION,**  
**OBEDIENCE, AND COVENANT FAITHFULNESS.**



The New Testament writers build directly upon this heritage, presenting Jesus as the divine object to be followed with the same undivided allegiance formerly reserved for YHWH.

### **Distribution in the New Testament**

**Akoloutheō appears ninety times**, concentrated in the Synoptic Gospels (particularly Matthew) and the Gospel of John, then less frequently in Acts, Pauline correspondence (once), and Revelation. The pattern mirrors salvation history: Jesus summons disciples during His earthly ministry; the church answers that summons in Acts; Revelation portrays consummate faithfulness in the face of final opposition.

### **In Matthew: Immediate, Costly Obedience**

Matthew introduces the verb in the call narratives of the fishermen: “At once they left their nets and followed Him” ([Matthew 4:20](#)). Twelve further crowd-scenes show multitudes following, yet Matthew stresses that true following is costly: “Whoever does not take his cross and follow Me is not worthy of Me” ([Matthew 10:38](#)); “If you want to be perfect, go, sell your possessions... then come, follow Me” ([Matthew 19:21](#)). The promise matches the cost: “When the Son of Man sits on His glorious throne, you who have followed Me will also sit on twelve thrones” ([Matthew 19:28](#)).

### **In Mark: The Way of the Servant**

Mark’s fast-moving narrative uses akoloutheō to frame “the way” theology ([Mark 10:52](#); 15:41). The hinge verse, [Mark 8:34](#), invites “anyone” to deny self, take up the cross, and follow. In [Mark 14:54](#) Peter “followed at a distance,” highlighting the peril of half-hearted discipleship.

### **In Luke: Unconditional Kingdom Allegiance**

Luke’s travel narrative intensifies the demands: “Let the dead bury their own dead, but you go and proclaim the kingdom of God” ([Luke 9:60](#)). Three prospective disciples each say “I will follow,” yet only the one who acts immediately meets the standard ([Luke 9:57-62](#)). Luke also records social outcasts who follow joyfully, such as the once-blind beggar: “Immediately he received his sight and followed Him, glorifying God” ([Luke 18:43](#)).

## **In John: Relational Knowledge and Life**

John embeds *akoloutheō* in shepherd imagery: “The sheep follow Him because they know His voice” ([John 10:4](#)); “My sheep hear My voice; I know them, and they follow Me” ([John 10:27](#)). Early disciples inquire, “Rabbi, where are You staying?”—His reply, “Come, and you will see” ([John 1:39](#)), models personal, receptive following. Post-resurrection, Jesus restores Peter with the repeated injunction “Follow Me” ([John 21:19, 22](#)), uniting love, service, and martyrdom.

## **Acts and the Early Church**

Though appearing only three times, *akoloutheō* in Acts illustrates that discipleship continues beyond the Ascension. Peter obeys the angel, “Wrap your cloak around you and follow me” ([Acts 12:8](#)). In Antioch Pisidia “many of the Jews and devout converts to Judaism followed Paul and Barnabas” ([Acts 13:43](#)), transferring the pattern of following Jesus to following His authorized messengers.

## **Pauline Literature**

The lone occurrence outside Acts and the Gospels is [1 Corinthians 10:4](#), where Israel’s wilderness community “drank from a spiritual rock that followed them, and that rock was Christ.” Paul thus portrays Christ as the continuous divine companion of His people across redemptive history.

## **Revelation: Eschatological Fidelity**

*Akoloutheō* frames ultimate loyalties. The 144,000 “follow the Lamb wherever He goes” ([Revelation 14:4](#)), while Death, Hades, and demonic hordes likewise “follow” agents of judgment ([Revelation 6:8](#); 14:8-9). Works “follow” the saints into eternity ([Revelation 14:13](#)), underscoring that genuine discipleship bears fruit that survives final evaluation.

## **Theological Themes**

### **1. Discipleship as Total Commitment**

To follow Jesus is to embrace Him as supreme authority, forsaking competing claims (family, wealth, self-preservation).

### **2. Obedience and Imitation**

Following implies walking the same path—sharing His sufferings, serving as He served, and obeying His commands.

### **3. Perseverance and Presence**

Present tense forms (“keep on following”) stress ongoing allegiance. Jesus’ promise “whoever follows Me will never walk in the darkness” ([John 8:12](#)) guarantees guiding presence.

#### 4. Mission and Multiplication

Those who follow become fishers of others ([Matthew 4:19](#)). In [Acts 13:43](#) new believers attach themselves to gospel proclaimers, extending the chain of discipleship.

