

Called to be Disciples

Disciples of Jesus

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We turn in the sacred scripture to Matthew chapter 9. Matthew chapter 9 and we read the first 13 verses and the text will be verse 9. There are also parallel passages in Mark and Luke which we will not be reading, but for your reference, Mark 2 verse 14 and Luke 5 verse 27. Matthew 9 beginning at verse 1.

1 And he entered into a ship, and passed over, and came into his own city [which is Capernaum in Galilee]. 2 And, behold, they brought to him a man sick of the palsy [paralyzed], lying on a bed: and Jesus seeing their faith said unto the sick of the palsy; Son, be of good cheer; thy sins be forgiven thee. 3 And, behold, certain of the scribes said within themselves, This man blasphemeth. 4 And Jesus knowing their thoughts said, Wherefore think ye evil in your hearts? 5 For whether is easier, to say, Thy sins be forgiven thee; or to say, Arise, and walk? 6 But that ye may know that the Son of man hath power on earth to forgive sins, (then saith he to the sick of the palsy,) Arise, take up thy bed, and go unto thine house. 7 And he arose, and departed to his house. 8 But when the multitudes saw it, they marvelled, and glorified God, which had given such power unto men. 9 And as Jesus passed forth from thence, he saw a man, named Matthew [also known as Levi], sitting at the receipt of custom: and he saith unto him, Follow me. And he arose, and followed him. 10 And it came to pass, as Jesus sat at meat in the house, behold, many publicans and sinners came and sat down with him and his disciples. 11 And when the Pharisees saw it, they said unto his disciples, Why eateth your Master with publicans and sinners? 12 But when Jesus heard that, he said unto them, They that be whole [they that be healthy] need not a physician, but they that are sick. 13 But go ye and learn what that meaneth, I will have mercy, and not sacrifice: for I am not come to call the righteous, but sinners to repentance.

So far we read, God's holy and infallible word.

The text is verse 9, and we will also be interacting with verses 10 and what follows, especially verse 10. Verse 9,

9 And as Jesus passed forth from thence, he saw a man, named Matthew, sitting at the receipt of custom: and he saith unto him, Follow me. And he arose, and followed him.

Beloved congregation of our Lord Jesus Christ, this evening we begin a new series on discipleship, on what it means to be a disciple of Jesus. So far we have two series going on; we have our series on James, and we also have our baptism series on building a covenant home, or a Christian home. And this series that we begin tonight works well for when we have confessions of faith, but we're going to maintain a flexibility regarding how often we return to this series in the next months and year. This is going to be a short series, around seven or eight sermons, focusing just on passages in Matthew, Mark, Luke, and John.

We take up this new series on discipleship for a few different reasons. First of all, in preparing for the sermon this evening and for the occasion of confession of faith, I was struck this past week by just how often this topic of discipleship comes up in Jesus' ministry. It comes up probably more than we even think. And just the sheer frequency in which this topic is treated tells us that this is an important topic to dwell on and meditate on. Second, I think it's always refreshing and enjoyable to spend time looking at the life and the ministry of Jesus, and that's what we're going to do in this series. And then third, I think it's very important for us to dwell on this topic, because we all confess to be disciples of Jesus, but the question needs to be asked, what does that actually mean and does that live in our consciences every day, so that this is how we identify ourselves, as those who are disciples of Jesus. Well, in this series we're going to look at a few related topics on discipleship. This evening, as our first sermon, we're going to look at how a man or a woman or a child becomes a disciple of Jesus, and we do so looking at how Jesus made Matthew, Levi, his disciple. We take as our theme, "Called to be Disciples," and we look at that theme under three points. First, we look at the powerful call to be a disciple, follow me. Second, we look at the clear marks of a disciple, looking at how Matthew responds to that call. And then third, a great encouragement for us, for all, to be a disciple.

