

I Desire Mercy and Not Sacrifice  
*Jesus and the Outsider, Pt. 2*  
*Matthew 9:9-13*

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## I. PRAYER

- i. Would you help us to be people who love you. People who give all of ourselves to you. People who care about the things that you care about. People who love the things that you love.

## II. INTRODUCTION & SERIES PLUG

- a. So, growing up, I loved High School.
  - i. I had a great experience, played football, had great friends.
  - ii. And then I went to college, and I just didn't like college.
    - It seemed like from the minute I got to college, I was trying to figure out how to graduate as fast as I could.
    - So, I took classes over the summers, got credit hours for internships, and I ended up graduating from college a year early.
  - iii. But, when I was trying to do all I could to graduate early, there was one class that was standing in my way.
    - That class was Hebrew 2.
      1. I was at a Bible College getting a degree in Biblical Studies.
      2. I had already taken Hebrew 1 but I had to have Hebrew 2 to graduate and they weren't offering it when I needed it to get out of college early.
      3. And the professor wouldn't do an independent study with me.
  - iv. And then I discovered something.



- I read in our student handbook that if a student had an overseas cross-cultural experience while in college, they could submit an academic appeal arguing that this experience was educational enough to be counted as credit for one language class needed for graduation.
    1. Well, it just so happened, that during my college years I had taken a semester off and during that time, I spent about two weeks in Israel touring the country.
    2. Now, we didn't learn any biblical Hebrew in Israel but you better believe I wanted to give this a shot.
  - So, I had to write up this long appeal explaining the trip, the educational value, and why it is justifiable that this trip should count toward my language credit.
- v. And for the appeal to be approved, you needed three signatures.
- The signature of the professor who teaches the class your trying to get out of.
  - The signature of the department chair.
  - The signature of the academic dean.
    1. Now, I was told, if you got the signatures of the professor and the department chair, the academic dean would rubber stamp it.
    2. So, I needed two signatures.
    3. And I was nervous because I knew I had zero shot at this.



- vi. So, I go meet with the professor. Really nice guy but I knew he wasn't going to go for this.
- He reads through my appeal...chuckles to himself...and tells me: I am going to sign this just so you take this to the department chair...because that will not be a fun meeting.
    1. And he signs it!
    2. This guy doesn't know me. I'll endure an awkward meeting to give this a shot.
- vii. Alright! 1 Down, 1 To Go!
- So, I setup a meeting with the department chair late in the day right at 5pm.
    1. And I'm nervous.
  - But when I go to his office, he was on the phone, he was rushed...
    1. He literally grabs my paper, sees that the professor signed off on it, puts his signature on it, and hands it back to me.
    2. I was in his office for only about a minute!
  - I had my two signatures! And sure enough the Academic Dean rubber stamped that thing and I got out of Hebrew 2 and graduated early.
    1. Now, it is possible that my parents, who go to this church, are hearing this for the first time.
    2. Don't worry...I had to take three more years of Hebrew in Seminary and I didn't wiggle out of those...so we're good.



- viii. But, here's the thing: my goal in this was to get the credits I needed to graduate early, it didn't matter how it was done. It didn't matter to me if I learned anything.
- The actual goal, the actual purpose of that class and that graduation requirement was for me to learn the language of biblical Hebrew so I could apply that later in my vocation.
  - I didn't care about the true purpose, I just cared about getting the credit.
- b. Don't we live a lot of life that way?
- i. How easy is it to go to work, check off the tasks on the list, punch out at five, and not really care about the true goals and purpose of the company?
    - We just want the paycheck.
  - ii. How many times have I gone to the gym, hit the weights, got on the treadmill and walked while watching SportsCenter...and never broke a sweat.
    - I'm not there because I care about getting in shape...I'm there because I want credit for going to the gym.
  - iii. And I think many of us are tempted to live the Christian life in this way.
    - Checking off the things that we should do as Christians and losing sight of the purpose of it all.
- c. Last week, we started a new series called "Jesus and the Outsider."



