

**how to fight with as a Christian... we have been given power....We can trust his word and use his word as a weapon...we can trust where his Spirit is leading and what his Spirit allows in our lives .. and trust his spirit to give us victory over the flesh and enemy..and we can trust God's plan which includes every aspect of our lives...**

*RO 8:28 And we know that God causes everything to work together for the good of those who love God and are called according to his purpose for them*

- **Which means ...God literally controls the outcome of every situation.**
- **So his strategy is perfectly designed to ensure his purpose.**
- **Who foresees every situation, obstacle, and overcomes them all**
- **Who understands the opponents and every device he will us and when...and has already designed counters to them.**
- **Whose preparation and training of his people is individually and perfectly designed and implemented**
- **Who promises victory and delivers every time**
  - **God know the enemy's tactics...and gives us the power to prevail, over every word and thought used against us**

*ISA 54:17 no **weapon** forged **against** you will prevail, and you will refute every tongue that accuses you. This is the heritage of the servants of the LORD, and this is their vindication from me," declares the Lord*

- **But what if those weapons have used against us have been successful? And our enemies tactics have so robbed us ...**

*JN 10: 10 The thief comes only to steal and kill and destroy; I have come that they may have life, and have it **to the full**.*

- ***we don't believe we can actually come back and have a full life?***

**This is the beauty of God...you can be a servant way before you ever recognize you are one! And that vindication is not yet realized in your life and is still future to you...but you don't know any of this...today there is hope for you!**

**There is nobody who would have been more rejected in their life than Matthew...who would have thought they were irredeemably separated from God...**

**No apostle would be considered more defeated and a spiritual failure than Matthew...so he is an example for those of us today who have experienced defeats ...sometimes even great failures in our lives...he has much to teach us about being courageous to make great changes in our lives...**

**we pick up his story in the Gospel of Mark**

**The Lord had been once again in the town of Capernaum and staying at the house of Peter. When he goes for a walk...really a mission ...he is going to call his fifth disciple who will become an apostle... another whose heart the Lord would write a new message upon.**

*NLT MK 2:13* Then Jesus went out to the lakeshore again and taught the crowds that were coming to him. <sup>14</sup> As he walked along, he saw Levi son of Alphaeus sitting at his tax collector's booth. "Follow me and be my disciple," Jesus said to him. So Levi got up and followed him.

Of all the apostles Matthew who was a Jew would arguably considered the greatest sinner of his day...the lowest of the low... hated by the populace, rejected by the religious and literally banned from the synagogue ...considered a traitor by his own nation... a sell out to the

occupying Roman government... the shame of his family and considered completely and irrevocably rejected by God.

- Tax collectors are always grouped in the Gospels by the religious with sinners ...pagans, and gentiles.. those outside of relationship with God
- they were spoken of in the same breath and matched up to prostitutes
- Jesus denouncing the religious hypocrites said this...

*NLT MT 21: 28* “But what do you think about this? A man with two sons told the older boy, ‘Son, go out and work in the vineyard today.’ <sup>29</sup> The son answered, ‘No, I won’t go,’ but later he changed his mind and went anyway. <sup>30</sup> Then the father told the other son, ‘You go,’ and he said, ‘Yes, sir, I will.’ But he didn’t go. <sup>31</sup> “Which of the two obeyed his father?” They replied, “The first.”<sup>[h]</sup> Then Jesus explained his meaning: “I tell you the truth, corrupt tax collectors and prostitutes will get into the Kingdom of God before you do.

- **That was the story of Matthew! The hypocrisy of the religious was probably one of the reasons he ran from the faith...**
- A tax collector would often be considered lower than a prostitute...And this is why... a prostitute only sells her body...
- A Jewish tax collector sold himself to the Romans and then would rape financially the people for his own enrichment...
- Not only would he charge the going roman land use tax...but could charge whatever he would want on top of that pocketing it for himself.
- He could tax...for toll (use of the road) load(how many axles your cart had) any mail. Not to mention sales tax on good, produce and meat products...
- Used roman thugs to enforce the tax or confiscation of good if deemed necessary. All under the approval of the roman government.

