

Matthew (Quality: Very Good)

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Date: 24 January 1993

Preacher: Matrunola, Kenneth (1937-1994)

[0 : 00] Will you turn to the Gospel according to Mark chapter 2 and at the 13th verse we shall read from that verse to verse 17.

And from this portion I would speak a little this evening. Mark chapter 2, the 13th verse and through to the 17th.

And he went forth again by the seaside, and all the multitude resorted unto him, and he taught them.

And 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. And it came to pass that as Jesus sat at meat in the house, Many publicans and sinners sat also together with Jesus and his disciples.

[1 : 02] For there were many, and they followed him. And when the scribes and Pharisees saw him eat with the publicans and sinners, they said unto his disciples, How is it that he eateth and drinketh with publicans and sinners?

When Jesus heard it, he saith unto them, They that are whole have no need of the physician, but they that are sick.

I came not to call the righteous, but sinners to repentance. Now in these verses, we are in two different locations.

We could put it this way, there are two scenes brought before us in these verses. The first scene is that where we see the Lord Jesus Christ by the seaside.

And the second is the Lord Jesus Christ of Matthew. And in these scenes, we find that there are several persons involved.

[2 : 22] Were we to be looking at some work of literature, we want to know the scenes, and we want to know the dramatis personae, the persons of the piece.

Who are in this work? Who are in the acts and the scenes of this book? And we can perhaps follow something of this as we look to this passage.

We've set the scenes, let us look at the persons, remembering all the while that this is no work of fiction. This is as it was, this is the record of fact.

And we desire both to acknowledge that and also to be benefited from it. Well, who are the persons of this piece? There is, first of all, the Lord Jesus Christ himself.

In this chapter, in the tenth verse, he speaks of himself as the son of man. But that ye might know that the son of man hath power on earth to forgive sins, he saith to the sick of the palsy, I say unto thee, arise and take up thy bed, and go thy way into thine house.

[3 : 41] He is the son of man. In the first verse of the gospel of Mark, he is set forth as the son of God. The beginning of the gospel of Jesus Christ, the son of God.

The son of God from all eternity. By his incarnation, in that great mystery of godliness, is become for us also the son of man.

He is the God-man. And here he is then in this which is before us. He goes forth again by the seaside.

All the multitude resorted unto him, and he taught them. Let us think of all the multitude then. This is the second group in this case.

Of characters who are in the scene. Here is a great crowd of people. You find that in Mark 1 that the crowds begin to appear.

[4 : 41] If you look back to chapter 1 and verse 33. All the city was gathered together at the door, and he healed many that were sick of divers diseases, and cast out many devils, and suffered not the devil to speak, because they knew him.

And he had to withdraw indeed. So numerous were the people. And at the end of the chapter, we are told that Jesus could no more openly enter into the city, because they came to him, and even when he went out into desert places, that didn't stop them coming to him from every quarter.

Of course, it's a wonderful testimony to the fulfillment of prophecy. Unto him shall the gathering of the people be. They came to him from every quarter.

There were crowds of people at this stage then of his public ministry. The early days of that ministry attracted many people. All the multitude resorted unto him, even as he went forth by the seaside.

That's by the lake of Galilee, the Sea of Galilee. And he taught them. And then we find that there is another person in the 14th verse.

[6 : 08] And this man is Levi. And Mark tells us that he was the son of Alphaeus. When we look to the gospel according to Luke, chapter 5, 27, we find that he's called Levi, but we're not told that he is the son of Alphaeus.

But when we look to the same record in Matthew, chapter 9 and verse 9, we find that this man, Levi, the son of Alphaeus, is also called Matthew.

And since it was the very same man that wrote that first gospel, and since in that first gospel he himself is pleased to use the name Matthew to describe himself in this incident, I think that we can call him Matthew rather than to call him Levi.

Levi. He was Matthew, the son of Alphaeus. And we find when you go on a chapter into Mark chapter 3 and have the list of the 12, when the Lord ordained 12 that they should be with him and that he might send them forth to preach, you find that there was also a James who was the son of Alphaeus.

not the James who was the son of Zebedee and who was a martyr. Recorded in Acts 12, that's the period when Peter was put in prison and prayer was made of the church of God for Peter.

