

# SERMON TRANSCRIPT

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SPEAKER

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SERIES

Follow Me

PART

2

TITLE

I Will Make You Well

SCRIPTURE

Matthew 9:9-13



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Well it's so good to see you, Providence family, in this room. I want to also just say hi to all the people on livestream. Also, there's a lot of families from Providence who've left Providence, and they're all over the world. Sometimes they actually tune in. I just want all of you to know the families around the world that love The Gospel and care so much about folks who don't have The Gospel, we're proud of you, we love you, we're grateful for you. I hope that this time is really encouraging to you as well.

To all of our guests here with us, welcome. We're thrilled that you are here. We always know it's an honor when we have folks here who are new guests. When we walk in these doors and we see a room like this, and we see all these people, it's only a natural instinct for all of us to want to fit. We all want to belong. It's absolutely natural. Nearly every single group throughout the entire world basically has the same path for, "How do you belong to us?" It's this, "Change and you can follow us." You need to change, and if you change then you can follow us. If you dress like us, if you'll think like us, if you'll act like us, if you'll pray like us. If you're like us, then you can belong.

Some of you are brand new. The first time you came, and a friend invited you. You may have asked, "Hey, what do I wear? What will other people be wearing?" So the background behind that question is, "I want to fit. I want to belong. I don't want to stand out so much and be so different from everybody that I don't fit, I don't connect." So every single one of us, very much like this picture right here, we spend a tremendous amount of time in life trying to change so that we can fit in.

We all do this. Every single one of us. Yet when Jesus Christ came from heaven, and He came to this earth, and He introduced a very different path to Him. Instead of it being changing, you can follow, it's "Follow Me, and you will change." It's vastly different. It's based on two simple words, follow and me. This was Jesus favorite invitation. That's what He gave to so many different people.

Jesus, as you read the gospels, you simply do not find Him running around telling people, "Impress Me, clean yourself up for Me, do better for Me." No, it was always, "Follow Me." You see, packed in those two simple relational words, follow and me, there's a person who walks a path in front of us, and there's an invitation to join that person. It's incredibly relational. Jesus used this simple invitation "follow Me", this phrase, to call all kinds of different peoples to Him. Religious people, irreligious people, moral people, immoral people, men and women, old and young, Jews and Gentiles. All kinds of different people, He said, "I want you to follow Me."

What we find right here in Matthew 9, in fact, if you have a bible, if you want to head there. If you don't, there's lots of bibles in the chairs near you. If you don't have one at home, take that home. We actually see an account of where Jesus actually calls a real person named Matthew to follow Him. What you're going to find in this story is really important. It's so pertinent to each and every one of us who are here. It's this, it's there is a person in this story that Jesus is going to engage who resembles you. You're going to see a reflection of yourself in someone within these five verses.

It may be startling, it may be something that you don't want to see. Normally, when we find things within the text that we don't want to see in our heart, in our life and yet they're there, we typically shut down or get defensive. I just want to encourage you just to receive everything that Jesus would be doing to someone just like you and just like me. How He would interact, how He would engage with us, because unlike every other institution, every other group, every other club that would say, "You need to change, and you can follow me", what we find here is He comes to a really irreligious, immoral person, and He says, "You follow Me, and I will help you change." So let's pray together, okay?

Father, we look to You know. We thank You for Jesus, we thank You for what You have done in each of our lives. I pray now that You would fill us with Your Spirit. God, I pray that You would remove all of the distractions, and all of the hurdles to our heart, understanding and believing what is true here in this text. I pray, Father, that You would help us to internalize it as though there's something consequential in this text for our lives even today. I pray God, for those in the room who feel like there is no way that You would want a relationship with them on the basis of their history. I pray Father, that You would help them to see people who have their same history, their same past, and how You engaged and how You brought them close, and how You called them follow. So I pray God, that You would help us now. Would You speak through weakness and glorify Your Son? We pray in Jesus name, Amen.

So, Matthew 9, starting in verse nine, this is what it says. It says, "As Jesus passed on from there, He saw a man called Matthew." Now let me just pause. You notice that we're in the book of Matthew. This happens to be the exact same man. So years later, after all of this took place, he's writing his account as an eyewitness of what he saw, what he heard from Jesus, and he's writing it down. He includes when Jesus called him to follow, because he knew it would be important to so many people just like us.

