

The Way of Jesus

Week 1 Discussion Guide

Matthew 9:9-13, 18-26

Opening Prayer

Lord Jesus, as we read these stories, help us to see you clearly. Give us eyes to recognize your mercy, courage to follow where you lead, and hearts that are being shaped into your way. Amen.

Read Matthew 9:9-13

Observe

1. What stands out to you about the way Jesus calls Matthew?
2. What do we learn about Matthew from the brief description Matthew gives of himself?
3. Why do you think the Pharisees were bothered by Jesus eating with tax collectors and sinners?
4. What image does Jesus use to explain his actions?
5. What do you think Jesus means when he says, "I desire mercy, and not sacrifice"?

Interpret

6. Why is it significant that Jesus calls Matthew while he is still sitting at the tax booth?
7. How does Jesus' table fellowship challenge common ideas about holiness and religious faithfulness?
8. In what ways can religious people today fall into the same trap as the Pharisees?
9. What does Jesus' quotation from Hosea teach us about God's priorities?

Reflect

10. Which character in this scene do you identify with most right now: Matthew, the sinners at the table, the disciples, or the Pharisees? Why?
11. Have you ever experienced Jesus' mercy when you felt unworthy of it?
12. Are there people you tend to avoid, dismiss, judge, or write off that Jesus might be inviting you to see differently?

Read Matthew 9:18-26

Observe

13. What do you notice about the ruler's approach to Jesus?
14. What details stand out to you about the woman who had been suffering for twelve years?
15. How does Jesus respond to her?
16. What is the reaction of the mourners when Jesus arrives at the ruler's house?
17. What similarities do you see between the ruler and the woman?

Interpret

18. Why do you think Matthew places these two stories together?
19. What do both stories teach us about faith?
20. What do these stories reveal about Jesus' authority?
21. How does Jesus challenge ordinary assumptions about uncleanness, suffering, and death?
22. Why do you think Jesus calls the woman "daughter"?

Reflect

23. Where do you most need to hear Jesus say, "Take heart"?
24. What burdens, fears, losses, or disappointments have you been carrying that need to be brought honestly before Jesus?
25. Is there an area of your life where it feels like hope has died? What would it look like to trust Jesus with that situation?
26. How have you seen Jesus bring life, healing, restoration, or hope into difficult situations?

Connecting the Whole Passage

27. What common themes connect Matthew's call, the meal with sinners, the bleeding woman, and the ruler's daughter?
28. What does this passage teach us about the kind of people Jesus moves toward?
29. What does this passage teach us about the heart of God?
30. If someone only read this passage, how might they describe "the way of Jesus"?

The Way of Jesus

Throughout this summer series, we'll ask five questions as we read Scripture together.

1. What kind of thing is this?

What do these stories reveal about Jesus' ministry and mission?

2. Where am I in the story?

Which character or situation do you find yourself relating to most this week?

3. What echoes does this text carry?

What Old Testament stories, themes, or promises come to mind as you read about mercy, healing, and resurrection?

4. What does this reveal about God and King Jesus?

What do these stories teach us about Jesus' character, priorities, and authority?

5. How is this forming me into the way of Jesus?

What is one specific way Jesus may be inviting you to embody mercy, courage, trust, or compassion this week?

Closing Prayer

Jesus, thank you for calling people who don't deserve it, welcoming people who feel far away, healing those who suffer, and bringing life where death seems to have the final word. Shape us into people who reflect your mercy. Teach us to walk in your way this week. Amen.