[7 : 46] That was the martyrdom of James, the son of Zebedee. But there was another apostle James and it is the other apostle James, of course, who wrote the book, the epistle that we have.

That is by this James, the son of Alphaeus. James the less, as some have called him, which doesn't mean that he was less of consequence.

He was no less in God's sight than the other James. For we're all, in that sense, on an equality with God. Though he give one a certain task that is distinctively his and a different task to another, though for one it may be a great matter and for another a very small matter, as we judge.

Yet, in the love of God, in the sight of God, in the benefits that God brings upon the people of his choice, we are all blessed, we are all precious in God's sight.

And we then think of this James as the brother of this man, Levi, who is better known as Matthew. They were brothers. I leave it there, but it could very well be that the father and mother were notable.

[9 : 04] This Alphaeus is taken to be by many Cleopas and the wife of Cleopas and the mother of these men would have been the other Mary who was present at the crucifixion and present at the resurrection of the Saviour also.

I think if you bear that in mind for the moment, that it may well be that this Matthew, if these are so, if the Alphaeus of which, who was the father of this Levi, this man Matthew, if that is the same Alphaeus as the husband of the other Mary, then this is of some significance.

I believe in this case we shall come to it presently. Then we find that there were publicans and sinners. It seemed to be held distinct from the multitude of the people that resorted to the law that we've mentioned, but we find that there were many publicans and sinners.

This is in the second scene when Jesus sat at meat in the publican's house. There were many publicans and sinners that sat together.

And you know the publicans of the New Testament were not those that kept public houses as we use the word. They were tax gatherers. There was a very involved and complicated system of gathering taxes for Rome who was the occupying power.

[10 : 37] on the Roman importance in Palestine had the authority to raise taxes. Now they didn't want to raise taxes personally. It was beneath them to go amongst the Jews and personally extract money from them.

So what they did was they appointed chief tax gatherers to attend to the matter for them. And then these chief tax gatherers appointed other tax gatherers or publicans in order that they might gather in the money.

With so many involved with so many fingers as we might say in the pie you can well understand that there was a great measure of greedy extortion and every unjust way of obtaining money was resorted to by those that were at the lower end of the scale.

they had to make their profits they had to make enough to pass on to those that appointed them who were to pass on to the Roman authority. You can see that it was a very iniquitous system and those that were at the lower end and who were the actual gatherers of the money they were cordially detested they were hated by the people they were also held in fear and trembling because they had an authority to do this work.

They might well have had soldiers that were on call should there be any that resisted their operations. These publicans were hated and not only hated for what they did but hated that they were serving themselves in this way and advancing the Roman interest.

[12 : 24] They were detested that they were traitors as well as extortioners. They were traitors to the nation. That's how they were regarded. And certainly they were looked down upon.

And if Matthew was one of these and yet Matthew would come from such a family as that of Alphaeus had such a father and mother as we judge that he may well have had if this indeed is the Alphaeus and if this is the son of that Alphaeus that we're dealing with here.

But assuming what many say to be the case then this is the black sheep of the family. Here are those that must have been of that godly remnant waiting for the consolation of Israel.

And they have a son who is utterly unprincipled who is a rogue who is one that has repudiated all that they have taught him and all that they have stood for.

And he is out to feather his own nest and to make his way in the world and would no doubt have been very successful at it. I think that is worthy of pointing out there are those that say that it must have been so that this man was a man that had an upbringing that was certainly much better than his present circumstances that we meet him in this incident would proclaim.

[13 : 54] And then those who are the sinners are the open sinners. Many publicans and sinners. Many like Matthew who were tax gatherers and many sinners.

Now the Pharisees of course judged all that broke the law to be sinners but these were plainly sinners. These were the open sinners.

These were the off scouring of society in Pharisaic eyes certainly. The women of the streets. The men that were a little different.

Those that were in every evil work involved. The pilferers, the thieves, the rabble. There were those then that ate in this house and then finally there were scribes and Pharisees.

The scribes and Pharisees you know were the religious leaders of the day. The scribes were the professional teachers of the law and the Pharisees were the religious rulers.