This is what happens. He says, "He called Matthew, sitting at the tax booth, and He said to him, 'Follow Me', and he rose and followed Him. As Jesus reclined at table in the house, behold many tax collectors and sinners came and were reclining with Jesus and His disciples. When the Pharisees saw this, they said to His disciples, 'Why does your teacher eat with tax collectors and sinners?' But when He heard it, He said, "Those who are well have no need of a physician, but those who are sick. Go and learn what this means. I desire mercy and not sacrifice, for I came not to call the righteous, but sinners."

Now what I want to do, I want to show you. I hope that you'll find this to be incredibly pertinent to your life, very helpful. There's going to be a lot of insights, but really all the insights and all the ideas, they can be hung on two great big ideas, two big hooks. I want to show you those two. They're the main points. Then we're going to finish with three applications. I promise one of those applications, maybe all three, but one of those applications will be incredibly pertinent to your life today. Okay?

So the first thing that we see here is this, is that Jesus calls the immoral and irreligious to follow Him. He calls those who are far away, have nothing to do with morality, nothing to do with goodness, nothing to do with church, and He says, "I want you to follow Me." This is what it says, "Jesus called Matthew." First it says He saw Matthew. What's interesting is not everyone wanted to see Matthew, because Matthew was a tax collector. Matthew was a hated person, because a tax collector was a hated person.

You see, when Rome would come in with its army and conquer a place, they would actually have an auction. The highest bidder actually won the privilege of being the tax collector in that province. That person, that man had all the authority that was necessary to collect what he needed. Everything that he could extract from people that was above and beyond what that minimum of what he had to send back to Rome was his profit margin. So they became incredibly deceitful. It was incredibly lucrative.

So what we would know about Matthew is that Matthew is a very rich man. We would know that Matthew is a very hated man, and he's also a man who is ostracized from all of society. He couldn't go to the temple, he couldn't worship with other people. No one wanted to be near him. He was like this picture, where you sit down and everybody has somebody except that one. That one, there's about two or three arm's lengths. No one really wants to be near. Well, this was Matthew. No one wanted to be near Matthew.

Some of you may feel that yourself. You live a life where it feels like everybody is an arm or two length away from you and they intentionally leave you there because they don't want you near. In that case, you have somebody right here in Matthew that you resemble. Nobody wanted to be near Matthew. Yet it says that Jesus came to Matthew. Now this is pretty remarkable to me, because he's the author.

I want you to think about Matthew for a second. I asked you to turn to Matthew. You turned into the book, the book, The Bible, scripture, and you saw his name. You know, there are things that are found in Matthew that are not necessarily found in other places in the way that Matthew writes them. Sometimes, it's only in his book where you find certain things. Throughout 2,000 years, people have been encouraged from what they found in Matthew. We have bible studies about these things.

We turn to Matthew 6, and you find The Lord's Prayer. We turn to Matthew 11, He says, "Come, all you who are weary and heavy-laden." You're worn out, you're beat down. Come to Me, and I'll give you rest. That's a great place, isn't it? We read in Matthew 22. He says, "Hey, what's the greatest commandment?" Jesus says, "Love the Lord your God with all of your heart, soul, mind and strength. The second is like it. Love your neighbor as yourself." That's in Matthew. We find in Matthew 28, "Go therefore and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, the Son and Holy Spirit, and teach them to obey everything that I commanded you. Surely I'm with you always to the end of the age." That's only in Matthew. These things are in Matthew.

Here we are, 2,000 years later. We study it, we memorize it, we think about it. Here we are. I just said, “Turn to Matthew 9.” You turned it right open. I want you to just think. Rewind to where you see 2,000 years pass all the way, and here’s a man named Matthew as he’s sitting, counting his money. No one wants to be near, and he’s exploiting people all day long. There he is. He’s far from God, he’s far from people, no one wants to be near him. That same person sitting at the table is now encouraging us, and he does year after year after year after year. You know how that’s possible? Because Jesus saw him and then came to him. Just like He wants to come to you. He sees you.