- i. And we studied Jesus' words to his disciples when he appeared to them after his resurrection in Luke 24.
  - And what we saw Jesus do was give the church a specific mission...that is to proclaim to all nations that repentance and forgiveness of sins is available in the name of Jesus Christ.
    1. All of us due to our sin have found ourselves on the outside of God's Kingdom but have been made insiders through Christ...we've been saved and forgiven of our sin.
    2. Now as insiders, God has sent us on a mission to the outsiders to proclaim the name of Jesus.
    3. God wants the insiders to be focused on going to the outsiders and bringing them in!
    4. That is the mission of the church!
- ii. And so we started this series because we want to study how Jesus pursued the outsiders.
  - Jesus was known for disrupting the religious norm of his day.
    1. The problem with religion is that it can tempt us to be more concerned about protecting the inside than going after those on the outside.
    2. And as we study Jesus' encounters with both insiders and outsiders, we will be forced to confront our own religious impulses to keep the outsider out.
- d. So, this morning, we're going to read a short encounter Jesus had with both insiders and outsiders in Matthew 9:9-13.



- i. And here is what Jesus is going to do:
  - He is going to confront the religion of the insiders and how they seem to care more about getting credit for their religious propriety than the actual mission and purpose that God has for his people.

### III. MATTHEW 9:9-13

#### a. Read Matthew 9:9-13

b. So, here, Jesus encounters both insiders and outsiders.

- i. This is where he is calling Matthew to be one of his disciples.
  - Matthew was a Tax Collector.
    1. Tax Collectors were hated during this time because they were Jews who worked for Rome collecting taxes from people.
    2. And they were known for overcharging taxes and pocketing the profit.
    3. So, these guys were the worst of the worst to the conservative Jews like the Pharisees because they were traitors.
- ii. And we see here that Jesus is reclining at a table eating with Matthew (Luke confirms that this happened in Matthew's house) and other sinners are there to.
  - And let me give you the lexical definition of the word here for sinner...the greek word is HAMARTOLÓS
    1. "*outsiders of those who did not observe the Law in detail and therefore were shunned by observers of traditional precepts.*" -BDAG



- iii. So, Jesus, along with some of his disciples, are enjoying dinner with these people and the Pharisees, the religious in-crowd, just had to say something.
  - Why does your teacher eat with these outsiders?
- iv. Look at Jesus' response: **Read v.12-13.**
  - So, we'll come back to the majority of this passage later.
  - But let's do what Jesus tells us to do first.
  - That is to go learn what it means when Jesus says: I desire mercy and not sacrifice.
  - What does that mean?

#### **IV. I DESIRE MERCY AND NOT SACRIFICE**

- a. Jesus is quoting the Old Testament here.
  - i. Specifically, he is quoting from the book of Hosea.
    - Hosea was a prophet that was sent by God to the Northern Kingdom of Israel.
      1. After the reign of King Solomon, Israel split between the Northern Kingdom of Israel and the Southern Kingdom of Judah.
      2. Hosea was a prophet sent by god to preach God's Word in the Northern Kingdom.
    - Now, this was a relatively secure and prosperous time for the Northern Kingdom.
      1. Their enemies were engaged in other war fronts and it was a time of expansion.
      2. However, this comfort and security actually led to what we call syncretism.



3. They allowed the various religions, philosophies, and cultic practices of other nations to seep in and blend with what they believed about God.
  4. And this led to great unfaithfulness.
  5. And Hosea is sent to call them to repentance!
- So, the book of Hosea compares Israel's relationship to God like marrying a prostitute.
    1. Although they are betrothed to one another, the prostitute is always being unfaithful. Always with another guy.
    2. And this is what God said Israel was like when it comes to their faithfulness to Him.
  - And so, Jesus quotes from Hosea 6:4-6
    1. "What shall I do with you, O Ephraim? What shall I do with you, O Judah? Your love is like a morning cloud, like the dew that goes early away.  
<sup>5</sup>Therefore I have hewn them by the prophets; I have slain them by the words of my mouth, and my judgment goes forth as the light.  
<sup>6</sup>For I desire steadfast love and not sacrifice, the knowledge of God rather than burnt offerings."
  - What God is saying here is I want your love, not your religion!
    1. Your religion is meant to stir up your love for me.
    2. But if there is no love for me in your religion, in your burnt offerings, in your Bible reading, in your church attendance, then it means nothing!
    3. God is saying: I WANT YOU! I don't want your rituals, I want you.



