

“Come & See, Go & Learn OR Go To Hell”

Matthew 9:9

December 28, 2025

INTRO: At the risk of being predictable...

What, if any, New Year's “resolutions” have you made?

See 3 resolutions that lead to miraculous, eternal revolution!

PRAYER

CONTEXT:

- Matthew's Gospel on Jesus Christ's Gospel...
- Scripture is a divine chain vs. string of pearls...
- We're 4 days into the new year... 2026
- Today's context: Christ AGAIN unifies AND divides!

BIG IDEA: Jesus will save every faith-filled sinner & damn every self-righteous fool.

(ROM. 3:23 & 6:23; JN. 3:3; 6:44; 14:6; LK. 14:27; MT. 24:13; HEB. 9:27)

...it is appointed for man to die once, and after that comes judgment...

PREVIEW:

1. Read
2. Realize
3. Respond

**T/S: THIS IS ONE OF THE MOST POWERFUL, BEAUTIFUL,
CONFRONTATIONAL, & ETERNAL ENCOUNTERS
CHRIST HAS IN ALL THE SCRIPTURES...**

TEXT: [Matthew 9:9-13](#)

I. READ

9As 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.

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

- v.9 = MESSIAH, Matthew (me), & Mission
- We see amazing grace...Unlikely selections...
- Relationship between faith & following...
- Following's consistency & completeness...
- v.10-13 = Christ SHOCKS & CONTRASTS...
- v.10-13 = Christ CONFRONTS & CORRECTS...
- v.10-13 = Christ CONVICTS & COMMISSIONS
- v.10-13 = Christ CLARIFYS & CONTINUES on

II. REALIZE

42: Matt. 9:9-13; Mark 2:13-17; Luke 5:27-32

MK Then He went out again by the sea; and all the multitude came to Him, and He taught them. LK After these things He went out and, MT as Jesus passed on from there, He saw a LK tax collector named Levi, MK the son of Alphaeus sitting at the tax office. And He said to MT Matthew, LK "Follow Me." So, he left all, rose up, and followed Him.... Then Levi gave Him a great feast in his own house. MK Now it happened, as He MT sat at the table MK dining in Levi's house, MT that behold, LK a great number of tax collectors MK and sinners also MT came and MK sat together with Jesus and His disciples; for there were many, and they followed Him. And when the scribes and Pharisees saw Him eating with the tax collectors and sinners, they LK complained against MK His disciples, LK saying, MT "Why does your Teacher LK eat and drink with tax collectors and sinners?"

MK When Jesus heard it, He LK answered and MK said to them, "Those who are well have no need of a physician, but those who are sick. MT But go and learn what this means: 'I desire mercy (compassion) and not sacrifice (ritualistic, religious-obeservance/obedience).' For I did not come to call the righteous, but sinners, to repentance."

- There is more to God's Word than meets the eye...
- There's treasure to be found in the full context...
 - Matthew's humility & prominence...
 - Matthew's exemplifying example for us...
 - God's powerful & providential influencers...
 - Christ's intentional use of family DNA...
 - The cowardice of the religious hypocrites...
 - The mic-dropping, confrontational Christ...
 - *"Go and learn"* GO AWAY! LEAVE NOW!
 - Come back if/when you are ready.
 - The multi-faceted declarations: He is God!
 - Magnificence of Christ's Gospel message...
 - Again, the Good News starts with bad news...
 - Jesus models His Word, will, & ways!!!

III. RESPOND

- i. **RESPOND** to GRACE
- ii. **REPENT** of Sin
- iii. **REALIGN** with God & His Glory
- iv. **REMEMBER** The Gospel
- v. **REPEAT** (from the beginning)

1. Read

- a. **JOHN 1:1**
- b. **ROMANS 10:17**
- c. **2 TIMOTHY 3:16-17**

2. Realize

- a. **EPHESIANS 2:1-10**
- b. **EPHESIANS 4:1-15**
- c. **EPHESIANS 6:10-20**

3. Respond

- a. **Respond to Grace** biblically/missionally...
 - i. **1 TIMOTHY 4:15-16**
 - ii. **TITUS 2:1 & 14-15**
 - iii. **MATTHEW 28:18-20**
- b. **Repent of Sin** personally...
 - i. **JOHN 6:44**
 - ii. **MARK 1:15**
- c. **Realign w/ God & His glory** holistically...
 - i. **1 JOHN 2:6**
 - ii. **ROMANS 8:1**
- d. **Remember The Gospel** ALWAYS...
 - i. **1 CORINTHIANS 10:31**
 - ii. **JOHN 14:15**
 - iii. **PHILIPPIANS 4:13**
- e. **Repeat consistently & continuously...**
 - i. **JOHN 20:21**
 - ii. **ACTS 1:8**
 - iii. **2 PETER 1:3**

REVIEW:

Jesus will save every faith-filled sinner & damn every self-righteous fool.

CLOSE:

1 LORD UNIFIES &/OR DIVIDES 2 LIVES:

➤ Biblical or Cultural (James 4:4)	
➤ Supernatural or Superficial	
➤ Repent or Regret	Unify or Divide
➤ Church or Crowd/"church"	Self-less or Self-ISH
➤ Believe or Beware	Light or Dark
➤ Truth or Lies	Broad or Narrow
➤ Religion or Relationship.	Discipleship or Entertainment
➤ Love or Lose	Lost or Found
➤ Fans or Followers	For or Against
➤ Abide or "Balance"	Gatherers or Scatterers
➤ Fruitful or Barren	Engage or Excuse
➤ Faithful or Phony	Walkers or Talkers (1 John 3:18)
➤ Holy or Hypocrite	Righteous or Wrongness
➤ Obedience or Disobedience	Indwelt or Impersonating
➤ ALL-In or ALL-Out	Live or Die
➤ Surrender or Suffer	Victor or Villain
➤ Armor or Costume wearing	Courage or Cowardice
➤ Soldier or Softy	Warriors or Wimps
➤ For Him or Against Him	Gathering or Scattering

God's Word, will, & way OR any & all others

Head, Heart, & Hands OR opinions, feelings, & busyness!

Local, Regional, & Global OR misguided missional myopia.

Cross-carrying slaves or part-time, luke-warm, hired hands.

Eternal exaltation & celebration
OR
separation & damnation!

Heaven OR **Hell**

So what's the big deal about resolutions?

➤ Biblically & missionally... it's personal & eternal!

The Gospel declares reality
&
demands a response!

COME AND SEE... THEN, BE THE CHURCH!
VS.

GO AND LEARN... OR GO TO HELL.

*** Matthew 24:3b-13 ***

3...the disciples came to Jesus privately, saying, “Tell us... what will be the sign of your coming and of the end of the age?” **4**And Jesus answered them, “See that no one leads you astray. **5**For many will come in my name, saying, ‘I am the Christ,’ and they will lead many astray. **6**And you will hear of wars and rumors of wars. See that you are not alarmed, for this must take place, but the end is not yet. **7**For nation will rise against nation, and kingdom against kingdom, and there will be famines and earthquakes in various places. **8**All these are but the beginning of the birth pains.

9“Then they will deliver you up to tribulation and put you to death, and you will be hated by all nations for my name’s sake. **10**And then many will fall away and betray one another and hate one another. **11**And many false prophets will arise and lead many astray. **12**And because lawlessness will be increased, the love of many will grow cold. **13**But the one who endures to the end will be saved. **14**And this gospel of the kingdom will be proclaimed throughout the whole world as a testimony to all nations, and then the end will come.

BE ready!

Yes LORD! Amen & AMEN!

Let's PRAY

STUDY NOTES:

Expositor's Bible Commentary:

Calling Matthew (9:9)

9 The locale is probably the outskirts of Capernaum. Matthew was sitting “at the tax collector’s booth,” a customs and excise booth at the border between the territories of Philip and Herod Antipas. On attitudes toward tax collectors, see on 5:46 (cf. also SBK, 1:377–80). Having demonstrated his authority to forgive sins (9:1–8), Jesus now called to himself a man whose occupation made him a pariah—a sinner and an associate of sinners (cf. 1 Tim 1:15).

The name “Matthew” may derive from the Hebrew behind “Mattaniah” (1 Chronicles 9:15), meaning “gift of God,” or, in another etymology, from a word meaning “the faithful” (Heb. *’emet*). In Mark the name is “Levi” (though in Mark there are difficult textual variants), and the change to “Matthew” in the first Gospel has prompted much speculation. The most radical theory is that of R. Pesch (“Levi-Matthäus,” ZNW 59 [1968]: 40–56), who says that the first evangelist purposely substituted a name from the apostolic band because he habitually uses “disciple” for the Twelve and therefore could not allow an outsider to stand. The evangelist then made a “sinner” out of him to represent the “sinners” among the apostles. “Matthew” in the first Gospel is thus reduced entirely to a redactional product. But Pesch’s understanding of “disciple” is questionable (see on 5:1–2; 8:18–22), and his skepticism is vast.

Since Jews not uncommonly had two or more names, the simple equation of Levi and Matthew is the most obvious course to take. Matthew may have been a Levite. Such a heritage would have assumed intimate acquaintance with Jewish tradition. Mark and Luke have “Matthew” in their lists of apostles (Mark 3:18; Luke 6:15; Pesch has to

say Mark 3:18 is also redactional). See for another example of a prominent NT figure with two names the apostle Paul. Acts has both “Saul” and “Paul,” but in his own writings Paul always refers to himself by the latter name. So Mark and Luke use both “Levi” and “Matthew,” but Matthew uses only the latter. (There is no evidence that either “Paul” or “Matthew” are Christian names, and the parallel is inexact because “Paul,” unlike “Matthew,” is a Gentile name.)

Gundry (*Use of OT*, pp. 181–83) suggests that Matthew’s work as a tax collector assured his fluency in Aramaic and Greek and that his accuracy in keeping records fitted him for note taking and later writing his Gospel. Hill (*Matthew*), following Stendahl (Peake, p. 673j), thinks it unlikely that a person living on “the despised outskirts of Jewish life” could be responsible for this Gospel. But does it not also seem unlikely that “a son of thunder” should become the apostle of love, or that the arch-persecutor of the church should become its greatest missionary and theologian? If Matthew wrote 9:9 regarding his own call, it is significant that it is more self-deprecating than Luke’s account, which says that Matthew “left everything” and followed Jesus.

6. *Eating with sinners* (9:10–13)

On the chronological relation between v. 9 and vv. 10–13, see on 9:1. Matthew abbreviates the account of Jesus’ eating with tax collectors and sinners, excluding descriptive elements that do not contribute to the confrontation, but adding an OT quotation (v. 13).

10–11 For comment on the opening words *kai egeneto* (“and it came to pass”; NIV “while”), see on 7:28–29. The Greek text does not mention “Matthew’s” house, though 9:9 implies it is Matthew’s and both Mark and Luke specify it (so NIV). Jesus himself had said that even a tax collector has his friends (5:46), and Matthew’s dinner substantiates this. “Sinners” may include common folk who did not share all the scruples of the Pharisees (cf. TDNT, 1:324–25); hence the quotation marks in NIV. But almost certainly it groups together those who broke

Pharisaic Halakoth (rules of conduct)—harlots, tax collectors, and other disreputable people (cf. Hummel, pp. 22ff.). Though eating with them entailed dangers of ceremonial defilement, Jesus and his disciples did so. The Pharisees' question, put not to Jesus but to his disciples, was less a request for information than a charge; and contemptuously it lumped together “tax collectors and sinners” under one article (cf. 11:19; Luke 15:1–2 for the same attitude).

There can be little doubt that Jesus was known as a friend to tax collectors and sinners (Matt 11:19; cf. M. Volkel, “‘Freund der Zöllner und Sünder,’ ” ZNW 69 [1978]: 1–10; and see note on 5:46).

12–13 These verses again connect Jesus' healing ministry with his “healing” of sinners (see on 8:17). The sick need a doctor (v. 12), and Jesus healed them; likewise the sinful need mercy, forgiveness, restoration, and Jesus healed them (v. 13). The Pharisees were not so healthy as they thought (cf. 7:1–5); more important they did not understand the purpose of Jesus' mission. Expecting a Messiah who would crush the sinful and support the righteous, they had little place for one who accepted and transformed the sinner and dismissed the “righteous” as hypocrites. Jesus explained his mission in terms reminiscent of 1:21. There is no suggestion here that he went to sinners because they gladly received him; rather, he went to them because they were sinners, just as a doctor goes to the sick because they are sick.

The quotation (v. 13) is from Hosea 6:6 and is introduced by the rabbinic formula “go and learn,” used of those who needed to study the text further. Use of the formula may be slightly sardonic: those who prided themselves in their knowledge of and conformity to Scripture needed to “go and learn” what it means. The quotation, possibly translated from the Hebrew by Matthew himself, is cast in Semitic antithesis: “not A but B often means B is of more basic importance than A.”

The Hebrew word for “mercy” (*hesed*) is close in meaning to “covenant love,” which, according to Hosea, is more important than “sacrifice.” Through Hosea, God said that the apostates of Hosea’s day, though continuing the formal ritual of temple worship, had lost its center. As applied to the Pharisees by Jesus, therefore, the Hosea quotation was not simply telling them that they should be more sympathetic to outcasts and less concerned about ceremonial purity, but that they were aligned with the apostates of ancient Israel in that they too preserved the shell while losing the heart of the matter, as exemplified by their attitude to tax collectors and sinners (cf. France, *Jesus*, p. 70). Jesus’ final statement (v. 13b) therefore cannot mean that he viewed the Pharisees as righteous people who did not need him, who were already perfectly acceptable to God by virtue of their obedience to his laws so that their only fault was the exclusion of others (contra Hill, *Greek Words*, pp. 130f.). If the Pharisees were so righteous, the demand for righteousness surpassing that of the Pharisees and teachers of the law (5:20) would be incoherent.

On the other hand, it may not be exactly right to say that “righteous” is ironic here. The saying simply defines the essential nature of Jesus’ messianic mission as he himself saw it. If pushed he would doubtless have affirmed the universal sinfulness of man (cf. 7:11). Therefore he is not dividing men into two groups but disavowing one image of what Messiah should be and do, replacing it with the correct one. His mission was characterized by grace, a pursuit of the lost, of sinners. The verb *kalesai* (“to call”) means “to invite” (unlike Paul’s usage, where the call is always efficacious). By implication those who do not see themselves in the light of Jesus’ mission not only fail to grasp the purpose of his coming but exclude themselves from the kingdom’s blessings.

If Matthew does not add “to repentance” after “sinners” (as Luke 5:32), it is not because he is disinterested in repentance (cf. Mt 3:2; 4:17). Rather, the words are not in his principal source (Mark) and do not in any case contribute to his present theme.

Hosea 6:6 is also quoted in Mt 12:7, again in a context challenging the Pharisees' legal scruples. Cope (*Matthew*, pp. 68–70) suggests that the verse reveals a contrast between the substantial demands of mercy and merely legal and ceremonial piety, a contrast traceable in the following pericopes (vv. 14–17, 18–26, 27–34, 35–38). But his evidence is slightly overdrawn. In 9:27–34, for instance, vv. 27–31 raise no overt hints of ceremonial defilement.

Tyndale Commentary:

The call of Matthew (9:9–13)

9. *Matthew*, later to be included in the Twelve (10:3), is named in the parallel passages in Mark and Luke as Levi. It seems clear that the same man is concerned (cf. Simon/Cephas for two Semitic names for the same individual). The *tax office* at Capernaum would be concerned with tolls on goods crossing the frontier of Antipas's tetrarchy either across the lake from Decapolis or across the Jordan from Philip's tetrarchy. Matthew was thus apparently a customs official in the service of Herod Antipas rather than a collector of direct taxes, but the two distinct occupations (see Jeremias, *NTT*, pp. 110–111) are both represented by the Greek *telōnēs*, and were generally linked together in Jewish writings, often bracketed with thieves and 'sinners' in general. Both occupations were despised as unpatriotic and inevitably involving contact with ritual uncleanness, quite apart from the extortion which was an inevitable result of the economic system. There is no evidence of any previous direct contact between Matthew and Jesus (cf. on 4:20), but Jesus was by now well known in Capernaum. That this popular 'Rabbi' (cf. 8:19)

should take the initiative in calling an outcast to be his disciple was a sign of acceptance to which Matthew understandably responded readily.

10. For *sat at table*, see on 8:11. Luke specifies that the meal was in Levi's house. The main point is that Jesus was prepared to sit at table with *sinners*, a term which could apply to the 'am ha'āreš, the common Jewish people who could not or would not keep the scribal rules of tithing and purity (among whom the *tax collectors* were prominent), but is used more widely of the immoral (Luke 7:37ff.), heretics (John 9:16ff.) and Gentiles (Gal. 2:15), as well as of tax collectors. To share a meal was a sign of intimacy, and Jesus' notorious willingness thus to identify himself with the undesirable is a prominent feature of the Gospel portrait (see especially Luke 15:1–2; 19:1–10).

11. The reaction is inevitable. After the objection of the scribes to Jesus' 'blasphemy' comes that of the *Pharisees* to his behaviour, for practical observance of the law was the main concern of Pharisaism. To be the guest of an 'am ha'āreš disqualifies a man from being a *ḥābēr*, one recognized as observing all the rules of tithing and purity (Mishnah *Demai* 2:2–3). While the customs officer as such was probably not ritually unclean (though the *tax collector* was, and rendered unclean any house he entered, Mishnah *Tohoroth* 7:6), this gathering of *sinners* would certainly involve the breach of the very detailed scribal regulations relating to food. From the Pharisaic point of view Jesus was undoubtedly in the wrong, as their question implies.

12. Jesus replies with a proverbial saying; similar sayings, portraying the philosopher as a healer, occur in several Greek writings; cf. Luke 4:23. The difference between Jesus and the Pharisees lies in their conception of priorities in the will of God: for the Pharisees the first priority is obedience to regulations, for Jesus a mission to people. A healer must get his hands dirty.

13. Two further sayings reinforce this difference of perspective. The first is a quotation of Hosea 6:6, introduced by a typically Rabbinic formula, *Go and learn what this means*. It is a call to reflection, for Jesus is pointing not to the surface meaning of the text (the validity of *sacrifice*

is not the point here or indeed anywhere in Jesus' teaching; cf. 5:23–24) but to Hosea's underlying concern, the danger of a religion which is all external, in which ritual demands have taken the place of love (*mercy* represents Heb. *hesed*, normally and appropriately translated 'steadfast love' by RSV). Jesus' table-fellowship to which they object is in fact the supreme fulfilment of God's *desire*, while in their censorious indifference is a rebirth of the superficial religion which Hosea deplored. The second saying returns more directly to the present situation, and has the same shocking effect as 8:11–12; those who are to be *called* (not only to this meal but to the Messianic banquet) should surely be the *righteous*, but Jesus reverses the standards of formal religion, and invites only the disqualified. *Righteous* is not entirely ironical: in their sense of the word they *were* 'righteous' (cf. Phil. 3:6), but it is precisely the adequacy of such righteousness that Jesus constantly calls in question (see on 5:20; also on 3:15; 5:6, 10). *Sinners* who 'hunger and thirst for righteousness' are closer to true righteousness than the self-satisfied.

St. Andrews/R.C. Sproul Commentary:

44

THE CALL OF MATTHEW

Matthew 9:9–13

In the Scriptures, it is not unusual to find the biblical writers giving accounts of how God called them to service. Several of the Old Testament prophets report on their calls, and Paul asserted his call as an Apostle in several of his letters. Here in Matthew 9, uniquely among the

four Gospel writers, Matthew recounts his direct and immediate call by Jesus.

As in many other events that Matthew records, this calling is also reported by Mark and Luke, though both of those writers give Matthew's name as Levi. Of course, it was not uncommon for men in the Jewish world of that time to have more than one name—Gospel examples include Peter (also known as Simon) and Thomas (also known as Didymus)—and there is no doubt that all three Gospel accounts refer to the same man.

Matthew's account is simple and straightforward: **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** (v. 9). Matthew was at the tax office because he was by profession a tax collector. The Jews were called to give their tithe to God, which was ten percent of their gross income every year. But beyond the tithe, they had to pay taxes to the civil government, and Matthew was one who helped to collect these taxes.

In our day, those who are involved in the collection of taxes are not very popular with those who labor under the burden of paying those taxes. This was even more true in ancient Israel. At this time in their history, the Jews were under Roman occupation. However, whereas Judea was under a Roman governor, Galilee was governed by Herod Antipas, a puppet king appointed by the Romans, so taxes in the north were paid to his administration. Among other taxes, Herod imposed a heavy tax on goods that were imported, and that tax was especially burdensome in Capernaum, which was not only a crossroads for the commercial routes on land but the chief place where goods that were brought across the Sea of Galilee were unloaded. Matthew had his tax office on the shore of the Sea of Galilee, and there he collected these custom taxes, which ran anywhere from two percent to twelve and a half percent.

The tax collectors received their compensation by taking a share of the taxes they were able to collect. From an economic perspective, the

tax collectors had a very enviable economic position, and many of them were quite wealthy. Matthew probably was a wealthy man, and the text even hints at this when it tells us that after he was called by Jesus, he celebrated by throwing a party at his house.

A Life-Changing Call

In any case, Matthew was performing his vocation at the tax office, just as he did on any other day, when Jesus passed by. Jesus saw him and said to him, “Follow Me.” With that, Matthew got up and followed Jesus. It was a moment that changed Matthew’s life forever. Jesus had a habit of doing that then, and He has a habit of doing it now. When Jesus calls someone not only outwardly but inwardly, that person’s life is never the same.

It seems likely that Matthew already knew who Jesus was. He may not have known Him personally, but he could not have been unfamiliar with Him, because by now Jesus had achieved something of local celebrity status for the mighty works He had done in Capernaum.

Jesus’ command to Matthew, “Follow Me,” had a literal sense to it. Jesus was a rabbi, a teacher, but He did not have a school where He gave lectures. Rather, Jesus was to the Jews what Aristotle was to the Greeks—a peripatetic philosopher, one who taught while walking around. Jesus constantly moved about, and as He walked, His disciples, who were His students, followed closely behind Him and listened to His teaching, trying to memorize what He said. One of the reasons why Jesus spoke in parables and in aphorisms was because those kinds of statements could be easily committed to memory. So, to be a disciple in the band of a peripatetic rabbi was literally to follow him around from place to place. Thus, when Jesus told Matthew to follow Him, He was saying: “I want you to be My student. I want you to come after Me, and I’m going to teach you, train you, and prepare you for a spiritual mission. In order to do that, Matthew, you have to leave your current occupation.

You have to forsake all of the revenue that goes with being a tax collector, and come and join My band of disciples.”

When Jesus called Peter and his brother Andrew, along with James and his brother John, they were fishermen. They knew that if things did not work out in their new vocation and they had a falling-out with Jesus, they could go back to the Sea of Galilee and resume their trade in the fishing industry. Matthew had no such safety net. Once he left his job as a tax collector, there were fifty men waiting in the wings to apply for that position. So, Matthew understood that when Jesus said, “Follow Me,” he had to leave his security. He had to lay everything aside and give His life to Jesus. That was what Jesus was asking him to do.

Remarkably, he was willing to do it. Jesus’ call was so compelling, “he arose and followed Him.” He put down the ledger, put aside the coins, got up from his chair, closed up shop as a tax collector, and followed Jesus to his death.

I imagine that on that day, the last thing Matthew thought about was that at some point in his life he would pick up a pen and write an account of the ministry of Jesus. I’m certain that he never thought that he would write something that would still be studied two thousand years later. And yet, in the providence of God, that is what Matthew was called to do.

With Tax Collectors and Sinners

Matthew then tells us: **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** (v. 10). The tax collectors were among the most despised people in the community. They were regarded as collaborators with the enemy. Even though they had wealth, their social status was at the bottom of the barrel. They were so despised they were not permitted to participate in the synagogue. They were regarded as so disreputable they were not permitted to give testimony in the law courts

of that day. So, the phrase “tax collectors and sinners” became an epithet for the dregs of society.

The Jews understood in a certain way that everyone was a sinner. But when they called someone a sinner, they were talking about someone whose life was characterized by such immorality that to come in contact with him was to experience spiritual and ceremonial defilement. That is why the Pharisees, who tried to keep themselves holy, did everything in their power to disassociate themselves from tax collectors. They thought that their salvation would come from segregation. They sought to keep themselves clean by avoiding any contact with the dregs of human society.

Many years go, I talked to a young Episcopalian priest who was serving a parish in Clairton, Pennsylvania, where I went to high school. Clairton was a mill town, and at that time the mills were suffering from tremendous levels of unemployment. The priest asked me, “How can I grow my church?” He explained that he was pastoring a mission church with only about twenty-five members. I told him that it takes time to build a church, especially when it starts out with just a handful of people, so he would have to be patient. I went on to tell him: “It’s not going to help you in this environment to just put a sign in front of your church. If you want to have a ministry in this town, you’re going to have to go where the pain is. If I were starting a church in Clairton, I would spend time every day of the week in the union hall and the bars, because that’s where the pain is found in this town. If you want to build a church in Clairton, you have to be willing to get your hands dirty.” He gulped when I told him that.

Frankly, I do not know whether he took my advice. As far as I know, that church is still a mission church, if it’s there at all. But I was trying to convince him to build his church the way Jesus built His church. He went out to the highways and byways to seek and to save those who were lost, and He associated with people whom none of the religious leaders of the day would be caught talking to. He went where the pain was, to touch the lepers, to free those who were possessed by demons, to comfort

those who were downcast. That was His mission, and that was how He built His church.

A Merciful Physician

When Jesus willingly associated with the dregs of society, the Pharisees took note. Matthew writes, **And when the Pharisees saw it, they said to His disciples, “Why does your Teacher eat with tax collectors and sinners?”** (v. 11). In antiquity, sharing a table was an expression of deep intimacy. Matthew expressed his feelings for Jesus and many other despised people by inviting them to a meal in his home, and Jesus showed His love and acceptance for them by participating. But the Pharisees were offended that Jesus would associate with such people, and they asked His disciples why He did it.

