

# Sermon Reflections

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## *Mercy Changes Things* (Matthew 9: 9-17)

**Summary:** Mercy changes things and the arrival of God in Jesus Christ brings His mercy to sinners. Has His mercy changed you?

### 1. His Mercy Changes Sinners (vv. 9-13)

- What was it about Christ that drew you to Him? What attribute of Jesus draws you to Him and holds you fast? See Romans 2:4. The arrival of Jesus, the Son of God, means the arrival of the mercy of God to sinners. Has His mercy changed you? How? Is it possible for someone to taste of Christ's mercy and *not* be changed?
- Matthew is commanded by Jesus, to "Follow Me." Describe what Jesus is telling Matthew to do. For Matthew, the commitment to follow Jesus could prove costly financially. The call to follow Jesus requires the same commitment from all His disciples. What motivates you to gladly follow Jesus regardless of the cost?
- In what way does the response of the Pharisees to Jesus partaking of the meal with tax collectors and sinners reveal their ignorance of the character of God? What did Jesus command them to study? See Hosea 6:6 and recall the teaching on Hebrew poetry and use of parallelism within that text. Is there any group(s) of people you would not eat a meal with? Are you characterized by pursuing or ignoring those outside of Christ? What truth about our Savior and His love toward you should work repentance in your heart?
- *"There is more mercy in Christ than sin in us."* - Richard Sibbes

### 2. His Mercy Changes Sorrows (vv. 14-17)

- The disciples of John the Baptist wanted to know why Jesus' disciples didn't fast. (What is fasting associated with?) Jesus answers them by giving an illustration of marriage. Describe the illustration, and identify the people who are referred to within it. Compare this with Hosea 2:19 and Revelation 19:7, 21:2. Why, therefore, would fasting not be appropriate at that time?
- Are you burdened by sorrows? Are you sorrowful, yet always rejoicing knowing that Jesus, your Faithful and True Groom will never leave you nor forsake you, and that He stands in Heaven interceding for you, keeping you until the day you see Him face to face? He desires for you to be with Him where He is (John 17:24). Brothers and Sisters in Christ, where is your focus currently? Is it on Jesus and His everlasting and unfailing love toward you, or is it on the news headlines? How might we stir one another up to keep our gaze perpetually on Christ?
- Explain the two parables that follow. What is the meaning of the new and old theme within the illustrations? What is the new wine that Jesus is speaking of? See Jeremiah 31:31-34 and Matthew 26: 26-28. How has Jesus and His New Covenant work "burst" the old expectations?
- Should Christians fast today?