Well He says, “Follow Me.” This is amazing, because what He’s saying is, “Look, if you’ll follow Me, if you’ll identify yourself with Me, then I will do what nobody else in all of society wants to do. That is I will identify Myself with you, only that you draw near to Me. You follow Me, and not only will I change you, but I will willingly expose My reputation to injury to be near you, if you will follow Me. That’s incredible. No one wants to be near him, including Jesus’ early disciples.

Now think about this, okay? So far we’re only aware from the accounts that He’s called four, Peter, Andrew, James and John. We looked at them last week. Peter, Andrew, James and John were professional fishermen under the jurisdiction of Matthew, the tax collector. In other words, Matthew had cheated these four men. So can you imagine Peter? I mean, Peter’s so impetuous. He has no filter whatsoever. Like, “Him? You’re calling him to be with us?” Jesus said, “Hey, welcome to our small group.” They’re like, “No! Not him! This is our small group. This is us, people like us.” Jesus said, “Well, I’ve invited him to our small group.”

It says here that Matthew rose and followed Him. Suddenly Jesus is at Matthew’s home. Now Matthew’s account doesn’t give us that detail, but Luke and Mark, they do. They said actually, he threw a party. He said, “Hey, I’m following Jesus now. I want to invite the few friends that I have”, who happened to be other tax collectors and sinners, “over for a meal.” Within moments, the house resembled like a nightclub in Las Vegas. It says with many tax collectors and sinners.

Now, The Bible says that all of us have sinned and fallen short of the glory of God. So if I would say to us, “Hey, all of us are sinners”, that would be truth. Yet, that’s not quite what it means when he says tax collectors and sinners. When it says sinners in this context, it’s a category of people. What that means is their behavior is such that they are categorized by their sin. That’s all people know about them. “Oh, that’s the prostitute, that’s the pervert, that’s the thief, that’s the abuser, that’s the dealer.” That’s all they knew. That’s my identity in culture.

It’s interesting that tax collectors much have been such bad people, that the sinners wanted their own category. “No, we’re not tax collectors, know that.” So every time you see them, there’s tax collectors and sinners. They’re never grouped together. Yet, for whatever reason, because they were ostracized from all of society, they were like, “Well, at least we’ve got you. You’re human, so we can hang out together.”

These were likely Matthew's only friends. I want you to think about this. Jesus, in His holy perfection, sat so comfortably in the middle of Matthew's friend network, that they were comfortable being around Him. It's a great question for us to ask. Would these kinds of people sit comfortably in your living room, in my living room? Because we are so at ease with our identity in Christ, so certain of who we are in Jesus Christ that we're able to be comfortable and love people who are so different from us. What love that Jesus would come and seek and save the lost, people just like you and me.

You say, "Well, that's not me. I'm nothing like that." Well, there's another point. Here's the second point. It's going to capture all the rest of us, and that's Jesus calls the moral and religious to follow Him. Now you fit somewhere between that scale. Somewhere, you're in there. It says in verse 11, that the Pharisees, that they're watching, they're following.

Let me back up. Always have to understand where the Pharisees are. These are like self-appointed religious police. They're self-appointed. God didn't appoint them, they appointed themselves. They are religious police. What that means is that they come to church. Instead of singing, they'd evaluate the song. Instead of listening to the sermon, they'd evaluate the sermon to see if it's Orthodox, to see if the doctrine is accurate. If it was compared to airplanes, it would be the inspector of the airplane that weighs it, that measures it, but never flies, never goes up in to the air. Lots of religious activity, but no spiritual life whatsoever, and yet self-appointed.

These are the kind of people that drive home, and instead of asking their husband or wife or their kids,, "Hey, this is what the Lord taught me, what did He tell you?" We ask the question, "What did you like and what didn't you like?" The Pharisees were self-appointed religious police. They start looking at what they see going on in this house and like, "What kind of house party is this?" Somebody take a photo and stick it on Instagram. People need to know. They hate Jesus by now. They don't love Him. They don't want to worship Him. Here they are, He's exposing Himself, who's supposed to be so holy and moral, and He's exposing Himself to people who their law would say this is going to make you unclean. Just being around these people. So they're absolutely confused, so they look over at Jesus's initial disciples, and they say, "We've got to ask. Why does your teacher, why does Jesus eat with these tax collectors and sinners?"

