



MATTHEW'S HOUSE

Matthew 9:9–13; Mark 2:14–17;
and Luke 5:29–32

⁹As 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. ¹⁰Now 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. ¹¹And when the Pharisees saw it, they said to His disciples, "Why does your Teacher eat with tax collectors and sinners?" ¹²When Jesus heard that, He said to them, "Those who are well have no need of a physician, but those who are sick. ¹³But 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."

—Matthew 9:9–13

¹⁴And as he passed by, he saw Levi the son of Alphaeus sitting at the receipt of custom, and said unto him, "Follow Me." And he arose and followed Him. ¹⁵Now it happened, as He was dining in Levi's house, that many tax collectors and sinners also sat together with Jesus and His disciples; for there were many, and they followed Him. ¹⁶And when the scribes and Pharisees saw Him eating with the tax collectors and sinners, they said to His disciples, "How is it that He eats and drinks with tax collectors and sinners?" ¹⁷When Jesus heard it, He said to them, "Those who are well have no need of a physician, but those who are sick. I did not come to call the righteous, but sinners, to repentance."

—Mark 2:14–17

²⁹Then Levi gave Him a great feast in his own house. And there were a great number of tax collectors and others who sat down with them. ³⁰And their scribes and the Pharisees complained against His disciples, saying, "Why do You eat and drink with tax collectors and sinners?" ³¹Jesus answered and said to them, "Those who are well have no need of a physician, but those who are sick. ³²I have not come to call the righteous, but sinners, to repentance."

—Luke 5:29–32

FOOD FOR THOUGHT

Assuredly, I say to you that tax collectors and harlots enter the kingdom of God before you.

—Matthew 21:31

FOOD FOR THOUGHT

Tax collectors worked for Rome, the oppressors of Israel. Therefore, they were despised by the religious Jews.

Read Matthew 9:9–13; Mark 2:14–17; and Luke 5:29–32

There are many believers who are overly occupied with pointing out and criticizing the sins of the world. Unfortunately, rather than reaching out to the lost with the love of Jesus, the church can too often end up ostracizing and condemning the very people that Jesus came to save!

During the time of Jesus' sojourn on earth, tax collectors were considered among the lowest and most immoral rung of Israel's society. The religious elite refused any association with tax collectors and sinners. People were not only considered sinners if they acted immorally, but also if they associated or spoke with anyone of questionable behavior. Therefore, tax collectors and sinners became the ostracized of Israel's society.

The Pharisees and scribes thought that their high moral values and disassociation with sinners qualified them to God. They actually believed that their self-righteous, judgmental behavior was acceptable and even warranted by God.

Imagine the chagrin of these self-righteous religious leaders as they watched Jesus actually eat from the same loaf of bread and share from the same bowls of food with Matthew's former colleagues and friends. The implications of Jesus' actions are even greater than we realize. Jesus as the Son of God and the Savior of the world was reaching out to lost humanity and inviting them to fellowship with and encounter God on earth. Jesus' mission on earth was—and still is—not to condemn men, but to save them from the condemnation that they are already under. *For God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son, that whoever believes in Him should not perish but have everlasting life. For God did not send His Son into the world to condemn the world, but that the world through Him might be saved* (John 3:16–17).

As you explore your lesson this week, allow the Holy Spirit to remove any attitudes of self-righteousness in you and give you a heart like Jesus, who seeks to see the lost saved.

1. Use Matthew 9:9–10, Mark 2:14–15 and Luke 5:29 to underscore:
 - a. The reason for the feast at Matthew's house
 - b. The guests at Matthew's house
2. Observe Matthew 9:11, Mark 2:16, and Luke 5:30 to comment on the reaction of the scribes and Pharisees to the company Jesus kept at Matthew's house.
3. Use the following verses to explain the answer of Jesus to the Pharisees' criticism:
 - a. Matthew 9:12–13
 - b. Luke 5:31–32
4. What is your greatest takeaway from Jesus in Matthew's house?

FOOD FOR THOUGHT

Matthew is also called Levi. Many Jews in Jesus' time had more than one name. Matthew, the author of the Gospel, openly declared his relationship to Jesus when he threw a huge banquet for all his friends. He left a comfortable, secure, high-income job and found destiny, honor, and adventure beyond his wildest dreams.

FOOD FOR THOUGHT

Sharing a meal with others was a sign of covenantal and social equality to the Jews in Jesus' time.

FOOD FOR THOUGHT

This is a quotation from Hosea 6:6. "Sacrifice" summarized observance of religious rituals. More important to God was "mercy" (the Septuagint rendering of Hb. hesed, meaning "steadfast love"), which would have led the Pharisees to care for these sinners as Jesus did.¹⁰