There are other passages in the gospel accounts where Jesus calls someone to be his disciple. For example, in Matthew chapter 4, you have that well-known chapter or passage where Jesus calls Peter and Andrew to follow him. That's where Jesus says, "Follow me and I will make you to be fishers of men," and Peter and Andrew drop their nets and they follow Jesus. Then we also read about how Jesus calls John and James to follow him and they leave their boats and their father's business and they follow him. And in John chapter 1 you read of how Jesus told Philip to follow him. And you also read of how Nathaniel becomes Jesus' disciple. Here in Matthew 9 however we have a special and I would say unique passage and what especially makes this call to discipleship stand out is the fact that Matthew was a publican. Not just a fisherman, a publican. That is, Matthew was a tax collector. And I want to spend a little bit of time this evening just describing this for you so that you understand what this means.

In the days of Jesus, there were really two kinds of taxes that the Romans demanded the people pay. First, there was the poll tax or what we might call income tax that everyone had to pay. It was the standard fee based on how much income you brought in. That tax left little room for corruption or extortion. But then, second, there was something called the toll tax or we could call it the duty tax or customs tax, and that's where the corruption and extortion took place. You see, the trade routes in the Roman Empire in Jesus' day were like toll roads. If a businessman wanted to transport his merchandise over a particular road, he would have to pay the Roman Empire a fee, a toll, to use the road. But the Romans were smart and so what they did was this, instead of collecting those taxes themselves, they subcontracted the job out to tax collectors. And the way it worked was like this, the Romans first determined how much taxes should be brought out of a toll booth. Just for one example, how much a certain toll booth should bring in in taxes. Then they would auction off and sell the rights to work that specific toll booth to the highest bidder. The highest bidder would then pay the government his price and he would go to work manning that toll booth collecting the taxes, and then at the end of the year, the tax collector would hand over to the Roman government the amount of taxes that the Romans were expecting to gain and required to have given to them from that toll booth. But the thing was this, anything that that tax collector could bring in that was above and beyond what the Roman government required at the end of the year, he could put in his own pockets and keep for himself. That was his business. And so what you have is this, tax collectors charging people much more in taxes than what was actually required, and then they're putting that money in their own pockets. The tax collectors could easily say to travelers, "You want to use this road? Then you pay the price that I set. Or you can find another road to use." And of course, there was no other road. And the travelers then were at the mercy of the tax collectors. A tax collector could stop anyone on the road, make him unpack his merchandise, he could determine whatever the value of that merchandise was, as the tax collector, so much, and then he could charge in taxes whatever he wanted. And if the traveler could not pay, well, the tax collector would then offer to loan him money at a very high rate. And then oftentimes, what a tax collector would do is this, he would hire thugs, he would hire enforcers to make sure he got his money from the people. And in this way, most tax collectors became very rich men, taking advantage of and robbing the people.

So when you think of tax collectors in today's terms, don't just think of someone working for the IRS or some government worker. I think a better way of thinking about a publican or a tax collector is like this, think of someone like a casino boss. Now, I personally don't know what a casino boss really looks like, but you can picture it. A casino boss in his office, overseeing all the cameras in his casino, he's got his thugs all around him, making sure that his casino is bringing in lots of money. He doesn't mess with anyone, and he's ready to threaten and intimidate anyone who upsets him, and he makes sure that in the end, the casino always wins. That's the kind of person a tax collector was. You can understand why people didn't like tax collectors.

