

## Matthew 9:9–13; Matthew 9:18–26 - Bible Study Handout

### Big Idea

Jesus calls Matthew from the tax booth, eats with sinners, heals a suffering woman, and raises a dead girl. In each scene, Jesus moves toward people others might avoid. He doesn't deny sin, suffering, shame, or death. He meets people in those places with mercy, authority, and restoring grace. These passages remind us that Jesus came for sinners and sufferers, and His mercy is stronger than every label, wound, and loss.

### Context

- Matthew 8–9 shows Jesus' authority through healing, forgiveness, deliverance, calling, and restoration.
- Just before Matthew's call, Jesus forgives and heals a paralyzed man, which raises questions about His authority.
- Matthew, also called Levi, is a tax collector. Tax collectors were often seen as collaborators with Rome and as people who profited from their neighbors' burdens (France).
- Jesus' meal with tax collectors and sinners creates conflict with the Pharisees, who question why a holy teacher would share table fellowship with such people.
- Matthew 9:18–26 continues the same theme of mercy crossing boundaries. Jesus responds to a grieving ruler, a bleeding woman, and a dead child.
- These stories show that Jesus' holiness is not fragile. He doesn't become unclean by touching human brokenness. Instead, His life and mercy restore what is broken (Keener).

### Key Themes

- Jesus calls unlikely people
- Mercy over empty religion
- Grace that meets sinners before they clean themselves up
- Faith that reaches toward Jesus in desperation
- Jesus' authority over sickness, shame, uncleanness, and death
- Restoration of dignity and community
- Holiness expressed through compassion
- God's grace moving first

### Passage Overview

#### Matthew 9:9 - Jesus Calls Matthew

- Jesus sees Matthew sitting at the tax collector's booth and says, "Follow me."
- Matthew is not in a synagogue or seeking a public spiritual renewal. He is sitting in the place tied to his reputation and compromise.
- Jesus sees more than Matthew's occupation and public shame. He sees the person grace can redeem.
- Matthew gets up and follows. Grace calls, but discipleship still requires response.

#### Matthew 9:10 - Jesus Eats With Tax Collectors and Sinners

- Jesus shares a meal with Matthew and others who were considered spiritually and socially unacceptable.
- In the first century, table fellowship showed welcome and relationship. This is why the Pharisees are troubled (Keener).
- Jesus does not approve of sin by eating with sinners. He shows that sinners are not beyond the reach of God's mercy.
- Matthew's call becomes a doorway for others to come near Jesus.

#### Matthew 9:11 - The Pharisees Question Jesus' Company

- The Pharisees ask why Jesus eats with tax collectors and sinners.
- Their concern reflects a common belief that holiness required separation from morally compromised people.
- Jesus shows another way. Holiness does not mean avoiding broken people. In Jesus, holiness moves toward them with truth and mercy.

#### Matthew 9:12 - The Sick Need a Doctor

- Jesus says, “It is not the healthy who need a doctor, but the sick.”
- Jesus does not deny the reality of sin. He names the need clearly.
- The image of a doctor shows the heart of His mission. He has come to heal, restore, forgive, and call people into new life.
- A Savior who avoids sinners would not be much of a Savior.

#### Matthew 9:13 - Mercy, Not Sacrifice

- Jesus quotes Hosea 6:6, “I desire mercy, not sacrifice.”
- Hosea challenged people who kept religious rituals while neglecting covenant love and mercy.
- Jesus is not rejecting worship or obedience. He is rejecting religion that keeps the form while losing the heart (France).
- Mercy is not optional for God’s people. It reveals whether we understand the heart of God.

#### Matthew 9:18–19 - A Ruler Comes to Jesus

- A ruler kneels before Jesus and asks Him to come because his daughter has died.
- Mark and Luke identify this man as Jairus, but Matthew’s account is shorter and more direct (Davies and Allison).
- This man has status, but grief brings him to his knees.
- Jesus gets up and goes with him. He does not treat grief as an interruption.

#### Matthew 9:20–21 - A Suffering Woman Reaches Out

- A woman who has been bleeding for twelve years touches the edge of Jesus’ cloak.
- Her condition would have affected her physically, socially, and spiritually. Under purity laws, ongoing bleeding made her ritually unclean.
- Twelve years is a long time to live exhausted, isolated, and disappointed.
- Her faith may be quiet and fearful, but it is real. She reaches toward Jesus because she believes mercy can be found there.

#### Matthew 9:22 - Jesus Calls Her Daughter

- Jesus turns, sees her, and says, “Take heart, daughter.”
- This woman has likely been known by her condition for years. Jesus gives her a family name.
- Her healing restores more than her body. It restores her dignity and place in the community.
- Jesus says her faith has healed her. Faith is not magic. Faith is the open hand that receives what Christ gives.

