Jesus, A Friend of Sinners

Matthew 9:9-13
9/17/2017

Intro.

***We need to follow our Savior's pattern for evangelism.**

How did Christ bring sinners to Himself?

I. **Confrontational Evangelism** - "He saw a man" (v. 9)

II. **Friendship Evangelism** - "He sat at meat" (v. 10-13)

Four Requirements:

A. **A neutral setting** - "in the house" (v. 10)

B. **A distinct lifestyle** - "physician. . . sick" (v.11-12)

C. **A spiritual purpose** - "call. . . sinners to repentance" (v. 11-12; 13b)

D. **A merciful attitude** - "I will have mercy" (v. 13a)

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Matthew (in v. 9-13) is continuing his theme of showing how Jesus Christ was misunderstood by the people of His day.

In this context, it is the religious crowd who find it incomprehensible that Jesus would come in contact with publicans and sinners.

Jesus cares for sinners! (Note His love for sinners in v. 9-13)

Matthew (also called "Levi") was a Jew who worked for Rome by collecting taxes.

V. 9

Publicans were despised because:

1. Extortion

   Publicans would normally collect more taxes than were due to Rome, then they would pocket the extra cash.

2. Bribery

   They would accept bribes from the wealthy and make up for it by "socking it" to the middle and lower class people

3. Traitorous (misplaced loyalty)

   "Because of the nature of their position, their first loyalty was to Rome" (MacArthur, p. 60)

   Due to the fact that they were viewed as traitors, reprobates, money-hungry scoundrels, they were considered outcasts of the Jewish society.

   "The noted Jewish scholar Alfred Edersheim reports that a Jewish "publicani" was barred from the synagogue and was forbidden to have any religious or social contact with his fellow Jews. He was ranked with the unclean animals, which a devout Jew would not so much as touch. He was in the class of swine, and because he was held to be a traitor and a congenital liar, he was ranked with robbers and murderers and was forbidden to give testimony in any Jewish court." (MacArthur, p. 60-61)

Since Matthew was prohibited from the religious life of Israel and evidently was longing for God's grace and redemption, he was so overwhelmed at the privilege offered by great Jesus Christ to follow Him, that the things of the world immediately lost their value. . . for he had found the Pearl of Great Price.

"Follow Me" - a brief but powerful exhortation

"And he arose and followed Him" - Matthew gets up, leaves his business behind, and followed Jesus.

To follow Christ today does not necessarily mean that you will have to leave your place of business (unless it is sinful employment). But there must be a willingness to do whatever Jesus wants you to do (EX: how a man left his dental practice to go to Bible college at Pillsbury).

V. 10

"In the house" - in the house of Matthew (Lk. 5:29)

"Like many new converts, Matthew's first thought was to tell his friends about the Savior. He was so overwhelmed that he threw a banquet to present Jesus to his friends--all of whom, as tax-gatherers and sinners, were social and religious outcasts.

"Many publicans" - Matthew being a publican no doubt had many associates who were of the same profession. You can reach people in your sphere of influence and area of expertise that no one else can!

What type of "sinners" did Jesus save?
--fornicators (the woman at the well - Jn. 4)
--demon-possessed (Mary Magdalene)
--adulterers (Jn. 8:1-11)
--prostitutes
--thieves (EX: thief on the cross)
--religionists (Nicodemus & Saul of Tarsus)

It was most likely because of this very banquet that the Lord Jesus gained the reputation by His enemies as *"a man gluttonous, and a winebibber, a friend of publicans and sinners"* (Mt. 11:19; cp. Lk. 15:2)

V. 11

The Pharisees were too cowardly to go directly to Jesus and ask Him, so they interrogate His disciples instead.

Sometimes our good will be evil spoken of.

V. 12

"The analogy is simple. Just as a physician is expected to go among people who are sick, a Forgiver should be expected to go among those who are sinful [and in need of forgiveness]. . . What sort of doctor would spend all of his time with healthy people and refuse to associate with those who are sick?" (MacArthur, p. 64)

Jesus is still the Great Physician who can cure spiritual heart disease, and regenerate sick souls, and resuscitate those who are spiritually dead (Eph. 2:1ff)

V. 13

"Go ye and learn" - a rabbinic rebuke because of ignorance. Go get your O.T. scroll and learn what Hosea meant when He said this in Hosea 6:6.