Now, from what we know from the story, we're not certain about this, but the Pharisees wouldn't have been in the house, because they would consider being in the house as jeopardizing their cleanliness morally. So they're outside the house. So Jesus ... This is amazing to me. He's so personally and emotionally engaged in the house and at the same time is absolutely, consciously aware and present emotionally in the conversations happening outside the house with His disciples and some of the Pharisees.

So without giving context to what they're talking about outside, He blurts out inside among the tax collectors and the sinners, He says, "Those who are well have no need for a doctor, but those who are sick." Now you and I, we read this 2,000 years later and we think, "Isn't it great that Jesus is a friend of sinners? He's a doctor." But what if you were Matthew? What if you were Matthew's friends? He just blurts out, "You know who really needs a doctor? These people. These people need a doctor right here."

What's interesting, if you look at ... Matthew could have colored it any way that he wanted to to make him look better in the story. He could've said, "You know, and we argued, 'Hey, wait a minute, You're saying that we're sick!'" There's none of that. On the basis of the silence, on their part, it implies that the sinners and tax collectors heard Jesus's diagnosis silently agreed and kept chewing on their sandwich. "Yeah, we are kind of messed up. I'm really glad I'm in the house next to the doctor as opposed to outside of the house."

Suddenly, Jesus just continues. This is not a dialogue. He's not even talking to them personally, saying, "Hey, go tell them this." Then He says to somebody, one of these disciples, He says, "Hey, go and learn what this means." Now these are professional learners. That's what they do for a living is they learn and they evaluate other people to see if they know what they've learned. He picks a verse from Hosea 6:6, and He uses half of it, He quotes half of it. The whole verse says this, "For I desire mercy and not sacrifice, the knowledge of God, rather than burnt offerings." What Jesus is saying here is this. He's saying, "Pharisees, you don't understand what God wants."

Oh, He put a whole sacrificial system together in order to prepare people to have a symbol of what was coming. I'm the Lamb of God. You think that you can just to go through through all your rituals and all your sacrifices. You come to church every Sunday, and this is just what you do. You just keep doing it, and keep doing it. Yet, you don't have a relationship with Me. Not only do you not have any relationship with Me, is it shows itself. This is how it shows itself, you don't give anybody any mercy. Because mercy is something that flows out of somebody who has only received mercy, and you don't think you need any mercy. You're self-justified. You think you're self-righteous. You don't think you need any mercy, so you give no mercy.

What a thing to say! Then all of a sudden He just wraps it all up. He's ties a bow and He says, "Oh, and by the way, I came not to call the righteous, but sinners." Now Jesus left absolutely no doubt about He's talking about. Let me get to Luke 15. In Luke 15, we actually find a mirror of this very encounter. Jesus is walking down the street, and there's a bunch of tax collectors and sinners that begin to gather around Him, because He's hospitable to them. They're comfortable around Him, once again.

Sure enough, there's the police, the Pharisees are over off to the side, the Pharisees and the scribes, and they're looking. They actually say, "I cannot believe that Jesus continues to interact with these sinful people, with these immoral people, with these irreligious people. Jesus looks and he recognizes that these people are very, very sinful. That's why they're still called tax collectors and sinners. They've not repented, they've not left their life that is deplorable. They've not. They've not been forgiven yet. Yet, they're close to Jesus.

These people, they're still far from Jesus and yet they're so good, and so moral, and so religious. So Jesus says, "I'll tell you what, you're probably not going to receive any direct instruction right now, because you're too proud. So let me tell you some stories." I was like, "Ooh, pop some popcorn. We love stories, okay." He tells two stories first, then He says, "All right." In the first two stories, somebody has something that's lost. They look for it, they find it and have a party. Then we get to the third story.

