



GracePoint: A Weekly Sermon Discussion

21 – Seeing Yourself in the Story

Announcements:

3/15 @6:30 -

Women's Bible

Study

3/16 @7:00 -

Corporate

Prayer

3/17 @6:30 -

Grace Group

3/20 @7:00 -

Sunday School

ICE BREAKER: Finish this sentence: Jesus saved me from _____ .

READ: Matthew 9:9-13

If you were writing what is, without a doubt, one of the most important things ever written; if you had an inkling that for as long as there were people, your words would be read; and if you had any clue that not one jot and tittle would pass away from what you were writing; and were going to talk about yourself -- you would think that you would endeavor to place yourself in the most positive light you could. This is not the case with Matthew. In fact, he is rather blunt in his assessment of his life before the call of Christ. He was a tax collector that hung out with other tax collectors and sinners. Yet in Matthew's assessment of himself we find hope for all of us. This is because Matthew sees

the truth in who he was, but more importantly, he sees the truth of the call that was placed upon him. A call to live for Christ, a call for a new and changed life, a call to no longer be defined as he once was, but instead as his savior saw him. All this is summed up simply as "follow me". Today I would like to dive deep into what Matthew Henry said of this call to follow Jesus, for it helps us to see the call of Christ.

We are all naturally averse from thee, O God; do thou bid us to follow thee; draw us by thy powerful word, and we shall run after thee. Speak by the word of the Spirit to our hearts, the world cannot hold us down, Satan cannot stop our way, we shall arise and follow thee. A saving change is wrought in the soul, by Christ as the author, and his word as the means. Neither Matthew's place, nor his gains by it, could detain him, when Christ called him. He left it, and though we find the disciples, who were fishers, occasionally fishing again afterwards, we never more find Matthew at his sinful gain. - Matthew Henry

There are two major parts of what Matthew Henry says of this passage. We will look at them in turn. The first is the power of the call. As Matthew Henry describes, when the call is given we are drawn. There is no power that can hold us back when the life giving call is heard, no scheme is strong enough to derail us. Even Satan himself could not block us when we arise to follow Christ. It is such a strong and mighty call that not even Matthew's "place nor his gains by it, could detain him." Simply this means that Matthew could not be so sinful or lost, he could not be in such a dark or hopeless place that the call to follow Jesus could not pluck him out of darkness and into marvelous light. And this then is our great hope. For the same power is behind the same call that we receive.

DISCUSS: As believers who have heard the call, why is it important to understand the power of the call that was given us?

The second thing to note is the changing of the call. The first note is that the call itself changed him from one who was "averse" from God to one who would follow him. But then, after responding there is more change that happens. Matthew writes that "he rose and followed him." And while in one sense this is not saying a lot, if we remember the context, and what Matthew has written before, we know that the statement that "he followed Jesus" is actually saying many profound things. He was willing to give up the rich and comfortable lifestyle that his tax collecting would have gained him so that he could live with one who "has no place to rest his head (Matthew 8:20). He would abandon his earthly desires, his aims and goals as he followed fully. He became, not one of the crowd, but a disciple. And this changed him. As Matthew Henry notes, "though we find the disciples, who were fishers, occasionally fishing again afterwards, we never more find Matthew at his sinful gain". Matthew heard the gospel call, he responded, and his life was blessedly ever the same again!

DISCUSS: What lessons are there to learn from the first change, from one averse to one who will follow? How can we walk in the changing power of the gospel call?

BONUS QUESTION: What is meant by the phrase “A saving change is wrought in the soul, by Christ as the author, and his word as the means.”?