

## The Four Gospels of the Bible, Matthew Follows Jesus

### Matthew 9:9-13

<sup>13</sup> It is not the healthy who need a doctor, but the sick. But go and learn what this means: "I desire mercy, not sacrifice. For I have not come to call the righteous, but sinners. (NIV)

*Passing along, Jesus saw a man at his work collecting taxes. His name was Matthew. Jesus said, "Come along with me." Matthew stood up and followed him. Later when Jesus was eating supper at Matthew's house with his close followers, a lot of disreputable characters came and joined them. When the Pharisees saw him keeping this kind of company, they had a fit, and lit into Jesus' followers. "What kind of example is this from your Teacher, acting cozy with crooks and riff-raff?" Jesus, overhearing, shot back, "Who needs a doctor: the healthy or the sick? Go figure out what this Scripture means: 'I'm after mercy, not religion.' I'm here to invite outsiders, not coddle insiders."*

### Taxes

Tax collecting was one of the most despised jobs or occupations of the day (recall that Zacchaeus was a tax collector...and would have been the last expected person to eat with Jesus).

### Followed Him

How simple it seemed; "Matthew stood up and followed him." What did Matthew know of Jesus? I'm not sure, but what's likely is that he knew little of the Savior.

### "They had a fit"

Why did they (the Pharisees) have a fit? Because they considered the kind that Jesus was with to be unworthy of any of such attention or generosity; a judgment of which they placed themselves worthy, even righteous to judge, in their observance of the law, etc.

### "After mercy, not religion"

*Blessed are the merciful, for they will be given mercy*, is what Jesus proclaimed. Why is mercy important? Because, with mercy we all a certain to death...

H. Kirk Rainer