The third story, what Jesus does is just what's absolute skill is He interjects both of these groups of people in real life into His story in order to make a spiritual point. This was the story. He said one day, there was a man who had two sons, a younger son and an older son. The younger son came to the father. This is a paraphrase. He said, "Dad, you're not dead. I wish you were, but you're not. So let's just act like you are. Give me my inheritance so that I can leave." The father says, "Okay." He takes all these resources, and he goes out and recklessly squanders everything in sinful living.

Suddenly, when all the money's gone, he's at the end of his rope, he's like, "What do I do? He goes, I know what I'll do. I'll go home. First, I need to prepare my speech, my 'I am so foolish speech'. So then he walks home. The father sees him from a distance. It says the father runs out to him and the son begins his speech. He's like, "All right, Dad, hold on, I practiced this." He said, "No, shh." He hugs him and he embraces him. He has compassion for him. The father comes and he says, "Listen, I have a robe for you. I have a ring. I have some sandals to minimize your shame coming home. I don't want you to have to walk back through all of the people in the house looking like this. So I'm going to protect you, I'm going to provide for you. I'm going to minimize the shame in coming home."

The he plans a party. They're having a great party. Well, there's another son, an older son. He's out in the field, he's working all day. He comes home and he hears music. He's like, "Wait a minute, there's party. Must be for me!" He comes in and he finds out that it's for his little disgusting brother who's come home after squandering everything. He's like, "Wait a minute, is he going to take more now?" He won't come into the party.

Now don't forget, Jesus is saying this because there's some people who were deplorable, and wicked, and sinful, and they were near Jesus. And you have other people who are religious and moral, and they're really far from Jesus, and they won't come to the party. So Jesus, He looks and He says, "Okay, so the father," and then He keeps speaking.

He says the father goes out and he begs with the older son. He said, "Son, everything I have is yours, but listen to me. You've got to come in. Your brother, he's come home. We have to celebrate because we love him." The story ends without us knowing if the older brother ever came home. Why did he leave it like this? It's because he was providing a window into this current reality to where there are sinful people just like the younger brother who are all surrounding Jesus. Yet, there's the older brother that's represented in the Pharisees and the scribes, and they're far from God.



This is His point. He's saying some people are a long way away, some people stay close to the house, but all people are far from God. All people need forgiveness, all people need mercy. It doesn't matter if you are addicted to a drug, or if you're addicted to self-righteousness. You are a sinner. This is what He's saying. So He's placing all of us into the category of one of two sons. Every single one of us have lived all of our days as one of these two sons, or a mixture of both.

It may be that you've had certain seasons where like, "This season, man, I was just like wild in the world." And super holy, super religious, and yet we can both be far from God. You know what's interesting to me is that I look at my life, and as I look back, truth be told, I've had days in both. But I've had far more days being far from God near His house than far from God being out in reckless, wild sin.

There may be a benefit in being the older son only when it comes to social consequence of our behavior. But I want you to know when it comes to spiritual need, being the older brother is by far the most risky. This is why, the irreligious and the immoral, they know they're far from God. Other people know they're far from God, so they can be praying for them. There's a tremendous amount of self-examination when they get to the end of the day and say, "Man, I can't believe I'm still doing this."

They know they're far from God, but the religious moral lost person in the older brother, three things about them. First is they can more easily mistake religious activity for spiritual life. They can know the language, and they can show up on time, and they can be here. They can look the part in every way, and yet they're dead men walking. Religious, and yet not born again. Giving all the burnt offerings and sacrifices, and yet giving no mercy, because they've never received it.

The second thing is that those who are religious and moral, the second thing is they can more easily deceive other Christians. Other people who've been rescued and have been added to the rescue team are no long praying for this person, because well that person doesn't need prayer. Look at them! They're doing great! Did you know that not a single one of you have ever shared The Gospel with me? Have you ever thought about that? You think, "Yeah, I never have. I never told him." Why? It's because most likely, you don't think I need to hear it. Why? "Well, you're already rescued. Let's tell it to other people." This is my point. People who are religious and moral and yet still lost go under the radar of the rescue team.

Then there's the third risk, and that is that the religious, moral lost person can more easily condemn others and escape self-examination. In other words, they're always looking, "Hey, there's a sinner, and there's a sinner, and there's a sinner." So they escape saying, "Wait a minute, am I sinner? Am I going to be going to heaven?" We listen to sermons like this and we think, "Boy, this person needs to hear this", instead of "I need to hear this. I need to hear this!"

