

Title: Sinners Made New

Primary Text: Matthew 9:9–12

Central Theme: The first Adam disfigured the image of God in which humanity was created and left his children an inheritance of sin and death. Jesus, the Last Adam, comes to reclaim sinners, restore God's image in us, bring us into the Father's family, and ultimately complete His work of new creation.

Introduction — The Friend Who Came Looking

A. The wedding illustration

- At a wedding ceremony, everyone watches the bride as she enters. But the photographer learns to watch the groom. The groom's face reveals something about love that an abstract definition cannot.
- **Key idea:** Love ultimately isn't merely an idea; it is an encounter with a person.
- In the same way, Christianity begins with an encounter with Jesus. Matthew's life changes when Jesus walks up to his tax booth and sees him.

B. The primary text — Matthew 9:9–12

Matthew 9:9–12

“As Jesus passed on from there, he saw a man called Matthew sitting at the tax booth, and he said to him, ‘Follow me.’ And he rose and followed him. And as Jesus reclined at table in the house, behold, many tax collectors and sinners came and were reclining with Jesus and his disciples. And when the Pharisees saw this, they said to his disciples, ‘Why does your teacher eat with tax collectors and sinners?’ But when he heard it, he said, ‘Those who are well have no need of a physician, but those who are sick.’

I. What Is Christianity?

A. Christianity is more than a system

- Christianity includes: beliefs, morality, doctrine, the promise of heaven.
- But none of these by itself reaches Christianity's center.

B. Christianity begins with Christ

- The heart of Christianity is an encounter with the living Jesus who says: “Follow Me.”
- Christianity announces that: God has come near. The Creator has entered creation. The invisible God has made Himself visible. The Word became flesh.
- God can actually be known.

C. The apostles testify to a Person they encountered

1 John 1:1

“That which was from the beginning, which we have heard, which we have seen with our eyes, which we looked upon and have touched with our hands, concerning the word of life—”

- Christianity is strikingly physical: **heard, seen, looked upon, touched.**

D. The beauty of Christ draws people

- Fishermen leave their nets. Matthew leaves his fortune. Women follow Jesus from town to town. Crowds forget to eat. Children come into His arms. Even His enemies cannot stop talking about Him.
- **Central point:** We aren't changed merely by seeing the ugliness of our sin. Transformation begins when we see the beauty of Christ.

II. Jesus' Astonishing Recruitment Strategy

A. Jesus doesn't recruit the people we would expect

- We might seek scholars and wealthy donors.
- Jesus chooses: four fishermen, a political zealot, a tax collector, six men whose occupations aren't even recorded.

B. Jesus moves toward the people others avoid

- The sermon focuses on two words from Matthew 9:9: **“He saw.”**

Matthew 9:9

“As Jesus passed on from there, he saw a man called Matthew sitting at the tax booth, and he said to him, ‘Follow me.’ And he rose and followed him.”

- Everyone else saw a traitor, a thief, a collaborator.
- Jesus saw Matthew, a man He had come to reclaim, a future disciple, a future apostle, a future writer of good news.

C. Jesus sees the whole person

- Christ does not minimize Matthew's sin.
- But neither does He reduce Matthew to his sin.
- **Key pastoral point:** Jesus sees the regret, shame, habits and secrets we hide—and still walks toward us.

III. Before the Tax Booth, There Was a Garden

- Matthew didn't grow up dreaming of becoming the town villain.
- Neither do we plan to become bitter, addicted, lonely, ashamed.
- Yet habits become character, wounds shape us, and eventually we may find ourselves behind a “tax booth” of our own construction asking: **“How did I become this person?”**
- The biblical answer takes us farther back than our individual mistakes ... before Matthew, back to a garden and Adam.

IV. The First Thing God Says About You

- The Bible's first word about humanity is not condemnation but extraordinary dignity.

Genesis 1:26

“Then God said, ‘Let us make man in our image, after our likeness. And let them have dominion over the fish of the sea and over the birds of the heavens and over the livestock and over all the earth and over every creeping thing that creeps on the earth.’”

A. Humanity was created in God's image

- Before shame was glory. Before hiding was home, before fear was fellowship, before curse was blessing.

B. Humanity was created to reflect God

- Adam and Eve were created to reflect God's goodness, creativity, generosity, wisdom, love.

C. Humanity was created to receive

- Everything was gift ... creation, work, bodies, marriage, and all else.
- They didn't earn God's smile. They were created beneath it.

V. Then We Forgot Who We Were

- The serpent persuades Adam and Eve to grasp independently for what God intended to give them in fellowship with Himself.
- The result is hiding, shame, blame, alienation, and death.

A. Adam's self-justification

Genesis 3:12

“The man said, ‘The woman whom you gave to be with me, she gave me fruit of the tree, and I ate.’”

- Adam manages to blame both Eve **and God**.

B. Sin twists good things

- Marital love becomes conflict. Provision becomes greed. Purpose becomes pride. God-given desires become self-centered demands.

C. Adam's inheritance becomes ours

- Our problem goes deeper than bad behavior.
- We have lost our home, forgotten our Father, become strangers to ourselves.
- Therefore, we need more than rules. **We need rescue.**

VI. "Follow Me"

- Matthew sits behind his tax booth perhaps believing: "This is simply who I am now."
- Then Jesus walks toward him.

A. God has always been the One who comes looking

- After Adam's sin:

Genesis 3:9

"But the LORD God called to the man and said to him, 'Where are you?'"

- God isn't asking because Adam's location is unknown. The question exposes Adam's lostness.
- The biblical pattern continues: God comes to Adam in the garden. God comes to Abraham in old age. God comes to Israel in slavery. God comes to humanity at Bethlehem. God comes to Matthew at the tax booth.

