

Tuesday 21 September 2021

St Matthew



The calling of Matthew
by Caravaggio

Matthew appears in the list of the twelve apostles of Jesus and, according to the gospel written under his name, was a tax collector. Mark and Luke called the tax collector Levi, and it has been assumed that they are one and the same. This occupation was despised by his fellow Jews as a betrayal to the occupying Roman force but Jesus showed that judging by outward appearance was not what he was about. Matthew affirmed that his life would now change because of following Jesus, and that he would make amends for any former wrongdoing. This was enough for Jesus, for he had drawn someone back to God. Matthew was forgiven, therefore he was acceptable, therefore he was received.

Sermon © Revd Jane Hyde.

Liturgy and prayers of intercession © 2000 The Archbishops' Council.

Bible readings © the publishers of the NRSV translation.

The liturgy assumes the service is Eucharistic. The prayers of consecration appear at the end.

The hymns are YouTube links. To hear the hymns please hover the mouse over each link, press Ctrl and then return.

To see service transcripts from previous weeks, please visit the page,
<http://www.medlockhead.co.uk/resources/index.htm>

Introduction and welcome

HYMN 1 Will you come and follow me (please click on this link to hear the hymn)

The Welcome

In the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit

All Amen.

The Lord be with you

All And also with you.

The Preparation

**All Almighty God,
to whom all hearts are open,
all desires known,
and from whom no secrets are hidden:
cleanse the thoughts of our hearts
by the inspiration of your Holy Spirit,
that we may perfectly love you,
and worthily magnify your holy name;
through Christ our Lord.
Amen.**

Our Lord Jesus Christ said:

The first commandment is this:

‘Hear, O Israel, the Lord our God is the only Lord.

You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart,
with all your soul, with all your mind,
and with all your strength.’

And the second is this: ‘Love your neighbour as yourself.’

There is no other commandment greater than these.

On these two commandments hang all the law and the prophets.

All Amen. Lord, have mercy.

Christ calls us to share the heavenly banquet of his love with all the saints in earth and heaven. Therefore, knowing our unworthiness and sin, let us confess our sins in penitence and faith, firmly resolved to keep God’s commandments and to live in love and peace with all.

All Almighty God, our heavenly Father,
we have sinned against you
and against our neighbour
in thought and word and deed,
through negligence, through weakness,
through our own deliberate fault.
We are truly sorry
and repent of all our sins.
For the sake of your Son Jesus Christ,
who died for us,
forgive us all that is past
and grant that we may serve you in newness of life
to the glory of your name.
Amen.

Almighty God,
who forgives all who truly repent, have mercy upon you,
pardon and deliver you from all your sins,
confirm and strengthen you in all goodness,
and keep you in life eternal;
through Jesus Christ our Lord.

All Amen.

The Gloria

This Gloria is sung to the tune of 'Cwm Rhondda'. Click [here](#) for the tune.

All Glory be to God in Heaven,
Songs of joy and peace we bring,
Thankful hearts and voices raising,
To creation's Lord we sing.
Lord we thank you, Lord we praise you,
Glory be to God our King:
Glory be to God our King.

Lamb of God, who on our shoulders,
Bore the load of this world's sin;
Only Son of God the Father,
You have brought us peace within.
Lord, have mercy, Christ have mercy,

Now your glorious reign begin:

Now your glorious reign begin.

You O Son of God are Holy,

You we praise with one accord.

None in heav'n or earth is like you,

Only you are Christ the Lord.

With the Father and the Spirit,

Ever worshipped and adored:

Ever worshipped and adored.

The Collect for St Matthew

O Almighty God,

whose blessèd Son called Matthew the tax-collector
to be an apostle and evangelist:

give us grace to forsake the selfish pursuit of gain

and the possessive love of riches

that we may follow in the way of your Son Jesus Christ,

who is alive and reigns with you,

in the unity of the Holy Spirit,

one God, now and for ever.

All Amen.

First reading

A reading from the book of Proverbs

Happy are those who find wisdom, and those who get understanding, for her income is better than silver, and her revenue better than gold. She is more precious than jewels, and nothing you desire can compare with her. Long life is in her right hand; in her left hand are riches and honour. Her ways are ways of pleasantness, and all her paths are peace. She is a tree of life to those who lay hold of her; those who hold her fast are called happy. *Proverbs 3:13-18*

This is the Word of the Lord

All Thanks be to God.

Second reading

A reading from the Second Letter of Paul to the Corinthians.

Since it is by God's mercy that we are engaged in this ministry of the Spirit, we do not lose heart. We have renounced the shameful things that one hides; we refuse

to practice cunning or to falsify God's word; but by the open statement of the truth we commend ourselves to the conscience of everyone in the sight of God. And even if our gospel is veiled, it is veiled to those who are perishing. In their case the god of this world has blinded the minds of the unbelievers, to keep them from seeing the light of the gospel of the glory of Christ, who is the image of God. For we do not proclaim ourselves; we proclaim Jesus Christ as Lord and ourselves as your servants for Jesus' sake. For it is the God who said, 'Let light shine out of darkness,' who has shone in our hearts to give the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ. *2 Corinthians 4:1-6*

This is the Word of the Lord

All Thanks be to God.