Oh Providence, we dare not be content within our life of having right beliefs and right behaviors only. Matthew 23:27, Jesus said, “Woe to you Pharisees, for you’re like whitewashed tombs which outwardly appear beautiful, but within are full of dead people’s bones and all uncleanness.” They were right in their thinking and right in their behavior in so much of it. Yet, they were so far from God. You see, if we do not draw near to Jesus Christ for mercy for our sin, we will find ourself outside the room that Jesus inhabits, even if we stay close to the house.

So three applications for us. One of them is sure to be pertinent to your life. The first is this, is let’s take our next step towards following Jesus. Who can take this step? The answer is anyone who hears Jesus calling can take this step. Anyone! There’s really different places. You start, and it may be just your first step. What is your first step? This may be the very first time you’ve ever even heard a sermon, first time you ever heard The Bible read. You didn’t even know Matthew was a book of The Bible. That’s okay. Your next step may be just coming back. Come back one more time.

You see, I’m going to give you just a little bit of hope. Being a sinner does not disqualify you from following. In fact, you kind of need to be one to do it. Okay, that’s the only people who follow Him are people who recognize, “I have a need.” What I’d say next may make some people uncomfortable, but the fact is that Jesus doesn’t even require a belief in Him to take an initial step toward Him. When you hear Him calling saying, “Hey, why don’t you read a gospel?” You can start reading the gospel of Luke or Matthew, and just say, “God, I don’t know if I believe this yet.” Yet, that’s a step towards Jesus Christ. He’s okay with that. He’s okay with you saying, “God, I’m exploring. I’m looking. I want to know if You’re there and if You’re real, and if You’re my Creator, and if all this is true.”

You see, Jesus stood on this earth, and He claimed to be your doctor. Friends, you know you’re broken. You know you’re sick. You don’t even keep your own rules. Neither do I. One of the ways we know we’re sick is we’re all going to die. We all get that, right? We are all going to die. That’s a problem we all face, every single one of us. Yet there is a doctor for all these things. Jesus comes and He goes, “These are my claims.” So I encourage you to examine those claims. Look at your heart.

On the other extreme, if someone maybe who has been a Christian for a long, long time. They’re absolutely believing in Jesus Christ for the forgiveness of their sin, they’re walking with Him, yet you know there’s something He wants you to do, and you still haven’t done it. It’s just an act of obedience. He wants you to be generous in a certain kind of way. He wants you to serve in a certain kind of way. You know it’s there, it’s always there, it’s like there’s that thing that’s there. Listen, this is the day you can do that. You can take that step of faith.

In between those two, there's this step. It's called surrender. Some people here may be ready for that. You're not a Christian, but you know you need to be. You know you want to be. You want to follow Jesus with your life, you want to trust Him. This is the second application, is let's repent and believe in Jesus. You see, friends, just real quick, all of our eyes, we tend to build walls between moral and immoral people. What you see here in this picture is the reality of all of humanity. There is one doctor and all the rest of us, no matter how religious or irreligious, immoral or moral we are. We all need that doctor. You and I are the ones that build walls and say, "You're on that side, and I'm on this side." Jesus says, "No, you're all on that side, and I'm on this side. I'm coming over the wall in order to rescue you. I'm coming to you, because I'm the doctor."

It's so consequential what He's done, because He rose from the dead. We're all going to die. This is why His historical resurrection is so consequential to all of us is because there was a person in time and space that conquered death. That's our greatest problem, that's our greatest sickness. Do you see how consequential He is? What He did can actually apply to you! It can accrue to you. Jesus stood on this earth and He said, "Not everyone who says to Me, 'Lord, Lord' will enter the Kingdom of heaven, but only He who does the will of My Father who is in heaven."

I can scarcely find a more sobering verse in the entire New Testament, because what it says is there are people who think that they will go to heaven when they die, and to their everlasting dismay, the door will closed to them, because they did not do the Father's will. You say, "Well, what is the Father's will?" Jesus made it so crystal clear in John 6:40. This is what He says, "This is the will of God, that everyone who sees the Son and believes in Him should have eternal life." That's His will.

