

I. Intro

II. Intro Video

III. Welcome

IV. WE

- A. Ever felt judged?
 - 1. Feels good right?

- B. Ever been judged by a church or religious person?
 - 1. Heard some real horror stories. Families/friends/kids/parents
 - 2. Even if you've never stepped foot in a church there's a good chance you've felt judged by a religious person.
 - 3. I'm a pastor and I've experienced it.
 - 4. People who look down on you b/c they belong to the "good ones" and you just don't measure up... don't look, act, talk like they think you're supposed to.

- C. One of the main reasons people give up on church or never try it in the first place..

D. The same things people reject about church... Jesus also rejected.

- 1. Especially judgmentalism

- E. Jesus himself said... "Do not judge so that you will not be judged (Matt 7:1)

- F. So why is there this disconnect?
 - 1. Why are the people who claim to know Jesus the best the people who are best at judging other people?
 - 2. Religion Jesus V. Religion Graphic?
 - 3. Religion makes people judgmental**

V. GOD Matthew 9:9-13

- A. Background- Around 60 AD, Matthew... section is an autobiography "this is what happened to me, how I met Jesus."

- B. Jesus is starting to have some run-ins with the religious leaders.
 - 1. Forgiving sins
 - 2. Accepting people like Simon.
 - 3. Healing the "untouchables" of society; lepers no-one wanted to get close to
 - 4. Healing the servant of the traitorous occupying Roman forces

- C. **V. 9a** As Jesus was walking along, he saw a man named Matthew sitting at his tax collector's booth.
 - 1. No big deal to us... first century readers knew something was about to go down.

 - 2. Tax collectors**
 - a. Jews who collected taxes from their own people on behalf of their Roman oppressors.
 - b. Used the force of Rome to get rich off of their own people by charging extra
 - c. HATED. Weren't allowed in synagogues or participate in the religion at all.

- d. Separated from their people, their heritage, and their God because they, themselves, had chosen to be traitors to their own people
 3. So Jesus sees this traitor and everyone there and everyone first reading this is thinking... all right; this is it! Jesus is going to let him have it and tell him to repent and stop his evil ways...
- D. V. 9b. "Follow me and be my disciple," Jesus said to him. So Matthew got up and followed him.**
1. WHAT!? - This traitor is being called to be one of Jesus' main guys?
 2. What had he done to earn it? Nothing.
 - a. Pay attention to what Jesus DIDN'T say here... Jesus didn't say clean up, repent, and then you can try this out. Didn't make Matthew swear to switch allegiances first; didn't air the many (legitimate) grievances the people had against him or make him promise to give back all the extra money he took to make things right
 - b. Notice this, too- Matthew hadn't even offered to DO or CHANGE anything at all... he was just working his day job.
 - c. Instead, Jesus pursued him... because...
- 3. Jesus accepts the people most people reject.**
4. Look at the **motley crew** Jesus is creating...
 - a. Simon Peter- normal Jewish guy ready to fight Romans.
 - b. Simon the Zealot- Freedom fighter
 - c. Matthew- traitor with the Romans and tax collector FOR them.
 - d. You think political differences are a bit awkward right now? **Rallies and MAGA hats or something?**
 5. Story gets better... or worse depending on how you feel about religion.
- E. V. 10 Later, Matthew invited Jesus and his disciples to his home as dinner guests, along with many tax collectors (now there's more of them!) and other disreputable sinners (Jews who for whatever reason weren't allowed to be part of the normal religious life... religious outcasts... people "obviously" far from God; "bad people")**
1. Makes a statement- Sharing a meal with someone showed that you accepted them, you identified with them. "These are my people."
 2. **Jesus identifies with people that many people would never want to be seen with.**
 3. The other disciples might be a little uncomfortable but if Jesus is good with it they are too. - **My motto**
 4. Everyone is having a good time until... those annoying goody-goody religious people show up.
- F. V. 11 When the Pharisees... saw this (busted)..., they asked the disciples (didn't have the guts to ask Jesus himself),... "Why does your teacher eat with such scum?" (never goes well well you dehumanize someone you disagree with).**
1. Not too subtle huh?
 2. **Pharisees... Picture?** religious of the religious... ultimate rule followers... even added rules to the originals just to make sure they didn't break the originals. Obviously they were the ones close to God. The more rules you kept, the better your social and heavenly score... so let's make some more rules!
 3. So if a teacher like Jesus was going to be with anyone it should be them.
 4. They can't believe it and are getting angry....

5. Why? **Religious people use religion to try and earn God's approval.**
6. When they see people who aren't trying as hard as them being accepted and treated with honor it makes them angry b/c they think it's unfair!
7. They did the religious stuff so they should be rewarded.
8. Makes them bitter... if they have to do this everyone else should too
9. Ever meet a bitter and angry religious person? (**Angela/ Rev. Lovejoy**)
10. That's why.
11. Next part... one of my favorites...
12. That time you were judged... You wish you had had a comeback? Jesus has you covered...