[15 : 06] They regarded themselves above all the other parties such as the Sadducees. They were the orthodox party. They were standing for conservative things.

They were seeking that the law should be meticulously observed. And you know the confrontations that the Saviour had with them and it was the Pharisees and the scribes and the lawyers and the rulers that were the chief opponents of Christ that brought the charges against him.

They were the ones upon whom Stephen as we read tonight leveled the charge that they were the betrayers and the murderers of God's Holy One the Messiah. Now these were the characters in this portion.

We have looked at them briefly. Now then let us consider the two scenes in turn. First of all the Lord Jesus Christ as we see him by the seaside teaching there to the multitude that resorted unto him.

Teaching them we believe the things concerning the kingdom of God because in verse 14 of chapter 1 we read that after John the Baptist was put in prison Jesus came into Galilee preaching the gospel of the kingdom of God and saying the time is fulfilled and the kingdom of God is at hand.

[16 : 38] Repent ye and believe the gospel. Now as he passed by the seaside he saw this man Levi whom we shall call Matthew as he is more familiar by that name.

He saw this man and this man was sitting at the receipt of custom. Here then was a man we have just looked a little concerning this man.

We know about his name. we know his occupation. We know that at this moment he is there by the seaside and he is sitting at the receipt of custom.

He had a toll booth for the purpose of receiving taxes and in that this toll booth was erected by the seaside it would seem that he had the task of levying these taxes upon the people that were fisherfolk and all that had some business by the side of the sea of Galilee.

That would be why he had an office there. That's what it means. This would be the office where to pay over what they had to meet the extortionate demands of the publican.

[17 : 57] This is Matthew sitting at the receipt of custom and the Lord sees him. The Lord not only sees Levi the son of Alphys he not only sees this man Matthew but he speaks to him.

And notice the words they are so direct there is no elaboration there is no speaking concerning the gospel the kingdom even in what is addressed to this man in the record that we have in the gospels the Lord said unto him follow me and he arose and followed him.

Now what is this telling us about Matthew? As a result of what happened to this man Matthew on that occasion we are being informed here that this man became a disciple of the Lord Jesus Christ like Peter like James like John like all those that are listed in the next chapter amongst whom you see the evidence that this man had changed entirely his bent and way of life he was now listed with the disciples of the Lord Jesus Christ and this is the call of Matthew as there are in different parts of the gospels the callings of these various others here is the call of this man Matthew to be a disciple of Christ now this man would seem to be a man that is without previous knowledge of

Christ I said of course that he had the benefit we may well believe that he had the benefit of upbringing and there would be few that were raised as Jews in the land but would have had some benefit in religious upbringing but I think that we can say of this man because we have no ground to say otherwise of this man that he was not previous to this encounter with the Lord Jesus Christ familiar with this gospel we have no information to suggest different that he was now confronted and what the Lord said to him and all that the Lord said to him was all that this man understood at this moment in time concerning these things what he would learn afterwards is a different matter but when the Lord met with him when he saw him there as he passed by when he addressed him with these words that are recorded for us I believe that this is a most remarkable event and this is the effectual call of this man this is not just the call of this man to service this

I believe is the work of grace in this man's heart in the case of the others they had initial contact with Christ and there's almost a year that would seem to elapse between the initial contact with Christ and the following of him in the case of Peter and Andrew and James and John but in this case it would seem to be that when the Lord passed by on that occasion saw this man and addressed him follow me and he arose and followed him that there took place there a most marvelous exhibition of the power of God whereby this man was changed he was a converted man a regenerated man a man that was converted and the regeneration and conversion were all in a moment and there was that evidence of the power of the word of Christ and the power of the gospel of salvation in that the Lord said follow me and he arose and followed him it's very similar to

[22 : 09] Saul Saul of Tarsus in that this man is at the very height of hostility to all things Christian and he is plotting and planning what he will do to Christians at Damascus and he is apprehended from heaven and in a moment this man is utterly prostrated literally prostrated and sees a light and he hears a voice and he is never the same man from that moment on what power there is in the gospel now then this man Matthew that the Lord meets thus as he passes by and to whom he speaks these words this man we might say is most unlikely material this man is most unlikely material to be one that will follow the Lord Jesus Christ here is this hated tax collector what a poor specimen he is of anything religious all things Jewish and yet he is the one that the