No matter how immoral or immoral you are or have been, Jesus is ready to receive you. I beg you, do not let rebellion or religion blind you. If you will repent of your belief that you can earn salvation, and you'll believe in Jesus Christ, He will forgive you of all of your sin. Friends, He will make you well. I believe I would be amiss if I just kept going.

There is one more application, but I want to give you an opportunity. If you're here today, and you say, "I am at that place. I want to trust Christ", I want to help you right now. So if you've already done that, I want to ask you to bow your head and pray for those in the room who may be contemplating following Jesus Christ as Lord and Savior for the first time. But if you want to trust Jesus Christ, it's a simple prayer. It's a confession to Him. You can pray something like this.

Father in Heaven, I believe in Your Son. I believe that I am a sinner. I believe that I've done things that have violated Your will and Your word. I know I cannot save myself. But I believe in Jesus Christ. I believe He is Your Son, and I believe He lived a righteous life. I believe He died on a cross. I believe He conquered the grave when He rose from the dead. I confess Jesus as Lord of my life. I want to follow Jesus today. Would you forgive me of all of my sin? We pray this in Jesus' name. Amen.

Friends, I want you to know that if you just prayed to receive Christ, you have been forgiven of all of your sin. There's so many reasons to be grateful to God. None more so than He can take away our sin. One more application, then we're going to take the Lord's Supper. It's for those of us who've already trusted Christ or who just did. It's let's follow Jesus by loving other sinners.

You see, Providence, we are following a doctor who helps spiritually sick people. When we started following Jesus, He healed us. If we keep following Jesus, that path is going to keep putting us in the presence of other sick people. You know you've stopped following Jesus when there's nobody sick around you, spiritually sick. When there's no needs around you, it means you've isolated yourself, even from following Jesus. Because if we're following Jesus down a path and He says that He is here to seek and save the lost, His path is leading to Matthew's dinner table. This is where He's going.

So if we're following Him, this is where we're going as well. All around the world, if we keep following. He goes to sick people in other countries. We will go to other countries if we are following. He goes to sick people in our neighborhood, and we will go to those people if we are following. One of the greatest ways for us to do this that just disarms people is around the table. This is what Matthew did. He's got a table. "Jesus, hey, I want to introduce my friends to you. All right, why don't you come over for a meal?" Suddenly, here they are. Something about a table that disarms people.

You can tell people the most significant thing that's ever happened in your life. Even if they disagree, they go, "Well, at least it's a good hamburger. At least it's good food." There's something about the table that does this, where we can introduce people to Jesus. So let me just encourage you, keep following Jesus to the extent that it places you in the presence of people who need Jesus.

That brings us to the Lord's Supper. Isn't it beautiful that Jesus remind us of the power of the table by giving us a table? Our Lord's Supper, to remember what He did and to help proclaim it. So those in the room who will be serving, if you want to go ahead and head back to the corner, if you would get those elements for us. There's bread and there's a cup, symbolic of His body and His blood. Jesus says that whereas every single person who actually hears Jesus calling them can take a step of faith towards Jesus, one of the things He tells us in The Bible is that only those who have trusted Him for salvation should take these elements.

The reason is because these elements, the bread and the cup, these are symbols, not the substance. The substance is genuine faith in Jesus Christ. So He can tell us, "Don't do this. Don't take the symbol." Because to take the symbol is to say, "It's true of me, that I am trusting in Jesus Christ for God's forgiveness." So if you're never done that, we encourage you just to let it pass. But if you have trusted Christ, we welcome you to the table. So let's pray together.

Father in heaven, as we take this time, I pray that You would examine our hearts. Help us to confess any sin to You, and to be reminded of Your promise that when we do confess our sin that you are faithful and just to forgive us of all of our sin, and cleanse us from unrighteousness. We thank You Father, that You came to people like Matthew, and You engaged people like the Pharisees, that this table is for all of us. No matter our past or history, or our present, that we can come to You in faith. So we thank you Jesus for what you've made available. Use this time to build our faith. We pray in Christ's name. Amen.



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