HYMN 2 O Jesus I have promised

[\(click on this link to hear the hymn\)](#)

Gospel reading

Hear the Gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ according to Matthew

All Glory to you O Lord.

As Jesus was walking along, he saw a man called Matthew sitting at the tax booth; and he said to him, 'Follow me.' And the man got up and followed him.

As he sat at dinner in the house, many tax collectors and sinners came and were sitting with him and his disciples. When the Pharisees saw this, they said to his disciples, 'Why does your teacher eat with tax collectors and sinners?' But when he heard this, he said, 'Those who are well have no need of a physician, but those who are sick. Go and learn what this means, "I desire mercy, not sacrifice." For I have come to call not the righteous but sinners.' *Matthew 9:9-13*

This is the Gospel of the Lord

All Praise to you O Christ.

Sermon

On my last trip to Rome, I visited the Cantarelli Chapel in the church of San Luigi dei Francesi (the church of the French congregation) to see Caravaggio's painting '*The Calling of St Matthew*'. The enormous canvas is reproduced on the front cover of today's service, and shows the moment Jesus called Matthew from his tax booth to join his chosen band of closest disciples.

And that's the point really. In chapters 8 and 9 of Matthew's Gospel, there are 13 instances when people 'came', 'followed', 'approached', were 'brought' or 'carried'

to Jesus. Time after time the initiative lay with them. Only twice did Jesus take the lead – in healing Peter’s mother-in-law (Matt 8.14–15) and in calling Matthew. Why did Jesus make the first move? Did Jesus need Matthew ... or see hidden potential in him ... or sense that Matthew feared rejection and needed a challenging invitation?

Jesus was walking from his hometown of Capernaum, which was near the frontier between territories controlled by Herod Agrippa and Philip. Tax collectors sat on the border collecting duty on goods in transit (plus their own substantial rake-off, which helped to make them so hated) and possibly Jesus had seen Matthew many times. The story makes it almost casual—Jesus was walking along, saw him and said, ‘Follow me’. As with Simon, Andrew, James and John (Matt 4:18–22) the response was instantaneous and life-changing.

What happened next was simply a meal, which was quite typical of Jesus. The guest list comprised Matthew’s companions, which provoked a predictable response from the Pharisees. Jesus’ retort is stinging because he adds to his comments about being sent to call sinners, *‘Go and learn what this means, “I desire mercy not sacrifice”.*’ This alludes to Proverbs (21:3), *‘To do righteousness and justice is more acceptable to the Lord and not sacrifice’*. In effect, Jesus is telling the Pharisees (who are expert teachers of the Law) that they need to become disciples to learn, not about the niceties of the sacrificial system but about the practice of mercy. Before long, we find Jesus repeating himself when the Pharisees again find fault...this time with the disciples eating on the sabbath: *‘... if you had known what this means, “I desire mercy and not sacrifice”, you would not have condemned the guiltless’* (Matthew 12:7)

Why did Jesus have to challenge Matthew to follow him? What stopped Matthew coming to Jesus of his own accord, like the other people in the stories surrounding his encounter with Jesus? What stops *us* from following Jesus? If we ask ourselves what, or who, is the hardest thing God could ask us to give up, we might find the answer. The Collect points us to the dangers of *‘selfish pursuit of gain and the possessive love of riches’*, and Matthew learned the truth in Proverbs that wisdom’s income is better than silver, gold or jewels, that in wisdom is *‘a tree of life’*.

In the traditional reading of Caravaggio’s painting, Jesus points to Matthew and Matthew points to himself as if to say ‘Who ... me? ... A sinner? ... A dodgy tax collector?’ ‘Yes ...’ says our Lord, ‘... you’re exactly who I want in my team.’ And that’s a lesson to us all. Jesus calls us all ... decent *and* dodgy. As Pope Francis suggested, the painting is all about how God gives second chances. Jesus sees that we are all capable of turning our lives around, of dedicating ourselves to His service.

Let us pray for grace, like Matthew, to follow the way of Jesus Christ. Amen.

The Creed

Do you believe and trust in God the Father,
the source of all being and life,
the one for whom we exist?

All We believe and trust in him.

Do you believe and trust in God the Son,
who took our human nature,
died for us and rose again?

All We believe and trust in him.

Do you believe and trust in God the Holy Spirit,
who gives life to the people of God
and makes Christ known in the world?

All We believe and trust in him.

This is the faith of the Church.

All This is our faith.

**We believe and trust in one God,
Father, Son and Holy Spirit.
Amen.**

Prayers of intercession

Dear loving P**.

Merciful Father,

**All accept these prayers
for the sake of your Son,
our Saviour Jesus Christ.
Amen.**

The peace

Unto us a child is born, unto us a son is given, and his name shall be called the Prince of Peace.

