



## Love Is Acceptance

Message Notes, April 15, 2018

Matthew 9:10-13, Galatians 5:9-13, Romans 5:8, 1 Corinthians 13:4-7

People have different takes on this idea, including:

- Jesus accepted people; so should I.
- The need to accept everyone as they are, with all baggage.
- If you do not love me and all that I am, then you must hate me.

#LoveIsAcceptance

- What is your view on the notion that love equates to acceptance?
- Where do you encounter this belief/attitude in the world today?

In Matthew 9:10, we encounter Matthew and his disciples eating with Jesus. The context is a time during which people from all kinds of areas and backgrounds are coming to Jesus. This includes fishermen who are known to be rough around the edges. These fishermen drop their nets – their livelihood – to follow Jesus. Matthew knows about these things because as a tax collector he has insight to what is going on in the area. He is also part of a group that is hated because he works for the Romans as a Jew, and tax collectors are known to take extra money for their pockets on top of the taxes Rome already requires from Jews. In Matthew 9:9, Jesus approaches Matthew and says, “Follow me” ... and Matthew got up and followed him.

Considering this context and the witness of the Bible as a whole, Jesus’ invitation to Matthew came from a heart of compassion and being *for* him instead of condemning him. Derrick shared that Jesus most likely looked into Matthew’s soul, saw the emptiness and said, “Why won’t you let the money go and follow what is better?” Jesus did not condemn Matthew, but offered what his heart most desired. Compassion over condemnation leads to Matthew following Jesus. Matthew had to walk away from all of it, just like the fishermen had.

#LoveIsTransformation

#LoveIsNewidentity

- How have you experienced the compassion of Jesus that led to transformation in your life?
- Compassion over condemnation: Is this hard for you in certain areas? Is there something to confess and pray over?

Tax collectors were despised among the people. When Matthew decided to follow Jesus, Jesus asked him to invite all of his friends to a banquet/party. Matthew’s friends were the despised – tax collectors, sinners, prostitutes, demon possessed ... These tend to be part of the group that is around Jesus. Many believe that most of this group, after the banquet/party, decided to follow Jesus as well. Jesus most likely asked Matthew to share his testimony at the banquet with his friends. They have heard about Jesus but maybe they expected him to condemn them. However, Matthew shared how he was approached with compassion and it changed everything. Telling people the details of life before and after Jesus gives them hope.



### #LovesForgiveness

- Are there friends/people from your former life who still need to know Jesus?
- How can the details of your life before and after Jesus impact those who don't know him as their personal Lord and Savior?

A common belief among people today: There is nothing wrong with what I do. Galatians 5:9-13 stands in opposition to this, and Romans 5:8 states that Christ died for us while we were still sinners.

Jesus was among tax collectors and sinners. While he doesn't approve of what they are doing, he loves them. Real love is described in 1 Corinthians 13:4-7.

### #LoveLikeJesus

Pharisees were the spiritual watchdogs of the day. "Why does your teacher eat with tax collectors and sinners?" they asked (Matthew 9:11). Jesus responds by stating that it is not the healthy but the sick who need a doctor. Those who have sin-sick souls are in need of forgiveness and hope. Jesus then quotes from Hosea 6:6 – "I desire mercy, not sacrifice." Hosea was a prophet called to preach to a people turning from God. He was called to stay faithful to a wife participating in prostitution as a living message of mercy, forgiveness and hope. God is more impressed with mercy towards others than outward acts of worship.

- Do you struggle loving a certain group of people?
- Who in your life right now needs your mercy, forgiveness and message of hope?
- Matthew felt compelled to write a biography of Jesus' life. If we got to ask Matthew what he would name the book, perhaps he would say, "The testimony of a tax collector." What is your testimony of the love of Jesus others need to hear?
- Where do you fit in this story?
- Are there people in your life who you need to share this with?