Now, in addition to that, we need to add something more here, we need to add to the picture the fact that Matthew is a Jew working for the enemy, the Roman Empire, taking the money from his own Jewish people and sending that away to the Roman Empire. And

as we all know, the Jews hated the Romans. The Jews resented the fact that the Romans ruled them and dominated them and they looked forward to the day when they could cast off the rule of the Romans. And now picture yourself, or someone, being a Jew, doing the work of a tax collector, robbing your own people in order to get rich off of them and then in addition to support the Roman government, working willingly for them. It all comes down to this: Jewish tax collectors were easily the most hated men in Hebrew society, viewed as despicable, rich vermin. And they often were, just that. They were viewed as religious and political traitors. They were trained extortionists, and they were thugs. They were in the same class, you can read it in the Bible, they were in the same class as prostitutes, murderers, pagan Gentiles. The Jewish tax collector was not allowed to serve as a witness in a court of law. He was not allowed in his local synagogue, his local church, or in the temple. Essentially, he was excommunicated. He was low life, hated basically by all the people. And remember, these tax collectors chose this occupation and likely they chose it because they knew how to do the job well, and because they were greedy. After all, the paycheck was nice.

And now the point of saying all of that is this, here is Matthew, a publican, sitting at his toll booth at the port of customs in the city of Capernaum on the major trade route from Syria to Egypt. And this is, we may presuppose, because he's a publican, this is the kind of person he is. He's a thug. He's a casino boss. He's a mobster. He's a publican. And think about this, this is the city of Capernaum. This is the city where Jesus spent a great deal of time. This was his own city. There are multitudes in this city who are following after Jesus. Peter and Andrew, John and James are from Capernaum. No doubt, Matthew himself has heard about Jesus. Matthew knows what's going on in his own town. But where is Matthew to be found? Is he out and about, listening to Jesus preaching? Following after Jesus? No. But there he remains, in his toll booth, at the receipt of custom, taking money from the people against their will, making himself rich, doing work in the service of the Roman Empire.

I think if you would have asked Peter and Andrew or James and John if it would be a good idea to make Matthew one of the twelve with them, I think those men would probably have said, "No, that's not really a good idea. You don't want Matthew as your disciple." But what do we read in the text? "And as Jesus passed forth from thence, he saw a man, named Matthew, sitting at the receipt of custom: and he saith unto him, Follow me." And that's striking how it even reads, isn't it? It's almost as if it happens by chance. Jesus is just walking by one day, happens to see Matthew, and he says, "Follow me." Now, we know it wasn't by chance, we'll look at that in a moment, but it just seems that way.

Second, notice how Jesus puts it, he simply says, "Follow me." And here's where we get the idea of what a disciple actually is. What is a disciple? A disciple is one who follows Jesus. He walks, she walks with Jesus. As I teach the Catechism students in the afternoon classes, a disciple is one who follows Jesus, a disciple is one who is a pupil who sits at the feet of Jesus and learns from Jesus, and a disciple is one who imitates Jesus in his walk and life. And that's precisely what Jesus is talking about here. "Matthew. You thug. You lowlife. You sinner. Leave this table. Leave this business and come follow me."

Really, we could put it this way, "Matthew, leave your life. Leave this wicked life that you've built up for yourself. Leave your lucrative business. Forsake the world you know. Crucify your old flesh and come follow me." When you look at Jesus' ministry, you see that these are the kinds of people Jesus calls. Just think of it. Simon Zealotes is another disciple, a revolutionary, a political revolutionary at one point in his life. Mary Magdalene who was demon possessed. You go down to verse 10 and you see Jesus sitting in the house of Matthew surrounded by publicans and sinners, and that word sinners in verse 10 has the idea of men devoted to sin. The same kind of characters as Matthew was, seedy criminals. These are the people Jesus labored amongst. These are the people that the Pharisees wouldn't have shaken hands with. These are the people Jesus makes his disciples.

Before we move on, what we need to appreciate, beloved, is that Matthew here is a picture of you and me and we should see that by nature until we are made disciples of Jesus, we are like Matthew working in his toll booth. We are like Matthew in so many ways. We sit in the toll booth of our own sin trying to get as much of this life as we can possibly get for ourselves and really not caring too much about what we have to do to others to get it. We keep sitting in our sin, going about our business until Jesus comes and calls us to be his disciples. And except Jesus calls us, and except Jesus calls us with that effectual, irresistible, internal call of the gospel, we will not leave all and follow him.

