

**HEROES**

**OF THE**

**FAITH**

Ordinary Men and Women . . .  
Super Ordinary Power

**34**

# **MATTHEW THE TAX COLLECTOR FOLLOWS JESUS**

**HEROES OF THE FAITH CURRICULUM—2012**

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# 34

## **MATTHEW THE TAX COLLECTOR FOLLOWS JESUS**

### **Memory Verse:**

Seek first God's kingdom and what God wants. Then all your other needs will be met as well. (Matthew 6:33 NCV)

### **Lesson Goals:**

- #1 - Understand how ordinary Matthew was
- #2 - Discover what obedience led Matthew to do
- #3 - Desire to let God do extraordinary things in the life of the ordinary student

### **Audience:**

Young, un-churched learners

Adaptable for all ages, including adults (See **For more training** on Activities page)

### **Scripture to Study:**

Matthew 9:9-13, 10:1-15

Mark 2:13-17, 3:13-19

Luke 5:27-32, 6:12-19



# 34

## **MATTHEW THE TAX COLLECTOR FOLLOWS JESUS**

Matthew 9:9-13

Who can tell me what a hero is? A hero is someone who is courageous and brave and compassionate. There are heroes and heroines in the Bible. All of them are brave and courageous and more, but not in the way you would expect.

**Our hero:** Matthew

**His Heroic Feat:** Sees His Need for God

Seeing your need for God may not sound very heroic, but let's look at the facts and see what you think when you have heard the whole story!

In our last couple of lessons we talked about the men Jesus chose to follow Him. He chose Andrew and Peter. Then one day, when Jesus was at the Sea of Galilee again, He saw a man sitting at the tax collector's booth. The man's name was Matthew. Jesus spoke to Matthew as he had to Andrew and Peter. He said, "Follow Me!" Matthew stood up from his tax collector's booth, left everything, and followed Jesus.

What would cause someone with a secure job to get up and leave it? Who knows what Matthew had seen as Jesus walked along the shores of the Sea of Galilee! Whatever it was it had been enough to make Matthew turn his back on the only job he had, a contract he held with the Roman government to collect taxes. Maybe it had something to do with the fact that people often group tax collectors with the worst kinds of sinners. Matthew wasn't doing anything illegal, but he was a sinner and sinners don't please God. Matthew was offered something amazing . . . to walk and talk and learn from Jesus. Matthew saw his need for God and left everything.

Then, Matthew gave a big dinner at his home. He gave the dinner for Jesus and he invited people that he knew needed to hear about Jesus. What kind of people would Matthew have known? There were many other tax collectors there along with other "sinners."

The Pharisees, or religious leaders, saw what Jesus was doing. They couldn't believe He would eat with sinners! They questioned the disciples and Jesus overheard them. He said, "It is not the healthy people who need a doctor, but the sick. . . . I didn't come to invite good people, but to invite sinners." (Matthew 9:12, 13b NCV) So, if you're good, Jesus won't invite you? What does that mean? You see, Jesus understood completely what was going on. Jesus understood that the Pharisees had their own rules for right and wrong. He also knew that they did the right things for people to see. They couldn't see their need for Jesus, even though they were sick with sin on the inside. Matthew, and many of his friends, knew they needed Jesus and they followed Him.

Matthew continued following Jesus. He walked and talked and learn from Jesus for three years. Matthew was with the disciples when Jesus died and when he returned to heaven. Matthew stayed with the twelve, praying, until the day of Pentecost when God sent the Holy Spirit.

We don't know much more about Matthew, but we do know that Matthew wrote the first book of the New Testament and that it is named for him. Matthew left us a faithful account of Jesus' life, from the genealogy (list of His ancestors) to the Great Commission. There is a theme that runs through Matthew's account of Jesus' life. Over and over again Matthew recorded Jesus talking about the "kingdom of heaven" or "God's kingdom." In fact, it is mentioned almost 40 times in the book of Matthew! Our memory verse talks about God's kingdom. "Seek first God's kingdom and what God wants. Then all your other needs will be met as well." (Matthew 6:33 NCV) Are you seeking God's kingdom? Maybe you're not sure what that means. It means to want God's way in your life, to let Him be in the lead. It's easy to do when you realize that God only wants what is best for you and me. He offers us a wonderful life and gives us a way to be free from sin. Will you seek Him today?



**YOU CAN BE A HERO, TOO!**

When you live a life of faith in Jesus Christ, you don't have to leap tall buildings to be a hero. Matthew saw his need for God. Have you seen your need for God?

Our memory verse says, "Seek first God's kingdom and what God wants. Then all your other needs will be met as well." (Matthew 6:33 NCV) Matthew knew that he needed Jesus in His life. He left everything to follow. Have you realized, yet, that you need Jesus in your life? You, like Matthew, are a sinner. The penalty for that sin is death, but God is offering you life. Are you willing to surrender the control you have over your own life and let Him be Lord of your life? Let's talk.