Lord sees and the Lord addresses and he is brought to follow Christ now that is something the man is so unlikely material didn't the Lord know that this wasn't good potential the Lord doesn't judge by the outward appearance thank God the Lord knew what he was doing then it seems this meeting is so casual so accidental he's come down to the seashore this man happens to be there the Lord is passing by stops and addresses the man follow me and he follows him seems to be so accidental surely this isn't the way to go about finding followers this is hardly the way we can imagine an apostle should have his beginning but it's God's way for his ways are not our ways his thoughts not our thoughts and isn't this a wonderful thing to notice and observe also nothing with the

Lord is by accident he saw him the Lord saw Levi the son of Alphaeus sitting at the receipt of custom and how did he see him because he was looking for him that's how he saw him he was looking for him he saw him not just a physical form but he saw him as more than that man he saw him as one chosen of God chosen of the Father from before the foundation of the world he saw him in that light as he saw all that were his in that light and as he sees all still in that light though now he is at the right hand of the majesty of the Father he saw him in a special way he saw him as one for whom the set time was come it was not haphazard it was not by chance wherever else he might have gone he did not go to these places because it was appointed for God works to plan meticulously to plan and it was appointed that he should pass that man and see that man and address that man and that's something also for us to marvel at that he works in this fashion and he has his time when he would call his own unto him not now in a personal way but by the preaching of the same word that he uttered himself and which he has put into the mouths of his servants the apostles and those that have come after them the word of the truth of the gospel he still confronts man with this and at the time appointed there will be a follow me in which they are bound to respond and they will do as this man did arise and follow him the man is so unlikely material to be a disciple the meeting seems to be so accidental the man is made so responsive too there's an amazing thing that he's so responsive here he is he's a businessman of a disreputable type but he's a businessman he's attracted to money he's he's in the very heart of the the business of gathering in taxes and the confrontation of the lord is such that he leaves it all behind there's nothing to suggest he ever went back to it or made any provision for it what happened to it who took it over there'll be plenty no doubt that would be only too ready to take it over but there's nothing that says that this man was trying to hold on to it like the rich young ruler that wanted to hold on to his riches he went away soaring because he had great possessions like many a person that comes in some external contact with gospel things and makes excuses and procrastinates and uses every artifice to avoid anything that would be of a response there is an immediate response why is there an immediate response we've said why because it's the power of the word of God it's the power of the gospel of the grace of God it's the appointed time for such a thing to take place follow me and he followed him these wonderful balanced sentences follow me and he followed him that's a perfect illustration of irresistible grace follow me and he followed him to many one there may come that voice it's in many an evangelist mouth follow Jesus but for the most part it is it is no more than sound it's empty words but if it please

God to make it an effectual word in those that he has appointed unto life in his dear son it will be accompanied by our sovereign power that will make a response because God works it God gives that grace to make the response faith is the gift of God repentance and faith are God's bestowing they're not natural they're given to us this man's response is repentance and faith which this response evidences in the following of Christ it's the power of the gospel that brings it to pass it's the sheep recognizing the shepherd's voice my sheep hear my voice and I know them and they follow me and I give unto them eternal life and they shall never perish neither shall any man pluck them out of my hand it's John 6 37 being exemplified in this incident of Levi by the son of

Alphaeus all that the father giveth me shall come unto me and him that cometh unto me I shall in no wise cast out now there are some lessons to be learned from this we looked at remarkable matters concerning this but look at the lessons the first is that it was not by chance it was not by chance that the saviour met with Matthew that day it was divine providence that brought that man to be there it may have been a divine providence that had brought him there on many many previous days a pattern of things might have been long since established that brought him there to that place but the fact is that he was there and the Lord was there and there was this blessing which was instantaneously communicated to him and none of us is here by accident none of us is ever within this chapel by accident if we are here it is the providence of