When Jesus heard that the Pharisees were asking this question, He confronted them: **When Jesus heard that, He said to them, “Those who are well have no need of a physician, but those who are sick. 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”** (vv. 12–13).

This is a multiple-pronged explanation. First, Jesus gave His reason in obvious terms: the sick need a doctor, not the healthy. The implication is that He was a doctor of some sort, and those He was associating with needed His ministrations. They were sick and needy. Unfortunately, no one can be a doctor unless he is willing to get his hands dirty, because disease and the treatment of it is a dirty business. Jesus declared Himself willing to get His hands dirty to save some filthy sinners.

Then He quoted from the book of Hosea, which is all about mercy, to show that His behavior should be the norm for all of God’s people. In Hosea 6:6, God declares, “I desire mercy and not sacrifice, and the knowledge of God more than burnt offerings.” By quoting this verse, Jesus was saying, in essence: “I’m on a mission of mercy. I didn’t come to bring judgment on the world. My Father is a God of justice, and He will visit justice upon this world in His time. But My Father always tempers

His justice with mercy. You should not think that you satisfy the desires of My Father if you merely go to the synagogue, pay your tithes, and give your sacrifices. I want my people to be people of mercy.” Christ has not commanded us to shake our fingers at every sinner and every outcast of our society. He has called us to a ministry of mercy. That is what He did, and that is what He wants us to do.

Finally He said, “I did not come to call the righteous, but sinners, to repentance.” Given that He came to draw some to repentance, it is plainly obvious that He had to minister among sinners, for the righteous have no need of repentance. Of course, He could have ministered among sinners equally well by associating with Jewish high society, but the difference was that those people did not know they needed to repent, whereas the tax collectors and other despised people knew they needed a Savior.

In effect, Jesus told the Pharisees: “You don’t like the people gathered around Me? These are the people I came to redeem. These are the people I came to call to repentance. I’m not involved with sinners because I want to be amid sin. I’m here because I care about them, because they’re lost and they’re dying, and I’ve come to be their Savior.”

MacArthur New Testament Commentary:

Receiving the Sinner/Refusing the Righteous

(9:9–17)

And as Jesus passed on from there, He saw a man, called Matthew, sitting in the tax office; and He said to him, “Follow Me!” And he rose, and followed Him.

And it happened that as He was reclining at the table in the house, behold many tax-gatherers and sinners came and were dining with Jesus and His disciples. And when the Pharisees saw this, they said to His disciples, “Why is your Teacher eating with the tax-gatherers and sinners?” But when He heard this, He said, “It is not those who are healthy who need a physician, but those who are sick. But go and learn what this means, ‘I desire compassion, and not sacrifice,’ for I did not come to call the righteous, but sinners.”

Then the disciples of John came to Him, saying, “Why do we and the Pharisees fast, but Your disciples do not fast?” And Jesus said to them, “The attendants of the bridegroom cannot mourn as long as the bridegroom is with them, can they? But the days will come when the bridegroom is taken away from them, and then they will fast. But no one puts a patch of unshrunk cloth on an old garment; for the patch pulls away from the garment, and a worse tear results. Nor do men put new wine into old wineskins; otherwise the wineskins burst, and the wine pours out, and the wineskins are ruined; but they put new wine into fresh wineskins, and both are preserved.” (9:9–17)

God's receiving the sinner and refusing the righteous is central to the Christian faith. The gospel is not for good people but for bad people who know they are bad and who come to God for forgiveness and cleansing.

From the earliest part of his gospel, Matthew gives the message of God's forgiveness of repentant sinners. In the genealogy of Jesus in chapter 1 he specifically mentions a number of people whose lives were marked by terrible sin. Both Rahab and Ruth were from pagan, idolatrous, Gentile nations, and Rahab was even a prostitute. Although David was a man after God's own heart, he was also a murderer and adulterer.

As the forerunner of the Lord, John the Baptist prepared the people for the Messiah by preaching repentance from sin, and as they confessed their sins, he baptized them as a symbol of God's cleansing (3:2, 6, 11). Jesus began His own ministry with the preaching of repentance (4:17), and in the Sermon on the Mount He proclaimed God's offer of forgiveness for those who sincerely and humbly hunger and thirst for righteousness (5:3–6). In His model prayer He taught His followers to continue to ask God for forgiveness (6:12). From the day of Pentecost on, the early church preached repentance from sin as an integral part of the gospel message (Acts 2:38; 3:19; 5:31).

The object of men's repentance is God's forgiveness, and that is the dual theme of the gospel—men must turn from sin in order for God to forgive, cleanse, and save them. The only people who ever receive salvation and enter God's kingdom are those who acknowledge their sinfulness and repent of it. It follows, then, that those who consider themselves already to be righteous see no need for repentance or forgiveness—and thereby shut themselves out from salvation in the kingdom of God.

That is the central truth of Matthew 9:9–17. Here one discovers one of the most definitive, dramatic, insightful, and comprehensive statements our Lord ever made. It gives the divine perspective on His ministry and the basic rationale of the incarnation. It is among the most important statements ever recorded in the Bible: “I did not come to call the righteous, but sinners” (v. 13b). That truth gives the essence of the gospel and the purpose for the incarnation. Jesus came into the world to call sinners to Himself. For those who know they have a terminal spiritual illness and who have no trust or hope in themselves to be cured, Jesus says, “I am the way, and the truth, and the life” (John 14:6).

Those who are pleasing to God testify with the penitent tax-collector in the Temple: “God, be merciful to me, the sinner!” (Luke 18:13). Augustine pleaded, “Lord, save me from that wicked man, myself.” John Knox, perhaps the greatest preacher in the history of Scotland, confessed, “In youth, in middle age and now after many battles, I find

nothing in me but corruption.” John Wesley wrote, “I am fallen short of the glory of God, my whole heart is altogether corrupt and abominable, and consequently my whole life being an evil tree cannot bring forth good fruit.” His brother Charles, who penned so many great hymns, confessed, “Vile and full of sin I am.” Augustus Toplady, who wrote the beloved hymn “Rock of Ages,” said of himself, “Oh, that such a wretch as I should ever be tempted to think highly of himself. I am myself nothing but sin and weakness, in whose flesh naturally dwells no good thing.”

As he beheld Jesus’ great power and glory, Peter declared, “Depart from me, for I am a sinful man, O Lord!” (Luke 5:8). In his first letter to Timothy, Paul summed up the confession of every honest believer: “It is a trustworthy statement, deserving full acceptance, that Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners, among whom I am foremost of all” (1 Tim. 1:15).

Had Jesus come to save the righteous, His incarnation would have been pointless. Righteous people need no salvation. But even more relevant to man’s situation is the fact that there *are* no righteous people apart from the saving work of Jesus Christ. “There is none righteous, not even one; there is none who understands, there is none who seeks for God; all have turned aside, together they have become useless; there is none who does good, there is not even one” (Rom. 3:10–12).

Many people, like the scribes and Pharisees of Jesus’ day, *consider* themselves to be righteous, and for them Jesus offers no hope or help, because they admit no need. The first declaration of the gospel is negative—that every man is sinful, separated from God, and condemned to hell. A person will not seek to be saved until he realizes he is lost. Therefore the first step in proclaiming the gospel is to tell men of their lostness, and the first step in receiving the gospel is to confess that lostness. A person will not seek healing until he is convinced he is sick; he will not seek life until he acknowledges he is dead. Conversion, then, occurs in one who is willing to accept the death sentence and also the acquittal of God. The man who does not recognize his condemnation to death has no hope for new life.

In the midst of his carefully selected accounts of Jesus' miracles that show His credentials as the predicted Messiah, Matthew presents that central truth of the gospel. The first three miracles (see Matt. 8:1–17) dealt with disease and displayed Jesus' power over sickness and the infirmities of the body. After those miracles came the response of three would-be disciples, whose unwillingness to pay the price of discipleship betrayed their lack of genuine faith (8:18–22; cf. Luke 9:57–62). The second group of three miracles displayed Jesus' power over nature, over demons, and over sin (see 8:23–9:8).

The response to those three miracles is set forth in the present text. The first part of the response is positive, evidenced in the acceptance of the gospel by a penitent sinner. The second part of the response is negative, evidenced in the rejection of the gospel by those who thought themselves already to be righteous.

After Jesus forgave the paralytic's sin (9:2), the questions in the minds of many people no doubt were: "How much sin is God willing to forgive? Whose sin can be forgiven, and whose not? What are the parameters and limits of His forgiveness? What are its conditions and how far does it go?" Those are the questions answered in verses 9–17.

THE POSITIVE RESPONSE

And as Jesus passed on from there, He saw a man, called Matthew, sitting in the tax office; and He said to him, "Follow Me!" And he rose, and followed Him.

And it happened that as He was reclining at the table in the house, behold many tax-gatherers and sinners came and were dining with Jesus and His disciples. (9:9–10)

As He left Capernaum, "His own city" (v. 1; cf. 4:13), **Jesus passed on from there and saw a man, called Matthew.** Mark calls **Matthew** by the name of Levi and identifies him as "the son of Alphaeus" (Mark 2:14; cf. Luke 5:27). It was not uncommon for men to be known by more than one name. Thomas was also called Didymus (John 11:16), Mark was

sometimes called John (Acts 12:12), and Peter was also known as Simon (Matt. 4:18). It may be that the Lord renamed Levi as **Matthew** (which means, “gift of Jehovah, or Yahweh”) just as He renamed Simon as Peter (which means, “stone”; see Matt. 16:18; John 1:42).

When we realize that **Matthew** penned these two verses about himself, we get a glimpse of his modesty and humility. In his own mind, the most important truth about the writer’s former character is given in the words, **sitting in the tax office**. To Jews of his day, that single phrase established **Matthew** as the most despised, vile, and corrupt man in Capernaum.

Matthew was a *publicani* (whence the title *publican* in some translations), a man who served occupying Rome against his own people as a collector of taxes. By the nature of his position, his first loyalty had to be to Rome. Nationals of a country or province occupied by Rome could buy franchises that entitled them to levy certain taxes on the populace and on travelers. A franchise required collecting a specified amount of taxes for Rome and allowed anything collected beyond that figure to be kept as personal profit. Because his power of taxation was virtually unlimited and was enforced by the Roman military, the owner of a tax franchise in effect had a license for extortion. For those reasons the *publicani* were understandably considered traitors by their own people and were usually even more despised than Roman officials or soldiers.

Many tax collectors would accept bribes from the wealthy to reduce and falsify their taxes and would then exact proportionately more from the middle and lower classes, making themselves hated still more. They amassed great fortunes under the authority of the oppressor and at the expense of their own countrymen.

Most Jews believed that the only proper government over them was a theocracy—the rule of God through His appointed leaders such as they experienced under Moses, the judges, and the Jewish monarchy. Because they considered any foreign rule over them to be illicit, they considered taxation by any such government as both unjust and unholy.

Taxation by Rome was therefore not only extortive but also made them compromise both their patriotism and their religion. It was those convictions that prompted the Pharisees to ask Jesus if it was proper to pay taxes to Caesar (Matt. 22:17). For Jesus to have answered yes would in their minds have marked Him both as a traitor and a reprobate.

The noted Jewish scholar Alfred Edersheim reports that a Jewish *publicani* was barred from the synagogue and was forbidden to have any religious or social contact with his fellow Jews. He was ranked with the unclean animals, which a devout Jew would not so much as touch. He was in the class of swine, and because he was held to be a traitor and a congenital liar, he was ranked with robbers and murderers and was forbidden to give testimony in any Jewish court.

Edersheim states that there were two categories of *publicani*. The first, whom the Jews called *gabbai*, collected general taxes, which included those on land and other property, those on income, and those referred to as poll, or registration, taxes. The basic land tax (the amount paid to Rome) was a tenth of one's grain and a fifth of one's fruit and wine. Income tax amounted to one percent of one's earnings, and the amount of the poll tax varied.

The second type of tax collector was called a *mokhes*, who collected a wide variety of use taxes—taxes similar to our import duties, tollway fees, boat docking fees, business license fees, and the like. The *mokhes* had almost unlimited latitude in their taxing powers and could attach a tax to virtually any article or activity. They could, for instance, levy a tax on a person's boat, on the fish he caught with it, and on the dock where he unloaded it. They could tax a traveler's donkey, his slaves and servants, and his goods. They had authority to open private letters to see if a taxable business of some sort might be related to the correspondence.

There were two kinds of *mokhes*. One kind, called the great *mokhes*, hired other men to collect taxes for them and, by virtue of partial anonymity, protected at least some of their reputation among their fellow countrymen. The other kind, called small *mokhes*, did their own

assessing and collecting and therefore were in constant contact with members of the community as well as with all travelers who passed their way. The *gabbai* were despised, the great *mokhes* were more despised, and the small *mokhes* were despised most.

Matthew was obviously a small *mokhes*, because he himself was **sitting in the tax office** as Jesus passed through the outskirts of Capernaum. It was to that man, the most despised of the despicable, to whom Jesus said, **Follow Me!** It was clear to early readers of Matthew's gospel, as it was clear to those who witnessed this amazing encounter, that Jesus extended His forgiveness even to the outcasts of society.

Although we are given no details of any words Matthew may have uttered in reply to Jesus' call, it seems evident from the context that he had been under deep conviction of sin and spiritual need. Because of Jesus' considerable teaching and miracle working in the region around Capernaum, Matthew would have been well acquainted with His ministry, whether or not he had personally listened to Jesus preach or seen Him perform a miracle. And although he did not seek Jesus out as did the centurion (Matt. 8:5) and the paralytic (9:2), Matthew seems to have been yearning for the forgiveness that the perverted system of Judaism told him he could never have. Therefore, when the Lord called him, he immediately **rose, and followed Him.**

Because of his modesty, Matthew does not mention the fact, but Luke tells us that the moment Jesus called him, Matthew "left everything behind, and rose and began to follow Him" (Luke 5:28). That simple call by Jesus was more than enough reason for Matthew to turn his back on everything he was and possessed. Because of his position as an agent of Rome, he knew that once he forsook his post he would never be able to return to it. He knew the cost and willingly paid it. Of all the disciples, Matthew doubtlessly made the greatest sacrifice of material possessions; yet he himself makes no mention of it. He felt with Paul that "whatever things were gain to me, those things I have counted as loss for the sake of Christ" (Phil. 3:7).

When a person is truly converted, he cannot leave his old life fast enough. His old habits, standards, and practices no longer appeal to him and he gladly longs to leave them behind. Edersheim says of Matthew, “He said not a word, for his soul was in the speechless surprise of unexpected grace.” Far from being depressed about what he left behind, his heart overflowed with joy. He lost a career but gained a destiny, lost his material possessions but gained a spiritual fortune, lost his temporal security but gained eternal life.

In one of her loveliest poems Amy Carmichael wrote,

I hear Him call, “Come, follow”;
That was all!
My gold grew dim.
My heart went after Him.
I rose and followed,
That was all.
Would you not follow,
If you heard Him call?

Like many new converts, Matthew’s first thought was to tell his friends about the Savior. He was so overwhelmed that he threw a banquet to present Jesus to his friends—all of whom, as **tax-gatherers and sinners**, were social and religious outcasts. We learn from Mark (2:15) and Luke (5:29) that the banquet was in Matthew’s own house, another fact that he modestly omits in his own account.

The **tax-gatherers** no doubt included the local *gabbai* of Capernaum and perhaps even some fellow *mokhes* from neighboring communities. The **sinners** doubtlessly included robbers, murderers, drunkards, prostitutes, and other irreligious and ungodly people. They were the riffraff of the area and must have been intrigued and touched by the prospect of **dining with Jesus**, whom they knew to be a teacher of righteousness, and His disciples.

It was probably because of this banquet that Jesus first gained the reputation among His opponents as “a gluttonous man and a drunkard,

a friend of tax-gatherers and sinners" (Matt. 11:19; cf. Luke 15:2). Most religious Jews, and especially the proud and self-righteous scribes and Pharisees, could not conceive of any Jew socializing with such a group of **sinners** unless he were one of their own kind.

The Jews of Jesus' day used the term *hamartōloi* (**sinners**) almost as a technical term for people who had no concern or respect either for the Mosaic law or rabbinic traditions. They were looked on as the vilest and most wretched and worthless of all people. Yet it was some of these that **Jesus and His disciples** joined at the banquet in Matthew's house.

Matthew's response to Jesus' call was immediate and positive, and his sincerity was evidenced by his eagerness to share his new faith and his new Master. In a similar way, the genuine faith of Zaccheus, another despised and wealthy tax-gatherer, was evidenced by his voluntary determination to share half his possessions with the poor and to repay four times whatever he had defrauded anyone (Luke 19:8).

We are not told what the group of **tax-gatherers** and sinners thought of Jesus either before or after the meal, but their response to Him was at least positive enough to eat with Him and listen to Him. The main point of the incident, however—and what most offended the Pharisees—was not that the **tax-gatherers and sinners** were willing to associate with Jesus but that Jesus was willing to associate with *them*.

THE NEGATIVE RESPONSE

And when the Pharisees saw this, they said to His disciples, "Why is your Teacher eating with the tax-gatherers and sinners?" (9:11)

The response of the **Pharisees** was quite different from Matthew's. They were outraged that this **Teacher** who claimed to uphold standards of righteousness even higher than their own (see Matt. 5:20) would willingly sit down and eat with such a flagrantly sinful group. No doubt they were also resentful and humiliated that Jesus had never shown them such favor. If He were really a man of God, they reasoned, why had

He not given a banquet for them, the exemplars and self-appointed custodians of religious purity?

The **Pharisees** did not confront Jesus head-on but instead cornered **His disciples**. Having learned of the banquet, these Jewish leaders waited outside to see what would happen and to exact an explanation of the unorthodox activity. The words **Why is your Teacher eating with the tax-gatherers and sinners?** were more a rebuke than a query. In the Pharisees' own minds the question was largely rhetorical, and because they did not believe a satisfactory answer could be given, they were not asking a sincere question but were venting their hostility. The purpose was to put the **disciples** and their **Teacher** on the spot. As with their many other questions to and about Jesus, their motive was not to learn the truth but to entrap and convict this presumptuous upstart who was turning their religious system upside down.

Even at this relatively early stage in Jesus' ministry, the **Pharisees** were becoming resentful and vindictive. Jesus had already said and done more than enough to establish Himself as an iconoclast who was at complete odds with almost everything they stood for and held sacred. They could see no defects in themselves and no good in those who were not like them. They were so pleased with themselves that they considered their enemies to be God's enemies. They were so convinced of their own doctrinal rightness that any belief or standard contrary to their own was by definition heretical and ungodly. They were so convinced of their own moral and spiritual righteousness that anyone who questioned their holiness questioned God's. The only thing Jesus could do that was worse than snubbing them, the religious and moral elite, was to befriend **tax-gatherers and sinners**, the religious and moral dregs. And He did both.

The **Pharisees** did not think they needed God's forgiveness and were certain that **tax-gatherers and sinners** did not deserve it. Their "ministry" was not to help but to judge, not to restore but to condemn. They wanted no part of a Man who, contrarily, condemned their self-righteousness and offered forgiveness to obvious **sinners**.

THE ARGUMENTS

But when He heard this, He said, “It is not those who are healthy who need a physician, but those who are sick. But go and learn what this means, ‘I desire compassion, and not sacrifice,’ for I did not come to call the righteous, but sinners.” (9:12–13)

When Jesus heard this accusatory question, He answered it for the disciples. His doing so doubtlessly embarrassed the Pharisees and added to their indignation. The fact that they had approached His disciples suggests that the Pharisees were afraid to confront Jesus Himself, and His overhearing and responding to their obvious indictment of His actions was more than a little disconcerting.

Although Jesus was fully aware of the Pharisees' true intent (cf. 9:4), He took their question at face value and explained exactly why He had done what He did. In His brief reply, He gave three arguments in defense of His gospel of forgiveness and reconciliation, the gospel that was reflected in His willingness to eat with the ungodly and immoral tax-gatherers and sinners.

THE ARGUMENT FROM HUMAN LOGIC

First of all, Jesus said, **“It is not those who are healthy who need a physician, but those who are sick.”** “If,” He was saying to the Pharisees, “you are really as spiritually and morally perfect as you claim to be, you do not need any help from God or other men. If you are indeed spiritually **healthy**, you do not need a spiritual **physician**. On the other hand, these tax-gatherers and sinners—who you declare, and they themselves admit, are spiritually **sick**—are the self-confessing sinners who need God’s way of salvation presented to them. They are the one’s who seek the spiritual **physician**, and that is why I am ministering to them.”

The analogy is simple. Just as a **physician** is expected to go among people who are **sick**, a forgiver should be expected to go among those who are sinful. Jesus was giving Himself to those who recognized their

deepest need. What sort of doctor would spend all his time with **healthy** people and refuse to associate with those who are **sick**? “Are you doctors,” He implied to the Pharisees, “who diagnose but have no desire to cure? Will you tell a person what his disease is and then refuse to give him medicine for it?” What an indictment of their self-righteous hardheartedness! Those whom they diagnosed as sinful they were quite willing to let remain sinful.

As the Lord charged them later, the scribes and Pharisees were hypocrites who were careful to “tithe mint and dill and cummin” but had no regard for the matters of true righteousness, the “weightier provisions of the law” such as “justice and mercy and faithfulness” (Matt. 23:23). They had outward form but no inward holiness, much ritual but no righteousness. They loved to condemn but not uplift, to judge but not help, They loved themselves but not others, and proved themselves to be without the compassion and mercy that God’s law required—the law they vigorously claimed to teach, practice, and defend.

How could the Pharisees have missed or forgotten God’s wonderful and merciful declarations such as, “I, the Lord, am your healer” (Ex. 15:26). How could they neglect, and even resent, the healing of those whom God Himself desired to heal? Those who claimed to be well proved themselves to be sickest of all!

THE ARGUMENT FROM SCRIPTURE

Jesus’ second argument was directly from Scripture. “Go and learn,” He said, **“what this means, ‘I desire compassion, and not sacrifice.’”** He pinned the Pharisees to the wall with their own Scripture. The phrase **go and learn** was commonly used in rabbinic writings to rebuke those who did not know what they should have known. Jesus used the Pharisees’ own most honored authorities to rebuke them for their ignorance of God’s true nature and of their failure to follow His clear commandments.

Jesus here quotes the prophet Hosea, through whom God said, “I delight in loyalty rather than sacrifice, and in the knowledge of God

rather than burnt offerings" (Hos. 6:6). "It is the perfect Word of God and not the flawed words of men that you should be concerned about," Jesus was saying; "and His Word calls you to be merciful and forgiving, not judgmental and condemning."

The fact that the quotation was from Hosea made it all the more pointed. The story of Gomer's unfaithfulness to her husband Hosea was a living illustration of Israel's own unfaithfulness to God; and Hosea's continuing love and forgiveness of Gomer was a picture of the continuing love and forgiveness God offered Israel. And just as God then desired **compassion** rather than **sacrifice**, He still did. Without **compassion**, all the rituals, ceremonies, and sacrifices of the Pharisees were unacceptable to God. Without **compassion** they proved themselves to be more ungodly even than the despised tax-gatherers and sinners, who made no pretense of godliness.

God had divinely instituted the sacrificial system, and when the prescribed offerings were made to Him in a spirit of humility, penitence, and reverence, they were pleasing to Him. But when offered insincerely and in a spirit of self-righteousness and self-satisfaction, they became instead an abomination. The rituals and ceremonies were only as valid as the contriteness of the worshiper. And the person who sacrificed to God in genuine reverence would serve his fellow man in genuine **compassion**. Conversely, the person who is cold toward other people proves he is also cold toward God, no matter how orthodox his theology and how impeccable his external moral standards. The person who sees obvious sinners as those only to be condemned proves himself to be a greater sinner than they. Those who are furthest from giving mercy are furthest from receiving it (see Matt. 6:15; 18:23–35).

God is never pleased with religious routine and activity that does not come from sincere love of Him and of other people. Ritual separated from righteousness is a sham and an affront to God. "I hate, I reject your festivals," God declared to Israel. "Nor do I delight in your solemn assemblies. Even though you offer up to Me burnt offerings and your grain offerings, I will not accept them; and I will not even look at the

peace offerings of your fatlings. Take away from Me the noise of your songs; I will not even listen to the sound of your harps. But let justice roll down like waters and righteousness like an ever-flowing stream" (Amos 5:21–24).

THE ARGUMENT FROM HIS OWN AUTHORITY

Third, Jesus defended His work on the basis of His own authority: **I did not come to call the righteous, but sinners.** He gladly associated and identified with tax-gatherers and other **sinners**, because they are the ones who needed Him. The parallel passage in Luke 5:32, and some Greek texts and English translations of Matthew 9:13, include the ending phrase, "to repentance." It is the repentant person, the person who is sinful and who acknowledges and turns from his sin, who is the object of Jesus' divine **call**. The person who is sinful but thinks he is **righteous** shuts himself out from God's mercy, because he refuses to acknowledge his need of it. He rejects Jesus' **call** to salvation because he rejects the idea of his lostness.

In response to a later similar charge by the Pharisees and scribes that He "receives sinners and eats with them" (Luke 15:2), Jesus gave three illustrations of God's concern for and forgiveness of the penitent sinner. Through the stories of the lost sheep and lost coin He pointed up the truth that "there will be more joy in heaven over one sinner who repents, than over ninety-nine righteous persons who need no repentance" (v. 7; cf. v. 10). In the story of the prodigal son He dramatically illustrated the double-sided truth that God is overjoyed with a humble sinner who repents and is grieved by the self-righteous person (represented by the older brother) who is himself unforgiving of others and even resents God's forgiveness of them (see espec. vv. 21–32).

Kaleō (to **call**) was often used of inviting a guest to one's home for food and lodging. The inference here is clear. Jesus did **not come to call** the self-righteous to salvation for the same reason He did not call the Pharisees to recline with Him at the dinner in Matthew's house. They

were too good in their own eyes to condescend to such humiliation. And because they would not identify themselves with fellow **sinners**, they could not be identified with Christ, who offers salvation only to sinners who willingly acknowledge they are **sinners**.