NOTE: In the context, Gomer, and Hosea's forgiveness of such a great sinner

God desires us to show mercy (pity, compassion) on people, not merely to bring sacrifices to God. To bring a sacrifice to God but to do so with a self-righteous, holier than thou, unmerciful attitude toward others is hypocrisy.

The hypocritical Pharisees paid their tithes, yet avoided the *"weightier matters"* of the Law - justice, mercy and faith! (Mt. 23:23).

"I am not come to call the righteous" - Reason: There are none! (Rom. 3:10)

Had the Pharisees know the O.T., they would have know this (Ps. 14:1-3; Ps. 53:1-4)

"Sinners to repentance" - Jesus saved the *"chief of sinners"* (Saul of Tarsus - I Tim. 1:15) to give an encouraging example that He is able to save anyone who comes to Him by faith (I Tim. 1:16).

Jesus saw every situation as an encounter with eternity at stake, and so must we.

***We need to follow our Savior's pattern for evangelism.**
How did Christ bring sinners to Himself?

Basically: Christ Made CONTACT with the Lost.
He touched their lives - Matthew 9:9-13)

Christ's life on earth is characterized by His willingness to "touch" the lives of sinners (literally - Mt. 8:3, 15; 9:20, 29; 14:36; 17:7; 20:34; Mk. 7:33; Lk. 22:51; Heb. 4:15)

He came into contact with those who needed Him. Jesus never isolated Himself from rubbing shoulders with hurting people.

How did Christ made contact with the lost?

I. **Confrontational Evangelism** - "He saw a man" (v. 9)

Commonly called "cold turkey" evangelism - taking the Gospel to someone you don't know.

EX: Woman at the well

Even in this type of evangelism a rapport must be built.

II. **Friendship Evangelism** - "He sat at meat" (v. 10-13)

Friendship evangelism is commonly called: "Lifestyle evangelism"; "Bridge evangelism."

Jesus is called a "Friend of sinners."

Should we be friends with the lost? Yes and No

Yes-We are friends in the sense that we genuinely love them and seek to build a bridge in their life so that they will listen to our gospel and see it "fleshed out" by our lives.

No-We are never to be like the world in order to win them. We are not to compromise conviction, participate in worldly practices; or go to certain of their places of entertainment to win them.

[We are to surrender personal differences, never doctrinal convictions - EX: Paul - I Cor. 9:19-23]

Two extremes are prevalent today in the name of "evangelism":

1) Spiritual Isolation - to have no contact with the lost (many fundamentalists)

2) Spiritual Immersion - to have no distinction with the lost (to blend into their worldliness) (many "New Evangelicals")

Four Requirements:

A. A neutral setting - "in the house" (v. 10)

It was not church, nor was it the night club where Jesus sat with sinners.

What is a neutral setting? It is a location and atmosphere not noted for either "religion" (on the one hand) or "sin" (on the other hand).

a. The Bible Examples of evangelizing in neutral settings:

1) Samaritan woman - by a well (Jn. 4)
2) Zacchaeus - in his home (Lk. 19:5-10)
3) Ethiopian Eunich - on the Gaza Road (Acts 8:26-40)
4) Cornelius & family - in his house (Acts 10:27-28)
5) Lydia - by a river (Acts 16:13)
6) Phillippian jailor - outside a jail cell (Acts 16:23, 29-30)
7) Jailor's family - in a home (Acts 16:32, 34)
8) The Athenians - at a market place (Acts 17:17b)
9) Justus - in his house (Acts 18:7)

Paul did frequently go into Jewish synagogues and preach, but not to the neglect of sharing his faith in "neutral" locations.

It is improper to have the mentality that evangelism should primarily take place in the local church. The primary function of the assembled congregation is the edification of the saints (Eph. 4:12; Heb. 10:24-25) not the evangelism of sinners.

Even though reaching the lost will and should take place during church gatherings (I Cor. 14:23-25), the primary purpose of believers "coming together" (v. 26) is not evangelism but edification.

Evangelism takes place, primarily, when the Church is dissembled, as believers go out to the homes, jobs, and

marketplaces, etc. (Acts 5:42, 8:4).

b. The benefits of evangelizing in neutral settings:

1) It shows the lost person that salvation does not come via a church, or a "religion."