But that's exactly also what we want to highlight in this first point of the sermon. The event itself is a very interesting event, the circumstances here, but what needs to be highlighted is this: how does Matthew become a disciple? How does anyone become a disciple of Jesus? Well, it's because of the powerful call that Jesus issues. See, this is no mere invitation Jesus gives. This is no mere offer. "Matthew, you can take it or leave it." No, this is the Prince of Peace, the King of Glory speaking and when the King says, "Follow me," what happens is this, "And he arose and followed him."

There's a few things we need to point out here about this. First of all, what we have in this whole passage is the doctrine of election. Notice that Matthew wasn't looking for this. That's not how it's presented to us. Matthew didn't come to Jesus, but Jesus came to Matthew. What's being emphasized in this passage is that the choice was entirely Jesus' choice. This was the man Jesus was choosing. Jesus was not preaching to a crowd of people and then started to beg the people to come forward and make a decision to get saved and be a follower of Jesus. No, there is the importance of the call, we're going to end with that this morning, but here Jesus came to Matthew, he found him out and he said, "Follow me." And again, the point is, Matthew didn't choose Jesus, Jesus chose Matthew. As Jesus said to his disciples in the Upper Room right before his crucifixion, "Ye did not choose me, but I chose you and appointed you that you should go and bear fruit." And you can imagine Matthew sitting up there with the rest of the disciples in the Upper Room nodding, "Yeah, he chose me. I did not choose him."

And the same thing is true of everyone who comes to God through faith in Jesus Christ and who follows Jesus as his disciple, as the disciple of Jesus. This is God's determination. The Bible says in Ephesians 1 verse 4 that God has chosen us in Jesus

Christ from before the foundations of the world. This is true of Cody. This is Cody's confession and experience. He has confessed faith in Jesus Christ. Why does a man have faith in Jesus Christ? Because, as Cody knows, he's one who God has chosen in eternity to be his child in Jesus Christ. And he's also one for whom Jesus died on the cross purchasing the gift of faith to believe in Jesus Christ. And he's one who's also been filled with the Holy Spirit so that he's actually brought to believe in Jesus Christ. But the point right now is this, this is the doctrine of election. Jesus chose Matthew to be his disciple.

Second of all, not only do we have here the doctrine of election, but we also have the doctrine of the effectual call and the doctrine of irresistible grace. Just look at the immediate change that takes place in Matthew. "Follow me. And he rose up and followed him." We don't read that Matthew said, "Jesus, I'll be there in a minute. Just let me finish taking care of these transactions. I still have a few more dollars to make here." No, he arose and followed him. I don't think that that necessarily means that Matthew never returned again to make his affairs straight. I don't know if he did, but the point of the language is this: Matthew is making a decisive break with his old life and he began following Jesus as a continuous pattern of life. In the parallel passage in Luke 5 verse 28 it reads this way, "And he left all, rose up and followed him." Matthew heard the call of his Savior and Matthew got up and followed him.

That's the doctrine of the effectual call. Young people, in Essentials class, you are taught about two kinds of calls. There's the external call of the gospel, that call that comes through the preaching, repent and believe and follow Jesus and that's heard wherever the preaching is carried out. That's the external call, and then there's also the internal call of the Spirit which is when the Holy Spirit actually works in our hearts and he applies that word to us so that inwardly we actually do turn from our sins and actually do begin to follow after Jesus. And here we have both. We don't have all the details here but Jesus calls Matthew to follow him, and then by his Holy Spirit, Jesus also works within Matthew, so that Matthew turns from his sins, he gets up, and he follows Jesus.

This is the call by which we're actually drawn to Jesus and that's what irresistible grace is. We're talking in Catechism lately about total depravity. The Lord says two and three and four. Irresistible grace goes along with that. Irresistible grace is this, whereas we by nature are enemies of God and hate God, God so enters into us, his elect, in a way that we can't resist and he enters into our hearts. We would resist him, but his grace is irresistible so that he enters into our hearts and he changes us so that we who are dead in sins are made alive, and we who are living for ourselves, hating God, are now suddenly turned in our inmost being so that we love God and we get up and we follow him.