#### 5. Eschatological Reward

Thrones ([Matthew 19:28](#)), eternal life ([Mark 10:30](#)), and rest ([Revelation 14:13](#)) await the followers who endure.

### **Pastoral and Practical Implications**

- Preaching and teaching must present the call to follow Christ as decisive and comprehensive, not merely optional or partial.
- Leaders model authentic following; congregations are urged to imitate their example insofar as it mirrors Christ (compare [1 Corinthians 11:1](#)).
- Discipleship programs should emphasize continual obedience, cross-bearing, and mission, reflecting the verb’s durative force.
- Comfort for suffering believers: the Lamb who was followed in life will be followed into glory—“where I am, there My servant will be also” ([John 12:26](#)).

### **Summary**

Strong’s 190 encapsulates the heartbeat of New Testament discipleship: hearing Christ’s summons, relinquishing former loyalties, staying in step with the Master, and arriving with Him in glory. The verb traces a line from Galilean shores to the New Jerusalem, inviting every generation to take its place in the long procession after the Lamb.

## What Does the Bible Tell Us about Matthew the Tax Collector?

Matthew the tax collector looks like the last person we'd expect to follow Jesus. So how did he become a disciple?

[LANCELOT TUCKER](#)

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Matthew the tax collector was a disciple of Jesus. He did not hold a prominent place in the Bible like Peter... or even Judas Iscariot (who betrayed Jesus). Still, he is one of the twelve disciples and helped establish the church, as seen in the Acts of the Apostles.

### Where Does the Bible First Mention Matthew the Tax Collector?

Matthew the tax collector was first mentioned in the Gospel of Matthew (specifically, [Matthew 9:9](#)). One day, while Jesus was walking, he noticed a man sitting where the custom receipt collector usually sits. That man's name was Matthew. Jesus then told Matthew to follow Him. Sometime later, Jesus and His disciples had dinner at Matthew's house ([Matthew 9:10](#)).

### Why Does the Bible Highlight Matthew as "The Tax Collector?"

Matthew was a tax collector by trade. Merchants, farmers, and other importers would often import goods into the area, and [Matthew was responsible for collecting import duties](#) from them. He also collected any income taxes and other levies the

Romans set. Under Roman jurisdiction, **Matthew ensured Rome got the money it demanded. Furthermore, many tax collectors took extra and kept it as a “commission.”**

The Romans placed a huge financial burden on their subjects' shoulders. **People disliked tax collectors, who made the Romans richer and their fellow Jews poorer. Furthermore, tax collectors often took more than they had to, keeping the extra as their**

**“commission.”** The Jews saw all tax collectors as enriching Roman pockets and their personal pockets. [Zacchaeus](#) was another tax collector who would collect money from the Jews and pass it on to the Romans while filling his own pocket. Like Matthew, Zacchaeus also came under people's scrutiny.

However, **both Matthew and Zacchaeus were forgiven by Jesus when He approached them.**

## **Did Matthew the Tax Collector Write the Gospel of Matthew?**

Matthew is believed to be not only one of Jesus's twelve disciples but also the author of [the Gospel of Matthew](#). **Various early church fathers, like [Eusebius](#), identify him as the book's author. As he traveled around with Jesus, Matthew recorded the mighty miracles he saw his master working.** His written work became one of the four accounts of Jesus collected in the New Testament. Throughout the ages, Matthew's writing has inspired many people around the world.

## What Ultimately Happened to Matthew the Tax Collector?

Tradition states that all of Jesus' disciples went on to spread the Gospel, but only one died of natural causes. John, the author of Revelation, died of old age in Malta. The rest died martyrs, executed in various ways.

According to *Foxe's Book of Martyrs*, Matthew was killed in Ethiopia while carrying out the Great Commission that Christ commanded him and His other disciples to do:

***“Go ye therefore, and teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son and of the Holy Ghost. Teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you...”*** ([Matthew 28:19-20](#) KJV).

However, Matthew's death was not in vain. He spread the Gospel of Christ far and wide, bringing many people to the Lord.