[30 : 19] God that has brought us here if we are not here it's the providence of God that has kept us from this place and we must see that and all through the scripture you see that you see it in the case of Lydia remember how Lydia was brought to Philippi remarkably as a businesswoman seller of purple she was away from Asia minor in Thyatira her hometown and Paul and his companions came there they didn't want to be there in the initial sense they wanted to go in other directions but they were constrained the doors were shut in some remarkable way they knew that the spirit of God didn't want them to go in these other directions into Asia along the coast of the Black Sea but to cross over into Europe the man of Macedonia appeared to Paul in a dream come over and help us and when they had heard Paul tell this to them they assuredly gathered that the Lord meant them to go there and so these came and Lydia came and it looked so much as though it was coincidence not coincidence providence and believe then in the communication of the gospel and providence believe in

God's prevenient grace that brings things to pass in order that there might be that manifestation of saving grace it's a wonderful truth God brings a person to that place where the word will be at the precise moment what many examples that are in this my friend years ago the Lord took to heaven he is a boy with a crowd of other boys intent and mischief climbing up on the roof of a chapel in order that they might make a noise and irritate the worshippers he engaged in this very thing heard the word that the man in the pulpit was proclaiming that arrested him and he was a saved man in consequence of that he served his Lord until he was taken suddenly from this scene and I believe he's with the Lord in glory what sovereign things providence or happenings prevenient grace or the ruling even the wrong devices in a man's heart many of the devices in a man's heart but the Lord directs his path and sovereignly he will bring it to pass and we never fear in gospel ministry that God will not do his part the world might crumble the sky fall before

God will fail to do his part you see it's not his part and our part it's all his part and that he deigns to use us in any small ways is according to the sovereignty of his grace that he might have the glory of his work it's not our work and if there are those that are joined to Christ in covenant bonds if he is as the bridegroom and they are as the bride do you think that if a man would not be parted from his his dear wife because of some distance between them but would seek that as soon as it was right and possible that he might be with do you think that Christ will abandon his bride do you think that he will be indifferent that his bride is in some far distant place and far separated from him he will come over the mountains he will cause his word to come there he will cause it to be there how he will do it we cannot begin to comprehend but he will do it he will gather in his people from north south east and west they will come from every quarter unto him and of that we need not of any fear there will be none of those for whom his blood was shed given to him in the covenant of grace but will not be brought to him they will be made to hear follow me and they will follow him be they in the most far flung outposts of the earth places that even seem to be beyond the reach of any preacher

God will make a way God will cause it to come to pass surely by a word he brought creation into being he can bring his own word to those in the set time and he will deliver them and bring them out and if we didn't believe that we would be very ready to give up this work we believe that God is sovereign in bringing a person into the place at the right time we are not then here by chance oh that God might give us ears to hear Matthew we say was an unlikely choice also well as I said he was an unlikely choice to us perhaps but he was not an unlikely choice to God he chooses us not because of qualities that are ours if he chose people by the qualities they had and what they might be able to do for him we might wonder if we would have any chance whatsoever but it's not so if he makes use of a man it is because he he endows that man with the very capacity to do whatever it is that he would have him to perform and we're chosen not for anything in us but chains as chosen not for good in me wakened up from wrath to flee hidden in the saviour's side by the spirit sanctified salvation is of the lord and whenever

I feel depressed at my shortcomings which is often I can tell you I think of 1 corinthians chapter 1 and these latter verses ye see your calling brethren how that not many wise men after the flesh not many mighty not many noble are called but God hath chosen the foolish things of the world to confound the wise and God hath chosen the weak things of the world to confound the things that are mighty base things of the world and things which are despised hath God chosen yea and things which are not to bring to naught things that are that no flesh should glory in his presence there's always hope for sinners where the gospel is preached and if sinners are brought under the gospel then it is in itself a very wonderful thing and if God will show them grace he has the power to perform and it matters not how we regard them and how we may have mentally excluded them from all possibility of salvation time and time again those that are saved are the last people we would have thought would have been saved and some of those that we thought would certainly have been saved are not saved wasn't it