“Because you consider yourselves already **righteous**,” the Lord was saying, “I have not come to **call** you. Because you are satisfied with yourselves, I will leave you to yourselves.” The Pharisee who stood proudly in the Temple and thanked God for his own goodness saw no need for forgiveness and thus was not forgiven. But the penitent, heart-broken tax-gatherer who beat his breast and cried out, “God, be merciful to me, the sinner!... went down to his house justified” (Luke 18:10–14). At that same Temple, Jesus said to a group of Pharisees, “I go away, and you shall seek Me, and shall die in your sin; where I am going, you cannot come” (John 8:21; cf. v. 24). The one who thinks he is **righteous** and spiritually safe without Christ has no part in Christ, who came **to call ... sinners**. He cannot seek and save those who will not recognize they are lost (see Luke 19:10). Logic, Scripture, and Jesus Himself together affirm that forgiveness is for the sinful and salvation is for the lost.

In one of His last parables Jesus graphically portrayed that truth. He pictured His kingdom as a great royal wedding feast for the king’s son, for which the king had sent out many invitations. When the previously invited guests, who represented Israel, were called at the appointed time but were unwilling to come, the king several times sent his servants out again to plead with them to reconsider. When they still refused, and mistreated and killed some of the servants, the enraged king ordered his armies to destroy the murderers and set their city on fire. He then sent servants throughout the rest of the kingdom, even to the most out-of-the-way places, to gather all they could find and bring them to the feast (see Matt. 22:1–10; cf. 21:33–46). That was the message He gave to the Pharisees at Capernaum. As Jews, they were the already invited guests to the Lord’s banquet, but they refused to attend and acted with hostility toward the messengers. Therefore, just as they stood outside Matthew’s house and watched the tax-gatherers and sinners eat with Jesus, they

would also stand outside God's kingdom and watch every sort of repentant sinner and outcast be welcomed into it.

The kingdom of God is for the spiritually sick who want to be healed, the spiritually corrupt who want to be cleansed, the spiritually poor who want to be rich, the spiritually hungry who want to be fed, the spiritually dead who want to be made alive. It is for ungodly outcasts who long to become God's own beloved children.

THE ILLUSTRATIONS

Then the disciples of John came to Him, saying, “Why do we and the Pharisees fast, but Your disciples do not fast?” And Jesus said to them, “The attendants of the bridegroom cannot mourn as long as the bridegroom is with them, can they? But the days will come when the bridegroom is taken away from them, and then they will fast. But no one puts a patch of unshrunk cloth on an old garment; for the patch pulls away from the garment, and a worse tear results. Nor do men put new wine into old wineskins; otherwise the wineskins burst, and the wine pours out, and the wineskins are ruined; but they put new wine into fresh wineskins, and both are preserved.” (9:14–17)

We do not know how long after Jesus' encounter with the Pharisees **the disciples of John came to Him**, but the logical relation of their question to that of the Pharisees is clear. Unlike that of the Pharisees, the question of John's disciples was sincere, but it reflected a similar concern about Jesus' teaching and activities that did not conform to the accepted religious standards.

Shortly after he baptized Jesus, **John the Baptist** in effect turned his disciples over to Jesus, saying, “You yourselves bear me witness, that I said, ‘I am not the Christ,’ but, ‘I have been sent before Him.’ ... He must increase, but I must decrease” (John 3:28, 30). Not all of **the disciples of John** began to follow Jesus, however, and even long after Pentecost the apostle Paul encountered some of them in Ephesus who knew no more of the faith than “John's baptism” (Acts 19:1–3).

John the Baptist was then in prison (see Matt. 4:12), and those of his **disciples** who had not begun to follow Jesus were left only with their traditional Jewish ceremonies and practices. Unlike the Pharisees outside Matthew's house, they **came to Him** (Jesus) directly, **saying**, "**Why do we and the Pharisees fast, but Your disciples do not fast?**" The Old Testament prescribed only one fast, the one on Yom Kippur, the Day of Atonement (see Lev. 16:29, 31, where the phrase "humble your souls" [from the Heb. 'ānâ "to afflict or humble"] commonly included the idea of refraining from food). But Jewish tradition had come to require fasting twice a week (see Luke 18:12), and these **disciples** were careful to follow that practice.

Along with alms giving and certain prescribed prayers, twice-weekly fasting was one of the three major expressions of orthodox Judaism during Jesus' day. The scribes and Pharisees looked on these practices with great seriousness and were careful not only to follow them faithfully but to do so as publicly and ostentatiously as possible—ostensibly as a testimony to true godliness but in reality as a testimony to their own self-styled piety. When they gave alms, they blew trumpets "in the synagogues and in the streets" in order to "be honored by men" (Matt. 6:2). When they prayed "in the synagogues and on the street corners," they did so "to be seen by men" (v. 5). And when they fasted, they "put on a gloomy face" and neglected their "appearance in order to be seen fasting by men" (v. 16). They did not see religion as a matter of humility, repentance, or forgiveness, but as a matter of ceremony and proud display. And therefore the external rituals which they paraded as badges of godly righteousness actually marked them as ungodly hypocrites, as Jesus declared in each of the three verses just cited (cf. 5:20).

Religious ritual and routine have always been dangers to true godliness. Many ceremonies, such as praying to saints and lighting a candle for a deceased relative are actually heretical. But even if it is not wrong in itself, when a *form* of praying, worshiping, or serving becomes the focus of attention, it becomes a barrier to true righteousness. It can keep an unbeliever from trusting in God and a believer from faithfully

obeying Him. Even going to church, reading the Bible, saying grace at meals, and singing hymns can become lifeless routines in which true worship of God has no part.

Jesus first replied to John's disciples by saying, **The attendants of the bridegroom cannot mourn as long as the bridegroom is with them, can they? But the days will come when the bridegroom is taken away from them, and then they will fast.**

In those days a wedding would usually last seven days, and the **bridegroom** would choose his best friends as **attendants** to be responsible for the festivities. The wedding celebration was not a time for them to **mourn** but to rejoice. Jesus' point was that it was inappropriate for His followers to **mourn** and **fast** while He was with them in person. The insincere, superficial, and hypocritical fasting practiced by the Pharisees was, of course, always out of place. But even sincere fasting was out of place as long as Jesus, the divine **bridegroom**, was still among His people. Their fasting was out of harmony with what God was then doing in their midst. There was no connection between their ritual and spiritual reality.

A fast is always meaningless if it is performed from habit and does not result from deep concern and mourning over some spiritual need. Going to church on Sunday is hypocritical if it is done apart from a genuine desire to worship and glorify God. Singing a hymn is only a pretense of worship if it does not come from a heart that seeks to praise the Lord.

The days will come, Jesus explained, **when the bridegroom is taken away. Taken away** is from *apairō*, which can carry the idea of sudden removal, of being snatched away violently. Jesus was obviously referring to His crucifixion, which would abruptly and violently take Him away from His followers, His faithful **attendants**. That will be the time for mourning, and **then they will fast.**

But for the present time, He was saying, fasting was inappropriate. When there is no reason to mourn there is no reason to fast. Fasting springs naturally from a broken and grieving heart, but fasting as a shallow spiritual ritual apart from such brokenness is an affront to God.

But an even more important issue was behind the question of John's disciples. Since they obviously had not become disciples of Jesus as John had instructed them to do, they had no basis for genuine faith. But it was clear to them, as it was to the Pharisees, that Jesus' teaching and activities were radically different from those of traditional Judaism. Consequently, behind their question about fasting may have been a deeper concern about forgiveness. "Why," they may really have been wondering, "do You emphasize internal things such as forgiveness, while our recognized religious leaders only emphasize external things such as fasting?"

Jesus' next two illustrations deal with that issue. He made clear that He was not teaching a reformed Pharisaism or a reformed rabbinicalism but an entirely different way of believing, thinking, and living. He did not come to improve the old system but to renounce and undermine it. His way had nothing to do with the old ways, and the old ways had no part in the new. The two ways cannot be connected to one another or be contained one in the other.

To illustrate the truth that His new way cannot be *connected* to the old way, Jesus went on to say, **No one puts a patch of unshrunk cloth on an old garment; for the patch pulls away from the garment, and a worse tear results.** Cloth of that day was primarily wool or linen, and both would shrink when washed. If a **patch of new, unshrunk, cloth** is sewn **on an old garment**, Jesus reminded them, then the first time the garment is washed, the new **patch** shrinks and **pulls away from the garment**, making **a worse tear** than before. In the same way, Jesus' new and internal gospel of forgiveness and cleansing cannot be attached to the old and external traditions of self-righteousness and ritual.

To illustrate the truth that His new way also cannot be *contained* in the old way, Jesus said, **Nor do men put new wine into old wineskins; otherwise the wineskins burst, and the wine pours out, and the wineskins are ruined.**

Wine was often stored in animal skins that were specially prepared for that purpose. The hide would be uncut except at the legs and neck, and

sometimes would be turned inside out. The leg openings would be stitched closed and sealed, and the neck was used as a spout, which was tied with a leather thong or string. **Old wineskins** would eventually dry out and become brittle, and if someone then **put new wine into** them, they would crack and **burst**, spilling **the wine ... out**. The only suitable container for **new wine** is a **fresh wineskin**. In the same way, the only life that can contain true righteousness is the new life given by God when a person repents of his sin and trusts in Jesus Christ as Lord and Savior.

The pharisaical, legalistic, external, self-righteous system of traditional Judaism could neither connect with nor contain the ministry and message of Christ. Consequently, that system had only one option—to oppose and seek to eliminate Christ, which is what it did.

It should be made clear that Jesus' doing away with the old and bringing in the new did not refer to setting aside the divine law and ushering in grace—as many interpreters have claimed throughout church history, and as some still claim today. Nothing could be further from the truth. Jesus categorically declared that He did *not* come to destroy the law but to fulfill it and that any opponent of the law was an opponent of God (Matt. 5:17–19). God's law and His grace have always coexisted and have always been perfectly compatible. The **old wineskins** were not the teachings of the Old Testament but the rabbinical traditions that had come to overshadow, supersede, and often contradict the divinely revealed truths of the Old Testament.

In this passage we can discover three marks of the true believer. First, like Matthew, the true believer follows the Lord. He leads a life of unquestioning obedience. Matthew made no conditions or excuses; he simply “rose, and followed Him” (v. 9). During a postresurrection appearance, Jesus said to Peter, “Follow Me!” But “Peter, turning around, saw the disciple whom Jesus loved following them; ... [and] therefore seeing him said to Jesus, ‘Lord, and what about this man?’ Jesus said to him, ‘If I want him to remain until I come, what is that to you? You follow Me!’ ” (John 21:19–22). The true believer is not always questioning God's truth and resisting His standards for living.

Second, the true believer has compassion on the unsaved. Like Matthew, he has a deep desire to lead others to Christ. That desire may sometimes get cluttered over with selfish concerns, but it will be there. Because we know “the fear of the Lord, we persuade men” to come to Him for salvation (2 Cor. 5:11); and if “the love of Christ controls us” (v. 14), that love will prompt us to witness of Him to others. Both our love of the unsaved and our love of Christ motivate us to be His instruments as He seeks and saves the lost (Luke 19:10). The indwelling Spirit of Christ gives compassion for the lost, and the person who has no desire to win the lost has no basis for claiming Christ or His Holy Spirit.

Third, a true believer forsakes legalism and ritualism. He fasts only as an expression of genuine spiritual concern, and he does not try to attach his new life in Christ to his old ritual or religion or try to fit it somehow into his old patterns. He knows they are incompatible and utterly contrary. He knows that what is begun in the Spirit cannot be completed in the flesh (Gal. 3:3). The genuine righteousness of a forgiven and cleansed heart cannot be enhanced or supplemented by external religious works. Freedom in Christ has no part in the bondage of legalism.

In a hymn that chronicles his own conversion, John Newton movingly describes the transforming power of Christ:

In evil long I took delight,
Unawed by shame or fear,
Till a new object struck my sight,
And stopped my wild career.

I saw One hanging on a tree,
In agony and blood;
He fixed His loving eyes on me,
As near His cross I stood.

How can it be, upon a tree
The Savior died for Me?

My soul is thrilled, my heart is filled,
To think He died for me.

Matthew Henry Unabridged Commentary:

Verses 9–13

In these verses we have an account of the grace and favour of Christ to poor publicans, particularly to Matthew. What he did to the bodies of people was to make way for a kind design upon their souls. Now observe here,

I. The call of Matthew, the penman of this gospel. Mark and Luke call him Levi; it was ordinary for the same person to have two names: perhaps Matthew was the name he was most known by as a publican, and, therefore, in his humility, he called himself by that name, rather than by the more honourable name of Levi. Some think Christ gave him the name of Matthew when he called him to be an apostle; as Simon, he surnamed Peter. Matthew signifies, *the gift of God*, Ministers are God's gifts to the church; their ministry, and their ability for it, are God's gifts to them. Now observe,

1. The posture that Christ's call found Matthew in. He was *sitting at the receipt of custom*, for he was a publican, Lu. 5:27. He was a custom-house officer at the port of Capernaum, or an exciseman, or collector of the land-tax. Now, (1.) He was in his calling, as the rest of them whom Christ called, ch. 4:18. Note, As Satan chooses to come, with his temptations, to those that are idle, so Christ chooses to come, with his calls, to those that are employed. But, (2.) It was a calling of ill fame among serious people; because it was attended with so much corruption and temptation, and there were so few in that business that were honest men. Matthew himself owns what he was before his conversion, as does

St. Paul (1 Tim. 1:13), that the grace of Christ in calling him might be the more magnified, and to show, that God has his remnant among all sorts of people. None can justify themselves in their unbelief, by their calling in the world; for there is no *sinful calling*, but some have been saved *out of it*, and no *lawful calling*, but some have been saved *in it*.

2. The preventing power of this call. We find not that Matthew looked after Christ, or had any inclination to follow him, though some of his kindred were already disciples of Christ, but Christ prevented him with the blessings of his goodness. He is found of those that seek him not. Christ *spoke first*; we have not chosen him, but he hath chosen us. He said, *Follow me*; and the same divine, almighty power accompanied this word to convert Matthew, which attended that word (v. 6), *Arise and walk*, to cure the man sick of the palsy. Note, A saving change is wrought in the soul by Christ as the *Author*, and his word as the *means*. His gospel is the *power of God unto salvation*, Rom. 1:16. The call was effectual, for he came at the call; *he arose, and followed him immediately*; neither denied, nor deferred his obedience. The power of divine grace soon answers and overcomes all objections. Neither his commission for his place, nor his gains by it, could detain him, when Christ called him. *He conferred not with flesh and blood*, Gal. 1:15, 16. He quitted his post, and his hopes of preferment in that way; and, though we find the disciples that were fishers occasionally fishing again afterwards, we never find Matthew at the receipt of custom again.

II. Christ's converse with publicans and sinners upon this occasion; Christ called Matthew, to introduce himself into an acquaintance with the people of that profession. *Jesus sat at meat in the house*, v. 10. The other evangelists tell us, that Matthew made a *great feast*, which the poor fishermen, when they were called, were not able to do. But when he comes to speak of this himself, he neither tells us that it was his own house, nor that it was a feast, but only that he *sat at meat in the house*; preserving the remembrance of Christ's favours to the publicans, rather than of the respect he had paid to Christ. Note, It well becomes us to speak sparingly of our own good deeds.

Now observe, 1. When Matthew invited Christ, he invited his disciples to *come along with him*. Note, They that welcome Christ, must welcome all that are his, for his sake, and let them have a room in their hearts. 2. He invited many publicans and sinners to *meet him*. This was the chief thing Matthew aimed at in this treat, that he might have an opportunity of bringing his old associates acquainted with Christ. He knew by experience what the grace of Christ could do, and would not despair concerning them. Note, They who are effectually brought to Christ themselves, cannot but be desirous that others also may be brought to him, and ambitious of contributing something towards it. True grace will not contentedly eat its morsels alone, but will invite others. When by the conversion of Matthew the fraternity was broken, presently his house was filled with publicans, and surely some of them will *follow him*, as he *followed Christ*. Thus did Andrew and Philip, Jn. 1:41, 45; 4:29. See Judges 14:9.

III. The displeasure of the Pharisees at this, v. 11. They cavilled at it; *why eateth your Master with publicans and sinners?* Here observe, 1. That Christ was quarrelled with. It was not the least of his sufferings, that he *endured the contradiction of sinners against himself*. None was more quarrelled with by men, than he that came to take up the great quarrel between God and man. Thus he denied himself the honour due to an incarnate Deity, which was to be justified in what he spake, and to have all he said readily subscribed to: for though he never spoke or did anything amiss, every thing he said and did was found fault with. Thus he taught us to expect and prepare for reproach, and to bear it patiently. 2. They that quarrelled with him were the Pharisees; a proud generation of men, conceited of themselves, and censorious of others; of the same temper with those in the prophet's time, who said, *Stand by thyself, come not near me; I am holier than thou*: they were very strict in avoiding *sinners*, but not in avoiding *sin*; none greater zealots than they for the *form* of godliness, nor greater enemies to the *power* of it. They were for keeping up the traditions of the elders to a nicety, and so propagating the same spirit that they were themselves governed by. 3. They brought

their cavil, not to Christ himself; they had not the courage to face him with it, but to his disciples. The disciples were in the same company, but the quarrel is with the Master: for they would not have done it, if he had not; and they thought it worse in him who was a prophet, than in them; his dignity, they thought, should set him at a greater distance from such company than others. Being offended at the Master, they quarrel with the disciples. Note, It concerns Christians to be able to vindicate and justify Christ, and his doctrines and laws, and to be *ready always to give an answer to those that ask them a reason of the hope that is in them*, 1 Pt. 3:15. While he is an Advocate for us in heaven, let us be advocates for him on earth, and make his reproach our own. 4. The complaint was his *eating with publicans and sinners*: to be intimate with wicked people is against the law of God (Ps. 119:115; 1:1); and perhaps by accusing Christ of this to his disciples, they hoped to tempt them from him, to put them out of conceit with him, and so to bring them over to themselves to be their disciples, who kept better company; for they *compassed sea and land to make proselytes*. To be intimate with publicans was against the *tradition of the elders*, and, therefore, they looked upon it as a heinous thing. They were angry with Christ for this, (1.) Because they *wished ill to him*, and sought occasion to misrepresent him. Note, It is an easy and very common thing to put the worst constructions upon the best words and actions. (2.) Because they *wished no good to* publicans and sinners, but envied Christ's favour to them, and were grieved to see them brought to repentance. Note, It may justly be suspected, that they have not the grace of God themselves, who grudge others a share in that grace, who are not pleased with it.

IV. The defence that Christ made for himself and his disciples, in justification of their converse with publicans and sinners. The disciples, it should seem, being yet weak, had to seek for an answer to the Pharisees' cavil, and, therefore, bring it to Christ, and he heard it (v. 12), or perhaps overheard them whispering it to his disciples. Let him alone to vindicate himself and to plead his own cause, to answer for himself and for us too. Two things he urges in his defence,

1. The necessity and exigence of the case of the publicans, which called aloud for his help, and therefore justified him in conversing with them for their good. It was the extreme necessity of poor, lost sinners, that brought Christ from the pure regions above, to these impure ones; and the same was it, that brought him into this company which was thought impure. Now,

(1.) He proves the necessity of the case of the publicans: *they that be whole need not a physician, but they that are sick.* The publicans are sick, and they need one to help and heal them, which the Pharisees think they do not. Note,

[1.] Sin is the sickness of the soul; sinners are spiritually sick. Original corruptions are the diseases of the soul, actual transgressions are its wounds, or the eruptions of the disease. It is deforming, weakening, disquieting, wasting, killing, but, blessed be God, not incurable. [2.] Jesus Christ is the great Physician of souls. His curing of bodily diseases signified this, that he arose with *healing under his wings.* He is a skilful, faithful, compassionate Physician, and it is his office and business to heal the sick. Wise and good men should be as physicians to all about them; Christ was so. *Hunc affectum versus omnes habet sapiens, quem versus aegros suos medicus—A wise man cherishes towards all around him the feelings of a physician for his patient.* Seneca *De Const.* [3.] Sin-sick souls have need of this Physician, for their disease is dangerous; nature will not help itself; no man can help us; such need have we of Christ, that we are undone, eternally undone, without him. Sensible sinners see their need, and apply themselves to him accordingly. [4.] There are multitudes who fancy themselves to be sound and whole, who think they have *no need of Christ*, but that they can shift for themselves well enough without him, as Laodicea, Rev. 3:17. Thus the Pharisees desired not the knowledge of Christ's word and ways, not because they had no need of him, but because they thought they had none. See Jn. 9:40, 41.

(2.) He proves, that their necessity did sufficiently justify his conduct, in conversing familiarly with them, and that he ought not to be blamed for it; for that necessity made it *an act of charity*, which ought always to

be preferred before the formalities of a religious profession, in which *beneficence* and *munificence* are far better than *magnificence*, as much as substance is better than shows or shadows. Those duties, which are of moral and natural obligation, are to take place even of those divine laws which are positive and ritual, much more of those impositions of men, and traditions of the elders, which make God's law stricter than he has made it. This he proves (v. 13) by a passage quoted out of Hos. 6:6, *I will have mercy and not sacrifice*. That morose separation from the society of publicans, which the Pharisees enjoined, was *less than sacrifice*; but Christ's conversing with them was more than an act of common mercy, and therefore to be preferred before it. If to do well ourselves is better than sacrifice, as Samuel shows (1 Sa. 15:22, 23), much more to do good to others. Christ's conversing with sinners is here called mercy: to promote the conversion of souls is the greatest act of mercy imaginable; it is *saving a soul from death*, Jam. 5:20. Observe how Christ quotes this, *Go ye and learn what that meaneth*. Note, It is not enough to be acquainted with the letter of scripture, but we must learn to understand the meaning of it. And they have best learned the meaning of the scriptures, that have learned how to apply them as a reproof to their own faults, and a rule for their own practice. This scripture which Christ quoted, served not only to vindicate him, but, [1.] To show wherein true religion consists; not in external observances: not *in meats and drinks* and shows of sanctity, not in little particular opinions and doubtful disputations, but in doing all the good we can to the bodies and souls of others; in righteousness and peace; in *visiting the fatherless and widows*. [2.] To condemn the Pharisaical hypocrisy of those who place religion in rituals, more than in morals, ch. 23:23. They espouse those forms of godliness which may be made consistent with, and perhaps subservient to, their pride, covetousness, ambition, and malice, while they hate that power of it which is mortifying to those lusts.

2. He urges the nature and end of his own commission. He must keep to his orders, and prosecute that for which he was appointed to be the great Teacher; now, says he, "*I am not come to call the righteous, but*

sinners to repentance, and therefore must converse with publicans.” Observe, (1.) What his errand was; it was to *call to repentance*. This was his first text (ch. 4:17), and it was the tendency of all his sermons. Note, The gospel call is a call to repentance; a call to us to change our mind and to change our way. (2.) With whom his errand lay; not with *the righteous*, but with *sinners*. That is, [1.] If the children of men had not been *sinners*, there had been no occasion for Christ’s coming among them. He is the Saviour, not of man as *man*, but of man as *fallen*. Had the first Adam continued in his original *righteousness*, we had not needed a second Adam. [2.] Therefore his *greatest business* lies with the *greatest sinners*; the more dangerous the sick man’s case is, the more occasion there is for the physician’s help. Christ came into the world to *save sinners*, but especially *the chief* (1 Tim. 1:15); to call not those so much, who, though sinners, are comparatively righteous, but the worst of sinners. [3.] The more sensible any sinners are of their sinfulness, the more welcome will Christ and his gospel be to them; and every one chooses to go where his company is desired, not to those who would rather have his room. Christ came not with an expectation of succeeding among *the righteous*, those who conceit themselves so, and therefore will sooner be sick of their Saviour, than sick of their sins, but among the convinced humble *sinners*; to them Christ will come, for to them he will be welcome.

Jamieson-Fausset-Brown Bible Commentary

Mt 9:9-13. Matthew's Call and Feast. (= Mr 2:14-17; Lu 5:27-32).

The Call of Matthew (Mt 9:9).

9. And as Jesus passed forth from thence—that is, from the scene of the paralytic's cure in Capernaum, towards the shore of the Sea of Galilee, on which that town lay. **Mark, as usual, pictures the scene more in detail**, thus (Mr 2:13): "And He went forth again by the seaside; and all the multitude resorted unto Him, and He taught them"—or, "kept teaching them." **"AND AS HE PASSED BY"**

HE SAW A MAN, NAMED MATTHEW—THE WRITER OF THIS PRECIOUS GOSPEL, WHO HERE, WITH SINGULAR MODESTY AND BREVITY, RELATES THE STORY OF HIS OWN CALLING.

In Mark and Luke he is called Levi, which seems to have been his family name.

In their lists of the twelve apostles, however, Mark and Luke give him the name of Matthew, which seems to have been the name by which he was known as a disciple.

While he himself sinks his family name, he is careful not to sink his occupation, the obnoxious associations with which he would place over against the grace that called him from it, and made him an apostle.

(See on [1240]Mt 10:3). Mark alone tells us (Mr 2:14) that he was "the son of Alphæus"—the same, probably, with the father of James the Less. From this and other considerations it is pretty certain that he must at least have heard of our Lord before this meeting. Unnecessary doubts, even from an early period, have been raised about the identity of Levi and Matthew. No capable jury, with the evidence before them which we have in the Gospels, would hesitate in giving a unanimous verdict of identity.

sitting at the receipt of custom—as a publican, which Luke (Lu 5:27) calls him.

It means the place of receipt, the toll house or booth in which the collector sat.

Being in this case by the seaside, it might be the ferry tax for the transit of persons and goods across the lake, which he collected. (See on [1241]Mt 5:46).

and **he saith unto him, Follow me—Witching words these, from the lips of Him who never employed them without**

giving them restless efficacy in the hearts of those they were spoken to.

And he—"left all" (Lu 5:28), "arose and followed him."

The Feast (Mt 9:10-13).