- There were two kinds of tax collectors **Chief tax collector**...Zacchaeus in the gospel of Luke...
- **General tax collector** who would set up on key road intersections or in the market places. **So everyday working day he would receive the sneers of the Jewish businessmen and women...the looks of disgust.. hear the words of hate under their breaths**...how much money would it take to overcome that kind of rejection...as he would also have been rejected by his family...and rejected them....
- Such was Matthew....
- So What did the Lord see in Matthew?
  1. he obviously saw a man of great courage...to be willing and actually step out and choose a profession and lifestyle that reject his people, religion, his family, his honor...his place in society...took a lot of courage
  2. money and pleasure were his high ambition...at least when he started out...as he threw off every constraint he had been raised with.
  - 3. I say that because this man wrote the gospel of Matthew ...which is written with a Jewish mind set...meaning he was learned in the Jewish faith.**
  - 4. this is evident in that his gospel contains over 95 scriptures references to the Old Testament more than the other three gospels combined. including quotes from the Psalms and Prophets as well as the first five books...the Torah**
  5. which tells us he was well versed in the Word and Jewish religious tradition.
  6. Perhaps at a early age he was disillusioned by the discrepancies and hypocrisy between what was written and what was practiced.
  7. he probably was one of those people ...who if it isn't real it no deal...

8. But the Lord saw in him...that he was not content...he was in too deep to get out...but what he initially thought would fill him left him empty...
9. He wanted the real thing or no thing...
10. being in the mist of the marketplace ...the hot bed of town gossip he most definitely heard of this ...different rabbi...who could heal, who preached with authority, and could dispatch demons...his heart must have been stirred
11. and when the word of the Lord Hit that fertile ground...he moved in characteristic courage...quit his job on the spot and followed Jesus
12. the first rabbi who would ever speak to him ...let alone invite him to go with him...
13. he would not let this opportunity pass him by....he messed up once he wont do it again.

**What also strikes me is that his courage is encased in great humility...**

- **years and years of outward criticisms and inward self condemnation had certainly exposed his many flaws**
- he full recognized his many and deep sin ..he was Jewish
- ...and he would never forget he was a product of Grace...
- In fact in his gospel he mentions himself only two times....once at his call and once in the list of the twelve apostles.

**His life focus would be changed as his life on Jesus, his love of the lost, his call to the religious hypocrites to repent.**

**You see when you reach someone....you reach their sphere of influence**

- **Often there people in messy situations...like you**
- **But where there's a mess , there's a message**

*NLT MK 2: 15 Later, Levi invited Jesus and his disciples to his home as dinner guests, along with many tax collectors and other disreputable sinners.*

*(There were many people of this kind among Jesus' followers.)* <sup>16</sup> But when the teachers of religious law who were Pharisees<sup>[b]</sup> saw him eating with tax collectors and other sinners, they asked his disciples, "Why does he eat with such scum?<sup>[c]</sup>" <sup>17</sup> When Jesus heard this, he told them, "Healthy people don't need a doctor—sick people do. I have come to call not those who think they are righteous, but those who know they are sinners."

## **You see when you reach someone....you reach their sphere of influence**

- **Often their people in messy situations**
- **But where there's a mess , there's a message**

Since he could not go...and probably would not want to go to the synagogue

- The first thing he does is hold a huge banquet at his house for Jesus and invites all those like him... and Jesus was there
- Ostracized from church...hurting on the inside...sinners on the outside...
- Just the type of people Jesus came for...the sick...

Matthew knew the way to get the this group of sick was to create an environment for them which was common to them...a banquet party...so they could hear Jesus....

He was willing to reach out to people like him with the good news of Jesus...in an environment they would be attracted too.

It takes one to impact many for the Kingdom of God... that is how he would be used to win battles against the enemy...going right into his territory...starting with him and then others..