[37 : 22] Newton that said when he got to heaven he thought there would be these wonders there would be a wonder that many that he expected to be there weren't there and there would be another wonder that there were many there that he never expected to be there and he says the greatest wonder will be if I'm there in that day and there are those here that would say amen to that and then we see the power of the saviour the power of the saviour in what he did in this man by a word this man follows him leaves it all that he's following he leaves his aspirations his ambitions his desire for money a man of greed a man of this world if there ever was one he leaves it all behind don't you ever think that the gospel is is unable to do that if it's God's mind to apply that gospel still the same thing will happen and a man that might be seemingly steeped in the things of this world will be brought out of it all those many testimonies that one has heard and you have heard them and I have heard them and what we hear is only the edges of God's ways there are so many others the difference that grace made the power of the gospel the power of the saviour this man became a faithful follower of Christ this man persevered there is nothing to suggest that this man did not continue we never told you know of the call of the call of

Judas Iscariot have you noticed that never told any detail of that this man was not in possession of grace this man was the son of perdition this man was in a very solemn sense destitute although he was in the company of Christ and though he was in the very number of the disciples of Christ he was without grace and you know his end was an awful end but that will never be the portion of those effectually called but he that begins the work will perform it until the day of Jesus Christ I remember saying concerning Lydia that this woman could not possibly be lost and the reason why this woman could not possibly be lost is because we read of her that the Lord opened Lydia's heart if I read there that Lydia opened her heart to the Lord

I would have a great question mark I would think that she might well be lost because she might never have really possessed grace in the first place but when you read that the Lord began a work he that begins a good work in you will perform it until the day of Jesus Christ we were taught on the matter of perseverance and Thursday night what a doctrine it is and when God calls by grace there is persevering grace given all predestinated called justified are glorified God will bring them from glory to glory and not one of the sheep of Christ will be missing in that last great day so see the power of the Saviour to change this man to hold this man he doesn't go back he goes on he follows the Lord he follows him dead he's brought to spiritual life from an empty living he's brought into the fullness of the life of God brought to

Noah of course the oppositions and the persecutions that go with a true and godly profession but ultimately we believe of this man that he leaves earth for heaven and then in the last day when the Lord comes his very dust will be raised from whatever place holds it until the day of the final summons when the trumpet shall sound and when the dead in Christ shall rise what a gospel what a what a Saviour follow me and he followed him there's the scene then now there's another scene the Lord Jesus Christ is in the house of this very same man you say how do we know that it's the same house it came to pass that as Jesus sat at meat in his house it would seem to suggest it but we're not left with guesswork on the matter Luke 5 29 tells us that Levi made him a great feast in his own house so in his house in Capernaum probably in the house of this man

Matthew how long he had that house we're not told it's not for us to pry where scripture is silent but in that house he made a great feast there are those that say that this was sometime after perhaps it was perhaps he made this feast sometime after and it can be worked out from certain of the circumstances in comparison with other gospels that the Lord might have had to go to gathering and to meet with the gathering demoniac and it was on the return from that that this took place you can argue that if you like I tend to think that it was almost at once but it was the same with Zacchaeus there are those that say that they don't think it was immediate because the man would have to be proved the man would have to prove to himself the difference that this had made in his life it wasn't the case with Zacchaeus very similar publicans the man up the tree little man in the tree looking down on the

[43 : 01] Lord says Zacchaeus come down make haste to come down and he goes into the house that very that very day of Zacchaeus and Zacchaeus provides for him Zacchaeus having been brought to know justifying grace and being brought to know the pardon of his sins he will restore half of all his he will give half of his goods to the poor and if he has taken by fraud he will restore fourfold there is grace in this man I believe that soon after we will not quibble on how long intervene but almost immediately after it seems to me he is making this meal and the Lord comes into his house now notice the company at the feast many publicans and sinners sat also together with Jesus and his disciples many of the former colleagues of Matthew were at this feast many very undesirable people were at this feast why did he invite them he is the master of the feast he invites them they don't just all come he invites them why invite them this man is a man that deserves to have known these people with whom he very largely consorted he wants that they should be there that they might meet with the man that he met