And this is what Matthew experienced at the toll booth or at the port of customs. This is what Cody has experienced also. God calls us and what do we do? We up and leave our previous life and we follow Jesus. This is what it is to be a disciple of Jesus. For many of us who grew up in the church, we don't know when this started because we've never known a day where we haven't been following Jesus, but this happens and this is what it is to be called by the King. Where the word of the King is, there is power. As I said it already, kings do not say, "Dear friend, be converted, if you will. I beg it of you." But

kings say, "Follow me." And the one who is under his rule does exactly that. He follows him. And in the preaching, it's the same thing. In the preaching, we do not say, "Please, if you will, please make Jesus' death on the cross worthwhile and actually choose to get saved by him," so that he died for someone or his death is worthwhile for someone. No, but the call is issued, "Thus saith the Lord. Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, and thou shalt be saved. Repent and believe." And with that command goes the power of the King and sinners are saved. Jesus says to Matthew, "Follow me. And he arose and followed him."

So what did we learn in all of this, this powerful call to be a disciple? Well, we learn that when Jesus lays his eyes on one of God's elect whom God has committed to Jesus' care and safekeeping, and when Jesus calls that elect child of God to follow him, that call is effectual. He changes the inmost recesses of the heart so that a turning takes place, so that the elect child of God can't help but follow Christ. That's the irresistible, effectual call unto salvation. That's how disciples are made. And that's why this is also the first sermon in our series. This is foundational for the rest of the series and the instruction that we're going to look at. This is how disciples are made, God calls them through the effectual call of the gospel. And then second, what we also learn is that Jesus' call to discipleship is for sinners. It's for sinners like Matthew. It's for sinners like you. It's for sinners like me. It's for sinners like the sinners perhaps you work with, who are your co-workers, who also need to hear about Jesus and who need to hear that call to repent and believe. We don't deserve to be disciples of Jesus, but he chose us and made us his disciples.

In this passage we see the powerful call to be a disciple. Not only do we have that powerful call to be a disciple, we also see in this passage the clear marks of a disciple, what being a disciple actually looks like. We see this clearly in the life of Matthew and how he, by grace, responds to the call. Matthew here is not a robot but God works within Matthew so that Matthew responds and Matthew makes a decision and he makes a choice. What do we see in Matthew that is a clear mark of being a disciple of Jesus? Well, I've got four things. First, repentance. As we already pointed out, Matthew got up and he left his life of sin behind. He had been an extortioner. He had been a thug. He had been a greedy man. He had lived for the things of this world. He had lived for number one, no matter who it hurt or who he hurt. And he repents. He turns from that sinful lifestyle. That's implied in the whole passage. We're not given all the details, but the fact is, in breaking with his life of sin and walking away from it, he was demonstrating the signs of repentance. This is what repentance is. This is what discipleship involves, a definite break with the old life of sin, no matter what the cost. We let go of everything that stands in the way of following after Jesus. That's the mark of being a disciple of Jesus.

Second, we see obedience in the life of Matthew and this goes hand in hand with repentance, but the emphasis is that Matthew not only forsakes his sin, but he then also follows after Jesus. And again, it's very striking because remember who Jesus is. Jesus is the one who has no pillow to lay his head on at night. Jesus is the one who is despised and rejected of men. There is no earthly attraction or beauty that we should desire him. And Matthew sees him and he obeys. And Matthew didn't know what lay in his future.

Matthew didn't have any security in knowing how the next two years were going to turn out, or how the rest of his life was going to turn out for that matter. But he simply obeyed. He trusted the Lord and obeyed the word of his Master. That's the mark of a disciple. Obedience.