- ii. This is all over the Old Testament. The idea that God does not want our religion, he wants our love. And our religion is just a way that our love is stirred up for God.
- iii. We could go to Amos.
- Amos was a prophet at the same time as Hosea and was also sent to the northern kingdom of Israel with basically the same message.
    1. 21 "I hate, I despise your feasts, and I take no delight in your solemn assemblies. 22 Even though you offer me your burnt offerings and grain offerings, I will not accept them; and the peace offerings of your fattened animals, I will not look upon them. 23 Take away from me the noise of your songs; to the melody of your harps I will not listen. 24 But let justice roll down like waters, and righteousness like an ever-flowing stream. -Amos 5:21-24
  - The same message we read from Hosea. You're doing all of this religious stuff for me, but you do not love me and you do not care about the things that I care about.
- iv. Or we could go to Micah.
- Another prophet sent to the southern kingdom during the reign of Hezekiah.
    1. 6 "With what shall I come before the Lord, and bow myself before God on high? Shall I come before him with burnt offerings, with calves a year old? 7 Will the Lord be pleased with thousands of rams, with ten thousands of rivers of oil? Shall I give my firstborn for my



transgression, the fruit of my body for the sin of my soul?" 8 He has told you, O man, what is good; and what does the Lord require of you but to do justice, and to love kindness, and to walk humbly with your God?" -Micah 6:6-8

- God what do you want from me? What worship rituals can I do to prove my love for you?
  1. And God says, I just want you. I want your heart. I want your love.
- v. Have I made my case? Do I need to prove this even further? Let's try 1 Samuel 15.
  - This is during the reign of King Saul. God instructs Saul to attack the Amalekites and his instructions were to destroy everything.
    1. So, Saul attacks the Amalekites but instead of destroying everything, he brings back the best livestock for himself.
  - And Samuel, who was a prophet of God, confronts Saul for his disobedience to God.
    1. And this is what Saul says in response to Samuel: 

"<sup>15</sup> Saul answered, "The troops brought them from the Amalekites and spared the best sheep, goats, and cattle in order to offer a sacrifice to the Lord your God, but the rest we destroyed."<sup>16</sup> "Stop!" exclaimed Samuel. "Let me tell you what the Lord said to me last night." -1 Samuel 15:15-16 (CSB).
    2. And God says through Samuel (v.22-23) – "Does the Lord take pleasure in burnt offerings and sacrifices as much as in obeying the Lord? Look:



to obey is better than sacrifice, to pay attention is better than the fat of rams.”

- Saul, God doesn't want your burnt offerings, he wants your heart. He wants you!

b. So, let's get all the way back to Matthew 9 where Jesus is having dinner with some sinners.

i. And the Pharisees, who are proud of their religious acumen, question the integrity of Jesus and His disciples for spending time with these kinds of people.

- And Jesus says: Go learn what this means...
  1. Go read your Old Testament. Go look for the heart of God.
- “I desire mercy (better translated steadfast love as in Hosea) and not sacrifice.”

ii. Listen, Pharisees...

- You guys have studied the Scriptures more than any!
- You never miss a ritual feast or a proper burnt offering.
- You tithe great sums of money to the temple.
- You fast. You recite prayers. You never miss worship at the synagogue.

iii. But somehow, and some way, you have missed me!

- You have checked every box but you have missed the purpose of all of this.
- Yet, you don't love me. You don't care about the things that I care about. You just care about the credit.



- iv. And so it boils down to this guys...
  - “Those who are ‘well’ have no need of a physician, but those who are sick...I came not to call the ‘righteous’, but sinners.”
  - These people at this table. This is what I care about.
  - And because you don’t care about the things that I care about...your religion is meaningless.
    1. In fact, to use the language from Amos, I hate it.
- v. And if you’re here and you have not trusted in Jesus Christ, I want you to know that Jesus cares about you.
  - And he is not waiting for you to get your life together before you can be in a relationship with him.
  - Jesus didn’t come for those who believe they are qualified, he came for those who know they are disqualified.
  - And he took your place on the cross so you could have forgiveness of sins and he is offering his grace and mercy to you.
  - The question is if you’ll accept his invitation.

## V. APPLICATION

- i. But for those of us who do know Jesus, there are two responses that I want to exhort all of us to have to the example of Jesus here.
- b. First – I don’t want us to scoff at the Pharisees but I want us to look to see if we have any Pharisee in us...both individually and corporately together as a church.



- i. In this example here in Matthew 9 and in the examples I read from the Old Testament, we see that when we reach a certain comfort level with our religion, we can forget the purpose of it all.
  - Andy Stanley says that the gravitational pull in church will always be towards insiders and not outsiders.
  - Because what happens when the church becomes our primary social circle, we find comfort in the predictability of the insiders and we don't like the unpredictability of the outsiders.
  - In our own lives and even during our Sunday morning gatherings as a church, we can subconsciously gravitate towards insiders because that makes us comfortable and ignore the outsiders because that's an unknown variable.
- ii. And so we need to find the Pharisee in all of us and what we need to do is put religion in its proper place.
  - Religion is a means to an end, and that is to know, love, and humbly walk with our God.
  - And one of the most telling ways that we can evaluate if our religion is out of place in our lives is by asking ourselves if we care about the things that God cares about.



