

Family Bible Study

6/7/2026



Matthew 9:9-13, 18-26

Healing the Sick

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. ¹⁰ And as Jesus reclined at table in the house, behold, many tax collectors and sinners came and were reclining with Jesus and his disciples. ¹¹ And when the Pharisees saw this, they said to his disciples, “Why does your teacher eat with tax collectors and sinners?” ¹² But when he heard it, he said, “Those who are well have no need of a physician, but those who are sick. ¹³ Go and learn what this means: ‘I desire mercy, and not sacrifice.’ For I came not to call the righteous, but sinners.”

¹⁸ While he was saying these things to them, behold, a ruler came in and knelt before him, saying, “My daughter has just died, but come and lay your hand on her, and she will live.” ¹⁹ And Jesus rose and followed him, with his disciples. ²⁰ And behold, a woman who had suffered from an issue of blood for twelve years came up behind him and touched the fringe of his garment, ²¹ for she said to herself, “If I only touch his garment, I will be made well.” ²² Jesus turned, and seeing her he said, “Take heart, daughter; your faith has made you well.” And instantly the woman was made well. ²³ And when Jesus came to the ruler's house and saw the flute players and the crowd making a commotion, ²⁴ he said, “Go away, for the girl is not dead but sleeping.” And they laughed at him. ²⁵ But when the crowd had been put outside, he went in and took her by the hand, and the girl arose. ²⁶ And the report of this went through all that district.

6. While Jesus is on his way to the ruler's house, someone reaches out to Jesus for help (v20). Who is this person? What help does she need? How does she approach Jesus? What did she think would happen? How does Jesus respond?
7. Meanwhile, back at the ruler's house, the mourners have already begun their threnody, or funeral song. The girl has clearly died. What does Jesus do (v24)? What is the mourners' response?
8. Who has the last laugh? What does Jesus do (v25)? What happens to the girl?
9. There are a lot of different things going on in this passage—many people introduced, controversies created, expectations challenged. What do these stories—the call of Matthew, the challenge to the Pharisees over eating with sinners, the healing of the woman with a hemorrhage, the resuscitation of the ruler's daughter—have in common? Anything?
10. Hanging out with sinners, touching someone with a discharge of bodily fluids, touching a corpse...all were considered “unclean” (see Leviticus 15:25, Numbers 19:11). What does it say about Jesus that he does not fear becoming “unclean” by coming in contact with the “unclean,” but instead goes to them to heal them?
11. How do these stories shed light on Jesus' mission/ministry? How do they show what it will be like when God's will is done on earth (the “kingdom of God”)? What does it say about how Jesus intends to get us there? How do we participate in what Jesus is doing?
12. What good news do these stories offer to people who feel broken, sinful, excluded, or hopeless?

Questions to Wonder with Kids

- This passage comes at the beginning of Matthew's Gospel, when Jesus is just getting started in his ministry. After performing some miracles and teaching his followers, Jesus is walking along and meets a man sitting at a tax booth. What is the man's name?
- The man is a tax collector. Do you know what a "tax" is? A tax-collector at that time would have been working with the Roman army, which had taken over the country. How do you think the other disciples would have felt when Jesus invited this man to join him?
- Where did Jesus and his disciples go then? Who else was there?
- Who didn't like the fact that Jesus was hanging out and eating with these tax-collectors and sinners? Why do you suppose they did not approve?
- What does Jesus say to them? What does that mean?
- The conversation between Jesus and the Pharisees is interrupted by someone who bursts into the room, looking for Jesus' help. What is his problem? Why is he looking for Jesus? I wonder what he thought Jesus could do about it...
- So Jesus agrees to go to the man's house, but along the way, someone else reaches out to Jesus. Who is this person? What is her problem, her "issue"?
- What does she do to Jesus? What is Jesus' response?
- When Jesus arrives at the man's house, is the girl still alive? Who else is there? What are they doing?
- What does Jesus say to them? How do they respond?
- Then what does Jesus do? What happens to the girl?
- All these people Jesus comes into contact with are considered "dirty" or "unclean" (sinners, sick woman, dead body), and it was thought that one can become "dirty" too just by touching them. But Jesus doesn't distance himself. I wonder why....

Questions for Adults

1. With this week's lesson, we resume our journey through Matthew's gospel, paused for a time for Lent and Easter seasons. We are back to an early point in Jesus' ministry. He has just given the Sermon on the Mount and performed several miracles, healing the sick and diseased, casting out demons and calming an unruly sea. The passage starts off with Jesus walking—to where, we don't know—when he crosses paths with a man named Matthew. What do we know about Matthew (v9)?
2. "Tax-collectors" were more like collection agencies than the IRS in Jesus' day. They were licensed by the Roman governor to collect taxes on Rome's behalf from among their fellow Jews. They were given a quota of tax moneys to take in, but given free rein to demand more, which the tax collector would then pocket. This made many tax collectors rich, but also hated by their fellow Jews. How do you suppose Jesus' other followers felt when Jesus tapped Matthew to join them?
3. What kinds of people might be considered "tax collectors" in today's society—people whom others look down upon or avoid?
4. This immediately led, we assume, to Jesus and his followers dining at Matthew's house, along with several other tax-collectors and "sinners" (likely including prostitutes and others unfavored in Jewish society). Who has a problem with this (v11)? Why?
5. What significance did sharing a meal have in the ancient world?
6. How does Jesus reply to his critics? How does the quote from Hosea 6:6 ("I desire mercy, and not sacrifice") apply to them? What does mercy look like in practice?
7. Their dinner discussion is interrupted by a "ruler" (elsewhere named Jairus, a leader of the synagogue) who seeks Jesus' help. What is the problem (v18)? How does he think Jesus will be able to do anything about it?