Third, we see commitment in the life of Matthew, dedication to Jesus. And that goes along with repentance and obedience but here we need to appreciate what's going on in the life of Matthew because for Matthew, there really is no going back to his previous work. He's counting the cost and he's made his decision, he's made his commitment. And think about it, for some of the other disciples, they could go back. Peter and Andrew, James and John, you see at one time later on, they do go back to fishing. But with Matthew, it's different. Once he walks away from being a tax collector, there's no easy way back. This is a decisive step in Matthew's life. He gives up that whole structure that led to him living a very lucrative life. He has all kinds of social contacts that are helpful in his work as a tax collector, and suddenly those social contacts are all being given up. They're of no benefit to his vocation. All that he invested in his work is going to the wayside. But this is commitment. This is forsaking all to follow Jesus. This is a mark of being a disciple of Jesus.

That's third and then fourth, what we also see in the life of Matthew is this, and this really brings it all together, we see a deep and a fervent love for Jesus and that comes out clearly in the verses that follow. Notice verse 10, "And it came to pass, as Jesus sat at meat in the house," and you learn from the parallel passages that that's not just anyone's house, that's Matthew's house. Matthew has Jesus at his own house. And then you also learn from the parallel passage that this isn't just a meal, but this is a feast. Matthew puts on a feast in honor of Jesus. "And it came to pass, as Jesus sat at meat in the house, behold, many publicans and sinners came and sat down with him and his disciples." The clear impression that we have is that Matthew planned this. Matthew went out and invited all his associates, all his tax collecting friends, all his thugs and mobsters, and he hosted a feast, a great feast. He spent some money on this, because he's got the money, because he was a publican, and he spends money on this.

And when we read about all these things, then we have to ask the question, why? Why is Matthew doing this? I think there's three obvious answers. First, Matthew was celebrating what had happened to him. Matthew has been converted. He's been raised from death to spiritual life. We don't know how unsatisfying his life had been up to this point but as we heard this morning, his life was miserable. His life was miserable because he didn't know his Savior. He didn't know. He didn't have a Savior. But now he's reborn. He's been made a disciple of Jesus Christ. He's received and accepted and called by his Savior. Cody, I ask you, is that not a reason for a great feast? Celebrating today? Celebrating who God has made me to be? To know that I have been made a follower of Christ, that God has looked upon you with mercy and freed you from a life of sin and misery? To know that your sins are forgiven, they've been blotted out in the shed blood of Jesus 2,000 years ago? This is a reason to feast and to celebrate. It was a very happy time when Matthew was turned from his life of sin to serving the Lord and of course, there's nothing wrong with celebrating that. We celebrate that every day of our lives.

Second, Matthew also put on this great feast not just for himself, celebrating what had happened to him, but second, for Jesus he put on this feast. Jesus, after all, is the guest of honor. The desire to honor Jesus, the desire to honor God is the natural reflex of the soul that has been brought into fellowship with God and has tasted and seen just how good and merciful God is. That's the natural reflex to Matthew. Jesus was everything because he is everything. That's how it is for a true disciple of Jesus. Jesus is his everything.

And then third, I think we may also assume that Matthew hosted this feast so that he could witness to all his friends and share Jesus with them. Matthew's got a love for Jesus and it boils over into witnessing to others about Jesus, sharing him with others. These were his friends. He had shared his life with them. They were his colleagues, his associates. Certainly he can introduce them to his Lord and Savior. Jesus is the one who saves sinners. Jesus is the one who came to heal the sick. Matthew knows that and Matthew must have said to himself, "I also know others who are just like me, who also need a Savior, who also are sick, who also are sinners." And he must have thought, "If my needy friends would meet with Jesus and hear his words, maybe they too would be brought to a saving knowledge of Jesus." And Jesus, of course, was glad to dine at Matthew's house, because this is what Jesus came for. He came not to call the righteous, but to call sinners to repentance, and you have to be with sinners, you have to interact with sinners in order to call them to repentance. From seeing all of this, Matthew's heart must have swelled. Think about that, hosting Jesus in your own home as a new convert. Matthew's heart must have swelled with joy over the presence of his Savior in his house. I could say in passing, is that how it is for us, is Jesus in my house? And am I swelling with joy, overflowing with joy, because of the presence of Jesus in my house, day by day?