GREEK:

Matthew 9:9 ►

Text Analysis

[Go to Parallel Greek](#)

Strong's	Greek	English	Morphology
2532 [e]	Kai Kai	And	Conj
3855 [e]	παράγων paragōn	passing on	V-PPA-NMS
3588 [e]	ό ho	-	Art-NMS
2424 [e]	Ἰησοῦς Iēsous	Jesus	N-NMS
1564 [e]	ἐκεῖθεν ekeithen	from there,	Adv

3708 [e]	εἶδεν eiden	He saw	V-AIA-3S
444 [e]	ἄνθρωπον anthrōpon	a man	N-AMS
2521 [e]	καθήμενον kathēmenon	sitting	V-PPM/P-AMS
1909 [e]	ἐπι epi	at	Prep
3588 [e]	τὸ to	the	Art-ANS
5058 [e]	τελώνιον, telōnion	tax booth,	N-ANS
3156 [e]	Μαθθαῖον Maththaion	Matthew	N-AMS
3004 [e]	λεγόμενον, legomenon	named.	V-PPM/P-AMS
2532 [e]	καὶ kai	And	Conj
3004 [e]	λέγει legei	He says	V-PIA-3S
846 [e]	αὐτῷ autō	to him,	PPro-DM3S
190 [e]	Ἀκολούθει Akolouthei	Follow	V-PMA-2S

1473 [e]	μοι. moi	Me.	PPro-D1S
2532 [e]	καὶ kai	And	Conj
450 [e]	ἀναστὰς anastas	having arisen,	V-APA-NMS
190 [e]	ἡκολούθησεν ēkolouthēsen	he followed	V-AIA-3S
846 [e]	αὐτῷ. autō	Him.	PPro-DM3S

◀ 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 [a](#)

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, (ω; future ἀκολουθήσω; imperfect ἡκολούθουν; 1 aorist ἡκολούθησα; perfect ἡκολούθηκα ([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, **ἡκολούθησαν αὐτῆς αἱ ἀμαρτίαι ἄχρι τοῦ οὐρανοῦ**, [Revelation 18:5](#), but here for **ἡκολούθησαν** G L T Tr WH have restored ἐκολλήθησαν; (**σημεῖα τοῖς πιστεύσασιν ἀκολουθήσει ταῦτα**, [Mark 16:17](#) Tr WH text (where others παρακολουθέω, which see)). to follow one in time, succeed one: [Revelation 14:8](#)f. (Herodian, 1, 14, 12 (6) **τά γοῦν ἀκολούθησαντα**, 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 θεῶ, 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 ἀκολούθει 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 μετά 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 פָּלַנְיַ אֶתְרֵי הַלְּךָ, 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**, **συνακολουθέω**).

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.

450. anistémi ►

Lexical Summary

anistémi: To raise, to rise, to stand up, to resurrect

Original Word: ἀνίστημι

Part of Speech: Verb

Transliteration: anistémi

Pronunciation: ah-NEE-stay-mee

Phonetic Spelling: (an-is'-tay-mee)

KJV: arise, lift up, raise up (again), rise (again), stand up(-right)

NASB: got, get, stood, rise again, raise, rose, stand

Word Origin: [from [G303 \(ἀνά - each\)](#) and [G2476 \(ἴστημι - standing\)](#)]

1. to stand up
{literal or figurative, transitive or intransitive}

Strong's Exhaustive Concordance

arise, jump up, stand up.

From [ana](#) and [histemi](#); to stand up (literal or figurative, transitive or intransitive) -- arise, lift up, raise up (again), rise (again), stand up(-right).

see GREEK [ana](#)

see GREEK [histemi](#)

NAS Exhaustive Concordance

Word Origin

from [ana](#) and [histémi](#)

Definition

to raise up, to rise

NASB Translation

arise (4), arises (2), arose (4), get (15), getting (1), got (24), raise (7), raised (4), raised...up again (1), raised up again (1), raising (1), rise (3), rise again (10), risen (2), risen again (2), rises (1), rising (1), rose (6), rose again (1), stand (5), stood (13).

Thayer's Greek Lexicon

STRONGS NT 450: ἀνίστημι

ἀνίστημι: future ἀναστήσω; 1 aorist ἀνέστησα; 2 aorist ἀνέστην, imperative ἀνάστηθι and ([Acts 12:7](#); [Ephesians 5:14](#) and L WH text in [Acts 9:11](#)) ἀνάστα (Winers Grammar, § 14, 1 h.; (Buttmann, 47 (40))); middle, present ἀνιστάματι; future ἀναστήσοματι; (from Homer down);

I. Transitively, in the present 1 aorist and future active, **to cause to rise, raise up** (מִקְרָא):

a. properly, of one lying down: [Acts 9:41](#).

b. **to raise up** from death: [John 6:39f, 44, 54](#); [Acts 2:32](#); [Acts 13:34](#) (so in Greek writings).

c. **to raise up, cause to be born:** σπέρμα offspring ([Genesis 38:8](#)), [Matthew 22:24](#) (cf. Winer's Grammar, 33 (32)); τόν Χριστόν, [Acts 2:30](#) Rec. **to cause to appear, bring forward**, τινα τίνι one for anyone's succor: προφήτην, [Acts 3:22](#); [Acts 7:37](#); τόν παῖδα αὐτοῦ, [Acts 3:26](#).

II. Intransitively, in the perfect pluperfect and 2 aorist active, and in the middle;

1. to rise, stand up; used a. of persons lying down (on a couch or bed): [Mark 1:35](#); [Mark 5:42](#); [Luke 8:55](#); [Luke 11:7](#); [Acts 9:34, 40](#). of persons lying on the ground: [Mark 9:27](#); [Luke 17:19](#); [Luke 22:46](#); [Acts 9:6](#).

b. of persons seated: [Luke 4:16](#) (*ἀνέστη ἀναγνῶναι*); [Matthew 26:62](#); [Mark 14:60](#); [Acts 23:9](#).

c. of those who leave a place to go elsewhere: [Matthew 9:9](#); [Mark 2:14](#); (R G); [Luke 4:38](#); [Luke 23:1](#); [Acts 9:30](#). Hence, of those who prepare themselves for a journey (German *sich aufmachen*): [Mark 7:24](#); [Mark 10:1](#); [Luke 1:39](#); [Luke 15:18, 20](#); [Acts 10:20](#); [Acts 22:10](#). In the same way the Hebrew *וְיַעֲשֶׂה* (especially *וְיַעֲשֶׂה*) is put before verbs of going, departing, etc., according to the well known oriental custom to omit nothing contributing to the full pictorial delineation of an action or event; hence, formerly *וְיַעֲשֶׂה* and *ἀναστάς* were sometimes incorrectly said to be redundant; cf. Winer's Grammar, 608 (565). *ἀναστῆναι ἀπό* to rise up from something, i. e. from what one has been doing while either sitting or prostrate on the ground: [Luke 22:45](#).

d. of the dead; 2 aorist, with *ἐκ νεκρῶν* added: [Matthew 17:9](#) R G WH marginal reading; [Mark 9:9](#); [Mark 12:25](#); [Luke 16:31](#); [Luke 24:46](#); [John 20:9](#); [Ephesians 5:14](#) (here figuratively); with *ἐκ νεκρῶν* omitted: [Mark 8:31](#); [Mark 16:9](#); [Luke 9:8, 19](#) (22 L T Tr marginal reading WH marginal reading); [Luke 24:7](#); [Romans 14:9](#) Rec.; so (without *ἐκ νεκρῶν*) in the future middle also: [Matthew 12:41](#); (, L WH marginal reading); [Matthew 20:19](#) (R G L Tr marginal reading WH marginal reading); [Mark 10:34](#); [Luke 11:32](#); [Luke 18:33](#); [John 11:23](#); [1 Thessalonians 4:16](#).

2. to arise, appear, stand forth; of kings, prophets, priests, leaders of insurgents: [Acts 5:36](#); [Acts 7:18](#). middle, [Romans 15:12](#); [Hebrews 7:11, 15](#). of those about to enter into conversation or dispute with anyone, [Luke 10:25](#); [Acts 6:9](#); or to undertake some business, [Acts 5:6](#); or to attempt something against others, [Acts 5:17](#). Hence, *ἀναστῆναι ἐπί τινα* **to rise up against anyone:** [Mark 3:26](#) (*μοικρὸν γένεσθαι*). (Synonym: see *ἐγείρω*, at the end. Compare: *ἐπανίστημι*, *ἐξανίστημι*.)

Topical Lexicon

Root Idea and Scope of Use

The verb translated “arise,” “get up,” “stand,” or “raise” appears 108 times in the Greek New Testament. It covers every sphere where a person (or group) moves from a lower to a higher position—whether literally standing, beginning a journey, taking the floor to speak, recovering

from sickness, or rising from the dead. The contexts fall into several dominant themes that reveal God's work in history and His intentions for His people.

Everyday Rising and the Servant Life of Christ

When Jesus "got up" early to pray ([Mark 1:35](#)) or "rose" from Simon's house to heal many ([Luke 4:38-39](#)), the word paints a picture of purposeful motion. The Savior is never idle; He rises to serve. Believers observing these texts learn that ordinary, daily obedience begins with getting up to meet the Father and to minister to others.

Summons to Action

Imperative forms urge immediate obedience. An angel tells Peter, "Quick, get up!" ([Acts 12:7](#)). The command to Philip—"Get up and go toward the south" ([Acts 8:26](#))—propels the gospel to an Ethiopian official. Saul hears the risen Lord say, "Get up and enter the city" ([Acts 9:6](#)). These narratives highlight how divine direction calls for swift response; delay is never portrayed as faithfulness.

Healing and Restoration

The verb often marks the moment healing becomes visible. To the paralytic lowered through the roof Jesus says, "Get up, take your mat, and go home" ([Luke 5:24-25](#)). Aeneas, bedridden eight years, hears Peter command, "Jesus Christ heals you. Get up and make your bed," and "immediately he got up" ([Acts 9:34](#)). Jairus's daughter ([Mark 5:42](#)) and Tabitha ([Acts 9:40-41](#)) alike "get up," revealing that divine authority extends over sickness and death.

Discipleship and Mission

Levi (Matthew) leaves his tax booth when Jesus says, "Follow Me." The text records, "And he got up and followed Him" ([Matthew 9:9](#)). In [Acts 13:16](#) Paul "stood up" in the synagogue to proclaim Christ. Leaders rise to teach ([Acts 15:7](#)), to defend the faith ([Acts 23:9](#)), or to appoint elders ([Acts 14:20-23](#)). The verb frames public ministry as something requiring believers to stand, speak, and advance.

Legal and Prophetic Testimony

At Jesus' trial false witnesses "stood up" ([Mark 14:57-60](#)); Stephen's opponents "rose up" in dispute ([Acts 6:9](#)). The word signals formal declaration, whether righteous or wicked. Thus it warns that standing against Christ is possible, but also affirms that the gospel's defenders will rise with equal boldness.

False Movements and Apostasy

Gamaliel recalls revolutionaries who “rose up” and perished ([Acts 5:36-37](#)). Paul predicts elders within Ephesus who will “rise up and distort the truth” ([Acts 20:30](#)). These occurrences remind the church to test every movement by Scripture; not every uprising is from God.

Christ’s Resurrection—the Central Event

Several passages use the verb for the resurrection of Jesus:

- [Mark 16:9](#) “After Jesus rose early on the first day of the week...”
- [Acts 2:24](#) “But God raised Him from the dead, releasing Him from the agony of death...”
- [Acts 13:34](#) “He raised Him from the dead, never to return to decay...”
- [Acts 17:31](#) “He has set a day when He will judge the world with justice by the Man He has appointed. He has given proof to everyone by raising Him from the dead.”

Christ’s rising is presented as historical, bodily, and decisive—validating His identity, guaranteeing justification, and anchoring all future hope.

The Coming Resurrection of Believers

Jesus repeatedly promises, “I will raise him up at the last day” ([John 6:40](#); also 6:39, 44, 54). To Martha He says, “Your brother will rise again” ([John 11:23](#)), to which she replies, “I know that he will rise again in the resurrection at the last day” ([John 11:24](#)). Paul teaches, “The dead in Christ will rise first” ([1 Thessalonians 4:16](#)). These assurances connect every Christian burial to a certain dawn when graves will open.

Judgment and Vindication

The verb also depicts future accountability. “The men of Nineveh will rise at the judgment with this generation and condemn it” ([Matthew 12:41](#)). Likewise “The Queen of the South will rise” ([Luke 11:31-32](#)). Those who obeyed lesser light will stand as witnesses against those who rejected the greater light of Christ.

A Superior Priesthood and Unchanging Covenant

Hebrews points to a new High Priest who “arises” in the order of Melchizedek ([Hebrews 7:11, 15](#)). The word signals God’s initiative to establish an eternal priesthood, grounding believers’ access to God in One who ever lives.

Exhortation to Spiritual Awakening

Paul adapts Isaiah in [Ephesians 5:14](#): “Wake up, O sleeper, rise from the dead, and Christ will shine on you.” The appeal calls the church to repentance and renewed holiness, confident that the same power that lifted Christ can lift the lethargic Christian.

Pastoral and Devotional Applications

1. Morning prayer and service: follow Jesus' pattern of rising early ([Mark 1:35](#)).
2. Readiness to obey: when Scripture or Spirit directs, "get up" immediately.
3. Ministry posture: stand up to proclaim truth, defend doctrine, and intercede.
4. Hope at funerals: comfort the grieving with the promise, "He will raise us up."
5. Watchfulness against false teachers who "rise up" from within.
6. Revival: call sleepy believers to arise, confident Christ's light will shine.

Summary

Whether describing a simple change of posture or the triumph of the empty tomb, this verb constantly turns the reader's eyes to decisive movement initiated by God. It summons the faithful to action, certifies the gospel's power to heal and restore, and seals the ultimate hope that all who are in Christ will one day rise as He rose.

Alphaeus

Topical Encyclopedia

Alphaeus is a biblical figure mentioned in the New Testament, primarily known as the father of two of Jesus' apostles. His name appears in the context of the lists of the Twelve Apostles, and he is associated with two distinct individuals: James the son of Alphaeus and Levi (also known as Matthew), the tax collector.

James, Son of Alphaeus

James, the son of Alphaeus, is one of the Twelve Apostles chosen by Jesus. He is often referred to as "James the Less" or "James the Younger" to distinguish him from James, the son of Zebedee.

The Gospel of Matthew lists him among the apostles: "James son of Alphaeus, and Thaddaeus" ([Matthew 10:3](#)). Similarly, the Gospel of Mark includes him in the apostolic list: "James son of Alphaeus, and Thaddaeus" ([Mark 3:18](#)). The Gospel of Luke also mentions him: "James son of Alphaeus, and Simon who was called the Zealot" ([Luke 6:15](#)).

LITTLE IS KNOWN ABOUT JAMES, SON OF ALPHAEUS, BEYOND HIS INCLUSION IN THE APOSTOLIC LISTS. HE IS NOT PROMINENTLY FEATURED IN THE GOSPEL NARRATIVES, AND THERE ARE NO SPECIFIC ACCOUNTS OF HIS ACTIONS OR WORDS. Tradition holds that he played a significant role in the early Christian community, though details of his ministry and martyrdom are largely derived from extra-biblical sources.

Levi (Matthew), Son of Alphaeus

Levi, also known as Matthew, is another son of Alphaeus mentioned in the New Testament. He is identified as a tax collector before his calling by Jesus. The Gospel of Mark records his calling: *"As He was walking along, He saw Levi son of Alphaeus sitting at the tax booth. 'Follow Me,' He told him, and Levi got up and followed Him"* ([Mark 2:14](#)).

Levi's transformation from a tax collector to a disciple of Christ is a testament to the transformative power of Jesus' ministry.

Levi is traditionally identified with Matthew, the author of the Gospel of Matthew. This identification is based on the parallel accounts in the Synoptic Gospels, where the calling of Levi in Mark and Luke corresponds to the calling of Matthew in the Gospel of Matthew ([Matthew 9:9](#)).

As an apostle, Matthew is credited with spreading the Gospel and is traditionally believed to have preached in various regions, including Ethiopia and Persia.

Family Connections and Speculations

THE NEW TESTAMENT DOES NOT PROVIDE EXPLICIT DETAILS ABOUT ALPHAEUS HIMSELF, AND HIS ROLE IS PRIMARILY AS A PATERNAL FIGURE TO HIS SONS.

Some scholars and traditions speculate about possible familial connections between Alphaeus and other biblical figures, though these remain conjectural. For instance, some have suggested that Alphaeus might be the same person as Clopas, mentioned in [John 19:25](#), though this identification is not universally accepted.

The mention of Alphaeus in the context of two apostles highlights the familial aspect of Jesus' early followers, where family ties often intersected with spiritual commitments.

The presence of both James and Levi/Matthew among the Twelve underscores the diverse backgrounds and callings of those who followed Jesus, united in their mission to spread His teachings.

Conclusion

ALPHAEUS, THOUGH NOT A CENTRAL FIGURE IN THE NEW TESTAMENT NARRATIVE, IS SIGNIFICANT AS THE FATHER OF TWO APOSTLES.

His sons, James and Levi/Matthew, played crucial roles in the early Christian movement, each contributing to the spread of the Gospel in their unique ways.

The legacy of Alphaeus is thus intertwined with the foundational history of the Christian faith, as seen through the lives and ministries of his sons.

Smith's Bible Dictionary

Alphaeus

(*changing*) the father of the apostle James the Less, ([Matthew 10:3](#); [Mark 3:18](#); [Luke 6:15](#); [Acts 1:13](#)) and husband of Mary. ([John 19:25](#)) [[MARY](#)] In this latter place he is called Cleopas (not, as in the Authorized Version, Cleophas).

ATS Bible Dictionary

Alphaeus

1. Father of James the Less, [Matthew 10:3](#) [Luke 6:15](#), and husband of the Mary usually regarded as sister to the mother of Christ, [John 19:25](#). See [MARY](#), 1 and 3. By comparing [John 19:25](#) with [Luke 24:18](#) and [Matthew 10:3](#), it is evident that Alphaeus is the same as Cleophas; Alphaeus being his Greek name, and Cleophas his Hebrew or Syriac name.
2. Father of Matthew, or Levi, the evangelist, [Mark 2:14](#).

Easton's Bible Dictionary

(1.) The father of James the Less, the apostle and writer of the epistle ([Matthew 10:3](#); [Mark 3:18](#); [Luke 6:15](#); [Acts 1:13](#)), and the husband of Mary ([John 19:25](#)). The Hebrew form of this name is Cleopas, or Clopas (q.v.).

(2.) The father of Levi, or Matthew ([Mark 2:14](#)).

International Standard Bible Encyclopedia

ALPHAEUS

al-fe'-us (Alphaios; Westcott and Hort, The New Testament in Greek, Halphaios):

(1) The father of the second James in the list of the apostles ([Matthew 10:3](#) [Mark 3:18](#) [Luke 6:15](#) [Acts 1:13](#)).

(2) The father of Levi, the publican ([Mark 2:14](#)). Levi is designated as Matthew in the Gospel of [Matthew 9:9](#). There is no other reference to this Alpheus.

Some writers, notably Weiss, identify the father of Levi with the father of the second James. He says that James and Levi were undoubtedly brothers; but that seems improbable. If they were brothers they would quite likely be associated as are James and John, Andrew and Peter.

Chrysostom says James and Levi had both been tax-gatherers before they became followers of Jesus. This tradition would not lend much weight as proof that they were brothers, for it might arise through identifying the two names, and the western manuscripts do identify them and read James instead of Levi in [Mark 2:14](#). This, however, is undoubtedly a corruption of the text. If it had been the original it would be difficult to explain the substitution of an unknown Levi for James who is well known. Many writers identify Alpheus, the father of the second James, with Clopas of [John 19:25](#). This had early become a tradition, and Chrysostom believed they were the same person. This identity rests on four suppositions, all of which are doubtful:

(a) That the Mary of Clopas was the same as the Mary who was the mother of the second James. There is a difference of opinion as to whether "Mary of Clopas" should be understood to be the wife of Clopas or the daughter of Clopas, but the former is more probable. We know from [Matthew 27:56](#) and [Mark 15:40](#) that there was a James who was the son of Mary, and that this Mary belonged to that little group of women that was near Jesus at the time of the crucifixion. It is quite likely that this Mary is the one referred to in [John 19:25](#). That would make James, the son of Mary of [Matthew 27:56](#), the son of Mary of Clopas. But Mary was such a common name in the New Testament that this supposition cannot be proven.

(b) That the James, who was the son of Mary, was the same person as the James, the son of Alpheus. Granting the supposition under (a), this would not prove the identity of Clopas and Alpheus unless this supposition can also be proven, but it seems impossible to either prove it or disprove it.

(c) That Alpheus and Clopas are different variations of a common original, and that the variation has arisen from different pronunciations of the first letter ("ch") of the Aramaic original. There are good scholars who both support and deny this theory.

(d) That Clopas had two names as was common at that time; but there is nothing to either substantiate or disprove this theory. See [CLOPAS](#).

It seems impossible to determine absolutely whether or not Alpheus, the father of the second James, and Clopas of [John 19:25](#) are the same person, but it is quite probable that they are.

A. W. Fortune

Matthew 9:10 ►

Text Analysis

[Go to Parallel Greek](#)

Strong's	Greek	English	Morphology
2532 [e]	Kai Kai	And	Conj
1096 [e]	ἐγένετο egeneto	it came to pass	V-AIM-3S
846 [e]	αὐτοῦ autou	of Him	PPro-GM3S
345 [e]	ἀνακειμένου anakeimenou	reclining	V-PPM/P-GMS
1722 [e]	ἐν en	in	Prep
3588 [e]	τῇ te	the	Art-DFS
3614 [e]	οἰκίᾳ, oikia	house,	N-DFS
2532 [e]	καὶ kai	that	Conj

3708 [e]	ἰδοὺ <u>idou</u>	behold,	V-AMA-2S
4183 [e]	πολλοὶ <u>polloi</u>	many	Adj-NMP
5057 [e]	τελῶναι <u>telōnai</u>	tax collectors	N-NMP
2532 [e]	καὶ <u>kai</u>	and	Conj
268 [e]	ἀμαρτωλοὶ <u>hamartōloi</u>	sinners,	Adj-NMP
2064 [e]	ἐλθόντες <u>elthontes</u>	having come,	V-APA-NMP
4873 [e]	συνανέκειντο <u>synanekeinto</u>	were reclining with	V-IIM/P-3P
3588 [e]	τῷ <u>tō</u>	-	Art-DMS
2424 [e]	Ἰησοῦ <u>Iēsou</u>	Jesus	N-DMS
2532 [e]	καὶ <u>kai</u>	and	Conj
3588 [e]	τοῖς <u>tois</u>	the	Art-DMP
3101 [e]	μαθηταῖς <u>mathētais</u>	disciples	N-DMP

846 [e]	$\alpha\acute{\nu}\tau\circ\tilde{\nu}.$ autou	of Him.	PPro-GM3S
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SINNERS:

268. hamartólos ►

Lexical Summary

hamartólos: Sinner

Original Word: ἀμαρτωλός

Part of Speech: Adjective

Transliteration: hamartólos

Pronunciation: hah-mar-to-los'

Phonetic Spelling: (ham-ar-to-los')

KJV: sinful, sinner

NASB: sinners, sinner, sinful

Word Origin: [from [G264 \(ἀμαρτάνω - sinned\)](#)]

1. sinful, i.e. a sinner

Strong's Exhaustive Concordance

sinful, sinner.

From [hamartano](#); sinful, i.e. A sinner -- sinful, sinner.

see GREEK [hamartano](#)

HELPS Word-studies

Cognate: 268 *hamartolós* (a substantival adjective, derived from [264 /hamartáno](#), "to forfeit by missing the mark") – properly, *loss* from *falling short* of what God approves, i.e. what is "wide of the mark"; a blatant sinner.

NAS Exhaustive Concordance

Word Origin

from [hamartanó](#)

Definition

sinful

NASB Translation

sinful (4), sinner (12), sinners (31).

Thayer's Greek Lexicon

STRONGS NT 268: ἀμαρτωλός

ἀμαρτωλός, (from the form ἀμάρτω, as φειδωλός from φείδομαι), **devoted to sin, a (masculine or feminine) sinner.** In the N. T. distinctions are so drawn that one is called ἀμαρτωλός who is,

a. not free from sin. In this sense all men are sinners; as, [Matthew 9:13](#); [Mark 2:17](#); [Luke 5:8, 32](#); [Luke 13:2](#); [Luke 18:13](#); [Romans 3:7](#); [Romans 5:\(8\),19](#); [1 Timothy 1:15](#); [Hebrews 7:26](#).

b. pre-eminently sinful, especially wicked; (α.). universally: [1 Timothy 1:9](#); [Jude 1:15](#); [Mark 8:38](#); [Luke 6:32-34](#); [Luke 7:37, 39](#); [Luke 15:7, 10](#); [John 9:16, 24f](#). [John 9:31](#); [Galatians 2:17](#); [Hebrews 12:3](#); [James 4:8](#); [James 5:20](#); [1 Peter 4:18](#); ἀμαρτία itself is called ἀμαρτωλός, [Romans 7:13](#). (β.) specifically, of men stained with certain definite vices or crimes, e. g. the tax-gatherers: [Luke 15:2](#); [Luke 18:13](#); [Luke 19:7](#); hence, the combination τελῶναι καὶ ἀμαρτωλοί, [Matthew 9:10](#); [Matthew 11:19](#); [Mark 2:15](#); [Luke 5:30](#); [Luke 7:34](#); [Luke 15:1](#). heathen, called by the Jews sinners κατ' ἔξοχήν (1 Macc. 1:34 1 Macc. 2:48, 62; Tobit 13:6): [Matthew 26:45](#) (?); [Mark 14:41](#); [Luke 24:7](#); [Galatians 2:15](#). (The word is found often in the Sept., as the equivalent of נָפָר and עָפָר, and in the O. T. Apocrypha; very seldom in Greek writings, as Aristotle, eth. Nic. 2, 9, p. 1109, 33; Plutarch, de audiend. poët. 7, p. 25 c.)