I don't think there's any question of this he longs that they should be there he's glad because of what's happened to him he's he's desirous that others should hear this this man for themselves that they should meet this man we're not told the the results of this but we're told that the Lord was there the Lord did not refrain to come that's what the Pharisees didn't like that he was found there with all this company of publicans and sinners for there were many and they followed him already they were attracted to him if you find anyone that's showing any interest in gospel things then you seek to bring them where Christ is where is Christ he is where his people meet he is where the word of God is preached you seek to bring them there if you can bring them there it's always surely our desire to bring people to be blessed as we've been blessed if we've been blessed by salvation don't we desire others to hear of this salvation and what a means hospitality can be to this very thing to open a door open a table up in order that there might be the conversation that will flow to the Lord

Jesus Christ how good these things are and how God makes them instrumental for the accomplishing of his purposes they were a company gathered a very motley company very undistinguished company publicans and sinners a great number of them and then you find the criticism of the scribes and the Pharisees they were following they seemed to follow the Lord around and they were never blessed there's a solemn thing are there those that follow the Lord around are there those that over a lifetime follow the Lord around and they're never blessed I'm sure there are I don't want please God to be of their number though or may we never be those that are followers with a carping critical heart of unbelief like these men these scribes and these Pharisees they saw him eat with the publicans and sinners they said unto his disciples but they wouldn't come out and say it to him it would appear they murmured

Luke tells us they muttered to the disciples how is it that he eateth and drinketh with publicans and sinners the criticism of the scribes and the Pharisees Scurgeon says the men with the green eyes who cannot see anything but they must be jealous of it and find fault with it they are there the men with the green eyes and they are saying how can it be if he's all that he claims to be if he's a man of God a teacher sent down from God how is it that he's consorting with this riffraff these publicans and sinners and it's solemn thing you see no understanding of the gospel there the gospel is for such the gospel is for those that know their sinners now they're so critical of Christians because of what they stand for and they make out that we should never be sinning well of course we should not be sinning would that to God that we were a better testimony in the world but you see we are those that know a great deal about sin we admit to being sinners it's a lot of those that are our critics that are sinning in the very fact that they seem to think that we are setting ourselves up as though we are without sin self-righteous well anyone that has been brought to know what

Matthew knew is not self-righteous anyone who has been brought into that place where God has dealt with them in the way of invincible grace knows that he's a sinner and those Pharisees didn't know it and there are people still with a Pharisee spirit they don't know it they don't want anyone to know these things they don't want anyone to be blessed they don't want anyone to move out of their own limited constricted views of what religion ought to be and it's an awful thing to be possessed of a Pharisee spirit that never consents to sin who all are sinners in God's sight says heart in a hymn there are but few so in their own the Pharisees he's never a sinner in his own sight though he is a very great sinner in God's sight there's no sympathy with the need of men such hardness of heart we've got to be careful you know when we speak about the wickedness of our day and this and that but for the grace of God said a godly man witnessing one taken to execution but for the grace of God there go I and there is that in all of our hearts to do every violent vicious thing imaginable but for restraints of God's grace or that we might not be critical when those are blessed by the gospel and start to say well why should they be and you get the elder brother in the 15th of

[50 : 13] Luke the prodigal is welcome back but the elder brother is so miserably angry at all this why should he get all this I've done all these things for my father I've never done what this wretched prodigal has done and yet he's never done this for me that he's done for him how we want to be delivered from that the criticism of the scribes and the Pharisees when they witness these things and then the counter of the saviour the counter of the saviour the lord heard the words they may have been muttered words they may have been addressed to the disciples but the lord heard them the lord hears every idle word the lord hears the murmurings of every heart but alone the conversations of our lips when Jesus heard it he saith unto them they that are whole have no need of the physician but I came not to call the righteous but sinners to repentance you see he defends his presence there at the feast he is there as the physician where should a physician be but where his patients are found here are those that know they're sinners

Pharisees didn't recognize they were sinners then why should the lord be in the Pharisee's house he is in that house of a man that grace had met with in a company of those that this man is invited to be there that they might hear the words of life that undoubtedly would be proclaimed he is where his patients are the physician should be not where there are those that are well and have no need of them but where there are those that are ill and are seeking help that's where he's found it's a very important principle of the the verse they that are whole have no need of the physician but they that are sick I came not to call the righteous but sinners to repentance what comfort can a savior bring to them that never felt their woe did you see these words in the hymn we were singing there are those that are saved before they're ever lost that's the fault of so much that has happened in this century in the presentation of the gospel it has not sought to show men that they are lost it has not preached the law to men it has not brought men to know the condemnation of a law that they have violated it has simply spoken to them of all the things that will happen to them if they become