Well, these are some clear marks of a disciple of Jesus. He repents of his sin. He obeys the word of the Lord. He commits himself to a life of following Jesus, and he has a deep and fervent love for his Savior. The question that comes to us this evening is this: are these marks evident in our lives? And not only that, but are these marks shining brightly in our lives? Are we actually living as disciples of Jesus? Cody, you made confession of faith. I'm going to issue the call to you. I want to challenge you tonight if we can use that language, let these marks of being a disciple in Jesus shine forth in your life, in your friendships, with your co-workers, in your relationship with your parents, repentance, obedience, commitment and devotion, and a deep and fervent love. This is a word for me too, Cody. This is a calling I need to hear also. And I think it's good for all of us. I shouldn't hesitate to speak to my fellow workman or you to speak to your fellow workman or your neighbor about who Jesus is. Just think of the casino boss talking to all his coworkers. Let's remember who Jesus is. He is the one who came into the world to save sinners, of whom I am chief. Truly I can then honor him with my life, can't I? If Matthew can behave this way, and then I give myself the excuse, well maybe it's easier for a new convert. If Matthew can behave this way, certainly I can behave myself similarly, can't I? That's a word for all who call themselves, identify as the disciples of Jesus Christ.

As we continue to consider this passage, the final thing I want to point out is that this passage gives us a great encouragement to be a disciple. This is for all of us. This is also for those of us maybe who are walking in sin, who have lost our way and are not following Jesus right now, and this is for those this evening here tonight who maybe are not yet disciples of Jesus Christ. What stands out in this passage is this: Jesus came to save sinners. Jesus came to make sinners his disciples. And Jesus delights in showing mercy. Matthew was a sinner. Matthew was an extortioner. Matthew had money as his idol. He was a covetous man. But Matthew was exactly one whom Jesus came to seek and to save. Maybe there are those here tonight who know themselves to be sinners like Matthew. Bad sinners. Extortioners. Greedy. Living for the things of this earth. And maybe not only that, but you also have friends that are walking with you in these paths. And maybe you feel how unsatisfying your life really is. Jesus issues the call this evening, "Follow me. Come unto me all ye who are weary and heavy-laden. I will in no wise cast you out." Jesus calls out this evening and says, "Come unto me and I will give you rest. Whosoever will, let him come. I will cast no one away. I came to save sinners such as you are. Not the righteous, not those who are healthy, those who are sick. Those who are sinners. I bore the punishment of sin. I died the accursed death of the cross for all those who call on my name. There is none other name under heaven given among men whereby you must be saved." The call comes, "Repent and believe in the Lord Jesus Christ. Turn and follow him." The question that I ask you is this: will you leave all rise up and follow Jesus? This week again, this is discipleship, this is discipleship every single day of our lives again.

"And as Jesus passed forth from thence, he saw a man, named Matthew, sitting at the receipt of custom: and he saith unto him, Follow me. And he arose, and followed him." So may it be of us. Amen.

Let us pray.

Our Father in heaven, we thank thee for showing Jesus to us. We thank thee for giving us thy Spirit so that we love him and we call on his name. Be near unto Cody, be near unto all of us as disciples of Christ, that we might follow hard after him, knowing his glory, knowing his worth. And we pray that if there are any here tonight who do not know Jesus as their Savior, may this word be applied to their hearts, and may they hear, may they even hear, we pray, that be thy will, that inward call from Jesus, "Follow me." To thy name be all the glory and honor. In Jesus' name we pray. Amen.