B. Jesus calls before Matthew changes

Matthew 9:9

"And he said to him, 'Follow me.' And he rose and followed him."

- Jesus doesn't say: "Fix yourself, then follow." He simply says: "Follow Me."

C. Grace precedes repentance

- Jesus doesn't wait for Matthew to become different before calling him.
- **His call begins making Matthew different.**
- Matthew leaves: income, security, identity, the life he had constructed.

- And Jesus offers Matthew something greater: Himself.

VII. The Last Adam

- Matthew doesn't merely need another chance. He needs another **Adam**—and therefore another inheritance.

A. Jesus is the Last Adam

1 Corinthians 15:45

“Thus it is written, ‘The first man Adam became a living being’; the last Adam became a life-giving spirit.”

- Adam stands at the head of fallen humanity.
- His inheritance is: sin, shame, fear, exile, death.
- But God doesn't abandon Adam's family. He joins it.

B. The Creator enters His creation

John 1:1–3

“In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. He was in the beginning with God. All things were made through him, and without him was not any thing made that was made.”

And:

John 1:14

“And the Word became flesh and dwelt among us, and we have seen his glory, glory as of the only Son from the Father, full of grace and truth.”

C. Adam and Christ contrasted

- **Adam:** stands in a garden with everything and grasps for more. **Jesus:** stands in a wilderness with nothing and trusts His Father.
- **Adam:** hides behind a tree to cover his shame. **Jesus:** is nailed to a tree bearing ours.
- **Adam:** blames his bride. **Jesus:** takes the blame for His bride.
- **Adam:** tastes forbidden fruit and brings death. **Jesus:** tastes death and brings life.

D. Two inheritances

- **In Adam:** an inheritance we could never escape. **In Christ:** an inheritance we could never earn.

Adam	Christ
Guilt	Forgiveness
Shame	Righteousness
Exile	Adoption
Death	Life
Grave	Father
Funeral	Wedding feast

VIII. When Jesus Builds a Family

- Jesus doesn't simply recruit impressive people. He creates them. Peter isn't a rock—yet. Matthew isn't an apostle—yet. James and John aren't humble—yet. Thomas isn't courageous—yet.
- Likewise, Christians shouldn't mistake their unfinished condition for Christ's finished work.

A. Jesus sees what grace will make of us

- He sees: frightened fishermen who will become shepherds; Saul the persecutor who will become a missionary; cowards who will become martyrs; sinners who will become saints.
- Sin says: “This is all you will ever be.” Jesus says: “I am just getting started.”

B. Christ completes what He begins

Philippians 1:6

“And I am sure of this, that he who began a good work in you will bring it to completion at the day of Jesus Christ.”

- Who begins the work? Jesus.
- Who completes the work? Jesus.
- Christian hope is ultimately not our grip on Christ. It is Christ's grip on us.

IX. Can God Really Delight in People Like Us?

A. God delights in His people

- God does not merely tolerate those who belong to Him; He rejoices over them.

Zephaniah 3:17

'The Lord your God is in your midst, a mighty one who will save; he will rejoice over you with gladness; he will quiet you by his love; he will exult over you with loud singing.'

Isaiah 62:5

'For as a young man marries a young woman, so shall your sons marry you, and as the bridegroom rejoices over the bride, so shall your God rejoice over you.'

- Believers can genuinely live in ways that please God.

B. God loves us while we are still sinners

- God's love does not begin after we make ourselves worthy. Christ comes down into our humanity to save us.

Romans 5:8**C. Christ gives us what belongs to Him**

- Jesus takes our sin and gives us His righteousness. Our judgment falls upon Him; His inheritance becomes ours.

2 Corinthians 5:21

'For our sake he made him to be sin who knew no sin, so that in him we might become the righteousness of God.'

X. Applying the Word**A. Stop hiding from the One who already sees you**

- Jesus knew everything about Matthew and walked toward him anyway. Repentance begins by recognizing that Christ has come to bring sinners home.

B. Rise when Jesus calls

- Matthew responds to Jesus' invitation: **"Follow Me."**
- Real change occurs when Christ becomes more beautiful to us than the things we leave behind.

C. Make room at your table for the people Jesus loves

- Matthew responds to grace by bringing others to Jesus.
- Evangelism can be as simple as inviting others to meet the One who came for us.

D. Remember that grace comes first

- Jesus approaches Matthew before Matthew follows Him.

- We do not obey so Jesus will love us; we obey because He already does.

XI. The Lord's Table

A. Jesus came for the sick

- Matthew's table is filled with sinners and outsiders.
- Jesus identifies Himself as the physician who has come for the sick.

Matthew 9:12

"Those who are well have no need of a physician, but those who are sick."

B. Jesus gives Himself to sinners

- At the Last Supper, Jesus knows His disciples will fail Him, yet He still gives Himself for them.
- The Last Adam gives His life to restore everything lost through the first Adam.

C. Come to the Table honestly

- Communion is food for the hungry, medicine for the sick, and grace for those who cannot heal themselves.
- We examine ourselves not to determine whether we are worthy, but to recognize again how much we need Christ.

D. Words of Institution

- Christ gives His body and blood for His people.
- Communion remembers His death and anticipates His return.

Benediction

Go now in the love of the Father who delights in you,
in the grace of the Son who came looking for you,
and in the power of the Holy Spirit who is making you new.

And be confident of this: *He who began a good work in you will bring it to completion at the day of Jesus Christ.*

So follow Him. Trust Him. And when you fall, run back to Him.

Amen

Brothers and Sisters, you are blessed by the perfect love of Your true Father, by the glorious work of your elder Brother, and by the empowering presence of the Holy Spirit; go, therefore, and be a blessing.