Topical Lexicon

Concept and Scope

Strong's 268 designates the person identified as "a sinner," one who lives in deviation from God's revealed will. While the term appears only forty-seven times in the Greek New Testament, the idea pervades Scripture: humanity, separated from God, stands under judgment unless reconciled through the promised Redeemer. The occurrences cluster in the Synoptic Gospels (where the contrast between "sinners" and self-styled "righteous" dominates Jesus' ministry narratives) and in the Pauline and General Epistles (where the word frames apostolic soteriology and pastoral instruction).

Old Testament Foundations

The Septuagint often employs ἀμαρτωλός for Hebrew *rasha'* ("wicked" or "guilty"). [Psalm 1:5](#), for instance, sets "the sinners" opposite "the righteous," establishing the covenant polarity assumed by New Testament writers. [Isaiah 53:12](#), "He bore the sin of many, and made intercession for the transgressors," foreshadows the Messiah's solidarity with ἀμαρτωλοί.

Jesus Christ and Sinners

- Identification: Incarnation places Jesus among sinners without participating in sin ([Hebrews 7:26](#)).
- Association: Repeated complaints—[Matthew 9:11](#); [Luke 15:2](#); [Luke 19:7](#)—show Him dining with the morally marginalized.
- Call to Repentance: “I have not come to call the righteous, but sinners to repentance” ([Luke 5:32](#)). Repentance never compromises holiness; instead, it magnifies grace.
- Justifying Sacrifice: “While we were still sinners, Christ died for us” ([Romans 5:8](#)). The cross simultaneously exposes sin’s gravity and God’s mercy.
- Vindication: Religious leaders call Jesus “a friend of tax collectors and sinners” ([Matthew 11:19](#)) in derision, yet the Gospel presents the title as honor, highlighting His saving purpose.

Parabolic Teaching

[Luke 15](#) lays out the theological heart of Christ’s stance. Heaven rejoices over “one sinner who repents” ([Luke 15:7, 10](#))—a direct challenge to Pharisaic disdain. The prodigal son narrative illustrates (1) divine readiness to forgive, (2) relational restoration, and (3) the elder brother’s self-righteous blindness.

Apostolic Doctrine

- Federal Solidarity: “Through the disobedience of the one man the many were made sinners” ([Romans 5:19](#)). Adamic headship explains universal guilt.
- Justification by Faith: [Galatians 2:15–17](#) dismantles any hope of righteousness by works. Even Jewish believers acknowledge themselves “sinners” apart from Christ.
- Ongoing Conflict: [Romans 7:13](#); [1 Peter 4:18](#) remind believers that sin’s presence lingers, making sanctification essential.
- High-Priestly Advocacy: [Hebrews 7:26](#) contrasts Jesus—“holy, innocent, undefiled, set apart from sinners”—with the Levitical priests, grounding His once-for-all intercession.

Pastoral and Missional Implications

1. Evangelism: The Gospel addresses real guilt, not merely felt needs. [1 Timothy 1:15](#) summarizes the apostolic pattern: “Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners—of whom I am the worst.”
2. Congregational Care: [James 5:20](#) urges believers to “turn a sinner from the error of his way,” linking pastoral correction with eternal outcomes.
3. Holiness and Humility: [James 4:8](#) commands, “Cleanse your hands, you sinners,” directing professing Christians to continual repentance. Assurance never negates vigilance.

Contrast with Self-Righteousness

[Luke 18:9-14](#) juxtaposes the self-confident Pharisee and the penitent tax collector. The latter's cry, "God, be merciful to me, the sinner!" (verse 13), receives divine justification, proving that recognition of one's sinful condition is prerequisite to grace.

Eschatological Perspective

[Jude 15](#) foresees final judgment "to convict all the ungodly ... of all the harsh things ungodly sinners have spoken against Him." Eschatology underscores the urgency of reconciliation now; after Christ's return, mercy gives way to righteous recompense.

Historical Reception

Early church preaching ([Acts 2](#); [Acts 3](#)) employed the category of "sinner" to level distinctions among Jew and Gentile, thrusting all under the same need and offering the same Savior. Patristic writers continued to emphasize both the believer's former identity as sinner and the transformative power of regeneration.

Summary

ἀμαρτωλός frames the Bible's redemptive storyline: universal guilt, sovereign grace, and transforming fellowship with God through Jesus Christ. The term highlights the dark backdrop upon which divine mercy shines, compels the church's mission to the lost, guards against self-righteous complacency, and assures believers that the One set apart from sinners is also the One who bore their sin to bring them to God.

Matthew 9:11

Text Analysis

[Go to Parallel Greek](#)

Strong's	Greek	English	Morphology
2532 [e]	καὶ kai	And	Conj
3708 [e]	ἰδόντες idontes	having seen [it],	V-APA-NMP

3588 [e]	οἱ hoi	the	Art-NMP
5330 [e]	Φαρισαῖοι Pharisaioi	Pharisees	N-NMP
3004 [e]	ἔλεγον elegon	said	V-IIA-3P
3588 [e]	τοῖς tois	to	Art-DMP
3101 [e]	μαθηταῖς mathētais	disciples	N-DMP
846 [e]	αὐτοῦ autou	of Him,	PPro-GM3S
1223 [e]	Διὰ Dia	Because of	Prep
5101 [e]	τί ti	why	IPro-ANS
3326 [e]	μετὰ meta	with	Prep
3588 [e]	τῶν tōn	the	Art-GMP
5057 [e]	τελωνῶν telōnōn	tax collectors	N-GMP
2532 [e]	καὶ kai	and	Conj

268 [e]	ἀμαρτωλῶν hamartōlōn	sinners	Adj-GMP
2068 [e]	ἐσθίει esthiei	eats	V-PIA-3S
3588 [e]	ό ho	the	Art-NMS
1320 [e]	διδάσκαλος didaskalos	Teacher	N-NMS
4771 [e]	ὑμῶν; hymōn	of you?	PPro-G2P

The Teacher

1320. didaskalos

Lexical Summary

didaskalos: Teacher, Master

Original Word: διδάσκαλος

Part of Speech: Noun, Masculine

Transliteration: didaskalos

Pronunciation: dee-DAS-kah-los

Phonetic Spelling: (did-as'-kal-os)

KJV: doctor, master, teacher

NASB: Teacher, teachers

Word Origin: [from [G1321 \(διδάσκω - teaching\)](#)]

1. a teacher, an instructor
2. (figuratively, with reverence) master
{genitive case or specially}

Strong's Exhaustive Concordance

doctor, master, teacher.

From [didasko](#); an instructor (genitive case or specially) -- doctor, master, teacher.

see GREEK [didasko](#)

HELPS Word-studies

Cognate: 1320 *didáskalos* (a masculine noun derived from [1321](#) /*didáskō*, "to teach") – a teacher, an instructor acknowledged for their mastery in their field of learning; in Scripture, a Bible teacher, competent in theology. [See 1319](#) (*didaskalia*).

NAS Exhaustive Concordance

Word Origin

from [didaskó](#)

Definition

an instructor

NASB Translation

Teacher (41), teacher (10), teachers (8).

Thayer's Greek Lexicon

STRONGS NT 1320: διδάσκαλος

διδάσκαλος, **διδασκαλον**, **ό** (**διδάσκω**), **a teacher**; in the N. T. one who teaches concerning the things of God, and the duties of man:

1. of one who is fitted to teach, or thinks himself so: [Hebrews 5:12](#); [Romans 2:20](#).
2. of the teachers of the Jewish religion: [Luke 2:46](#); [John 3:10](#); hence, the Hebrew בָּנָה is rendered in Greek διδάσκαλος: [John 1:38](#) (); ; cf. below, under **ράββι**, and Pressel in Herzog xii., p. 471f; (Campbell, Dissert. on the Gospels, diss. vii. part 2).
3. of those who by their great power as teachers drew crowds about them;
 - a. of John the Baptist: [Luke 3:12](#).
 - b. of Jesus: [John 1:38](#) (); ; often in the first three Gospels.
4. by preeminence used of Jesus by himself, as the one who showed men the way of salvation: [Matthew 23:8](#) L T Tr WH.
5. of the apostles: **ό διδάσκαλος τῶν ἐθνῶν**, of Paul, [1 Timothy 2:7](#); [2 Timothy 1:11](#).

6. of those who in the religious assemblies of Christians undertake the work of teaching, with the special assistance of the Holy Spirit: [1 Corinthians 12:28](#); [Ephesians 4:11](#); [Acts 13:1](#), cf. [James 3:1](#).

7. of false teachers among Christians: [2 Timothy 4:3](#). (Homer (h. Merc. 556), Aeschylus, others)

Topical Lexicon

Origins and Scope of the Term

Didaskalos designates one who instructs with authority in matters of faith, morals, and Scripture. In first-century Judea it corresponded to the Hebrew “rabbi,” yet the New Testament expands the idea beyond rabbinic circles to embrace the unique authority of Jesus Christ and the Spirit-gifted role of teachers in the Church.

Jesus as the Supreme Teacher

From the outset of the Gospels the word serves chiefly as a title for Jesus. Crowds, seekers, disciples, adversaries, and even demons acknowledge Him with “Teacher” (for example, [Matthew 8:19](#); [Mark 10:17](#); [Luke 20:21](#)). His teaching is distinguished by:

- Authority: “He was teaching them as one who had authority, and not as their scribes” ([Matthew 7:29](#)).
- Divine insight: He reveals the mysteries of the kingdom ([Matthew 13:11](#)).
- Compassion: He “taught them many things” because He saw them as sheep without a shepherd ([Mark 6:34](#)).
- Finality: “You call Me Teacher and Lord, and rightly so, for that is what I am” ([John 13:13](#)).

When opponents address Him as Teacher ([Matthew 22:16](#); [Luke 11:45](#)), their hypocrisy only underscores the authenticity of His instruction.

Discipleship Under the Teacher

The didaskalos–mathetes (teacher–disciple) relationship frames Christian discipleship. Jesus insists, “A disciple is not above his teacher, but everyone who is fully trained will be like his teacher” ([Luke 6:40](#)). The goal is conformity to Christ’s character and doctrine, not mere accumulation of information.

Teachers within Israel

While Jesus alone fulfills the role flawlessly, other teachers appear in the Gospel narrative:

- Jewish religious authorities—Nicodemus, called “the teacher of Israel” ([John 3:10](#)), illustrates the limitations of traditional instruction absent spiritual rebirth.
- John the Baptist—though never given the formal title, his ministry of proclamation functions

pedagogically ([Luke 3:12](#)).

- The scribes—frequently rebuked because their teaching nullified the word of God ([Mark 7:13](#)).

These contrasts elevate the necessity of truth-anchored teaching.

The Spiritual Gift and Office of Teaching

Post-resurrection usage broadens to the ecclesial setting. God “appointed first of all apostles, second prophets, third teachers” ([1 Corinthians 12:28](#)). The Antioch church lists teachers alongside prophets ([Acts 13:1](#)), showing that doctrinal instruction stands at the heart of missionary advance. [Ephesians 4:11](#) links pastors and teachers, implying shepherding through doctrinal care.

Paul repeatedly applies the title to himself ([1 Timothy 2:7](#); [2 Timothy 1:11](#)), highlighting:

- A commission—“a teacher of the Gentiles in faith and truth.”
- A necessity—sound teaching guards the gospel deposit ([2 Timothy 1:13-14](#)).

Qualifications and Accountability

Scripture attaches sobering weight to the role. “Not many of you should become teachers, my brothers, because you know that we who teach will be judged more strictly” ([James 3:1](#)). Hebrews laments believers who “ought to be teachers” yet still need elementary truths ([Hebrews 5:12](#)). Thus, spiritual maturity precedes public instruction.

True and False Teachers

End-time warnings sharpen the contrast:

- True teachers impart “sound doctrine” ([2 Timothy 4:2](#)).
- False teachers cater to “itching ears” ([2 Timothy 4:3](#)), introduce destructive heresies ([2 Peter 2:1](#)), and must be silenced for the Church’s protection ([Titus 1:11](#)).

Didaskalos therefore carries both honor and hazard; fidelity to apostolic truth is the dividing line.

Authority of the One Teacher

[Matthew 23:8](#) crystallizes the theology of teaching: “But you are not to be called ‘Rabbi,’ for you have one Teacher, and you are all brothers.” All human teaching is derivative; Christ alone is the ultimate source. Authentic Christian teachers lead others to submit to His words, never to their own.

Eschatological Dimension

Jesus foretells a time when deceptive teachers will proliferate ([Matthew 24:11](#)). Vigilant discernment anchored in Scripture is thus integral to perseverance.

Practical Ministry Implications

1. Ground teaching in the whole counsel of God ([Acts 20:27](#)).
2. Cultivate Christlike character to match doctrinal precision.
3. Equip the saints for ministry, aiming for unity in the faith ([Ephesians 4:12-13](#)).
4. Guard against self-promotion; authority rests in the word, not personality.
5. Accept accountability before God and the Church for every word taught.

Summary

Strong's 1320 encapsulates a calling that reaches its apex in Jesus Christ and continues through Spirit-enabled servants who faithfully expound Scripture. The health of the Church in every generation rises or falls with the integrity of its teachers.

Matthew 9:12 ►

Text Analysis

[Go to Parallel Greek](#)

Strong's	Greek	English	Morphology
3588 [e]	Ο ho	-	Art-NMS
1161 [e]	δὲ de	And	Conj
191 [e]	ἀκούσας akousas	having heard,	V-APA-NMS
3004 [e]	εἶπεν eipen	He said,	V-AIA-3S

3756 [e]	Oὐ Ou	Not	Adv
5532 [e]	χρεῖαν chreian	need	N-AFS
2192 [e]	ἔχουσιν echousin	have	V-PIA-3P
3588 [e]	οἱ hoi	those	Art-NMP
2480 [e]	ἰσχύοντες ischyontes	being strong	V-PPA-NMP
2395 [e]	ἰατροῦ iatrou	of a physician,	N-GMS
235 [e]	ἀλλ' all'	but	Conj
3588 [e]	οἱ hoi	those	Art-NMP
2560 [e]	κακῶς kakōs	sick	Adv
2192 [e]	ἔχοντες. echontes	being.	V-PPA-NMP

Being STRONG/HEALTHY:

2480. ischuó ►

Lexical Summary

ischuó: To be strong, to have power, to prevail, to be able.

Original Word: ἵσχυω

Part of Speech: Verb

Transliteration: ischuó

Pronunciation: is-khoo'-o

Phonetic Spelling: (is-khoo'-o)

KJV: be able, avail, can do(-not), could, be good, might, prevail, be of strength, be whole, + much work

NASB: could, able, strong enough, healthy, am strong enough, been able, can

Word Origin: [from [G2479 \(ἰσχύς - might\)](#)]

1. to have (or exercise) strength, force
{literally or figuratively}

Strong's Exhaustive Concordance

be able, prevail, be of strength

From [ischus](#); to have (or exercise) force (literally or figuratively) -- be able, avail, can do(-not), could, be good, might, prevail, be of strength, be whole, + much work.

see GREEK [ischus](#)

HELPS Word-studies

Cognate: [2480 isxyō](#) – properly, embodied strength that "gets into the fray" (action), i.e. *engaging* the resistance. For the believer, [2480 \(isxyō\)](#) refers to the Lord strengthening them with *combative, confrontive* force to achieve all He gives faith for. That is, *facing necessary resistance* that brings what the *Lord* defines is success (*His* victory, cf. 1 Jn 5:4). Accordingly, faith ([4102 /pístis](#)) and [2480 \(isxyō\)](#) are directly connected (Js 5:16). [See 2479 \(isxys\)](#).

Js 5:15,16 (Gk text): "¹⁵And the prayer characterized by *faith* ([4102 /pístis](#)) will restore the one who is sick, and the Lord will raise him up. If he has committed sins with present effects, it will be forgiven him. ¹⁶Therefore, openly confess these sins to one another, and pray for the benefit of one another, for the purpose of being supernaturally healed. *Very combative (engaging, overcoming, [2480 /isxyō\)](#)* is the specific (urgent) request of a divinely-approved person who is energized (by God)."

[Here the believer seeks to make *petitions* ([1162 /déēsis](#)) in *faith* – i.e. which are in *accord with God's inbirthings* (the *persuasion* of His will).]

NAS Exhaustive Concordance

Word Origin

from [ischus](#)

Definition

to be strong, have power

NASB Translation

able (5), am...strong enough (1), been able (1), can (1), can do (1), could (8), force (1), good (1), healthy (2), means (1), overpowered (1), prevailing (1), strong enough (3), unable* (2).

Thayer's Greek Lexicon

STRONGS NT 2480: ἰσχύω

ἰσχύω; imperfect ἰσχυον; future ἰσχύσω; 1 aorist ἰσχυσα; (ἰσχύς);
the Sept. for מַעַל, גַּמָּן, קִרְבָּן, etc.; **to be strong**, i. e.:

1. to be strong in body, to be robust, to be in sound health: οἱ ἰσχύοντες, as a substantive, [Matthew 9:12](#); [Mark 2:17](#) (Sophocles Tr. 234; Xenophon, Cyril 6, 1, 24; joined with ὑγιαίνειν, id. mem. 2, 7, 7).

2. to have power (from Aeschylus down), i. e.

a. to have a power evinced in extraordinary deeds, i. e. **to exert, wield, power:** so of the gospel, [Acts 19:20](#); Hebraistically, **to have strength to overcome:** οὐκ ἰσχυσαν (A.

V. **prevailed not** i. e.) succumbed, were conquered (so נָלַכְתִּי, [Genesis 32:26](#) (25)), [Revelation 12:8](#); **κατά τίνος**, against one, i. e. to use one's strength against one, to treat him with violence, [Acts 19:16](#).

b. equivalent to **to be of force, avail** (German gelten): [Hebrews 9:17](#); τί, [Galatians 5:6](#), and Rec. in [Galatians 6:15](#).

c. to be serviceable: εἰς τί (A. V. **good for**), [Matthew 5:13](#).

d. followed by an infinitive **to be able, can:** [Matthew 8:28](#); [Matthew 26:40](#); [Mark 5:4](#); ([Mark 9:18](#) (infinitive to be supplied)); [Mark 14:37](#); [Luke 6:48](#); [Luke 8:43](#); (); ; [John 21:6](#); [Acts 6:10](#); [Acts 15:10](#); [Acts 25:7](#); [Acts 27:16](#) (Plutarch, Pomp. 58). with the accusative, πάντα, [Philippians 4:13](#); πολύ, [James 5:16](#).

(Compare: ἐνισχύω, ἐξισχύω, ἐπισχύω, κατισχύω.)

Topical Lexicon

Scope of the Term in the New Testament

Strong's Greek 2480 focuses on the idea of having power, ability, or prevailing strength. Its twenty-eight New Testament occurrences span the Synoptic Gospels, John, Acts, Pauline letters, Hebrews, James, and Revelation, covering physical capability, moral or legal sufficiency, and decisive spiritual power. The contexts range from everyday labor ([Luke 16:3](#)) to cosmic conflict

([Revelation 12:8](#)), showing that true strength is ultimately measured by relationship to the Lord and His purposes.

Physical Strength and Human Limitation

1. Daily labor and human frailty: “I am not strong enough to dig” ([Luke 16:3](#)).
2. Severe demonic oppression: no one “was strong enough to subdue” the Gerasene demoniac ([Mark 5:4](#); cf. [Matthew 8:28](#)).
3. Medical helplessness: the woman with the flow of blood “could not be healed by anyone” ([Luke 8:43](#)).
4. Manual tasks under pressure: sailors “were scarcely able to secure the lifeboat” ([Acts 27:16](#)).
5. Physical exhaustion in Gethsemane: “Could you not keep watch for one hour?” ([Mark 14:37](#); [Matthew 26:40](#)).

These scenes stress the inadequacy of human strength apart from divine help.

Moral and Legal Competence

1. Salt that “is no longer good for anything” ([Matthew 5:13](#)) depicts moral uselessness.
2. “In Christ Jesus neither circumcision nor uncircumcision has any value” ([Galatians 5:6](#)), highlighting the insufficiency of ritual performance to justify.
3. [Hebrews 9:17](#) affirms that a covenant “is only in force” after death, underlining legal strength activated by a death.
4. [Acts 25:7 and 6:10](#) show opponents unable to “prove” or “withstand” when truth is on trial, underscoring that moral and evidential strength belong to righteousness.

Spiritual Power and Ministry Effectiveness

1. The possessed boy’s spirit resisted the disciples: “they were not able” ([Mark 9:18](#)), contrasting human impotence with Christ’s authority.
2. [Acts 19:16](#) reveals evil spirits overpowering the seven sons of Sceva, while verse 20 counters with, “So the word of the Lord continued to increase and prevail mightily.”
3. [Philippians 4:13](#) declares the believer’s sufficiency: “I can do all things through Him who gives me strength.”

Prevailing Word and the Advance of the Gospel

The verb highlights the unstoppable spread of the message: [Acts 19:20](#)’s “prevailed mighty” links gospel power with measurable impact. [Acts 6:10](#) shows Stephen’s Spirit-filled wisdom that adversaries could not resist, demonstrating that the Word’s strength outstrips the opposition’s best efforts.

Prayer, Faith, and the Believer’s Strength

[James 5:16](#): “The prayer of a righteous man is powerful and effective.” Strength here is not physical but spiritual efficacy rooted in holiness and faith. This guides believers to seek strength through righteous living and fervent intercession.

Discipleship and Dependence on Christ

1. [Luke 13:24](#)—many will seek to enter and “will not be able,” warning that self-reliance fails at the kingdom’s door.
2. Tower-building parables ([Luke 14:29-30](#)) illustrate counting the cost; only Christ provides enduring strength for discipleship.
3. [Acts 15:10](#) confesses that neither the patriarchs nor the apostles were “able to bear” the yoke of the Law, directing all strength to grace.

Eschatological Victory and Cosmic Conflict

[Revelation 12:8](#) states that the dragon “was not strong enough” and lost his place in heaven. Final victory belongs to God and His Christ; evil cannot prevail. The term thus frames eschatology in terms of divine versus created strength.

Practical and Pastoral Implications

- Dependence: Human strength is limited; believers must draw on Christ’s sufficiency ([Philippians 4:13](#)).
- Perseverance: The gospel’s inherent power encourages bold proclamation ([Acts 19:20](#)).
- Prayer: Righteous, faith-filled petitions wield real power ([James 5:16](#)).
- Humility: Recognizing inability ([Luke 13:24](#); [Mark 14:37](#)) fosters watchfulness and reliance on grace.
- Assurance: Cosmic victory over Satan ([Revelation 12:8](#)) guarantees the church’s ultimate triumph.

Historical Usage in Early Church Language

Early Christian writers echoed 2480 to describe martyr endurance and doctrinal steadfastness, reflecting the apostolic pattern: human weakness matched with divine strength. The term became a watchword for confessors who, though physically powerless, “prevailed” through faith, mirroring the New Testament emphasis that true might belongs to God, is received through Christ, and is exercised by the Spirit.

Matthew 9:13 ►

Text Analysis

[Go to Parallel Greek](#)

Strong's	Greek	English	Morphology
4198 [e]	πορευθέντες poreuthentes	Having gone	V-APP-NMP
1161 [e]	δέ de	however,	Conj
3129 [e]	μάθετε mathete	learn	V-AMA-2P
5101 [e]	τί ti	what	!Pro-NNS
1510 [e]	ἐστιν estin	is,	V-PIA-3S
1656 [e]	Ἐλεος Eleos	Mercy	N-ANS
2309 [e]	θέλω thelō	I desire,	V-PIA-1S
2532 [e]	καὶ kai	and	Conj
3756 [e]	οὐ ou	not	Adv
2378 [e]	θυσίαν· thysian	sacrifice.'	N-AFS
3756 [e]	οὐ ou	Not	Adv

1063 [e]	γὰρ gar	for	Conj
2064 [e]	ἤλθον ēlthon	I came	V-AIA-1S
2564 [e]	καλέσαι kalesai	to call	V-ANA
1342 [e]	δικαίους dikaious	[the] righteous,	Adj-AMP
235 [e]	ἀλλὰ alla	but	Conj
268 [e]	ἀμαρτωλούς. hamartōlous	sinners.	Adj-AMP

MERCY:

1656. eleos

Lexical Summary

eleos: Mercy, compassion, pity

Original Word: ἔλεος

Part of Speech: Noun, Masculine; Noun, Neuter

Transliteration: eleos

Pronunciation: EL-eh-os

Phonetic Spelling: (el'-eh-os)

KJV: (+ tender) mercy

NASB: mercy, compassion

Word Origin: [of uncertain affinity]

1. compassion
{human or divine, especially active}

Strong's Exhaustive Concordance

tender mercy.

Of uncertain affinity; compassion (human or divine, especially active) -- (+ tender) mercy.

HELPS Word-studies

1656 *éleos* (translating OT [2617](#) /*kataisxýnō*, "covenant-loyalty, covenant-love" in the OT-*LXX* over 170 times) – properly, "mercy" as it is defined by *loyalty to God's covenant*.

NAS Exhaustive Concordance

Word Origin

a prim. word

Definition

mercy, pity, compassion

NASB Translation

compassion (2), mercy (25).

Thayer's Greek Lexicon

STRONGS NT 1656: ἔλεος (1)

ἔλεος (1), ἔλέου, ὁ, **mercy**: that of God toward sinners, [Titus 3:5](#); ἔλεον λαμβάνειν, to receive i. e. experience, [Hebrews 4:16](#); that of men: readiness to help those in trouble, [Matthew 9:13](#) and [Matthew 12:7](#) (from [Hosea 6:6](#)); [Matthew 23:23](#). But in all these passages L T Tr WH have adopted the neuter form τό ἔλεος (which see), much more common in Hellenistic writings than the masculine ὁ ἔλεος, which is the only form in classic Greek (Sophocles (Lexicon, under the word) notes ἔλεος in Polybius 1, 88, 2; and Pape in Diodorus Siculus 3, 18 variant). The Greek manuscripts of the O. T. also frequently waver between the two forms. Cf. (WHs Appendix, p. 158); Winers Grammar, 66 (64); Buttmann, 22 (20).

