

Week 6 - What to believe and next steps to take:

- A. **What to believe** – By God’s grace, we are ambassadors for Jesus. For that reason, we can be ambassadors for Jesus. (2 Corinthians 5:18-20)

- B. **Next Steps** – Pray for those who are in your life that do not know the Lord or do not act like they know him. Begin to make efforts toward them in conversation, building bridges to the gospel.
 - 1. Scripture memory:
 - a. Philippians 2:13 “...for it is God who is at work in you, both to will and to work for His good pleasure.”
 - b. Ephesians 2:10 “For we are His workmanship, created in Christ Jesus for good works, which God prepared beforehand so that we would walk in them.”

 - 2. Scripture reading – Matthew 9-12
 - a. Ask this question when you read a chapter – What do I need to believe about God from reading this chapter?
 - b. If I believe this about God, what will I do or stop doing as a result of believing this?

 - 3. Meditation is lingering in contemplative listening, listening to what God has said in His word, resulting in specific obedience to God and His word. Spend time meditating on the verse that captures what you need to believe and how you will obey.

 - 4. Pray
 - a. Pray for the people in your life that need a disciple to be a blessing to them.
 - b. Begin to pray for the person/s you will disciple in the next year.
 - c. Pray daily using your neighborhood map or top ten list for those in your life with whom you want to share the gospel.
 - d. Continue to journal a couple prayers requests you would like to be praying this week.

 - 5. Some addition assignments:
 - a. Begin to think about a plan for becoming a first generation disciple maker at FBCGT.
 - b. Work on sharing your own personal story of salvation. Ask someone you know if you can share your story with them in about 2-3 minutes. (with some current story on what difference it is making now).
 - c. Work on sharing the gospel with the three circles conversation guide.
 - d. Pray for the Bible distribution.

Matthew 9:9-13 (NASB)

As Jesus went on from there, He saw a man called Matthew, sitting in the tax collector's booth; and He said to him, "Follow Me!" And he got up and followed Him. **10** Then it happened that as Jesus was reclining at the table in the house, behold, many tax collectors and sinners came and were dining with Jesus and His disciples. **11** When the Pharisees saw this, they said to His disciples, "Why is your Teacher eating with the tax collectors and sinners?" **12** But when Jesus heard this, He said, "It is not those who are healthy who need a physician, but those who are sick. **13** "But go and learn what this means: 'I DESIRE COMPASSION, AND NOT SACRIFICE,' for I did not come to call the righteous, but sinners."

This day in Matthew's life probably started like any other. Matthew woke up and headed to his tax booth to face another day of angry, hateful, self-righteous people. On that ordinary day when Matthew was sitting at his tax booth collecting money to satisfy his wants and needs, something extraordinary happened. Jesus walked up to his booth. Jesus wasted no time with words of explanation. He simply said to Matthew, "Follow me." Do you think Matthew did a double take? Did it register? "Jesus wants me to follow Him." That is exactly what Matthew did. He left everything and got up and followed Jesus. Then in next scene we see a great feast, a party, with all of Matthew's friends, a whole bunch of losers, sinners, reprobates, tax collectors. These were the kind of bad people you wouldn't want to be around or have your kids around. At this party Jesus was the guest of honor. Jesus was eating with them, hanging out with them. Jesus had called Matthew to follow Him and Matthew wanted all his friends to see the unbelievable. Jesus, teacher, healer, forgiver of sins, the Son of Man, called him, Matthew, the reject, outcast, sinner, and tax collector. Unbelievable. So Matthew invited all his friends to come and see that he was with Jesus, following Him, that Jesus had really called him, of all people. Matthew was rejected and he was a traitor but Jesus loved him and forgave him. Who can be forgiven? Who can follow Jesus? If Matthew can, anyone can.

When the Pharisees saw all of this partying, they had a real problem. "Why is Jesus eating with those people," they asked. Why would Jesus sit down at the same table with people like that? Why would Jesus show his approval by going to a tax collector's house and sitting down and eating with him and all his worldly friends? The righteous are not supposed to be with sinners, getting polluted, affected, infected. Jesus responds with the most defining statement in all His ministry, "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 MERCY, AND NOT SACRIFICE,' for I did not come to call the righteous, but sinners." He starts with a simple proverbial statement, a statement that should make sense to anyone. People who are not sick, don't need a doctor. People who are actually sick need a doctor. Jesus is saying, "I am not hanging out with these guys as one of them, I am with them because they need me." Then comes the challenge. Go and learn what this means. Go and figure this out, "I desire mercy and not sacrifice."

The Pharisees would have immediately recognized what Jesus was quoting. This was a verse from the prophet Hosea. Jesus was quoting Hosea and telling the Pharisees to go and learn what this OT passage meant. If Jesus told them to figure it out then we should make sure we figure it out as well. So let's learn together a little bit.

