

Follow Me  
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As Jesus went on from there, he saw a man named Matthew sitting at the tax collector's booth. "Follow me," he told him, and Matthew got up and followed him.  
Matthew 9:9

Two simple words changed Matthew's life forever: "Follow Me."

Matthew was not the kind of person most people expected Jesus to choose. He was a tax collector—a man viewed by his neighbors as dishonest, greedy, and a collaborator with the Roman occupiers. If anyone seemed outside the circle of God's people, it was Matthew.

Yet Jesus walked right up to him, looked him in the eye, and said, "Follow Me." Notice what Jesus did not say. He did not say, "Clean up your life first." He did not say, "Prove yourself worthy." He simply said, "Follow Me."

This is the way of God's grace. Jesus calls sinners, not because they have made themselves righteous, but because He has come to make them righteous. Matthew's new life did not begin with his decision. It began with Jesus' invitation.

The Pharisees could not understand this. When they saw Jesus eating with tax collectors and sinners, they complained. Surely a holy teacher should stay away from such people! But Jesus answered them, "Those who are well have no need of a physician, but those who are sick. For I came not to call the righteous, but sinners."  
(Matthew 9:12)

What wonderful news! Jesus is not looking for people who have everything together. He comes for those who know they need help. He comes for the guilty, the broken, the ashamed, and the weary. That means He comes for you and me.

Like Matthew, we have sinned in thought, word, and deed. We have often followed our own desires rather than God's will. Yet Jesus still comes to us through His Word and says, "Follow Me." He calls us through the Gospel. He forgives us through His cross. He washes us in Holy Baptism. He feeds us with His body and blood. And day by day, He leads us as His disciples.

The Christian life is not first about our commitment to Jesus; it is about Jesus' commitment to us. The same Lord who called Matthew has called us by name. The same Savior who welcomed sinners still welcomes sinners today. And because He has shown us such mercy, by the power of the Holy Spirit, we gladly rise and follow Him!