

## Follow Me - Matthew the Tax Collector

### Introduction:

In Matthew 9:9-13, the simple yet powerful call from Jesus—"Follow me"—transforms the life of Matthew, a tax collector. This invitation was more than just a command to walk behind Jesus; it was a call to leave behind his old life and identity. Most of Matthew's fellow Jews would have seen him as a corrupt traitor, but Jesus saw beyond Matthew's reputation and called him to a life of grace and purpose. Matthew's immediate response to follow highlights the nature of true discipleship—leaving behind what was for the sake of what Jesus offers. As Jesus later dines with tax collectors and sinners, He makes a bold statement about the kind of followers He is seeking—those who recognize their brokenness and need for mercy. His words, "I desire mercy, not sacrifice," challenge us to consider how we follow Him today. Are we more focused on outward appearances, or are we showing the same mercy that Jesus extends to us?

### Read Your Bible

- Matthew 9:9-13

### Apply God's Word to Your Life:

1. What does Jesus' call, "Follow me," mean for Matthew, and why is it significant that he left everything to do so?
2. Are you surprised that Matthew responds immediately to Jesus' invitation? Why or why not?
3. What is the significance of Jesus eating with tax collectors and sinners (v. 10)?
4. In verse 12, how does Jesus' analogy of the sick needing a doctor relate to His mission and purpose?
5. What does Jesus mean by quoting Hosea 6:6, "I desire mercy, not sacrifice" (v. 13), and how does it challenge the Pharisees' view of righteousness?
6. What does this passage teach us about the kind of people Jesus calls to follow Him?
7. How can we engage with those who are often rejected by society?

### Reflecting on the text:

1. What have you learned about God?
2. What have you learned about the world?
3. What have you learned about yourself?

### Pray

Gracious Lord, we thank You for the call to follow Jesus, just as Matthew did. Help us to leave behind anything that hinders us from walking with You. Teach us to extend the same mercy and grace that You offer to us, especially to those whom society rejects. May we be reminded that we are all in need of Your healing, and give us the strength to respond to Your invitation each day with a willing heart. In Jesus' name we pray, Amen.