

# Sunday, March 11, 2018 – Fourth Sunday of Lent

## Sermon: Matthew – The Reformed

### Read Matthew 9:9-13



Matthew was one of the twelve apostles Jesus chose to follow Him as an apostle. Jesus called Matthew to follow Him when Jesus walked by where Matthew was working.



Matthew was a tax collector. He was not a popular person. Tax collectors were not liked by the people from whom they collected taxes. We do not like paying taxes. There are very few people who look forward to April 15. We pay taxes to a government who is led by people we have elected. The people in Israel were paying taxes to the Romans who conquered their land. They paid taxes to a government where they had no say. It is interesting that Jesus called Matthew and Simon the Zealot to be in the twelve. Normally the two would be enemies. Matthew was raising support for the people Simon wanted to fight. In Jesus they found common ground.



Tax collectors were considered to be sinners. They were examples of bad people. Tax collectors were considered to be crooks. They were known for cheating people who owed taxes. They would inflate how much was owed so that they could keep the difference. This was the group Matthew was from. Jesus called him to be one of His twelve closest disciples. If it were up to us, then we probably would not have chosen Simon the Zealot or Matthew. If we really think about what we know about the twelve we may have looked for a different group. They do not always understand what Jesus teaches. We would look for people wiser than those 12. Fortunately, Jesus does not see people as we do. If we think about it, why should Jesus pick us to represent Him today.



That Jesus would associate with Matthew was scandalous. Not only did Jesus associate with Matthew, but He called him to go with Him and went to Matthew's house to eat. Matthew invited others who were considered sinners to come and join them. The Pharisees thought this was terrible. If Jesus was really a good person, then He would not associate with sinners. He should be more careful about who He spends His time with. They criticized Jesus for doing this. Jesus response was that the sick are the ones who need a doctor.



From Matthew we learn that Jesus wants all to follow Him. He is not choosy. He offers His grace to all of us. We can go to Him for forgiveness. We do not have to prove ourselves to come to Him. We allow Him to work in us to make us better, but there is no entrance exam. We can also learn that like Jesus, we can welcome all people to Him. It is not up to us to judge, but we are called to offer forgiveness in Jesus. This does not mean we approve of the actions of everyone, but we can accept them as a person that Jesus loves. Just as Jesus cares for all we can care for all people as well.