Hosea 6:1-7 "Come, let us return to the LORD. For He has torn *us*, but He will heal us; He has wounded *us*, but He will bandage us. ²"He will revive us after two days; He will raise us up on the third day, That we may live before Him. ³"So let us know, let us press on to know the LORD. His

going forth is as certain as the dawn; And He will come to us like the rain, Like the spring rain watering the earth.”⁴What shall I do with you, O Ephraim? What shall I do with you, O Judah? For your loyalty [loyal love, devotion] is like a morning cloud and like the dew which goes away early.⁵Therefore I have hewn *them* in pieces by the prophets; I have slain them by the words of My mouth; And the judgments on you are *like* the light that goes forth.⁶For I delight in loyalty [loyal love, devotion] rather than sacrifice, And in the knowledge of God rather than burnt offerings.⁷

God tells his people that their love for Him is like the morning cloud and dew which goes away quickly. He tells them that He delights in their love and devotion, the love of their hearts, rather than just the performance of their sacrifices. He wants them to know and love Him, not just go through some routine that is devoid of heart and love for God. That is the message of Hosea and that is what Jesus says we better figure out.

How did Jesus know the Pharisees needed to go and learn this? What made Jesus say this? Jesus knew because of how the Pharisees treated sinners. Jesus came to call sinners. Jesus came for sinners so that those who were far from God could find him, know him, and love him because God desires our love. The Pharisees wanted nothing to do with sinners and tax collectors. As long as Pharisees acted that way, they didn't know God or love God. Those people were sinners and the Pharisees wanted nothing to do with them. The only way the Pharisees could end up there is if all their rituals and sacrifices and offerings had become a display of their own self-righteousness rather than expressions of their hearts to a faithful, forgiving God who made provision for them to know Him and love Him.

Jesus didn't want Matthew to be some guy who went down to the synagogue every week and paid his tithe, said his prayers, said his hellos, did his time and went back home and work the rest of the week thinking he was better than the next guy who knew he was so rotten and sinful that the synagogue wouldn't let him in. Jesus didn't want Matthew to have all the form of religion but miss out on what God was really all about. Jesus wanted Matthew's heart. He wanted Matthew to know his love, to know forgiveness, to know life. Jesus came to call sinners, to forgive guys like Matthew who knew they were bad, who knew they were outcasts, who knew they needed a savior. Jesus came for Matthew. Jesus came for sinners. The Pharisees didn't think Matthew had a place at the table of righteousness. "Pharisee Bob" didn't want to be around Matthew, wouldn't want his kids to be around Matthew's kids, wouldn't want anything to do with Matthew and his friends because they were sinners. The problem is that Pharisee Bob was just as much a sinner as Matthew. Sure he did all the right stuff but he was missing God. He didn't love God. He had forgotten that he was a sinner just like Matthew. He had just forgotten and as a result was missing God, even though he was doing all the rituals God prescribed. Pharisee Bob was doing everything that should have helped him see Jesus and run to Him for real forgiveness of his sins. But Pharisee Bob didn't need Jesus because he wasn't a sinner like Matthew. Wrong. God doesn't want our ritual without our hearts and he can't get our hearts unless we come to Jesus. And we won't come to Jesus unless we know we are just like Matthew – a sinner, a complete and total reprobate, worthy of hell and condemnation.

If we don't get this we will miss Jesus because we won't think we need him. If we get this truth, we will find Jesus and we will join him in loving others, calling sinners, being around sinners, reaching out with the same love we ourselves received. If we come to church and sing our songs and go through our motions but are not actively loving sinners, calling sinners to

Jesus, do we really have any part in Christ at all? Jesus desires our love and not just our singing, giving, sermons or whatever else we might call righteousness. All this singing and sermon stuff should be a part of our love for God. And we will know it is all a part of our loving God when our love for sinners abounds and we join Jesus is seeking out and calling sinners to Jesus. And if a sinner needs proof that God can really forgive his or her sins, we should be the greatest of testimonies. We must never lose sight of the reality that Jesus came to call sinners and that means that is what we are – called sinners, who needed forgiveness, who needed a savior, just like the worst sinners around us. We are called to be in the world holding high the banner, Jesus has come to call sinners. To love God and to love people is better than anything else we can do. That is how we must follow Jesus. Love God and love sinners so that they can do the same.

Matthew never got over what Jesus did in his life. Matthew knew the sinner he was apart from Jesus and he never got over it. Later in Matthew's gospel, he lists the disciples by name. Listen to how his list goes, (Matt 10:2-3) "Now the names of the twelve apostles are these: The first, Simon, who is called Peter, and Andrew his brother; and James the son of Zebedee, and John his brother; ³Philip and Bartholomew; Thomas and *Matthew the tax collector...*" Jesus loved Matthew and forgave him all his sin. Matthew never got over it. Later in his life went in to Ethiopia and Egypt sharing this gospel with sinners. The king of Egypt ordered his servants to kill Matthew because of his evangelizing and one of the king's servants came to Matthew and killed him with a spear. From the day of his party with all his friends until the day he died for the gospel, Matthew lived and died for Jesus Christ because Jesus Christ came to call sinners. He never got over it. I hope we don't either. I hope we will love God, love sinners and truly follow Jesus, the one who came to call sinners. Disciples seek the lost. Love God and love people so that they can do the same.