

Recap of 4/23/23 message by Pastor Joe (Mark 2:13-17):

1. *Matthew 2:13-17 introduces us to another of Jesus disciples, Levi (also called Matthew), the tax collector.*
2. *Tax collectors were despised by the Jews, seen as agents of Rome, betrayers of Israel for money. They often collected more than necessary and pocketed the difference; Matthew was an unlikely candidate for a disciple of Jesus. Matthew's response to Jesus' call according to the parallel passage in Luke 5:28, "left everything" and followed Jesus.*
 - a) *"We ought never to despair entirely of any one's salvation, when we read this passage of Scripture." (Ryle)*
 - b) *"Branded a traitor and treated like a leper, Matthew was an unlikely disciple. Then Jesus came along. Not only did Jesus change his life, but he also chose Matthew to be one of his most trusted followers (and writer of the first gospel). It may seem odd for God to use a man with a shady past to advance His kingdom.... The story of Matthew is an encouraging one. It reminds us that God is in control of the affairs of our lives. He has put together each one of us with an individual personality, special abilities, and unique experiences...God can use your training and skills to make a difference for his kingdom. (365 Life Lessons)*
3. *Matthew threw a "great banquet" (Luke 5:29) for his tax collector friends to meet his Savior.*
 - a) *"God can and does use [elaborate evangelism programs] to draw people to Himself. But perhaps we've overlooked a more natural strategy for reaching out to the spiritually needy--...Evangelism means creating natural opportunities for your unbelieving friends to see Jesus as He really is." (365 Life Lessons)*
4. *"Some want to live within the sound of church or chapel bell; I want to run a rescue shop within a yard of hell." (C.T. Studd)*