STRONGS NT 1656: ἔλεος (2) ἔλεος (2), ἔλέους, τό (a form more common in Hellenistic Greek than the classic ὁ ἔλεος, which see), "mercy; kindness or good will toward the miserable and afflicted, joined with a desire to relieve them";

1. of men toward men: [Matthew 9:13](#); [Matthew 12:7](#); [Matthew 23:23](#) (in these three passages, accusatives to L T Tr WH); [James 2:13](#); [James 3:17](#); ποιεῖν ἔλεος, to exercise the virtue of mercy, show oneself merciful, [James 2:13](#); with the addition of μετά τίνος (in imitation of the very common Hebrew phrase נָשַׁעַ רְאֵת מִנְחָה, [Genesis 21:23](#); [Genesis 24:12](#); [Judges 1:24](#), etc.; cf. Thiersch, De Pentateuchi vers. Alex., p. 147; (Winer's Grammar, 33 (32); 376 (353))), to show, afford, mercy to one, [Luke 10:37](#).

2. of God toward men;

a. universally: [Luke 1:50](#); in benedictions: [Galatians 6:16](#); [1 Timothy 1:2](#); [2 Timothy 1:2](#); ((probably) [Titus 1:4](#) R L); [2 John 1:3](#); [Jude 1:2](#). ἐμεγάλυνε κύριος τό ἔλεος αὐτοῦ μετ' αὐτῆς, magnified his mercy toward her, i. e. showed distinguished mercy to her (after the Hebrew, see [Genesis 19:19](#)), [Luke 1:58](#).

b. especially the mercy and clemency of God in providing and offering to men salvation by Christ: [Luke 1:54](#); [Romans 15:9](#); [Ephesians 2:4](#); ([Titus 3:5](#) L T Tr WH; [Hebrews 4:16](#) L T Tr WH); [1 Peter 1:3](#); **σπλάγχνα ἐλέοντος** (the genitive of quality (cf. Winers Grammar, 611 (568))), wherein mercy dwells, as we should say, **the heart of mercy**, [Luke 1:78](#); **ποιεῖν ἔλεος μετά τίνος** (see 1 above), [Luke 1:72](#); **σκεύη ἐλέοντος**, vessels (fitted for the reception) of mercy, i. e. men whom God has made fit to obtain salvation through Christ, [Romans 9:23](#); **τῷ ὑμετέρῳ ἐλη̄ι**, by (in consequence of, moved by) the mercy shown you in your conversion to Christ, [Romans 11:31](#) (cf. Winers Grammar, § 22, 7 (cf. § 61, 3 a.); Buttmann, 157 (137)).

3. the mercy of Christ, whereby at his return to judgment he will bless true Christians with eternal life: [Jude 1:21](#); ([2 Timothy 1:16, 18](#) (on the repetition of **κύριος** in [2 Timothy 1:18](#) cf. [Genesis 19:24](#); [1 Samuel 3:21](#); [1 Samuel 15:22](#); [2 Chronicles 7:2](#); [Genesis 1:27](#), etc. Winer's Grammar, § 22, 2); but Prof. Grimm understands **κύριος** here as referring to God; see **κύριος**, c. **α.**). (Cf. Trench, § xlvi.; and see **ἐλη̄ω** at the end.)

Topical Lexicon

Conceptual Overview

Strong's Greek 1656 (ἔλεος, eleos) speaks of God's compassionate response toward human misery and of the believer's corresponding attitude toward others. It is more than sentiment; it is love that moves to act and to relieve. Every one of its twenty-seven New Testament occurrences carries this note of active compassion, whether describing God's saving initiative or the believer's ethical obligation.

Old Testament Background and Septuagint Bridge

In the Septuagint, eleos most often translates Hebrew hesed (steadfast covenant love) and rahamim (tender compassion). Thus, when the New Testament writers employ ἔλεος they inherit centuries of revelation in which the Lord binds Himself to His people in loyal love and repeatedly bends toward them in pity despite their failings ([Exodus 34:6](#); [Psalm 136](#)). The Magnificat echoes this stream: "His mercy extends to those who fear Him, from generation to generation" ([Luke 1:50](#)).

Divine Attribute Revealed in Christ

[Ephesians 2:4](#) gathers the theme into a single phrase: “God, who is rich in mercy.” The incarnation, teaching, miracles, cross, and resurrection of Jesus Christ all display that wealth. Matthew twice records Him citing [Hosea 6:6](#), “I desire mercy, not sacrifice” ([Matthew 9:13](#); 12:7), correcting a religion that offered ritual while ignoring human need. The Good Samaritan parable ends with the command, “Go and do likewise” ([Luke 10:37](#)), showing that divine mercy must reproduce itself in human lives.

Mercy and Salvation

[Titus 3:5](#) ties mercy to regeneration: “He saved us, not by works of righteousness that we had done, but according to His mercy.” Romans amplifies the thought. God prepares “vessels of mercy” for glory ([Romans 9:23](#)); both Jew and Gentile finally “may receive mercy” ([Romans 11:31](#)); and the Gentiles glorify God “for His mercy” ([Romans 15:9](#)). 1 Peter celebrates the same grace: “By His great mercy He has given us new birth into a living hope” ([1 Peter 1:3](#)).

Mercy in Apostolic Greetings and Benedictions

Unlike the earlier Pauline letters that greet with “grace and peace,” the Pastoral Epistles add mercy: “Grace, mercy, and peace from God the Father and Christ Jesus our Lord” ([1 Timothy 1:2](#); [2 Timothy 1:2](#)). The inclusion underscores the pastoral concern for frail servants engaged in difficult ministry. [Galatians 6:16](#) extends “peace and mercy” to all who walk by the rule of the new creation, while [2 John 1:3](#) and [Jude 1:2](#) pray that mercy be multiplied to the fellowship.

The Throne of Grace

[Hebrews 4:16](#) invites believers to draw near “so that we may receive mercy and find grace to help us in our time of need.” Mercy here is not merely forensic; it is continual assistance from a sympathetic High Priest. The open throne sustains worship, perseverance, and restorative ministry within the church.

Mercy and Judgment

James issues searching warnings and promises. “Judgment without mercy will be shown to anyone who has not been merciful. Mercy triumphs over judgment” ([James 2:13](#)). Wisdom from above is “full of mercy” ([James 3:17](#)), contrasting heavenly character with earthly rivalry. God’s mercy does not nullify righteousness; it provides the means by which righteousness is satisfied and sin’s misery relieved.

Eschatological Mercy

The believer’s hope rests finally on mercy: “keep yourselves in the love of God as you await the mercy of our Lord Jesus Christ to bring you eternal life” ([Jude 1:21](#)). Paul prays that Onesiphorus “find mercy from the Lord on that day” ([2 Timothy 1:18](#)). Mercy will crown the faithful at the consummation, completing what grace began in time.

Ethical and Pastoral Implications

1. Worship: True worship values mercy above ritualism, aligning with God's heart ([Matthew 23:23](#)).
2. Evangelism: Proclaiming the gospel is extending God's saving mercy to the lost ([Romans 11:31](#)).
3. Compassion Ministries: Practical relief of suffering mirrors the Father's character ([Luke 10:37](#)).
4. Fellowship: Greetings of "mercy" remind believers to deal gently with one another's weaknesses ([Galatians 6:16](#)).
5. Leadership: Pastors and missionaries labor under the awareness that their service exists because they themselves "received mercy" (cf. [1 Timothy 1:13](#) with the cognate verb).

Historical and Liturgical Legacy

Early Christian worship adopted the cry, "Kyrie, eleison—Lord, have mercy," which remains a staple in many liturgies. The phrase encapsulates both confession of need and confidence in God's compassionate readiness to forgive and heal.

Key New Testament Occurrences

[Matthew 9:13](#); [Matthew 12:7](#); [Matthew 23:23](#)

[Luke 1:50](#), [1:54](#), [1:58](#), [1:72](#), [1:78](#); [Luke 10:37](#)

[Romans 9:23](#); [Romans 11:31](#); [Romans 15:9](#)

[Ephesians 2:4](#)

[Galatians 6:16](#)

[1 Timothy 1:2](#)

[2 Timothy 1:2](#), [1:16](#), [1:18](#)

[Titus 3:5](#)

[Hebrews 4:16](#)

[James 2:13](#); [James 3:17](#)

[1 Peter 1:3](#)

[2 John 1:3](#)

[Jude 1:2, 1:21](#)

Summary

"Ἐλεος is God's compassionate resolve to address human misery, culminating in the saving work of Christ and perpetuated through the Spirit-empowered mercy of His people. It anchors the believer's past forgiveness, present confidence, and future hope, while shaping every sphere of Christian ministry.

I/JESUS DESIRE:

2309. **theló**

Lexical Summary

theló: To will, to wish, to desire, to intend

Original Word: θέλω

Part of Speech: Verb

Transliteration: theló

Pronunciation: theh'-lo

Phonetic Spelling: (eth-el'-o,)

KJV: desire, be disposed (forward), intend, list, love, mean, please, have rather, (be) will (have, -ling, -ling(-ly))

NASB: want, wish, wishes, wanted, willing, desire, wants

Word Origin: [apparently strengthened from the alternate form of [G138 \(αἱρέουμαι - choose\)](#)]

1. to determine, i.e. choose or prefer
2. (by implication) to wish, i.e. be inclined to
3. (sometimes adverbially) gladly
4. (impersonally for the future tense) to be about to
5. (by Hebraism) to delight in

{literally or figuratively; as an active option from subjective impulse; whereas G1014 properly denotes rather a passive acquiescence in objective considerations}

Strong's Exhaustive Concordance

desire, be disposed toward, intend

Thel'-o or thel'-o or in certain tenses theleo thel-eh'-o, and etheleo eth-el-eh'-o, which are otherwise obsolete; apparently strengthened from the alternate form of [haireomai](#); to determine (as an active option from subjective impulse; whereas [boulomai](#) properly denotes rather a passive acquiescence in objective considerations), i.e. Choose or prefer (literally or figuratively); by implication, to wish, i.e. Be inclined to (sometimes adverbially, gladly); impersonally for the

future tense, to be about to; by Hebraism, to delight in -- desire, be disposed (forward), intend, list, love, mean, please, have rather, (be) will (have, -ling, - ling(-ly)).

see GREEK [haireomai](#)

see GREEK [boulomai](#)

HELPS Word-studies

Cognate: 2309 *thélō* (a primitive verb, *NAS* dictionary) – to desire (wish, will), wanting what is *best (optimal)* because someone is *ready* and *willing* to act.

[2309](#) /*thélō* ("to desire, wish") is commonly used of the Lord extending His "best-offer" to the believer – wanting (desiring) to birth His persuasion (faith) in them which also empowers, manifests His presence etc. [See 2307 \(*thelēma*\)](#).

[Note the close connection between *faith* ([4102](#) /*pístis*, "God's inbirthed *persuasion*") and this root (*thel-*, [2307](#) /*thelēma*); cf. 2 Cor 8:5-7 and Heb 10:36-39).]

NAS Exhaustive Concordance

Word Origin

a prim. verb

Definition

to will, wish

NASB Translation

am...willing (1), am willing (3), delighting (1), delights (1), desire (14), desired (4), desires (4), desiring (2), intended (1), intending (1), like (3), maintain (1), mean (1), mean* (2), please (1), purposed (1), refused* (1), unwilling* (11), want (52), wanted (15), wanting (3), wants (8), will (5), willed (1), willing (15), wills (4), wish (24), wished (7), wishes (16), wishing (4), would (1).

Thayer's Greek Lexicon

STRONGS NT 2309: ἐθέλω

ἐθέλω, see [θέλω](#).

STRONGS NT 2309: θέλωθέλω (only in this form in the N. T.; in Greek authors also [ἐθέλω](#) (Veitch, under the word; Lob. ad Phryn., p. 7; Buttmann, 57 (49))); imperfect [ἠθελον](#); (future 3 person singular [θελήσει](#), [Revelation 11:5](#) WH marginal reading); 1 aorist [ἠθέλησα](#); (derived apparently from [ἔλειν](#) with a fuller aspiration, so that it means properly, to seize with the mind; but Curtius, p. 726, edition 5, regards its root as uncertain (he inclines, however, to the view of Pott, Fick, Vanicek, and others, which connects it with a root meaning to hold to)); the Sept. for [הָבָן](#) and [γένη](#); **to will (have in mind) intend**; i. e.:

1. to be resolved or determined, to purpose: absolutely, ὁ θέλων, [Romans 9:16](#); τοῦ Θεοῦ θέλοντος if God will, [Acts 18:21](#); ἐάν ὁ κύριος θελήσῃ. (in Attic ἐάν θεός θέλῃ, ἦν οἱ Θεοί θέλωσιν (cf. Lob. as above)), [1 Corinthians 4:19](#); [James 4:15](#); καθώς ἡθέλησε, [1 Corinthians 12:18](#); [1 Corinthians 15:38](#); τί, [Romans 7:15f, 19](#); [1 Corinthians 7:36](#); [Galatians 5:17](#); with the aorist infinitive, [Matthew 20:14](#); [Matthew 26:15](#); [John 6:21](#) (where the meaning is, they were willing to receive him into the ship, but that was unnecessary, because unexpectedly the ship was nearing the land; cf. Lücke, B-Crusius, Ewald (Godet), others at the passage; Winers Grammar, § 54, 4; (Buttmann, 375 (321))); [John 12:44](#); [Acts 25:9](#); [Colossians 1:27](#); [1 Thessalonians 2:18](#); [Revelation 11:5](#), etc.; with the present infinitive, [Luke 10:29](#) R G; [John 6:67](#); [John 12:17](#); [John 8:44](#); [Acts 24:6](#) (Rec.); [Romans 7:21](#); [Galatians 4:9](#) (here T Tr text WH text 1 aorist infinitive); with an infinitive suggested by the context, [John 5:21](#) (οὗς θέλει, namely, ζωποιησαι); [Matthew 8:2](#); [Mark 3:13](#); [Mark 6:22](#); [Romans 9:18](#); [Revelation 11:6](#), etc. οὐ θέλω to be unwilling: with the aorist infinitive, [Matthew 2:18](#); [Matthew 15:32](#); [Matthew 22:3](#); [Mark 6:26](#); [Luke 15:28](#); [John 5:40](#); [Acts 7:39](#); [1 Corinthians 16:7](#); [Revelation 2:21](#) (not Rec.), etc.; with the present infinitive, [John 7:1](#); [Acts 14:13](#); [Acts 17:18](#); [2 Thessalonians 3:10](#), etc.; with the infinitive omitted and to be gathered from the context, [Matthew 18:30](#); [Matthew 21:29](#); [Luke 18:4](#), etc.; θέλω and οὐ θέλω followed by the accusative with an infinitive, [Luke 1:62](#); [1 Corinthians 10:20](#); on the Pauline phrase οὐ θέλω ύμᾶς ἀγνοεῖν, see ἀγνοέω, a.; corresponding to θέλω ύμᾶς εἰδέναι, [1 Corinthians 11:3](#); [Colossians 2:1](#). θέλειν, used of a purpose or resolution, is contrasted with the carrying out of the purpose into act: opposed to ποιεῖν, πράσσειν, [Romans 7:15, 19](#); [2 Corinthians 8:10f](#) (on which latter passage cf. DeWette and Meyer; Winer's Grammar, § 61, 7b.); to ἐνεργεῖν, [Philippians 2:13](#), cf. [Mark 6:19](#); [John 7:44](#). One is said also θέλειν that which he is on the point of doing: [Mark 6:48](#); [John 1:43](#) (44); and it is used thus also of things that tend or point to some conclusion (cf. Winers Grammar, § 42, 1 b.; Buttmann, 254 (219)): [Acts 2:12](#); [Acts 17:20](#). λανθάνει αὐτούς τοῦτο θέλοντας this (viz., what follows, ὅτι etc.) escapes them of their own will, i. e. they are purposely, wilfully, ignorant, [2 Peter 3:5](#), where others interpret as follows: this (viz. what has been said previously) desiring (i. e. holding as their opinion (for examples of this sense see Sophocles Lexicon, under the word, 4)), they are ignorant etc.; but cf. DeWette at the passage and Winers Grammar, § 54, 4 note; (Buttmann, § 150, 8 Rem.). τάς ἐπιθυμίας τοῦ πατρός ύμῶν θέλετε ποιεῖν it is your **purpose** to fulfil the lusts of your father, i. e. ye are actuated by him of your own free knowledge and choice, [John 8:44](#) (Winers Grammar, as above; Buttmann, 375 (321)).

2. equivalent to to desire, to wish: τί, [Matthew 20:21](#); [Mark 14:36](#); [Luke 5:39](#) (but WH in brackets); [John 15:7](#); [1 Corinthians 4:21](#); [2 Corinthians 11:12](#); followed by the aorist infinitive, [Matthew 5:40](#); [Matthew 12:38](#); [Matthew 16:25](#); [Matthew 19:17](#); [Mark 10:43](#); [Luke 8:20](#); [Luke 13:8](#); [John 5:6, 35](#) (ye were desirous of rejoicing); ; [Galatians 3:2](#); [James 2:20](#); [1 Peter 3:10](#); followed by the present infinitive, [John 9:27](#); [Galatians 4:20](#) (ἢθελον I could wish, on which imperfect see εὔχομαι, 2); the infinitive is lacking and to be supplied from the

neighboring verb, [Matthew 17:12](#); [Matthew 27:15](#); [Mark 9:13](#); [John 21:18](#); followed by the accusative and infinitive, [Mark 7:24](#); [Luke 1:62](#); [John 21:22](#); [Romans 16:19](#); [1 Corinthians 7:7, 32](#); [1 Corinthians 14:5](#); [Galatians 6:13](#); οὐ θέλω to be unwilling (desire not): followed by the aorist infinitive, [Matthew 23:4](#); [Luke 19:14, 27](#); [1 Corinthians 10:20](#); followed by ἵνα, [Matthew 7:12](#); [Mark 6:25](#); [Mark 9:30](#); [Mark 10:35](#); [Luke 6:31](#); [John 17:24](#); cf. Winers Grammar, § 44, 8 b.; (Buttmann, § 139, 46); followed by the deliberative subjunctive (aorist): θέλεις συλλέξωμεν αὐτά (cf. the German willstdu, sollenwirzusammenlesen? (Goodwin § 88)), [Matthew 13:28](#); add, [Matthew 20:32](#) (where L brackets adds ἵνα); ; [Mark 10:51](#); [Mark 14:12](#); [Mark 15:9, 12](#) (Tr brackets θέλεις); [Luke 9:54](#); [Luke 18:41](#); [Luke 22:9](#) (cf. Winers Grammar, § 41 a. 4 b.; Buttmann, § 139, 2); followed by εἰ, [Luke 12:49](#) (see εἰ, I. 4); followed by ἢ, to prefer, [1 Corinthians 14:19](#) (see ἢ, 3 d.).

3. equivalent to **to love**; followed by an infinitive, **to like to do a thing, be fond of doing**: [Mark 12:38](#); [Luke 20:46](#); cf. Winers Grammar, § 54, 4; (Buttmann, § 150, 8).

4. in imitation of the Hebrew יָדַע, **to take delight, have pleasure** (opposite by Buttmann, § 150, 8 Rem.; cf. Winer's Grammar, § 33, a.; but see examples below): ἐν τίνι, in a thing, [Colossians 2:18](#) (ἐν καλῷ, to delight in goodness, Test xii. Patr., p. 688 (test. Ash. 1; (cf. εἰς ζωήν, p. 635, test. Zeb. 3); [Psalm 111:1](#) (); [Psalm 146:10](#) ()); ἐν τίνι, the dative of the person, [1 Samuel 18:22](#); [2 Samuel 15:26](#); ([1 Kings 10:9](#)); [2 Chronicles 9:8](#); for [1,הַצְרָבָה](#) [Chronicles 28:4](#)). τινα, to love one: [Matthew 27:43](#) ([Psalm 21:9](#)()); ([Psalm 17:20](#)()); [Psalm 40:12](#)(); [Ezekiel 18:32](#), cf. [Ezekiel 18:23](#); Tobit 13:6; epp. to μισεῖν, Ignatius ad Rom. 8, 3 [ET]; θεληθῆναι is used of those who find favor, ibid. 8, 1). τί, [Matthew 9:13](#) and [Matthew 12:7](#) (from [Hosea 6:6](#)); [Hebrews 10:5, 8](#) (fr. [Psalm 39:7](#)()). As respects the distinction

between βούλομαι and θέλω, the former seems to designate the will which follows deliberation, the latter the will which proceeds from inclination. This appears not only from [Matthew 1:19](#), but also from the fact that the Sept. express the idea of **pleasure, delight**, by the verb θέλειν (see just above). The reverse of this distinction is laid down by Alexander Buttmann (1873) Lexil. i., p. 26 (English translation, p. 194); Delitzsch on [Hebrews 6:17](#). According to Tittmann (Syn., i., p. 124) θέλειν denotes

mere **volition, βούλεσθαι inclination**; (cf. Whiston on Demosthenes 9, 5; 124, 13). (Philip Buttmanns statement of the distinction between the two words is quoted with approval by Schmidt (Syn., iii., chapter 146), who adduces in confirmation (besides many examples) the assumed relationship between βούλομαι and Φελπίς, ἐλπίς; the use of θέλω in the sense of 'resolve' in such passages as Thucydides 5, 9; of θέλων equivalent to ἥδεως in the poets; of βούλομαι as parallel to ἐπιθυμέω in Demosthenes 29, 45, etc.; and passages in which the two words occur together and βούλομαι is apparently equivalent to 'wish' while θέλω stands for 'will' as Xenophon, an. 4, 4, 5; Euripides, Alc. 281, etc., etc. At the same time it must be confessed that scholars are far from harmonious on the subject. Many agree with

Prof. Grimm that **Θέλω** gives prominence to the emotive element, **βούλομαι** emphasizes the rational and volitive; that **Θέλω** signifies the **choice**, while **βούλομαι** marks the choice as **deliberate and intelligent**; yet they acknowledge that the words are sometimes used indiscriminately, and especially that **Θέλω** as the less sharply-defined term is put where **βούλομαι** would be proper; see Ellendt, Lex. Sophocles; Pape, Handwörterb.; Seiler, Wörterb. d. Homer, under the word **βούλομαι**; Suhle und Schneidewin, Handwörterb.; Crosby, Lex. to Xenophon, an., under the word **ἐθέλω**; (Arnold's) Pillon, Greek Syn. § 129; Webster, Synt. and Syn. of the Greek Testament, p. 197; Wilke, Clavis N. T., edition 2, 2:603; Schleusner, N. T. Lex. see under the word, **βούλομαι**; Munthe, Observations, phil. in N. T. ex Diodorus Siculus, etc., p. 3; Valckenaer, Scholia etc. ii. 23; Westermann on Demosthenes 20, 111; the commentators generally on Matt. as above; Lightfoot on [Philemon 1:13, 14](#); Riddle in Schaff's Lange on Eph., p. 42; this seems to be roughly intended by Ammonius also: **βούλεσθαι μέν ἐπί μόνου λεκτεον τοῦ λογικου. τό δέ θέλειν καὶ ἐπί ἀλογου ζων**; (and Eustathius on Iliad 1, 112, p. 61, 2, says **οὐχ' ἀπλῶς θέλω, ἀλλά βούλομαι, ὅπερ ἐπίτασις τοῦ θέλειν ἔστιν**). On the other hand, Liddell and Scott (under the word **ἐθέλω**); Passow, edition 5; Rost, Wörterb. edition 4; Schenkl, Schulwörterb.; Donaldson, Crat. § 463f; Wahl; Clay. Apocrypha, under the word **βούλομαι**; Cremer, under the words, **βούλομαι** and **Θέλω**; especially Stallb. on Platos de repub. 4, 13, p. 437 b. (cf. too Cope on Aristotle, rhet. 2, 19, 19); Franke on Demosthenes 1, 1, substantially reverse the distinction, as does Ellicott on [1 Timothy 5:14](#); Wordsworth on [1 Thessalonians 2:18](#). Although the latter opinion may seem to be favored by that view of the derivation of the words which allies **βούλομαι** with **voluntas** (Curtius, § 659, compare p. 726), and makes **Θέλω** signify 'to hold to something,' 'form a fixed resolve' (see above, at the beginning), yet the predominant usage of the N. T. will be evident to one who looks up the passages referred to above (Fritzsche's explanation of [Matthew 1:19](#) is hardly natural); to which may be added such as [Matthew 2:18](#); [Matthew 9:13](#); [Matthew 12:38](#); [Matthew 15:28](#); [Matthew 17:4](#) (); (cf. [Luke 22:42](#)); [Mark 6:19](#); [Mark 7:24](#); [Mark 9:30](#); [Mark 10:35](#); [Mark 12:38](#); [Mark 15:9](#) (cf. [John 18:39](#)), [Mark 15:15](#) (where R. V. **wishing** is questionable; cf. [Luke 23:20](#)); [Luke 10:24](#); [Luke 15:28](#); [Luke 16:26](#); [John 5:6](#); [John 6:11](#); [John 12:21](#); [Acts 10:10](#); [Acts 18:15](#); [Romans 7:19](#) (cf. [Romans 7:15](#), its opposed to **μισῶ**, and indeed the use of **Θέλω** throughout this chapter); [1 Corinthians 7:36, 39](#); [1 Corinthians 14:35](#); [Ephesians 1:11](#); [2 Thessalonians 3:10](#), etc. Such passages as [1 Timothy 2:4](#); [2 Peter 3:9](#) will be ranged now on one side, now on the other; cf. [1 Corinthians 12:11, 18](#). **Θέλω** occurs in the N. T. about five times as often as **βούλομαι** (on the relative use of the words in classic writers see Tycho Mommsen in Rutherford, New Phryn., p. 415f). The usage of the Sept. (beyond the particular specified by Prof. Grimm) seems to afford little light; see e. g. [Genesis 24:5, 8](#); [Deuteronomy 25:7](#); [Psalm 39:7, 9](#) (), etc. In modern Greek **Θέλω** seems to have nearly driven **βούλομαι** out of use; on **Θέλω** as an auxiliary cf. Jebb in Vincent and Dickson's Handbook, Appendix §§ 60, 64. For examples of the associated use of the words in classic Greek, see Stephanus' Thesaurus under the word **βούλομαι**, p. 366 d.; Lightfoot, Cremer, and especially Schmidt, as above.)