#### Matthew 9:23–24 - Jesus Enters the House of Mourning

- Jesus arrives at the ruler’s house and finds flute players and a noisy crowd.
- Public mourning had already begun. Everyone believes the story is over.
- Jesus says the girl is not dead but asleep, and the crowd laughs at Him.
- Their laughter shows disbelief. They know death, but they do not yet understand who is standing in the room.

#### Matthew 9:25–26 - Jesus Takes Her by the Hand

- Jesus takes the girl by the hand, and she gets up.
- Touching a dead body would normally make someone ritually unclean, but Jesus does not become unclean. His holiness brings life (Keener).

- This miracle points beyond itself to the larger hope of resurrection.
- The news spreads through the region because mercy like this cannot stay hidden.

#### Important Observations

- Jesus calls Matthew while he is still sitting at the tax booth.
- Matthew's response shows that grace invites real change.
- Jesus' table includes people religious leaders considered unacceptable.
- Jesus does not choose between truth and mercy. He holds them together.
- The bleeding woman is not reduced to her condition. Jesus calls her "daughter."
- Jesus enters the ruler's grief instead of standing at a distance.
- Jesus' holiness is not threatened by uncleanness, sickness, sin, or death.
- These passages show a Savior who moves toward people in need.

#### Wesleyan Insights

- **Prevenient Grace:** Jesus comes to Matthew before Matthew comes to Him. Grace moves first, awakens the heart, and makes response possible (Collins).
- **Saving Grace:** Matthew rises and follows. He does not save himself, but he responds to the mercy of Christ.
- **Repentance and Faith:** Jesus' mercy does not excuse sin. It opens the door to a changed life.
- **Works of Mercy:** Jesus' compassion takes visible shape through welcome, healing, and restoration. Wesley believed holy love should become practical care for others (Maddox).
- **Holiness of Heart and Life:** True holiness does not avoid hurting people. It reflects the love of Christ by moving toward them with mercy and truth.

#### Life Application

- We need to ask who we quietly assume is too far gone for Jesus.
- A church shaped by Jesus tells the truth about sin without treating sinners as hopeless.
- Some people carry wounds no one else can see. Jesus sees them and calls them by name.
- Mercy does not mean lowering God's standards. It means meeting people with the heart of Christ.
- Like Matthew, we may need to get up from something familiar in order to follow Jesus faithfully.
- Like the woman, we can reach for Jesus even when our faith feels fragile.
- Like the ruler, we can bring Jesus the grief we cannot fix.

#### Apologetic Reflection

- The call of Matthew has historical credibility because the early Church would not likely invent a despised tax collector as one of Jesus' chosen disciples just to make the movement look respectable.
- The conflict over table fellowship fits the first-century Jewish setting, where meals carried social and religious meaning (Keener).
- These passages take sin, suffering, shame, and death seriously. Christianity does not ask people to pretend pain is small.
- Jesus' miracles point to His identity and authority. He forgives sinners, restores the unclean, and gives life where death seems final.
- The Christian hope rests not in human strength but in the mercy and authority of Jesus Christ.

#### Details Worth Noticing

- Jesus sees Matthew before He calls him. Being seen by Jesus comes before being changed by Jesus.
- Matthew's house becomes a place where others encounter Christ.

- Jesus quotes Hosea, showing that mercy has always been at the heart of God’s desire for His people.
- The woman touches Jesus secretly, but Jesus restores her publicly.
- Jesus calls the woman “daughter,” the only time this word is used this way in Matthew.
- The ruler and the bleeding woman are very different socially, but both come to Jesus in need.
- Jesus takes the dead girl by the hand. His compassion is personal, not distant.

#### Reflection Questions

1. Why does it matter that Jesus calls Matthew while he is still sitting at the tax booth?
2. How can the Church practice mercy without pretending sin does not matter?
3. Who are the people today who may feel like “tax collectors and sinners” at the edge of the table?
4. What does the bleeding woman teach us about reaching for Jesus when we feel worn down?
5. Where do you need to trust Jesus with something that feels beyond repair?

#### Key Verse

“It is not the healthy who need a doctor, but the sick... For I have not come to call the righteous, but sinners.” - Matthew 9:12–13

#### Cross References

Hosea 6:6 • Isaiah 53:4–5 • Matthew 11:28–30 • Mark 2:13–17 • Mark 5:21–43 • Luke 5:27–32 • Luke 7:36–50 • Romans 5:6–8 • Ephesians 2:8–10 • Hebrews 4:14–16

#### Takeaway

Matthew 9:9–13 and Matthew 9:18–26 show us the mercy and authority of Jesus. He calls sinners, welcomes the rejected, restores the suffering, and brings life into the house of grief. Grace does not wait until we are cleaned up, strong, or respectable. Jesus comes near, calls us forward, and gives us life we could never create for ourselves.