2) The atmosphere does not inhibit the lost person (less apprehension or fear) - in a church building he may not feel comfortable (tendency is to throw up barriers against any form of "prosceletizing")

3) The atmosphere does nto distract the lost person

--In a nightclub, bar, etc., the surroundings are sensual, noisy, and worldly, thus distracting to both the one witnessing and the one listening.

4) Neutral settings provide periodic (consistent) contact with the lost person

EX: Through building relationships with those at work, school, recreational areas (parks, etc.), you establish rapport, trust, and come in contact with lost people on a consistent basis.

They get a chance to see a "real live" Christian in day-to-day life.

B. A distinct lifestyle - "physician. . . house" (v.11-12)

Jesus remained a physician when among the sick, He did not become sick with them!"

SEE Matthew 5:13-16

a. We must maintain our spiritual savor (v. 13)

1) We need to be distinct morally

The world needs something to retard corruption - what makes us distinct? Note previous context (v. 3-12).

2) We need a persevering contact

b. We must maintain our spiritual light (v. 14-16)

1) Don't hide your light (v. 15)

Our tendency is to make mad, quick dashes into our town and then retreat to our refuge. People see light flashing by, then wonder, "What was that???!!!"

2) Let people see your light (v.16)

a) We should be known for our "light" (our distinguishable brilliance against the backdrop of the world's darkness)

Today, many Christians are "gray," not "white" (seeking to blend rather than contrast).

b) We should be known for our "good works"

(1) Our "good works" must be visible to the world ("...that they may see your good works...")

Christianity is not merely a "closet" religion

The world will never see real love, joy, peace, contentment, humility, honesty, sacrifice, and spirituality unless they see it in us.

(2) Our "good works" must cause the world to glorify God, not ourselves.

Be humble about your "light"

C. **A <u>spiritual</u> purpose** - "call. . . sinners to repentance" (v. 11-12; 13b)

Our major goal in building relationships with the lost is to lead them to repentance (to bring them to our Savior).

Our purpose (goal) is <u>not</u> to:

a. Merely <u>gain friends</u>

A true friend will tell the most important news he has ever heard - the gospel.

b. Become a <u>social worker</u>

Beware not to get sidetracked from your main goal. Many churches today are nothing but social organizations (feeding the poor; clothing the naked, sheltering the homeless, etc.), meeting temporal needs and never getting around to the <u>eternal needs</u> of their souls.

Some might think, "If I have people over to my house, etc., with the ulterior motive of sharing the Gospel, am I being a hypocrite? Answer: NO!

This is the most <u>loving motive</u> we could ever have.

D. **A <u>merciful</u> attitude** - "I will have mercy" (v. 13a)

"Mercy" - is to extend to others the same treatment God showed to you. Showing mercy requires <u>humility</u> and <u>love</u>.

<u>Humility</u> - "I am no better than you." You will never lead anyone to Christ if you preach <u>down</u> to them with a "holier than thou" attitude.

<u>Love</u> - "I will love you as Christ loved me when I didn't deserve it."

"People need to know how much you care before they will care about how much you know."

God is interested in internals (mercy), not merely externals (sacrifice).

SEE Mt. 12:7

CONCLUSION:

Jesus by example teaches us that we need to make contact with the unsaved in order to win them.

Salt is useless unless it come sin contact with food.
Light is useless unless it comes in contact with darkness.
A map is useless unless it comes in contact with someone who needs directions.
A compass is useless unless it comes in contact with someone who is lost.
A Christian is useless unless he comes in contact with the unsaved.

--Do you seek to make contact with the lost or avoid them?

--Do you know who your neighbors are?
- What are their names, first and last?
- What are their children's names?
- Where do they work?
- When was the last time they were in your home?
- When was the last time you were in theirs?

--Why do you think God gave you the job you have? Why did He set those people across your path? Are you reaching them?

Don't be a hibernating Christian! Don't be an isolationist! Don't live on your own island while the sea of humanity drifts to eternal ruin!

--Make a list, include your unsaved neighbors, fellow employees, class mates, relatives, etc.

--Pray for a chance to develop relationships with them

--Plan an occasion to get together - Be ready to sow the seed

Hymn: "Jesus: what a friend of sinners"