## **What Can We Learn From Matthew the Tax Collector?**

**1. God never gives up on us:** During the Roman Empire, tax collectors were notorious for pursuing money and prosperity. They would collect more than the necessary amounts from people and thus increase their wealth. This might have been the case with Matthew. However, Jesus did not give up on him. Instead,

***the Lord took Matthew under His wing and disciplined him so Matthew could become a channel of His blessing to others.***

Jesus, in His love and tender mercies, will never give up on us. Even when we wear the filthiest clothes, the Lord will never forsake us. **Like Matthew, the Lord simply wants us to come to him in repentance and humility.** Another gospel records Jesus telling the story of a repentant tax collector asking for God's mercy in the temple ([Luke 18:9-14](#)). Jesus used the tax gatherer's humility to teach us He will forgive us regardless of how many bad things we might have done. As we come to Him, He will take us to Himself, dust us off, and clothe us with a new garment of righteousness.

**2. We must make the right choice:** Matthew made the right choice when he chose to leave his job and follow Jesus. **Like Matthew, we must make the right choice to follow Jesus. If anything hinders us from following the Lord, we must forsake those things and follow after Christ,** where we can hope to find eternal life, joy, and peace.

**3. Don't let hatred stop you from serving Christ:** Matthew not only had to deal with the fact other Jews hated him. One of Jesus' other disciples was Simon the Zealot (Matthew 10:4), who would likely have hated him. The [Zealots](#) staged mass riots and civil unrest to overthrow the Romans—if anyone hated tax collectors, they especially did.

**As [Christians](#) seeking a greater intimate walk with the Lord, we must not let other people's hatred or dislike of us stop us from pursuing Christ and eternal life.** Instead, we should continue to seek after the Lord with all our hearts. **AS WE CONTINUE TO RUN THE CHRISTIAN RACE, WE SHOULD BE MINDFUL OF THE MANY HINDRANCES**

## AND SETBACKS WE WILL ENCOUNTER, ESPECIALLY AT THE HANDS OF PEOPLE.

**4. Matthew's life is an example for all:** We don't know exactly why Matthew became a tax collector. Maybe he was greedy for money. Maybe he was an orphan who wanted to escape poverty. Maybe he wanted life among society's elites. Regardless, he chose a greedy profession filled with people who could never get enough. Yet, after Jesus called Matthew, he forsook his profession and became a disciple of the Lord.

It doesn't matter the type of lifestyle we used to live before those around us. Christ did not come to call the righteous to repentance but sinners who need His grace and mercy. Our lifestyle will not stop God in His track from extending His love to us. As we come to the Lord in our filthiness, He will take us to Himself and turn us around, thus, making us become a lighthouse of His glory so that all men who see us will note that His name calls us.

**5. Matthew's life points us to Jesus Christ and not to himself:** Throughout the Bible, Mathew was not mentioned much, yet he wrote the first book of the New Testament, the Gospel of St. Matthew. **Although not much is known about him, he clearly did a good job pointing us to Christ through his written words.** NOT ONLY DID HE WRITE A BESTSELLING BOOK ABOUT THE RISEN SAVIOR, BUT HE DEMONSTRATED HIS LOVE FOR CHRIST BY FREELY GIVING HIS OWN



## LIFE FOR THE SAKE OF THE LORD AND THE CAUSE OF THE GOSPEL.

His contribution and sacrifice made it possible for not only those of his generation to find Christ but for many other generations to follow.

**6. Matthew is a trailblazer:** If Christ can turn a sinner such as Matthew's life around, He can do the same for anyone. The life of Matthew—tax-gatherer, pursuer of greed, a sinner who once had no hope—shows us that **God is no respecter of persons.** If God can do it for Matthew, He can do the same for us today. Therefore, let us follow the example of Matthew, who left a legacy for us to follow. We can confidently turn to Christ, the One sent to redeem us back to the Father.

## **7. We must come to Christ just as we are:**

*When Jesus called Matthew, he dropped everything and followed Him.*

Jesus is a loving Savior to all and will not reject any of us, even the vilest of sinners He will accept. It doesn't matter how deep we are in sin or how great our sins are. He is always there to put His loving arms around us and welcome us into His kingdom.

Therefore, **WE MUST COME TO HIM JUST AS WE ARE AND NOT TRY TO BECOME GOOD IN OUR OWN STRENGTH AND THEN RUN TO HIM, HOPING HE WILL ACCEPT US BASED ON OUR MERITS OR GOOD, CLEAN LIVING.**

We must remember that the love of God is wide and far-reaching.

The love of God will envelop even the greatest of sinners if such sinners allow Him to rule in their lives.

As we take time out to contemplate the life of Matthew the tax collector, we should heed the lessons we can learn through this devout follower of Jesus Christ. He was a sinner, one who loved money. Yet, his contribution to the church made him a great beneficiary of the grace of God, which is given to everyone who seeks after the Lord with their whole hearts.