Topical Lexicon

Overview

Strong's Greek 2309 (θέλω / ἔθέλω) describes volition—desire, intention, choice—appearing 209 times across the New Testament. The contexts range from God's sovereign purposes to the everyday wishes of people, making it a key term for understanding both divine initiative and human responsibility.

The Sovereign Will of God

God's will is portrayed as decisive and effectual. [Romans 9:18](#) affirms, "So then, He has mercy on whom He wills, and He hardens whom He wills." Creation itself reflects this freedom: "But God has placed the parts, every one of them, in the body just as He desired" ([1 Corinthians 12:18](#)). The same verb underlines God's gracious purpose in salvation: "He chose to make known to them the glorious riches of this mystery" ([Colossians 1:27](#)). Nothing thwarts His intent ([Ephesians 1:11](#) is a parallel idea, though using a cognate).

The Messianic Will of Christ

Jesus repeatedly reveals a deliberate, redemptive will. In [John 17:24](#) He prays, "Father, I desire that those You have given Me be with Me where I am." His earthly ministry displays compassion directed by personal choice: "I am willing; be cleansed" ([Matthew 8:3](#); [Mark 1:41](#)). Yet He submits His human will to the Father: "Yet not as I will, but as You will" ([Matthew 26:39](#); [Mark 14:36](#)). Christ's lament over Jerusalem exposes the tragedy of resisted grace: "How often I have longed to gather your children together... but you were not willing" ([Matthew 23:37](#); [Luke 13:34](#)).

The Spirit's Enabling Will

[Philippians 2:13](#) links divine and human volition: "For it is God who works in you to will and to act on behalf of His good pleasure." Believers' sanctification is thus energized by the Spirit, aligning their desires with God's.

Human Will: Submission and Resistance

Scripture presents human volition as genuine yet accountable. Positive examples include the leper's plea, "Lord, if You are willing, You can make me clean" ([Luke 5:12](#)), and the disciples' yielding, "If anyone wants to come after Me, he must deny himself" ([Luke 9:23](#)). Negative instances expose rebellion: "You refuse to come to Me to have life" ([John 5:40](#)); "They wanted to arrest Him, but no one laid a hand on Him" ([John 7:44](#)).

Discipleship and Self-Denial

The call to follow Christ centers on a redirected will: “Whoever wants to save his life will lose it, but whoever loses his life for My sake will find it” ([Matthew 16:25](#)). Leadership in the kingdom likewise depends on voluntary humility ([Matthew 20:26-27](#); [Mark 10:43-44](#)).

Pastoral and Epistolary Usage

Apostles appeal to the will for teaching, correction, and encouragement. Paul writes, “I do not want you to be unaware, brothers” ([Romans 1:13](#); [1 Corinthians 10:1](#)). He expresses pastoral preference: “I desire then that in every place the men should pray” ([1 Timothy 2:8](#)) and “I wish you all spoke in tongues, but even more that you would prophesy” ([1 Corinthians 14:5](#)). Such uses show shepherds guiding but never coercing the flock ([Philemon 14](#)).

Eschatological and Judicial Dimensions

Free will meets divine judgment. Those “unwilling to work” face discipline ([2 Thessalonians 3:10](#)). Christ’s parables warn of eternal consequences: the citizens who “did not want Me to reign over them” are sentenced ([Luke 19:27](#)). Revelation depicts prophetic witnesses who “desire to harm” their foes but are restrained by God’s timetable ([Revelation 11:5-6](#)).

Theological and Ministry Significance

1. Compatibility of sovereignty and responsibility: God’s efficacious will coexists with meaningful human choices.
2. Christ’s redemptive willingness invites faith while exposing culpable refusal.
3. Discipleship is measured by a submitted will, not mere external conformity.
4. Pastoral leadership respects individual volition, aiming for willing—not coerced—obedience ([Hebrews 13:17](#) uses a related concept).

Historical Reflection in Church Teaching

Early catechesis emphasized voluntary faith and baptism, echoing [Acts 2:12](#). Reformation debates on free will and predestination often cited θέλω texts such as [Romans 7](#) and [John 5](#). Evangelical missions have long appealed to [1 Timothy 2:4](#)—God “wants all people to be saved”—as impetus for global evangelism.

Ministry Application

- Evangelism: Present the gospel as divine invitation that requires a willing response ([Revelation 22:17](#)).
- Counseling: Address conflicted desires with [Romans 7](#) realism and [Philippians 2:13](#) hope.
- Leadership: Encourage ministries that seek volunteers rather than conscripts ([2 Corinthians 8:10-11](#)).
- Worship: Model prayer after Christ—submitting personal desires to the Father’s will.

Conclusion

θέλω reveals the heartbeat of Scripture: a sovereign God who wills to save, a Savior who wills to serve and sacrifice, a Spirit who wills to sanctify, and people called to align their wills with His.

(not) SACRIFICE:

2378. thusia

Lexical Summary

thusia: Sacrifice, offering

Original Word: θυσία

Part of Speech: Noun, Feminine

Transliteration: thusia

Pronunciation: thoo-see'-ah

Phonetic Spelling: (thoo-see'-ah)

KJV: sacrifice

NASB: sacrifice, sacrifices

Word Origin: [from [G2380 \(θύω - kill\)](#)]

1. sacrifice (the act or the victim)

{literally or figuratively}

Strong's Exhaustive Concordance

sacrifice.

From [thuo](#); sacrifice (the act or the victim, literally or figuratively) -- sacrifice.

see GREEK [thuo](#)

HELPS Word-studies

2378 *thysía* – properly, an *offering (sacrifice)*; an official sacrifice *prescribed by God*; hence an offering *the Lord accepts because offered on His terms*.

[2378](#) /*thysía* ("sacrifice") refers to various forms of OT blood sacrifices ("types") – all awaiting their *fulfillment* in their *antitype*, Jesus Christ (Heb 10:5-12).

NAS Exhaustive Concordance

Word Origin

from [thuó](#)

Definition

a sacrifice

NASB Translation

sacrifice (14), sacrifices (14).

Thayer's Greek Lexicon

STRONGS NT 2378: θυσία

θυσία, θυσίας, ἡ (θύω) (from Aeschylus down), the Sept. for **הַנְחָתָה** an offering, and **הַבָּיִת**; a sacrifice, victim;

a. properly: [Matthew 9:13](#) and [Matthew 12:7](#), from [Hosea 6:6](#); [Mark 9:40](#) ((R G L Tr text brackets), see [ἀλίζω](#)); [Ephesians 5:2](#); [Hebrews 10:5, 28](#); plural, [Mark 12:33](#); [Luke 13:1](#); [Hebrews 9:23](#); ([Hebrews 10:1, 8](#) (here Rec. singular)); [ἀνάγειν θυσίαν τίνι](#), [Acts 7:41](#); [ἀναφέρειν](#), [Hebrews 7:27](#) (see [ἀνάγω](#), and [ἀναφέρω](#) 2); ([δοῦναι θυσίαν](#), [Luke 2:24](#)); [προσφέρειν](#), [Acts 7:42](#); [Hebrews 5:1](#); [Hebrews 8:3](#); 10:();(); passive [Hebrews 9:9](#); [διά τῆς θυσίας αὐτοῦ](#), by his sacrifice, i. e. by the sacrifice which he offered (not, **by offering up himself**; that would have been expressed by [διά τῆς θυσίας τῆς ἑαυτοῦ](#), or [διά τῆς ἑαυτοῦ θυσίας](#)), [Hebrews 9:26](#); [ἐσθίειν τάς θυσίας](#), to eat the flesh left over from the victims sacrificed (viz. at the sacrificial feasts; cf. ([Leviticus 7:15ff](#); [Deuteronomy 12:7f, 17f](#), etc.) Winer's RWB under the word *Opfermahlzeiten*), [1 Corinthians 10:18](#).

b. in expressions involving a comparison: **θυσίαι πνευματικαι** (see **πνευματικός**, 3 a.), [1 Peter 2:5](#); **θυσία**, a free gift, which is likened to an offered sacrifice, [Philippians 4:18](#); [Hebrews 13:16](#) (**τοιαύταις θυσίαις**, i. e. with such things as substitutes for sacrifices God is well pleased); **θυσία ζῶσα** (see [ζάω](#), II).

b. at the end), [Romans 12:1](#); [ἀναφέρειν θυσίαν αἰνέσεως](#), [Hebrews 13:15](#) (if this meant, as it can mean, [αἱνεστιν ὡς θυσίαν](#), the author would not have added, as he has, the explanation of the words; he must therefore be supposed to have reproduced the Hebrew phrase **הַזְוֹתִי בְּבָיִת**, and then defined this more exactly; [Leviticus 7:3](#) ([Leviticus 7:13](#)) (cf. [Leviticus 7:2](#) ([Leviticus 7:12](#))); [Psalm 106:22](#) (); see [αἱνεσις](#)); [ἐπί τῇ θυσίᾳ ... τῆς πίστεως ὑμῶν](#) (epexegetical genitive), in the work of exciting, nourishing, increasing, your faith, as if in providing a sacrifice to be offered to God (cf. [ἐπί](#), p. 233b bottom), [Philippians 2:17](#).

Topical Lexicon

Range of New Testament Usage

The term appears twenty-nine times, encompassing literal temple offerings, idolatrous rituals, the once-for-all offering of Christ, and the ongoing “spiritual sacrifices” of the Church. The references cluster especially in Hebrews, where the contrast between shadow and fulfillment is central ([Hebrews 7–10](#)). A smaller group describes pagan or misguided worship ([Acts 7:41–42](#); [1 Corinthians 10:18](#); [Luke 13:1](#)), while several passages apply sacrificial language to Christian ethics and ministry ([Romans 12:1](#); [Ephesians 5:2](#); [Philippians 2:17](#); [1 Peter 2:5](#)).

Rooted in the Old Testament Pattern

Every New Testament occurrence presupposes the Levitical system in which blood sacrifices mediated covenant fellowship ([Leviticus 17:11](#)). [Mark 9:49](#) alludes to the requirement that “every sacrifice will be salted with salt,” recalling [Leviticus 2:13](#) and showing that Jesus read the sacrificial code as prophetic of discipleship purified by fire. [Hebrews 9:23–10:4](#) repeatedly calls the Mosaic sacrifices “copies” pointing to a greater reality.

Fulfillment in the Once-for-All Sacrifice of Christ

Hebrews presents the climactic theology:

- “But when this Priest had offered for all time one sacrifice for sins, He sat down at the right hand of God.” ([Hebrews 10:12](#))

The uniqueness and sufficiency of Calvary render further sin-offerings unnecessary ([Hebrews 10:18](#)). [Ephesians 5:2](#) echoes the same truth in pastoral exhortation: “Christ...gave Himself up for us as a fragrant sacrificial offering to God.”

Contrast with Ineffectual or Idolatrous Sacrifices

Stephen reminds Israel that they “made a calf in those days and brought a sacrifice to the idol” ([Acts 7:41](#)). Paul warns Corinth that pagan altars create “fellow partakers” with demons ([1 Corinthians 10:18–20](#)). [Luke 13:1](#) records politically motivated sacrifices by Pilate that ended in bloodshed, underscoring how corrupted worship exposes human sinfulness. These texts reinforce that acceptable worship must conform to divine revelation and find its goal in Christ.

The Believer’s Call to Offer Spiritual Sacrifices

Christ’s finished work does not eliminate sacrifice; it transforms it. Believers are now priests who “offer spiritual sacrifices acceptable to God through Jesus Christ” ([1 Peter 2:5](#)). Key expressions include:

- Personal consecration: “Offer your bodies as a living sacrifice, holy and pleasing to God” ([Romans 12:1](#)).
- Praise: “Let us continually offer to God a sacrifice of praise” ([Hebrews 13:15](#)).

- Doing good and sharing: “With such sacrifices God is pleased” ([Hebrews 13:16](#)).
- Financial generosity: Paul calls the Philippians’ gift “a fragrant offering, an acceptable sacrifice” ([Philippians 4:18](#)).

Sacrifice in Apostolic Ministry

Paul describes his apostolic labor as priestly service: “Even if I am being poured out like a drink offering on the sacrifice and service of your faith, I am glad” ([Philippians 2:17](#)). The image elevates pastoral work and missionary partnership to temple-language dignity, encouraging sacrificial commitment to gospel advance.

Suffering and Martyrdom

[Hebrews 11:4](#) reaches back to Abel, the first martyr, to show that faith-filled sacrifice still “speaks.” In later Christian history the vocabulary of θυσία becomes associated with martyrdom, reflecting the New Testament trajectory in which suffering for Christ is understood as a holy offering (cf. [Philippians 2:17](#); [Revelation 6:9](#), where the “souls of those slain” lie beneath the altar).

Corporate Worship and Ethical Implications

[Mark 12:33](#) affirms that “to love Him with all your heart... and to love your neighbor as yourself is more important than all burnt offerings and sacrifices.” Love thus defines genuine sacrifice, integrating worship and ethics. [Hebrews 10:25](#) links congregational assembly with maintaining confidence in Christ’s completed offering, showing how Eucharistic remembrance and mutual exhortation arise from the same sacrificial foundation.

Eschatological Rest

Because Christ has “appeared once for all at the end of the ages to do away with sin by the sacrifice of Himself” ([Hebrews 9:26](#)), the believer’s future is secured. No additional blood will ever be required. The ultimate “sacrifice of praise” offered throughout eternity ([Revelation 5:8-10](#)) celebrates the Lamb who was slain yet lives forever.

Practical Summary

1. Christ’s sacrifice is final, sufficient, and the interpretive key to all prior offerings.
2. Worship detached from obedience or rooted in idolatry is condemned.
3. Christian life, service, generosity, praise, and even suffering are to be offered as ongoing, God-pleasing sacrifices made acceptable through Jesus Christ.

TO CALL:

2564. kaleó ►

Lexical Summary

kaleó: To call, to name, to invite

Original Word: καλέω

Part of Speech: Verb

Transliteration: kaleó

Pronunciation: kä-le'-ō

Phonetic Spelling: (kal-eh'-o)

KJV: bid, call (forth), (whose, whose sur-)name (was (called))

NASB: called, invited, call, calls, calling, invite, named

Word Origin: [akin to the base of [G2753 \(κελεύω - ordered\)](#)]

1. to "call" (aloud)

{(properly) aloud, but used in a variety of applications, directly or otherwise}

Strong's Exhaustive Concordance

bid, call forth, name, invite

Akin to the base of [keleuo](#); to "call" (properly, aloud, but used in a variety of applications, directly or otherwise) -- bid, call (forth), (whose, whose sur-)name (was (called)).

see GREEK [keleuo](#)

NAS Exhaustive Concordance

Word Origin

a prim. word

Definition

to call

NASB Translation

call (13), called (99), calling (2), calls (7), give (1), invite (2), invited (15), invited guests (1), invites (1), name given (1), named (2), so-called (1), summoned (2).

Thayer's Greek Lexicon

STRONGS NT 2564: καλέω

καλέω, καλῶ; imperfect ἐκάλουν; future **καλέσω** (Winer's Grammar, § 13, 3 c.); 1

aorist **ἐκάλεσα**; perfect **κέκληκά**; passive, present **καλοῦμαι**; perfect 3 person

singular **κέκληται** ([1 Corinthians 7:18](#) L T Tr WH; ([Revelation 19:13](#) L T Tr WH)),

participle **κεκλημένος**; 1 aorist **ἐκλήθην**; 1 future **κληθήσομαι**; (from Homer down);

Hebrew **אָקַלְךָ**; Latinvoco; i. e.:

1. **to call** (German rufen (cf. **βοάω**, at the end));

a. to call aloud, utter in a loud voice: **ἀχοις οὖ τό σήμερον καλεῖται**, as long as the word 'today' is called out or proclaimed, [Hebrews 3:13](#); **τινα**, to call one to approach or stand before one, [Matthew 20:8](#); [Matthew 22:3](#) (where **εἰς τούς γάμους** seems to belong to **τούς κεκλημένος**); [Matthew 25:14](#); ([Mark 3:31](#) L T Tr WH); [Luke 19:13](#); **τά ίδια πρόβατα κατ' ὄνομα**, his own sheep each by its name, [John 10:3](#) (where L T Tr WH **φωνεῖ**); used of Christ, calling certain persons to be his disciples and constant companions, [Matthew 4:21](#) (note what precedes in 19: **δεῦτε ὀπίσω μου**); [Mark 1:20](#); to order one to be summoned, [Matthew 2:15](#) (see just below); before the judges, [Acts 4:18](#); [Acts 24:2](#); followed by **ἐκ** with the genitive of place, equivalent to **to call out, call forth from:** [Matthew 2:15](#), cf. [Hebrews 11:8](#). metaphorically, **to cause to pass from one state into another:** **τινα ἐκ σκότους εἰς τό φῶς**, [1 Peter 2:9](#).

b. like the Latin *voco* equivalent to **to invite; properly: **εἰς τούς γάμους**, [Matthew 22:3, 9](#); [Luke 14:8](#); [John 2:2](#); to a feast, [Luke 14:16](#); [1 Corinthians 10:27](#) (cf. Winer's Grammar, 593 (552)); [Revelation 19:9](#); **ό καλέσας**, [Luke 7:39](#); [Luke 14:9](#); **ό κεκληκώς τινα**, [Luke 14:10, 12](#); **οί κεκλημένοι**, [Matthew 22:8](#); [Luke 14:7, 17, 24](#); ([2 Samuel 13:23](#); [Esther 5:12](#); and often so in Greek writings from Homer, Odyssey 4, 532; 11,187 down). **β.** metaphorically: **to invite one, εἰς τί**, to something i. e. to participate in it, enjoy it; used thus in the Epistles of Paul and Peter of God as inviting men by the preaching of the gospel (**διά τοῦ εὐαγγελίου**, [2 Thessalonians 2:14](#)) to the blessings of the heavenly kingdom: **εἰς τήν βασιλείαν τοῦ Θεοῦ**, [1 Thessalonians 2:12](#); **εἰς ζωήν αἰώνιον**, [1 Timothy 6:12](#); **εἰς δόξαν αἰώνιον**, [1 Peter 5:10](#); **εἰς τήν κοινωνίαν τοῦ νίοῦ αὐτοῦ**, [1 Corinthians 1:9](#); so **καλεῖν τινα** used alone: [Romans 8:30](#); [Romans 9:24](#); [1 Corinthians 7:17f, 20-22, 24](#); **τινα καλεῖν κλήσει**, [2 Timothy 1:9](#); **ἐν φῶ ἐκληθημέν**, in whom lies the reason why we were called, who is the ground of our having been invited, [Ephesians 1:11](#) Lachmann; **ἀξιος τῆς κλήσεως, ἡς** (by attraction for **ἡ** (or perhaps **ἥν**; cf. Winer's Grammar, § 24, 1; Buttmann, 287 (247); Ellicott, in the place cited)) **ἐκλήθητε**, [Ephesians 4:1](#); God is styled **ό καλῶν τινα** (he that calleth one, **the caller**, cf. Winer's Grammar, § 45, 7), [Galatians 5:8](#); [1 Thessalonians 5:24](#); and **ό καλέσας τινα**, [Galatians 1:6](#); [Colossians 1:12](#) Lachmann; [1 Peter 1:15](#); [2 Peter 1:3](#). **οἱ κεκλημένοι**, [Hebrews 9:15](#); **καλεῖν** and **καλεῖσθαι** are used with a specification of the mediate end (for the highest or final end of the calling is eternal salvation): **ἐπ' ἐλευθερία**, [Galatians 5:13](#); **οὐκ ἐπ' ἀκαθαρσίᾳ ἀλλ' ἐν ἀγιασμῷ**, [1 Thessalonians 4:7](#); **ἐν εἰρήνῃ**, [1 Corinthians 7:15](#); **ἐν ἐνί ἐλπίδι**, that ye might come into**

one hope, [Ephesians 4:4](#) (see ἐν, I. 7 (yet cf. Winers Grammar, 417 (389); Buttmann, 329 (283); especially Ellicott in loc.), and ἐπί, Buttmann, 2

a. ζ'); εἰς εἰρήνην τοῦ Χριστοῦ ἐν ἐνί σώματι, that ye may be in one body i. e. be members of one and the same body, [Colossians 3:15](#); εἰς τοῦτο (which refers to what precedes) followed by ἵνα, [1 Peter 2:21](#); [1 Peter 3:9](#); (but everywhere in the N. T. Epistles only those are spoken of as called by God who have listened to his voice addressed to them in the gospel, hence those who have enlisted in the service of Christ — see [Romans 8:30](#) and Rückert's Commentary, at the passage cited, p. 464, cf. [1 Corinthians 1:24](#); those who have slighted the invitation are not reckoned among the called); Christ also is said καλεῖν τινα, namely, to embrace the offer of salvation by the Messiah, in [Matthew 9:13](#) and [Mark 2:17](#) (in both passages Rec. adds εἰς μετάνοιαν). God is said to call those who are not yet born, viz. by promises of salvation which have respect to them, so that καλεῖν is for substance equivalent to **to appoint one to salvation**, [Romans](#)

[9:12](#) (11); καλοῦντος τά μή ὄντα ὡς ὄντα, [Romans 4:17](#), where cf. Fritzsche (others besides, cf. Meyer (especially Weiss edition) at the passage). **to call** (equivalent to **to select**) **to assume some office**, τινα, of God appointing or committing an office to one (German berufen): [Galatians 1:15](#); [Hebrews 5:4](#) ([Isaiah 42:6](#); [Isaiah 49:1](#); [Isaiah 51:2](#)). **to invite** equivalent to **to rouse, summon**: to do something, εἰς μετάνοιαν, [Luke 5:32](#), added in Rec. also in [Matthew 9:13](#) and [Mark 2:17](#).

2. to call i. e. to name, call by name;

a. **to give a name to**; with two accusatives, one of the object the other of the name as a predicate (to call one (by) a name: [Matthew 10:25](#) Rec.; cf. Winers Grammar, § 32, 4 b.; Buttmann, 151 (132) note); passive with the nominative of the name, **to receive the name of, receive as a name**: [Matthew 2:23](#); [Matthew 27:8](#); [Luke 1:32, 60, 62](#); [Luke 2:4](#), etc.; καλούμενος, **called, whose name or surname is**, [Luke 7:11](#); [Luke 9:10](#); [Luke 10:39](#); [Acts 7:58](#); [Acts 27:8, 16](#); ὁ καλούμενος (on its position cf. Buttmann, § 144, 19): [Luke 6:15](#); [Luke 8:2](#); ([Luke 22:3](#) T Tr WH); ; [Acts 1:23](#); [Acts 10:1](#); [Acts 13:1](#); ([Acts 15:22](#) L T Tr WH); ; [Revelation 12:9](#); [Revelation 16:16](#); with ὄνόματι added, [Luke 19:2](#); καλεῖσθαι ὄνόματι τίνι, to be called by a name, [Luke 1:61](#); καλεῖν τινα ἐπί τῷ ὄνόματι τίνος, [Luke 1:59](#) (see ἐπί, Buttmann, 2 a. ḥ, p. 233 {b}); after the Hebrew טַהַר נַפְשׁ, καλεῖν τό ὄνομα τίνος, with the name in the accusative, **to give some name to one, call his name**: [Matthew 1:21, 23, 25](#); [Luke 1:13, 31](#); passive, [Luke 2:21](#); [Revelation 19:13](#); [Genesis 17:19](#); [1 Samuel 1:20](#), etc. (similarly sometimes in Greek writings, cf. Fritzsche on Matthew, p. 45 (Buttmann, 151 (132))).

b. Passive καλοῦμαι with predicate nominative **to be called i. e. to bear a name or title** (among men) (cf. Winer's Grammar, § 65, 8): [Luke 1:35](#); [Luke 22:25](#); [Acts 8:10](#) (Rec. omits καλοῦμαι); [1 Corinthians 15:9](#); **to be said to be** (equivalent to **to be**

acknowledged, pass as, the nominative expressing the judgment passed on one): [Matthew 5:9, 19](#); [Luke 1:32, 35, 76](#); [Luke 2:23](#); [Luke 15:19](#); [Romans 9:26](#); [James 2:23](#); opposed to εἶναι, 1 [John 3:1](#) L T Tr WH; Hebraistically ([Genesis 21:12](#)) ἐν Ἰσαάκ κληθήσεται σοι σπέρμα, through (better in, cf. εἰν, I. 6 c. and Meyer (edited by Weiss) ad Romans, the passage cited) Isaac shall a seed be called for thee, i. e. Isaac (not Ishmael) is the one whose posterity shall obtain the name and honor of thy descendants, [Romans 9:7](#) and [Hebrews 11:18](#).

c. καλῶ τινα, with an accusative of the predicate or a title of honor, **to salute one by a name**: [Matthew 23:9](#); passive, [Matthew 23:7f, 10](#); [Revelation 19:11](#) (but Tr marginal reading WH brackets καλῶ); to give a name to one and mention him at the same time, [Matthew 22:43, 45](#); [Luke 20:44](#). (Compare: ἀντικαλέω, ἐνκαλέω, εἰσκαλέω (καλέομαι), ἐπικαλέω, μετακαλέω, παρακαλέω, συνπαρακαλέω, προκαλέω, προσκαλέω, συγκαλέω.)

Topical Lexicon

Overview of Usage

Strong's Greek 2564 appears one hundred forty-eight times in the New Testament. Its semantic field embraces summoning, inviting, addressing by name, and appointing to vocation. The contexts range from simple naming of a child ([Luke 1:31](#)) to God's sovereign summons that unfailingly brings sinners to salvation ([Romans 8:30](#)). Narrative, parable, epistle, and apocalypse alike weave the verb into a tapestry that displays the Lord's initiative, human response, and ultimate destiny of the redeemed.

