Introduction

There is a common misconception that the church is a gathering place for saintly, perfect people. Moreover, some think that being a Christian means observing a set of rules or commandments. The reality is that the Christian life is about a relationship with Jesus Christ. And at the heart of that relationship is an invitation that Jesus extends to people from all experiences of life: "Follow me."

Discussion Questions

1. *Read Matthew 9:9-13*. What did the general public think of tax collectors like Matthew?
2. How have certain experiences in your life prevented you from developing relationships with other people? Can you imagine anything that might disqualify you from having a relationship with God?
3. In this passage, Jesus seems to be comfortable in the company of tax collectors and sinners, while the Pharisees express considerable outrage. What standards did Jesus have for choosing his relationships?
4. What does it mean to be "healthy" and "sick" as described in verse 12? Would you describe yourself as healthy or sick?
5. How does following Jesus make you less critical and more gracious towards others?
6. Are you willing to follow Jesus? What does it look like to follow Jesus in your life?

Moving Forward

Jesus extends his invitation to people who know something's wrong but aren't sure what to do about it. He invites people who know they are not all they ought to be. He didn't ask Matthew to clean up his act before following him, and Jesus doesn't ask that of us. In time, within the context of his relationship with Jesus, Matthew experienced incredible life transformation. But Jesus' initial request and his request from there on out is simply, "Follow me." Will you follow Jesus Christ?

Begin tomorrow morning with this prayer, "Lord, today I want to follow you."

Changing Your Mind

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