# PRE-SCHOOL!

## LESSON

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Then, Matthew gave a big dinner at his home. He gave the dinner for Jesus and he invited people that he knew needed to hear about Jesus. There were many other tax collectors there along with other "sinners."

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What does that mean? You see, Jesus understood completely what was going on. Jesus understood that the Pharisees had their own rules for right and wrong. He also knew that they did things to make people think they were good. They couldn't see their need for Jesus, even though they were sick with sin on the inside. Matthew, and many of his friends, knew they needed Jesus and they followed Him.

Do you know that you need God? Matthew did and then He decided to follow.

# ACTIVITIES!

- Memory Verse Activity - Have a scavenger hunt in your Bible study area. Before-hand, write short phrases of the memory verse on index cards. Then, plan where you will hide the index cards, and write out appropriate directions on the back of each index card, giving your students clues as to where they will find the next part of the verse. Before Bible Study, hide the index cards in the places you have chosen. When ready for the Memory Verse Scavenger Hunt, give clues to the first phrase. Be sure to practice the verse, beginning with the first phrase, adding a phrase each time the next one is found.
- Continue adding heroes' names and heroic feats to your "Heroes Banner."
- Sing "I Have Decided to Follow Jesus," "Seek Ye First," "I Will," "Wherever He Leads I'll Go," or other praise songs related to the lesson.
- Listen to Casting Crown's "Jesus, Friend Of Sinners," or Matthew West's "The Motions."
- Bring chocolate coins for snack. Talk about Matthew's job as a tax collector. Talk about Matthew leaving everything to follow Jesus.
- Make doctor's bags from a large sheet of construction paper, folded in half. Cut out a handle across the open end. Discuss Matthew 9:12-13.
- **For more training:** Encourage your students to read the book of Matthew this week.
- **For more training:** Look up the following passages about the kingdom of heaven and discuss what you learn. (Matthew 5:3, 20; Matthew 7:21-29; Matthew 13:24-30 (36-43), 31-32, 33-34, 44-46, 47-50; Matthew 18:1-4, 23-35, Matthew 20:1-16; Matthew 22:1-14; Matthew 25:1-13, 14-30)

Seek first  
God's kingdom and  
what God wants.

Then  
all your other needs  
will be met as well.

Matthew 6:33

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# ***HERO IN TRAINING***

Matthew the Tax Collector Follows Jesus

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# HERO TRAINING!

**Scripture:** Matthew 9:9-13

**Memory verse:**

Seek first God's kingdom and what God wants. Then all your other needs will be met as well. (Matthew 6:33 NCV)

**Our Hero:** \_\_\_\_\_

What did our hero do that was so heroic? \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

What can you do to be a **Hero of the Faith**? \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_



What power do Heroes of the Faith possess? \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

Do you have the power? \_\_\_\_\_

Read Matthew 9:9-13. Are you more like Matthew or the Pharisees?

What can you do to be more like Matthew? \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

# HIDDEN MESSAGE!

Can you crack the code to find the Hidden Message?  
Read Luke 5:27-28 and trace the letters below to reveal Matthew's  
other name.

LEVI

# WORD

# SEARCH!



- Sea of Galilee
- Jesus walking
- Matthew
- tax collector
- "Follow Me"
- left everything
- big dinner
- sinners
- sick need doctor

# HIDDEN MESSAGE!

Answer Page

Can you crack the code to find the Hidden Message?  
Read Luke 5:27-28 and trace the letters below to reveal Matthew's  
other name.

LEW

# WORD

# SEARCH!

Answer Page

E	E	L	I	L	A	G	F	O	A	E	S	B
M	R	I	E	O	U	D	L	R	D	F	S	X
T	A	X	C	O	L	L	E	C	T	O	R	A
O	T	T	N	O	W	S	F	F	G	L	E	J
D	C	S	T	U	H	U	T	T	G	L	N	E
N	O	Y	W	H	D	S	E	H	N	O	N	S
N	D	T	L	O	E	E	V	R	I	W	I	U
W	D	U	K	V	N	W	E	R	V	M	S	S
S	E	N	A	E	U	N	R	T	I	E	I	W
S	E	G	H	M	N	T	Y	B	L	E	S	A
S	N	U	S	I	J	N	T	I	F	S	S	L
F	K	O	D	E	E	R	H	R	O	Y	L	K
V	C	G	E	O	R	U	I	S	N	I	L	I
G	I	T	R	E	T	E	N	N	O	M	I	N
B	S	S	W	I	L	L	G	E	S	U	T	G

- Sea of Galilee
- Jesus walking
- Matthew
- tax collector
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