G. **V. 12-13a** **When Jesus heard this [now you're gonna get it],... he said, "Healthy people don't need a doctor- sick people do." Then he added, "Now go and learn the meaning of this scripture...**

1. **Go and learn-** Incredibly insulting.
2. What a teacher would say to a young student.
3. These men who prided themselves on their knowledge of the Jewish scriptures are being treated like ignorant school kids
4. Quotes one of the Jewish prophets to them... a passage they had memorized. They already "knew" it, in their minds, at least.

H. **V. 13a** **"Now go and learn the meaning of this Scripture: 'I want you to show mercy, not offer sacrifices.'**

1. Their own scriptures that they clung to, they thought made them this holy, set apart group actually told them... God doesn't care about how religious you are or the sacrifices you make to convince yourself and others that you are special to God.
2. God cares about how you treat the people he made.
3. Are you merciful- empathizing, helping, forgiving, loving, accepting?
4. They weren't. They were actually doing the very opposite! They condemned the people Jesus loved and they were also condemning Him!

I. **V. 13b** **"For I have come to call not those who think they are righteous, but those who know they are sinners."**

1. Two types of people... those who admit they are sinners and liars.... Hold on, give me a second.
2. You're safe... I can't even see you.

J. **Sin-** breaking the law of love. What **I** want is more important than **you**.

1. Not a mistake... don't make mistakes on purpose.
2. Two options (whether we call it sin or something else)- 1. Admit it or 2. Compare yourself to others to feel better.
3. "Yeah sure I've done some stuff... but I'm not as bad as THEM."
4. That's what religion (maybe you don't call it that) [basing your worth on good deeds] tricks you into thinking... there's a **scale** and those with a better score are winning and better than those who have a lower score.
5. Reality is we're all so far behind that we'll never get a positive score on our own...
6. 1 lie or judgmental thought a day... nothing takes away those marks, they're still there. That hurtful thought still lingers, that thing you did or said still hurt someone else, didn't it?

K. Listen... **God hates sin**... kills/destroys/separates. **But he loves you.**

1. Jesus ate with the "sinners" wasn't condoning the hurt they caused... he was loving them.
2. Jesus came to fix all of that and heal and restore us.

3. Sin like cancer has to be removed/ destroyed.
4. To destroy sin he'd have to destroy the source... us.
5. So to destroy sin without destroying us...
6. Jesus came... satisfied true Justice for all the evil/sin ever committed by taking the punishment for it.
7. Like a judge paying your fine for you. You hoped to have your fine decreased a bit for good behavior, but instead, it was totally paid off!
8. Rose from the dead, showing that he actually has the authority to end sin and its ultimate outcome death.

L. Jesus came for those who know they are sinners.

1. **Jesus didn't come to judge. He came to restore.**
2. It wasn't just to get people to sin less Or do more good things... that's religion.
3. He came to provide what every sinner (not mistaker) actually needs... forgiveness and restoration.
4. Forgiven and restored the moment we admit we are sinners and trust his payment to pay our fine.
5. And then the transformation begins-
6. True, lasting, powerful change can only begin when we allow JEsus to transform our thinking and how we love.
7. He calls us to follow him and when we do we are transformed to be able to love through him
8. What changed Matthew from a hated tax collector to a trusted member of Jesus' inner circle and biographer of his life.

VI. YOU

A. JF- Back-up a bit

1. How comfortable are you with the fact that Jesus accepted and chose Matthew without ever pointing out his sin or telling him to change his lifestyle first?
2. **You can't earn God's love by being religious.**
3. But you can accept his love and his invitation to follow him.
4. **You were never called to follow a religion. You were called to follow Jesus.**
5. You haven't earned God's love by being religious. You have always been loved and were forgiven b/c not b/c of you but b/c of Jesus.
6. Now you are free to forgive and love the way you were forgiven and loved.
7. That's what changes a nation, community, person.
8. He desires mercy not sacrifice.

B. Not JF- Have you been judged by a religious person or organization?

1. **If you've ever felt judged by a Christian... they weren't following Jesus. They were following religion.**
2. Have you judged yourself and thought that there is too much in your past, current choices that would make God reject you?
3. You are not rejected. You are the person Jesus specifically came for.
4. Lean in and explore... Find out who Jesus was, what he said, believed, and did.
5. Read a Gospel. Matthew Eye-witness
6. Discover and accept... let us know.

VII. WE

- A. Life offered... no judgment, free to be you, unending love, forgiveness, acceptance.
- B. Freedom from having to compare yourself and trying to measure up.
- C. Not a dead life of judgment but a growing life of loving others.

D. Jesus doesn't invite us to accept a religion. He invites us to accept each other as we follow him (into something greater) together.