So God's winning strategy is simple..

*1 Cor 1 26 Remember, dear brothers and sisters, that few of you were wise in the world's eyes or powerful or wealthy when God called you. 27 Instead, God chose things the world considers foolish in order to shame those who think they are wise. And he chose things that are powerless to shame those who are powerful. 28 God chose things despised by the world,<sup>[b]</sup> things counted as nothing at all, and used them to bring to nothing what the world considers important.*

The powerful are the evil spiritual forces in the heavenlies who use the things of the world as his power...

•

end

- **we are now higher spiritual beings than the enemy...with access to Heavenly power... while still earth dwellers!!**
- **though we still must wrestle with him...close personal fighting...**

*Eph 6:* <sup>12</sup> For we do not wrestle against flesh and blood, but against the rulers, against the authorities, against the cosmic powers over this present darkness, against the spiritual forces of evil in the heavenly places. <sup>13</sup> Therefore take up the whole armor of God, that you may be able to withstand in the evil day, and having done all, to stand firm.

**What does verse 13 mean...it is our position that enables us to overcome by putting on our spiritual identity... your position....**

- **To stand means to confront from a position...stand in your higher ground and fight from there...**
- **We have the higher ground...the greater position and therefore the greater power..**

1. **The word Stand means to take your position and hold it!!**
2. **His Word is our Sword!!! wield it!!**
3. **Prayer is our long distance canons...fire them**
4. **obedience keeps our advancing steady!!! stop wandering all around...**

**our wrestling is important as we learn to fight well.... learn in our battles... ...in our battles we learn..to pray through doubt until we hit faith**



1. in our battles we learn...to overcome evil with good..
2. in our battles we learn...to persevere, and keep on marching
3. in our battles we learn...to be strong in Him..not in our selves
4. in our battles we learn...to stand firm..when we want to quit
5. in our battles we learn...to be victorious through prayer air strikes..
6. in our battles we learn...to war against that which wars against us
7. in our battles we learn...to walk out our talk
8. in our battles we learn... to grow in compassion for others who are struggling in their own battles
9. in our battles we learn..to conquer that which previously conquered us..fears, substances, pride...
10. in our battles we learn...to trust the character of God, when we don't understand his ways
11. in our battles we learn...that we will win!
12. So we can and should run to our humble God when in need...
13. In our battles we cry out for more of the Holy Spirit!!

**even our losses are instructional ...You may suffered setbacks of every kind...these aren't setbacks...there regrouping...**

- Our disappointments are instructional
- Our failures were not final...Merely stop signs... delays and obstacles...
- And that they will prove to be strategically necessary!!
- For through them they would learn some of life's greatest war weapons... such as Faith, patience perseverance and hope...long suffering

- **Defeats can change a rebellious heart!!**
- **In Fact ...We come to see defeats as the avenue for change in direction...**

## **2. Be the last person standing in your battles...**

*1 Cor 15:57 But thanks be to God! He gives us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ.58 Therefore, my dear brothers and sisters, stand firm. Let nothing move you. ....*

Since he could not go...and probably would not want to go to the synagogue

- The first thing he does is hold a huge banquet at his house for Jesus and invites all those like him... and Jesus was there
- Ostracized from church...hurting on the inside...sinners on the outside...
- Just the type of people Jesus came for...the sick...
- **There are four types of sick... Jesus is speaking of spiritually sick**
  - 1. those who are sick know it and want help**
  - 2. those who are sick know it and don't want help ...yet**
  - 3. those who are sick, don't believe it, refuse to listen to the symptoms or diagnosis... and want to kill the doctor**
  - 4. Those who are sick and don't know it and so they don't want help.. but when presented the symptoms and diagnosis in a way they can hear...will want help**

Matthew knew the way to get the fourth group was to create an environment for them which was common to them...a banquet party...so they could hear Jesus....

Courageous and humble... and was willing to reach out to people like him with the good news of Jesus...in an environment they would be attracted too.

