

Daily Discipleship

Sunday, June 5-11(A) – Matthew 9:9-13, 18-26

Tips of Discipleship: *Be Merciful*

Focus Question: *How might you extend mercy to someone in the next week?*

word of life

“Those who are well have no need of a physician, but those who are sick. Go and learn what this means, ‘I desire mercy, not sacrifice.’” Matthew 9:12 (NRSV)

Read Matthew 9:9-13, 18-26

Chapter nine of Matthew begins with Jesus forgiving the paralytic his sins *before* he has made confession. Forgiveness also occurs *before* Jesus heals the man physically. All of this leaves the crowds in awe and amazed at the authority of Jesus. (See Matthew 9:2-8)

But there is more to the new ways of Jesus. He has a pattern of eating and interacting with sinners. This is clearly seen when Jesus calls a tax collector named Matthew as one of his disciples. Tax collectors were known for adding extra to the tax and keeping it for themselves. Nevertheless, the request by Jesus is simple, “Follow me.” (Matthew 9:9 NRSV) Their response is immediate. All of this baffles the Pharisees.

1. *What does it mean to you that Jesus interacts with sinners?*
2. *What does it mean to you that Jesus would call a “sinner” to be his disciple?*
3. *How might Jesus be a positive influence on those around him?*

Jesus understands himself to be on a mission for those who are sick – physically, emotionally, and spiritually. He is available for those who have a need of a savior. Jesus says, “Those who are well have no need of a physician, but those who are sick. Go and learn what this means, ‘I desire mercy, not sacrifice.’” (Matthew 9:12 NRSV)

4. *Describe someone who thinks he or she does not need a physician to tend to his or her spiritual needs.*
5. *How might the Pharisees be in need of a physician?*
6. *What does it mean for Jesus to desire mercy?*

Later a leader of the synagogue comes and kneels before Jesus. He begs Jesus to make his dead daughter live again. He desires a miracle for nothing else will help his daughter. Jesus gets up and follows this religious leader. No questions are asked. Jesus responds as if the request is typical and within the range of Jesus.

7. *How would you have reacted if you heard this request from this grieving father?*
8. *What strikes you about the response of Jesus?*

While they were traveling, a woman who had been bleeding for twelve years touches the robe of Jesus so she might be healed. Jesus responds by turning to the healed woman and speaking with mercy, “Take heart, daughter, your faith has been made well.” (Matthew 9:22 NRSV) The woman is healed immediately.

Jesus returns to the other daughter in the story. She is already surrounded by mourners and their music. Jesus asks the crowd to leave. They mock his hope for life. But new life is given – by the grace of God. Jesus is not bound by human limitations.

9. *What do you hope you remember from these passages?*

word among us

Several members of the congregation witnessed their pastor walk into a bar at noon. They were appalled. They asked themselves, “What would others in the community think if they saw their pastor enter into a bar in the middle of the day?” They immediately pulled out their cell phones and began calling the church council and other leaders.

1. *What do you think of the reaction of the members?*
2. *What might have been another way to handle this situation?*

It turned out the pastor was meeting with a woman who was deeply troubled and contemplating suicide. She agreed to meet the pastor in that particular bar at noon. Her whole story was complicated, but the woman ended up getting some extensive counseling as she found her way to health.

3. *Does it make sense to you as a Christian to only interact with Christians in Christian settings? How so?*
4. *How might you be a positive influence on others who might not have faith?*
5. *What is the balance between living with Christians and intentionally interacting with non-believers?*

Jesus had the sole option to interact with sinners. He met no perfect people. Some of them admitted their sin and others did not. The righteous of his day were appalled at the company of Jesus. How dare Jesus interact with sinners? Yet, Jesus came to save sinners and give hope to the lost. He intentionally reached out to those who had needs.

6. *Who would Jesus eat with today?*
7. *Where would we find Jesus in our culture?*
8. *Who are the lost of our times?*
9. *What does this say about where the church should invest its energy?*

Again and again, Jesus extended life to people. He invited Matthew to be a disciple – despite Matthew being an ostracized tax collector. This call to Matthew was life-changing and life-giving. He also gave life back to the woman who had been bleeding for twelve years. As long as the woman was bleeding, she was considered unclean and could not have normal interactions with others. After Jesus healed her, she could claim her life again.

It was a startling and bold request from the father for Jesus to bring his daughter back to life, but one rooted in faith. Jesus responded immediately.

10. *What request might you ask of Jesus?*
11. *How might you be more bold and confident in your faith?*
12. *How might you be an instrument of mercy to those around you?*

Prayer

Gracious God, help me to be merciful to those around me. Open my eyes, hearts, and hands to those in need. Amen

Dig Deeper

Psalm 50:7-15

last word

Prayerfully ponder how
God has shown you mercy
and how you might show mercy to others.



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