

Matthew 9:9-17

New and Improved

February 24, 2019 – Rev. Rick Lyon

Intro

Revelation 21:5 - He who sat on the throne said, "Behold, I make *all things* new."

1. A new and improved man

One historian wrote: Jewish tax collectors were easily the most hated men in Hebrew society. They weren't only hated for their extortion, but also because they worked for the Jew's enemies the Romans. Tax collectors couldn't serve as a judge or witness in court and were excommunicated from the synagogues. They were the lowest of the low.

Mt. 10:2-4 - The names of the twelve apostles are these: first, Simon, who is called Peter, and Andrew his brother; James the son of Zebedee, and John his brother; Philip and Bartholomew; Thomas and *Matthew the tax collector*; James the son of Alphaeus, and Thaddaeus; Simon the Zealot, and *Judas Iscariot, who betrayed Him*.

Someone wrote: This gathering didn't happen automatically. Like any dinner party, it had to be thought out, planned, and arranged. I imagine it this way: Several

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weeks after Matthew committed his life to Christ, he goes back to his tax office to clean out his cubicle. He packs up his stuff and walks out of the tax office for the last time. As he's walking out he thinks, "*How are these guys ever going to come to faith in Christ? How are they ever going to get to know Jesus the way I have?*" Matthew realizes he's probably their best link to coming to the Lord.

He thinks, "*What am I gonna do? I'm not a preacher or teacher or anything like that. I could do nothing and just let 'em all go to hell. No, I can't do that!*" So he starts brainstorming—"*What do I do well? Let's start there. I throw great parties. But let's not go there!*" But he can't shake the idea. And finally it hits him: "*Why not? Why not throw a party with a purpose? What if all my tax-gathering friends who love my parties came? And what if I invited Jesus and the guys? What if Jesus and the other disciples got together with my unsaved IRS friends? And what if some spiritual conversations took place? And what if that led to some of my friends coming to faith in Christ like I have?*"

So, Matthew decides to throw a party. And the Bible says a crowd showed up. The Bible doesn't tell us how many of Matthew's friends became followers of Jesus as a result of his efforts. Maybe some did. Maybe none did. But what's important to see is that something happened to Matthew. Matthew became a passionate soul-winner. There's nothing special about Matthew. He's like a lot of us. He's an average, 9-5 working stiff. All he has, really, is a positive personal experience with Christ, a heart for his lost friends, and the courage to try to reach them. And that's why God uses ordinary Matthew in an extraordinary way—just as God will use ordinary you and ordinary me, if we'll just let him.

2. A new and improved message.

Illustration #1 - The Physician

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Illustration #2 - The Wedding

Matthew 6:16 - "When you fast, don't look *somber* as the hypocrites do, for they disfigure their faces *to show others* they're fasting."

Psalm 16:11 - In God's presence there's *fullness of joy*.

1 Timothy 6:17 - God gives us richly all things to enjoy.

Illustration #3 - The Garment

Colossians 3:9-10 - Put off the old self with its practices and put on the new self.

Romans 13:14 - Put on the Lord Jesus Christ, and make no provision for the flesh.

Illustration #4 - The Wineskins

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