The peace of the Lord be always with you,

All And also with you.

HYMN 3 O thou who camest from above [\(click on this link to hear the hymn\)](#)

The liturgy of the Communion Service appears below

The Dismissal

Christ the Son of God, born of Mary,
fill you with his grace to trust his promises and obey his will;
and the blessing of God the Almighty:
Father, Son, and Holy Spirit,
be with you now and remain with you always.

All Amen.

HYMN 4 I the Lord of sea and sky (please click on this link to hear the hymn)

Go in peace to love and serve the Lord.

All In the name of Christ. Amen.

The Liturgy of the Sacrament

Eucharistic Prayer (prayer E)

The Lord be with you

All and also with you.

Lift up your hearts.

All We lift them to the Lord.

Let us give thanks to the Lord our God.

All It is right to give thanks and praise.

It is indeed right, our duty and our joy,
always and everywhere to give you thanks,
holy Father, almighty and eternal God, through Jesus Christ our Lord.

And now we give thanks, most gracious God,
surrounded by a great cloud of witnesses
and glorified in the assembly of your saints.

The glorious company of apostles praise you.

The noble fellowship of prophets praise you.

The white-robed army of martyrs praise you.

We, your holy Church, acclaim you.

In communion with angels and archangels,
and with all who served you on earth and worship you now in heaven,
we raise our voice to proclaim your glory,
for ever praising you and saying:

**All Holy, holy, holy Lord,
God of power and might,
heaven and earth are full of your glory.
Hosanna in the highest.
Blessed is he who comes in the name of the Lord.
Hosanna in the highest.**

We praise and bless you, loving Father,
through Jesus Christ, our Lord;
and as we obey his command,
send your Holy Spirit,
that broken bread and wine outpoured
may be for us the body and blood of your dear Son.

On the night before he died he had supper with his friends
and, taking bread, he praised you.

He broke the bread, gave it to them and said:
Take, eat; this is my body which is given for you;
do this in remembrance of me.

When supper was ended he took the cup of wine.
Again he praised you, gave it to them and said:
Drink this, all of you;
this is my blood of the new covenant,
which is shed for you and for many for the forgiveness of sins.
Do this, as often as you drink it, in remembrance of me.

So, Father, we remember all that Jesus did,
in him we plead with confidence his sacrifice made once for all upon the cross.

Bringing before you the bread of life and cup of salvation,
we proclaim his death and resurrection
until he comes in glory.

Great is the mystery of faith:

All Christ has died.
Christ is risen.
Christ will come again.

Lord of all life,
help us to work together for that day
when your kingdom comes
and justice and mercy will be seen in all the earth.

Look with favour on your people,
gather us in your loving arms
and bring us with St Matthew and all the saints
to feast at your table in heaven.

Through Christ, and with Christ, and in Christ,
in the unity of the Holy Spirit,
all honour and glory are yours, O loving Father,
for ever and ever.

All Amen.

The Lord's Prayer

As our Saviour taught us, so we pray

**All Our Father in heaven,
hallowed be your name,
your kingdom come,
your will be done,
on earth as in heaven.
Give us today our daily bread.
Forgive us our sins
as we forgive those who sin against us.
Lead us not into temptation
but deliver us from evil.

For the kingdom, the power,
and the glory are yours
now and for ever. Amen.**

Breaking of the Bread

We break this bread to share in the body of Christ.

**All Though we are many, we are one body,
because we all share in one bread.**

**All Lamb of God,
you take away the sin of the world,
have mercy on us.**

**Lamb of God,
you take away the sin of the world,
have mercy on us.**

**Lamb of God,
you take away the sin of the world,
grant us peace.**

Draw near with faith.

Receive the body of our Lord Jesus Christ
which he gave for you,
and his blood which he shed for you.

Eat and drink in remembrance that he died for you,
and feed on him in your hearts
by faith with thanksgiving.

All We do not presume
to come to this your table, merciful Lord,
trusting in our own righteousness,
but in your manifold and great mercies.
We are not worthy
so much as to gather up the crumbs under your table.
But you are the same Lord
whose nature is always to have mercy.
Grant us therefore, gracious Lord,
so to eat the flesh of your dear Son Jesus Christ
and to drink his blood,
that our sinful bodies may be made clean by his body
and our souls washed through his most precious blood,
and that we may evermore dwell in him,
and he in us.
Amen.

Communion is distributed.

Prayer after Communion

Lord God, the source of truth and love,
keep us faithful to the apostles' teaching and fellowship,
united in prayer and the breaking of bread,
and one in joy and simplicity of heart,
in Jesus Christ our Lord.

All Amen

All Almighty God,
we thank you for feeding us
with the body and blood of your Son Jesus Christ.
Through him we offer you our souls and bodies
to be a living sacrifice.
Send us out in the power of your Spirit
to live and work
to your praise and glory.
Amen.