- Last week, I devoted the whole sermon to unpacking the fact that the whole Bible points to the fact that what God cares about is saving people and the mission that he has given the church is to go after the outsider proclaiming the gospel of Jesus Christ.
  - Does all of our religious activity and spiritual disciplines mold our hearts into caring for what Jesus cares for or does our religion actually lead us away from that?
- iii. It's like a decked-out Jeep Wrangler.
- You know you see those Jeeps on the road that have been modified with everything one would need for off-roading in a world war.
    1. They have the jacked up suspension, oversized tires, extra gas cans, a wench up front, flood lights, and all kinds of stuff.
  - The crazy thing is, especially around here in Northern Virginia, is you'll see those jeeps every once in a while but most of the time they are spotless, scratchless!
    1. They look like their owners would never even think of taking their jeep off-roading.
    2. What if I get a scratch? What if I wear out my big tires? What if I get it dirty?
  - That makes no sense! Why would you put all of this equipment on your jeep and never use it for its intended purpose?
    1. The only explanation is they want to look like they go off-roading without actually going off-roading.



iv. Can't religion be the same way?

- We do all of these things. We spend time in the Bible. We go to church. We do service projects. We pray.
- But if we don't use these things to love God, to walk with God, to care about the thing that God cares about and to actually do the things that He has called us to do...then it's all a waste.
  1. We must be doing it all so we look like we belong to Jesus when maybe we're not willing to do the things that he has called us to do.

v. Where can we identify the Pharisee that lives in our hearts that pulls us away from engaging the outsider?

- We have been called to go after the outsider and we need to be thinking about how our religion and spiritual practices encourage that call, not get in the way of it.

c. The second response that I want us to have is to follow Jesus in recapturing hospitality.

- i. Boy, this is a challenge for us here in Northern Virginia.
  - We have such a busy culture and our time is extremely scarce.
- ii. But in our text this morning, the Pharisees weren't as bothered that Jesus would interact with the Tax Collectors and Sinners.
  - What made the scene even more scandalous to them was that Jesus was at Matthew's house, reclining at his table, and enjoying a meal.



- To share a meal with someone was a sign of intimacy, closeness, connection, sharing life.
    1. This wasn't quick small talk as you run into each other at the grocery store, this was intentional spending time with one another for several hours over food and drink.
  - And our hurried, social media trained relationships with people are forgetting how to do this.
- iii. I think hospitality is a spiritual discipline that we need to be intentional about reintroducing into our lives.
- Spending intentional time with people who do not know Jesus. Sharing a meal. Getting to know their stories. Caring for their souls. Learning from their experiences. And speaking the message to them that we have been called to deliver.

d. Jesus says here in Matthew 9 that he came not to call the righteous, but the sinners.

- i. The question for us, is do we give any hospitable priority to outsiders or do we reserve it all for insiders?
- That's a tough question for our church to answer, I believe.
  - How can you begin to specifically use hospitality as a strategy in our mission to reach the outsiders?
  - How can we here on Sunday mornings begin to all contribute to a culture of hospitality here, so people on the outside feel welcomed and desired here when we worship together?



1. How can we craft an experience here on Sunday where outsiders would feel as comfortable with us as those sinners felt with Jesus?
2. What would it look like if all of us as individual members of this church took on personal responsibility of making our Sunday morning gatherings welcoming to the outsider...and showed up early to engage them, being prayerful for them, and seeking to get to know them?
3. These are questions that we want to wrestle with as a church over this sermon series and in our community groups.

## VI. CONCLUSION

- a. But, Grace Hill, Jesus did not come for the well but the sick.
  - i. And we have been called to the same mission.
  - ii. And you know what?
    - The person that we all most identify with in this story is not the Pharisee.
    - As followers of Jesus, we most identify with the sinners reclining at the table with the God of the Universe.
  - iii. This is what we're primarily going to reflect on next week.
    - But I want us to understand, this morning, that we go after the outsiders because all of us at one point was an outsider.



- And Jesus, in his grace and his mercy, pursued us, desired to be with us, gave his life for us so we could be reconciled to God.
- iv. All we have is Christ
- I think the Bible is very clear, that there is nothing more potent that we could do to worship and glorify our God than going after the outsiders that he so deeply loves...just like he came after us.

## VII. PRAY