Divine Initiative in Salvation

The heaviest theological weight falls on passages where God Himself is the subject. [Romans 8:30](#) concentrates the golden chain of redemption: "Those He predestined He also called; those He called He also justified; those He justified He also glorified". Here the verb marks the decisive, effectual moment when eternal purpose intersects temporal history, ensuring that none who are called in this sense are finally lost.

Similarly, [1 Thessalonians 5:24](#) grounds perseverance in God's faithfulness: "The One who calls you is faithful, and He will do it." The call secures both initial conversion and lifelong sanctification ([1 Thessalonians 4:7](#); [2 Thessalonians 2:14](#)). In these texts the verb carries covenantal overtones derived from the Old Testament summons of Israel ([Isaiah 41:9](#)), now applied to the church.

Invitation to Discipleship

In the Synoptic Gospels the term marks Jesus' personal recruitment of followers. "He called them, and immediately they left the boat and their father" ([Matthew 4:21](#)). The authority of the

call overrides family and livelihood, highlighting the radical reordering of priorities in discipleship.

Jesus' self-designation for mission also features the verb: "I have not come to call the righteous, but sinners" ([Matthew 9:13](#); [Mark 2:17](#); [Luke 5:32](#)). The call here is simultaneously evangelistic and transformational, aimed at those conscious of need rather than self-satisfied.

Parabolic Depiction of the Kingdom Invitation

Parables of the wedding banquet employ the verb repeatedly ([Matthew 22:3](#), [Matthew 22:9](#); [Luke 14:8-24](#)). The king or host "calls" guests, some of whom refuse, others who accept. These accounts stress human responsibility to respond, while culminating in the maxim, "Many are called, but few are chosen" ([Matthew 22:14](#)). The saying shows that receipt of an invitation does not equate with final acceptance unless accompanied by appropriate response—an early hint of the distinction between external and effectual calling clarified later in the Epistles.

Naming and Identity

Beyond summoning, 2564 signifies the bestowal of a name that defines identity and destiny. "You shall call His name Jesus" ([Matthew 1:21](#)) and "They will call Him Immanuel" ([Matthew 1:23](#)) root Messiah's titles in divine revelation. The Baptist is similarly named by command ([Luke 1:13](#)). In Acts, geographical locations ([Acts 28:1](#)) and storms ([Acts 27:14](#)) are "called" to identify them. Revelation applies the verb to the victorious Christ: "He has a name written on Him which no one knows but Himself... and His name is The Word of God" ([Revelation 19:12-13](#)).

Corporate Vocation of the Church

Epistolary usage stresses the church's collective calling. "There is one body and one Spirit, just as you were called to one hope when you were called" ([Ephesians 4:4](#)). Believers share a singular summons that shapes unity, holiness ([1 Peter 1:15](#)), and mutual peace ([Colossians 3:15](#)). Paul urges conduct "worthy of the calling you have received" ([Ephesians 4:1](#)), indicating that ethical exhortations flow from grace already bestowed.

Call to Suffering and Glory

Peter balances privilege with cost: "To this you were called, because Christ suffered for you" ([1 Peter 2:21](#)). Yet the same apostle anchors hope: "The God of all grace... after you have suffered a little while, will Himself restore, confirm, strengthen, and establish you" ([1 Peter 5:10](#)). The call therefore embraces present hardship and future glory.

Mission and Apostolic Authority

In [Acts 13:2](#) the Spirit instructs, "Set apart for Me Barnabas and Saul for the work to which I have called them." Here the verb legitimizes apostolic mission. Paul later defends his ministry on

the ground that God “called” him by grace ([Galatians 1:15](#)). Thus personal vocation undergirds ecclesial authority and missionary expansion.

Eschatological Invitation

Revelation employs 2564 to announce the consummation: “Blessed are those who are invited to the marriage supper of the Lamb” ([Revelation 19:9](#)). The verb links present grace with future celebration, echoing Jesus’ earlier banquet parables and assuring the saints of ultimate fellowship.

Representative Texts

[Matthew 4:21](#); [Matthew 22:3](#); [Matthew 22:14](#)

[Mark 1:20](#)

[Luke 14:16-24](#)

[John 1:42](#)

[Acts 2:39](#); [Acts 13:2](#)

[Romans 8:28-30](#); [Romans 9:24-26](#)

[1 Corinthians 1:9](#); [1 Corinthians 7:17-24](#)

[Galatians 5:13](#)

[Ephesians 4:1-6](#)

[1 Thessalonians 2:12](#); [1 Thessalonians 5:24](#)

[1 Peter 2:9](#), [1 Peter 2:21](#); [1 Peter 5:10](#)

[Revelation 17:14](#); [Revelation 19:9](#)

Historical and Cultural Background

In Greco-Roman society a “call” could summon citizens to assembly, invite guests to a banquet, or designate an official title. The New Testament authors appropriate this everyday term to communicate divine initiative. Old Testament parallels include the covenantal “calling” of Abram ([Genesis 12:1](#)) and Israel ([Hosea 11:1](#), quoted in [Matthew 2:15](#)). By situating God’s redemptive action within familiar social imagery, Scripture underscores both accessibility and authority.

Patristic and Reformation Perspectives

Early Fathers distinguished between the general proclamation of the gospel and the effective calling that imparts new birth, echoing [Romans 8:30](#). Reformers such as Calvin emphasized the irresistible nature of the inward call, while maintaining universal invitation through preaching. Both streams viewed the verb as a key to understanding grace and responsibility.

Contemporary Ministry Application

Pastors may appeal to 2564 when assuring believers of God's unfailing purpose, urging holy living worthy of the call, or inviting unbelievers to Christ. Mission boards derive mandate from the Spirit's continuing call, and counselors remind struggling saints that the One who calls also equips. Ultimately, the verb encourages confidence that every aspect of Christian life—from identity and vocation to destiny—is initiated and sustained by the Lord who “calls things that are not as though they were” ([Romans 4:17](#)).

(not) the RIGHTEOUS: **1342. *dikaios***

Lexical Summary

dikaios: Righteous, just, upright

Original Word: δίκαιος

Part of Speech: Adjective

Transliteration: dikaios

Pronunciation: dee-KAH-yos

Phonetic Spelling: (dik'-ah-yos)

KJV: just, meet, right(-eous)

NASB: righteous, righteous man, right, just, righteous one, innocent, justice

Word Origin: [from [G1349 \(δίκη - justice\)](#)]

1. equitable (in character or act)
2. (by implication) innocent, holy
{absolutely or relatively}

Strong's Exhaustive Concordance

just, righteous.

From [dike](#); equitable (in character or act); by implication, innocent, holy (absolutely or relatively) -- just, meet, right(-eous).

see GREEK [dike](#)

HELPS Word-studies

Cognate: 1342 *dikaios* (an adjective, derived from *dikē*, "right, judicial approval") – properly, "approved by God" (J. Thayer); *righteous*; "just in the eyes of God" (Souter). [See 1343](#) ("*dikaiosynē*").

["Righteous" relates to *conformity* to *God's standard* (justice). For more on the root-idea see the cognate noun, [1343](#) /*dikaiosynē* ("righteousness").]

[1342](#) /*dikaios* ("righteous, just") describes what is in conformity to God's own being (His will, standard of rightness); hence "upright."

NAS Exhaustive Concordance

Word Origin

from [diké](#)

Definition

correct, righteous, by impl. innocent

NASB Translation

innocent (1), just (6), justice (1), right (7), righteous (48), righteous man (8), righteous man's (1), righteous men (1), righteous one (4), righteous person (1), righteous persons (1).

Thayer's Greek Lexicon

STRONGS NT 1342: δίκαιος

δίκαιος, δίκαια, δίκαιον (from δίκη right) (fr. Homer down), properly, the Hebrew יָדָע, "observant of **ή δίκη**, **righteous, observing divine and human laws; one who is such as he ought to be**; (German rechtbeschaffen; in the earlier language, whence appropriated by Luther, gerecht in a broad sense; in Greek writings used even of physical things, as ἵππος, Xenophon, mem. 4, 4, 5; γῆδιον δίκαιοτατον, most fertile, Xenophon, Cyril 8, 3, 38; (ἄρμα δίκαιον, ibid. 2, 2, 26));

1. in a wide sense, upright, righteous, virtuous, keeping the commands of God;

a. universally: [Matthew 1:19](#) (the meaning is, it was not consistent with his uprightness to expose his betrothed to public reproach); [Matthew 10:41](#); [Matthew 13:43, 49](#); [Matthew 23:28](#); [Matthew 25:37, 46](#); [Luke 1:6, 17](#); [Luke 14:14](#); [Luke 18:9](#); [Luke 20:20](#); [Romans 5:7](#) (cf. Winer's Grammar, 117 (111)); [1 Timothy 1:9](#); [James 5:6, 16](#); [1 Peter 3:12](#); [1 John 3:7](#) (10 Lachmann); [Revelation 22:11](#); opposed to **ἀμαρτωλοί καὶ ἀσεβεῖς**, [1 Peter](#)

[4:18](#); δίκαιοι καὶ ἀδικοι, [Matthew 5:45](#); [Acts 24:15](#); used of O. T. characters noted for piety and probity: [Matthew 13:17](#); ([Matthew 23:29](#)); [Hebrews 12:23](#); thus of Abel, [Matthew 23:35](#); [Hebrews 11:4](#); of Lot, [2 Peter 2:7](#)f. (Wis. 10:4f); of those who seem to themselves to be righteous, who pride themselves on their virtues, whether real or imaginary: [Matthew 9:13](#); [Mark 2:17](#); [Luke 5:32](#); [Luke 15:7](#) ([Ecclesiastes 7:17](#) (16)). Joined with εὐλαβῆς, [Luke 2:25](#) (ἥθη ἐνλαβαη καὶ δίκαια, τό δίκαιον καὶ ἐνλαβες, Plato, polit., p. 311 a. b.); with ἀγιος, [Mark 6:20](#); with ἀγαθός, [Luke 23:50](#); with φοβούμενος τόν Θεόν, [Acts 10:22](#); ἔργα δίκαια, opposite πονηρά, [1 John 3:12](#). Neuter τό δίκαιον, **that which regard for duty demands, what is right**: [2 Peter 1:13](#); plural [Philippians 4:8](#); δίκαιον ἐστι, [Ephesians 6:1](#); [Philippians 1:7](#); with the addition of ἐνώπιον τοῦ Θεοῦ, God being judge, [Acts 4:19](#).

b. the negative idea predominating: **innocent, faultless, guiltless**, (for יְמִין, [Proverbs 1:11](#); [Job 9:23](#), etc.); thus used of Christ in the speech of Gentiles: [Matthew 27:19](#), 24 R G L brackets Tr brackets WH marginal reading; [Luke 23:47](#); αἱμα δίκαιον, ([Proverbs 6:17](#); [Joel 3:19](#)()); [Jonah 1:14](#)), [Matthew 23:35](#); (Tr marginal reading WH text); ἡ ἐντολή ἀγια καὶ δίκαια (having no fellowship with sin (others besides, see the commentaries at the passage)) καὶ ἀγαθή, [Romans 7:12](#).

c. preeminently, of him whose way of thinking, feeling, and acting is wholly conformed to the will of God, and who therefore needs no rectification in heart or life; in this sense Christ alone can be called δίκαιος: [Acts 7:52](#); [Acts 22:14](#); [1 Peter 3:18](#); [1 John 2:1](#); ἀγιος καὶ δίκαιος, [Acts 3:14](#); among the rest of mankind it is rightly denied that one δίκαιος can be found, [Romans 3:10](#) ([Ecclesiastes 7:21](#)-20 ἀνθρωπος οὐκ ἐστι δίκαιος ἐν τῇ γῇ, ὃς ποιήσει ἀγαθόν καὶ οὐχ ἀμαρτήσεται). of God: **holy**, [Romans 3:26](#) (where it is to be closely rendered **just or righteous**, on account of the following καὶ τόν δικαιοῦντα, **and the justifier or who pronounces righteous**, but the substantial meaning is **holy**, that quality by virtue of which he hates and punishes sin); [1 John 2:29](#).

d. contextually, **approved God, acceptable to God**, (German gottwohlgefällig): [Romans 5:19](#); with the addition ἐκ πίστεως, acceptable to God by faith (Winer's Grammar, 136 (129)): [Romans 1:17](#); [Galatians 3:11](#); [Hebrews 10:38](#); δίκαιος παρά τῷ Θεῷ, [Romans 2:13](#).

2. In a narrower sense, **rendering to each his due**; and that in a judicial sense, **passing just judgment on others**, whether expressed in words or shown by the manner of dealing with them: [Titus 1:8](#); so of God recompensing men impartially according to their deeds, [Revelation 16:5](#); in the same sense also in [John 17:25](#) (who does not award the same fate to the loving and faithful disciples of Christ and to 'the world'); [1 John 1:9](#) (who executes the laws of his government, and therefore also the law concerning the pardon of sins); ὁ δίκαιος κριτής, of

Christ, [2 Timothy 4:8](#); κρίσις δίκαια, [John 5:30](#); [John 7:24](#); [2 Thessalonians 1:5](#); plural, [Revelation 16:7](#); [Revelation 19:2](#); αἱ ὄδοι τοῦ Θεοῦ δίκαια καὶ ἀληθιναί, [Revelation 15:3](#); neuter τό δίκαιον, what is due to others, [Colossians 4:1](#); what is agreeable to justice and law, [Luke 12:51](#); δίκαιον namely, ἐστιν, it is agreeable to justice, [2 Thessalonians 1:6](#); accordant with deserts, [Matthew 20:4](#), and Rec. (See references under the word δικαιόω, at the end; cf. ἀγαθός, at the end.)

Topical Lexicon

Semantic Range and Biblical Horizon

The term embraces the whole idea of moral uprightness, judicial equity, and covenant fidelity. Whether applied to God, to Christ, or to redeemed people, it always measures reality against God's own character and revealed standards.

Roots in the Old Testament Story

New Testament writers inherit the Hebrew concept of צַדִּיק (tsaddiq), a word describing one who walks in covenant faithfulness ([Genesis 6:9](#); [Deuteronomy 32:4](#)). The Septuagint regularly renders that word with the Greek term under study, so when the Gospel writers call Joseph “righteous” ([Matthew 1:19](#)), they are invoking the ancestral memory of Noah, Job, and David—men declared upright by divine testimony.

Christ as the Righteous One

[Acts 3:14](#); [Acts 7:52](#); [Acts 22:14](#); [1 Peter 3:18](#), and [Revelation 16:5](#) gather around a single title: “the Righteous One.” He is the unique benchmark of justice, the One whom God vindicates at the resurrection ([Romans 1:4](#)). His righteousness is not merely exemplary but representative and substitutionary: “Christ also suffered for sins once for all, the righteous for the unrighteous, to bring you to God” ([1 Peter 3:18](#)).

Forensic and Transformational Dimensions in Paul

Paul cites Habakkuk twice: “The righteous will live by faith” ([Romans 1:17](#); [Galatians 3:11](#)). In [Romans 3:26](#) God is shown to be “just and the justifier of the one who has faith in Jesus.” Here the term highlights God's impartial justice and His gracious declaration of believers as righteous through union with Christ. Yet Paul also uses the adjective ethically: “Just as through the obedience of the One, the many will be made righteous” ([Romans 5:19](#)), pointing to Spirit-empowered conformity to Christ.

Ethical Instruction for the Church

[Ephesians 6:1](#) exhorts children to obey parents because “this is right.” [Titus 1:8](#) lists “just” among the elder’s qualifications. [James 5:6](#) rebukes those who condemn “the righteous man,” while [James 5:16](#) promises that “the prayer of a righteous man has great power.” Thus the word regulates relationships at home, in leadership, in social justice, and in prayer.

Portraits of Righteous Individuals

- Joseph ([Matthew 1:19](#)) models mercy toward Mary.
- Zechariah and Elizabeth “were righteous in the sight of God” ([Luke 1:6](#)).
- Simeon is “righteous and devout” ([Luke 2:25](#)).
- Cornelius the centurion has a reputation for justice ([Acts 10:22](#)).
- “Joseph, a righteous member of the Council” risks reputation to bury Jesus ([Luke 23:50](#)).

These narratives ground the abstract idea in concrete lives of obedience, humility, and courageous faith.

Righteousness and Self-Righteousness in the Gospels

Jesus repeatedly contrasts true righteousness with religious façade. He condemns those who “appear righteous to others, but on the inside you are full of hypocrisy and wickedness” ([Matthew 23:28](#)). In [Luke 18:9-14](#) the Pharisee trusts in his own righteousness, whereas the tax collector receives God’s mercy. [John 7:24](#) commands, “Stop judging by appearances, but judge with righteous judgment”, calling for evaluation that aligns with divine standards.

Johannine Epistles: Family Resemblance to the Father

John views righteous conduct as evidence of new birth: “Everyone who practices righteousness has been born of Him” ([1 John 2:29](#)). Conversely, “The one who practices sin is of the devil” ([1 John 3:7-10](#)). The word thus functions as a litmus test of authentic faith.

Petrine Emphases

2 Peter pictures Lot’s anguish in Sodom, calling him both “a righteous man” ([2 Peter 2:7](#)) and describing his “righteous soul” ([2 Peter 2:8](#)). Peter warns that the “righteous are scarcely saved” ([1 Peter 4:18](#)), magnifying divine grace while urging perseverance.

Revelation: Eschatological Vindication

Heaven praises God: “Righteous are You...because You have brought these judgments” ([Revelation 16:5](#)). The adjective underscores that every end-time act of wrath or reward springs from perfect justice. In [Revelation 19:2](#) the great multitude celebrates that “His judgments are true and just.”

Ministry and Pastoral Application

1. Gospel preaching must present Christ as the only righteous substitute, exposing both human guilt and divine remedy ([Romans 3:10](#); [2 Corinthians 5:21](#)).
2. Discipleship calls believers to pursue practical righteousness, not to earn standing but to display it ([Philippians 1:27](#); [Titus 2:11-14](#)).
3. Church discipline must reflect God's impartial justice ([1 Timothy 5:21](#)).
4. Social engagement should mirror God's concern for fairness ([Colossians 4:1](#)).
5. Counseling can draw hope from promises that God "is faithful and righteous to forgive" ([1 John 1:9](#)).

Historical and Theological Reflections

Early Fathers revered martyrs as "righteous," echoing [Hebrews 11](#). The Reformation recovered Paul's emphasis on forensic justification, stressing that righteousness is imputed by faith alone. Contemporary scholarship may debate nuances, yet Scripture consistently holds together the declarative and transformative aspects, ensuring that grace produces holiness.

Prayer and Worship

Biblical praise extols the LORD's righteousness ([Psalm 145:17](#), LXX uses the same Greek word). New-covenant worship joins that chorus, affirming in song and prayer that God's judgments are righteous and true, while petitioning that personal and corporate life reflect that same standard until righteous deeds "shine forth like the sun in the kingdom of their Father" ([Matthew 13:43](#)).

SICK:

2560. kakós ►

Lexical Summary

kakós: Bad, evil, wicked, harmful

Original Word: κακός

Part of Speech: Adverb

Transliteration: kakós

Pronunciation: kä-kos'

Phonetic Spelling: (kak-oce')

KJV: amiss, diseased, evil, grievously, miserably, sick, sore

NASB: sick, cruelly, evil, very, wretched, wrong motives, wrongly

Word Origin: [from [G2556 \(κακός - evil\)](#)]

1. badly
2. (figuratively, physically) sickly
3. (figuratively, morally) wrongly
4. (by extension) greatly, i.e. greatly (badly) in need
{physically or morally}

Strong's Exhaustive Concordance

amiss, badly, grievously

From [kakos](#); badly (physically or morally) -- amiss, diseased, evil, grievously, miserably, sick, sore.

see GREEK [kakos](#)

HELPS Word-studies

Cognate: **2560** *kakōs* (the adverbial form of [2556](#) /*kakós*) – *sore-misery* related to experiencing grievous harm (affliction).

NAS Exhaustive Concordance

Word Origin

adverb from [kakos](#)

Definition

badly

NASB Translation

cruelly (1), evil (1), ill* (5), sick (6), very (1), wretched (1), wrong motives (1), wrongly (1).

Thayer's Greek Lexicon

STRONGS NT 2560: κακῶς

κακῶς (**κακός**), adverb (from Homer on down), **badly**, **ill**, i. e.

a. (in a physical sense) **miserably**: **ἔχειν**, **to be ill**, sick (see **ἔχω**, II. a.), [Matthew 4:24](#); [Matthew 8:16](#); [Matthew 9:12](#); [Matthew 14:35](#); ([Matthew 17:15](#) L Tr text WH text); [Mark 1:32, 34](#); ; ([Mark 6:55](#)); [Luke 5:31](#); [Luke 7:2](#), etc.; **πάσχειν**, [Matthew 17:15](#) (R G T Tr marginal reading WH marginal reading); **δαιμονίζεσθαι**, [Matthew 15:22](#); **κακούς κακῶς ἀπολέσει**, [Matthew 21:41](#), on this combination of words with verbs of destroying, perishing, etc., which is frequent in Greek writings also, cf. Kuinoel at the passage; Winers Grammar, § 68, 1.

b. (morally) **improperly**, **wrongly**: [John 18:23](#); **κακῶς εἰπεῖν τινα**, to speak ill of, revile, one, [Acts 23:5](#); with bad intent, **αἰτεῖσθαι**, [James 4:3](#).

Topical Lexicon

Semantic Range and Nuances

Strong's Greek 2560, *kakōs*, functions adverbially to describe a condition or action that is “badly,” “miserably,” or “wrongly” done or experienced. The breadth of its usage moves along two main axes: physical misery (sickness, torment) and moral fault (wrong speech, evil intent). The contexts in which *kakōs* appears reveal how the New Testament writers employ the term to expose both bodily affliction and ethical deviation.

Occurrences Related to Physical Affliction

Thirteen of the sixteen occurrences refer to bodily distress. The evangelists cluster the word around the healing ministry of Jesus, underscoring His compassion and authority.

- [Matthew 4:24](#); 8:16; 14:35; [Mark 1:32, 34](#); 6:55 record crowds bringing those who were *kakōs* to Jesus. The emphasis lies in the totality of human misery He confronted—diseases, pain, seizures, demonic oppression—and the completeness of His cure: “and He healed them” ([Matthew 4:24](#)).
- [Matthew 15:22 and 17:15](#) stress the severity of demonic torment and epileptic suffering: “My daughter is miserably demon-possessed,” “he suffers terribly.” The adverb intensifies the desperation driving petitioners to Christ.
- [Matthew 9:12](#); [Mark 2:17](#); [Luke 5:31](#) employ a proverbial contrast between “healthy” and *kakōs* (“sick”). Jesus applies a medical metaphor to His redemptive mission: “It is not the healthy who need a doctor, but the sick.” Physical illness becomes a window into mankind’s deeper spiritual need, legitimizing the Lord’s fellowship with sinners.
- [Luke 7:2](#) presents a centurion’s valued servant who was “about to die” while *kakōs*, illustrating that Gentiles too could appeal to Israel’s Messiah for relief.

Occurrences Addressing Moral Wrong

The remaining three passages shift from malady to misconduct.

- [John 18:23](#): “If I spoke wrongly, testify to the wrong.” Jesus invokes legal justice; the adverb targets speech that transgresses truth.
- [Acts 23:5](#) cites [Exodus 22:28](#) to rebuke slander of leadership: “Do not speak evil about the ruler of your people.” Paul’s swift repentance shows reverence for God-ordained authority even in a hostile courtroom.

- [James 4:3](#) diagnoses prayer hindered by selfish craving: “You ask with wrong motives, that you may spend it on your pleasures.” Here *kakōs* exposes inward corruption rather than external circumstance.

Theological and Pastoral Implications

1. Compassionate Christology. The repeated association of *kakōs* with desperate sufferers highlights the gospel portrait of Jesus as the Great Physician. Physical healing serves as a sign of the in-breaking kingdom and the reversal of Eden’s curse.
2. Holistic Salvation. By using the same adverb for sickness and sin, Scripture knits together the human plight. Jesus heals bodies and restores righteousness, pointing toward ultimate wholeness in resurrection.
3. Missions and Mercy Ministry. The pattern of bringing the *kakōs* to Christ ([Mark 6:55](#)) legitimizes practical care in Christian outreach. Physical relief and gospel proclamation operate in tandem, reflecting the Lord’s own practice.
4. Ethical Speech and Authority. *Kakōs* condemns unjust words ([John 18:23](#); [Acts 23:5](#)). Faithful discipleship includes guarding the tongue and honoring legitimate rulers, even when they err.
5. Prayer and Purity of Motive. James warns that requests formed *kakōs* are ineffective. Effective intercession springs from a heart aligned with God’s purposes, not self-indulgence.

Historical Background

In the ancient Mediterranean world, chronic illness often led to social exclusion. The Gospels’ frequent mention of the *kakōs* underscores the scandalous nature of Jesus’ touch; by engaging the ceremonially unclean, He subverted prevailing norms. Additionally, Greek ethical thought valued self-mastery; the New Testament re-centers morality on conformity to God’s will rather than philosophical virtue, identifying *kakōs* conduct as rebellion against divine authority.

Application for Contemporary Ministry

- Churches should treat visible affliction and hidden sin with equal seriousness, extending compassionate aid and doctrinal truth.
- Pastors must model respectful speech toward civil authorities, correcting error without slander.
- Believers are to examine motives in prayer and service, avoiding the *kakōs* orientation that seeks personal gratification over God’s glory.

Summary

Kakōs weaves through the New Testament as a thread linking bodily suffering, moral failure, and the redemptive work of Christ. Whether describing a demon-tormented child, a self-serving prayer, or malicious speech, the term exposes the darkness the Savior came to dispel. His

response—healing, teaching, and atoning death—transforms both the physically kakōs and the spiritually kakōs, demonstrating the gospel’s power to make all things well.

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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?

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UPDATED MAR 29, 2023

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?

Mathew 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 discipled 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.