

Family Worship Guide – Week 6

MEMORIZE

Matthew 9:13 – “Go and learn what this means, ‘I desire mercy, and not sacrifice.’ For I came not to call the righteous, but sinners.”

READ

Read Matthew 9:9-13.

Matthew and his fellow tax collectors would have been despised by much of Jewish culture and the Pharisees in particular. This disdain resulted from the tax collectors’ disobedience to God’s law and the fact that they often took advantage of their own people for professional and financial gain. So, it would not only have been surprising but also offensive that Jesus would dine with such people and even call one of them to be his disciple. Jesus pointed out to the Pharisees, though, that he came to help all those who need him. This, of course, included the Pharisees, but because they saw themselves as righteous they didn’t recognize their own need. The tax collectors and other sinners, however, did. Those who thought themselves righteous should have been joining Jesus in his acts of mercy rather than focusing on who had or hadn’t made the right sacrifices.

Questions:

In what ways do we need Jesus?

How do we demonstrate the type of mercy God desires?

What does it mean that Jesus came to call sinners and not the righteous?

Bottom Line: Jesus alone has the authority to call sinners to himself that they may be made righteous.

SING

“Praise the Lord! Praise the Lord, O my soul! I will praise the Lord as long as I live; I will sing praises to my God while I have my being.” (Psalm 146:1-2)

As we continue in worship, may our hearts burst in song and praise because of the immeasurable wonder of who Jesus is as he displays his divine authority over disease and demons, stormy seas and the sins of men. This week our family worship song is ‘Exalted’ by Chris Tomlin. Together, as a family and faith family, let’s reflect on the magnitude of these verses in the Gospel of Matthew and their implications that Jesus is no ordinary man, but rather this Jesus is God in the flesh. And let us declare together with our voices the unique beauty and worth of our Maker and Savior as we sing, “Yahweh! Holy is your name!”

Visit our website for a link to this song: http://www.brookhills.org/gathering/this_week.html.

SUGGESTIONS

These suggestions were created by the age-group ministry leaders as a way to help parents better communicate the biblical truths discussed in the Family Worship Guide. These suggestions are intended to help parents facilitate God-centered discussions with their children. Parents should prayerfully use these suggestions, and any other means necessary, to help their children discover the truths of God’s word and worship him together.

Preschool

- Before you begin, open your Bible to Mathew 9:9-13 and gather some items to use as Bible costumes. You can use towels, sheets, bathrobes, sandals, etc. to create garments similar to those in biblical times. After everyone is dressed, sit down for a snack or dinner at your kitchen table and pretend you are a part of the Bible story.
- Tell your preschooler that Jesus called a man named Matthew to follow him. Matthew was a tax collector. Tax collectors are people who collect money from other people to pay for different things. But most of the time, tax collectors in Bible days were liars and would take more money than they were supposed to from people and keep it for themselves.
- Jesus also went with Matthew to his house to eat dinner. He ate dinner with the other tax collectors. Why would Jesus want to eat with them? Why do you think Jesus would want a tax collector to follow him?
- Jesus is perfect and holy. He never sinned, yet he ate with sinners and people who made bad choices. Jesus came to earth for sinners. He was sent to save us.

- We are all sinners and make bad choices. When we believe in Jesus and turn away from our sin (bad choices) he forgives us and saves us. He is teaching us and calling us to follow him. Jesus must love us very much!
- Pray together and thank God for His forgiveness and love.

Children

- Read Matthew 9:9-13 to your children.
- Use the following illustration to help your children understand that Jesus alone has the authority to save sinners:
 - Ask your children to close their eyes and imagine they are sitting in a school classroom. The previous week everyone in the class completed a very difficult test and now everyone is getting the graded tests back. Everyone in the room is a little nervous about their grades because of how important the test will be in their final grade for the year.
 - Then, to everyone's surprise, a child stands up and walks behind the teacher and changes everyone's grades. He walks up to a girl, strikes out her "A+" and replaces it with a "C". Then he picks up another classmate's test and marks through a "D-" and writes "B" instead.
 - Ask – Does this seem odd? (Oh, yes!) Why? (Because the child that began changing grades had no right to do so.)
 - Explain – Only the teacher of that class would have the authority to determine the grade that each child earned or to change it to a higher grade if he or she saw fit. No child in the class would have the authority to change someone else's grade, nor would they be able to change their own grade.
- Just like the child in this illustration, the Pharisees in Matthew 9 thought they could determine the sinfulness or righteousness of themselves and others. Similarly, just as the teacher was the only one with the authority to issue grades, Jesus is the only one who can determine our righteousness before God.
- What if no one in the class passed the test, but the teacher decided to give everyone an "A" anyway? That would be an amazing gift and you would be so thankful! That is what Jesus did with Matthew and the other sinners, and it was 10,000 times better than a changed grade. He was actually calling sinners to himself! Jesus looked at those who's hearts were sinful, and he declared them to be righteous, or right, before God. That's what he does for us, too.
- Does this mean the Pharisees really were right before God because of their own good deeds and how they tried to follow God's Law? No, as we see in Romans 3:9-23, there is none righteous in their own strength. Remind your children that the Pharisees needed God just as much as the obvious sinners; they were simply blind to their sin and need.
- Jesus showed us how to treat others the way God desires because he showed mercy and steadfast love towards them. How should we respond to those who are far from God? (Love, mercy, compassion, share the gospel with them). Should we think we are better than those who are far from God? (Absolutely not! We are just as in need of God's forgiveness as anyone!) Pray as a family and ask that God would give you a heart and mind like that of Jesus, who showed mercy and love towards sinners and was eager for them to know salvation that only he can provide.

Students

- Read Matthew 9:9-13 together as a family. This study emphasizes the fact that we all stand in need of God's mercy and the righteousness that is supplied only through Christ. With this in mind, we want to highlight everyone's need for God's mercy, and not just those who aren't "religious."
- Everyone has been sick at some point in his or her life, some of us quite seriously. Some people are fully aware of their illness and head straight to the doctor. Others are more stubborn and decide they can take care of themselves, so they never see a physician, even in the case of something more serious. They refuse to see the gravity of their need and inability to get well without the aid of a doctor.
- Ask your students what they thought the Pharisees were missing in regard to Jesus' teaching in Matthew 9. Explain that the Pharisees were like the sick person who needs a doctor but won't admit they are sick. Although they were standing in the midst of the Great Healer, they kept trying to heal themselves (make themselves more righteous) and pointing the finger at those they thought were more sick (more sinful) than they were. They had become so stubborn they refused to admit that they needed God's forgiveness and mercy.
- What happens to someone who tries to heal himself when he has a serious illness? Their condition deteriorates and they get sicker and sicker. Ask your students how this parallels the Pharisees' quest for righteousness and who had the power to heal them.
- Now ask your students to define what it means to be righteous (to be in right standing with God). Remind your student that in order for us to come into a right relationship with God, we have to first admit our desperate need for him and surrender our lives to him. This is a great reminder for students who already follow Christ as well, in that we continually need God's mercy in our lives. Follow up and ask how you know someone has admitted this need. Lead them to understand that humility is the outcome of realizing we need God and his forgiveness. Would someone describe *you* as humble?