Christians how happy they will be and all the advantages that will be theirs I've had men preach in a way that to become a Christian will be money in your pocket because what you spend in beer you love to spend in other more worthy ways you love more for your family that's not the gospel my friends that may be a blessed consequence of grace but that is not how grace is to be proclaimed we are to preach the law of God to the hearts of men are going to be lost before they can be found and where there are those that are not with any sense of their sinfulness their lostness the Lord will leave them in that condition the gospel you see is for the sinner it's a sinner's gospel it's a full and free pardon to those that have sinned you may be aware that there's this sad controversy on the one but not to a person that's divorced and remarried it's no gospel

I read that there's forgiveness for all sorts and conditions of men for the most vile transgressions even blaspheming the name of the Son of God the only sin for which there is no forgiveness is the sin against the Holy Ghost the blasphemy against the Holy Ghost and what is that really but to say that we don't need to be saved that's the blasphemy of the Holy Ghost that refuses anything spiritual the convictions that come from the Spirit of God knows nothing of them refuses them the word of the truth of the gospel concerning Christ who came to seek and to save that which was lost is indifferent because there's no sense of being lost no sense of need that's the blasphemy against the Holy Spirit but there's forgiveness of all manner of other sins how could we say that we are to make these restrictions and this restriction are we going to call that unclean which God has blessed are we going to say that where

God has shown pardon and granted regeneration in the heart that we cannot admit such a one to the very ordinances that God has appointed for poor sinners God deliver us from such thought and God bring others to see the very danger that they're in in the desire for a stand against the many disorders of our society with Luther we say that we verily hate divorce but we must allow that the hearts of men have brought these things upon us we're not in a perfect society it was not so from the beginning but we're not in that beginning before Adam sinned we're in a world that is lying in the wicked one we're in a day when men are under all sorts of burdens brought through sin and iniquity and all the ramifications of these things in the world of man but what a gospel that proclaims that where sin abounded grace doth much more abound and I believe that the lord defends his presence in the feast and he declares the very essence of the gospel in this negative fashion

[56 : 47] I came not to call the righteous but sinners to repentance we've got a gospel for sinners we've got a gospel for those that are downright sinners like Manasseh was we've got a gospel for those that are in the very lowest place because of their sinfulness that can lift them from it and raise them and keep them a saviour that saves to the uttermost all them that come unto God by him and it's exemplified in some manner in this passage that is before us the self righteous never ever place in God's scheme the merely religious who are in the form and the letter of legalism like the Pharisees never ever place in God's scheme of things but the poor sinner does when grace is brought and the balm of Gilead is applied when they're brought to say is there not a balm in Gilead to make the wounded whole and grace displays that saving balm in the perfections of the Redeemer there is a place for the sinner whose deep dyed sins will grieve his heart in the days to come and may vex many another but if he's brought to true repentance and there is that demonstration of saving faith we can but wonder at the power of the gospel and give glory to

God this is a faithful saying worthy of all acceptance Christ Jesus is come into the world to save sinners on the day we forget that we haven't got a gospel any longer to proclaim Christ is the physician of the needy wounded who feel their soul sickness and cry for a deliverance he's the savior of such he will save them and the glory shall be his and whether they associate Christ's presence in the Pharisees in the company of sinners and publicans and make out that this is some disparagement to his character and his claims it's the very reverse the physician gets the greatest glory when he's there healing the most sick and needy patients and our great physician gets glory when he does that which he came into the world to do to seek and to save that which was lost oh may we be those that love this gospel

I hope that you've all received it as anyone that hasn't known the power of this gospel may you be disturbed may you be brought to cry to God that he will give you to know it that he will work in such an invincible way that all resistance overcome you will heed him when he says follow thou me and like Levi the son of Alphaeus hearing that word of Christ he arose and followed him God give us to know the power of his gospel and what he means when he says I will have mercy and not sacrifice may we be those that can say we are debtors to mercy and mercy alone amen nobody