It take the courage of one to impact many for the Kingdom of God...

Jesus saw that in Matthew...that which Matthew did not see himself.

To do something he had never done before...

Now...I want to talk about us...there is the individual that God calls and the response takes courage...God is doing some things individually in you, and that takes courage

And there is a call that God does in us...the church and that takes courage and sacrifice

- Like Matthew we want to reach people like us...and there are many people like Matthews friends that will not come into a church like setting...and for many reasons...
- This church is in the process of stepping out in courage to do something we have not done before ...

- We are going to change the environment in which people can come and meet Jesus...
- A church with different types of banquets in which people can meet and investigate Jesus...

@@@@@

### **Be the last person standing in your battles...**

<sup>Eph 6:13</sup> Therefore put on the full armor of God, so that when the day of evil comes, you may be able to stand your ground, and after you have done everything, to stand.

- **What does verse 13 mean....To stand means to confront from a position...stand in your higher ground and fight from there...**
- **we have the high ground...the greater position and therefore the greater power..**
- **James 4:7** Submit yourselves, **then**, to God. **Resist the devil**, and he will flee from you.
- Stand and he will run...

Courage precedes progress

you have to have the Heart to go or do... before you go or do....

*So what do we need to do stand firm in this:* we all need courage...

- **So Do not ever mistake ...bad times, hard times, trouble, or trials, disappointment, tragedy or loss as an indication that Jesus is not in charge...he is always in charge...but even more than that...a good plan is being worked out..**  
**So what is tough Faith...simple ...carry your crosses and follow the Lord.**
- **So we must Practice what we Believe! because someday practice actually becomes game time! *that is the perspective we must view all things in our life***
- **Courageous people can be counted on when the going is rough.. for they could be counted on when the going was easy...**
- **Courageous people keep moving in the face of major obstacles because they have learned to keep moving forward in the face of small obstacles**
- **Courageous people have learned to adapt and overcome what seem like insurmountable setbacks because they have learned to adapt and overcome normal setbacks..**
- **Courageous people keep their convictions in tragedy because they have learned to keep their convictions in prosperity....**  
1.

Courage always starts with an individual...but its results will impact many.....

The call of the apostle Matthew is one such example...

The Lord had been once again in the town of Capernaum and staying at the house of Peter.

When he goes for a walk...really a mission ...he is going to call his fifth disciple who will become an apostle... another whose heart the Lord would write his message upon.

*MK 2:13* Once again Jesus went out beside the lake. A large crowd came to him, and he began to teach them. <sup>14</sup> As he walked along, he saw Levi son of Alphaeus sitting at the tax collector's booth. "Follow me," Jesus told him, and Levi got up and followed him.

*MK 2:15* While Jesus was having dinner at Levi's house, many tax collectors and "sinners" were eating with him and his disciples, for there were many who followed him. <sup>16</sup> When the teachers of the law who were Pharisees saw him eating with the "sinners" and tax collectors, they asked his disciples: "Why does he eat with tax collectors and 'sinners'?"

*MK 2:17* On hearing this, Jesus said to them, "It is not the healthy who need a doctor, but the sick. I have not come to call the righteous, but sinners."

- Of all the apostles Matthew who was a Jew would arguably considered the greatest sinner of his day...the lowest of the low... hated by the populace, rejected by the religious and literally banned from the synagogue ...considered a traitor by his own nation... a sell out to the occupying Roman government... the shame of his family and considered completely and irrevocably rejected by God.
- They are always grouped in the Gospels by the religious with sinners...those outside of relationship with God...pagans, and gentiles
- they were spoken of in the same breath and matched up to prostitutes
- Jesus denouncing the religious hypocrites said this...

*MT 21:33* For John came to you to show you the way of righteousness, and you did not believe him, but the **tax collectors and the prostitutes did**. And even after you saw this, you did not repent and believe him.

- A tax collector would often be considered lower than a prostitute...And this is why... a prostitute only sells her body...
- A Jewish tax collector sold himself to the Romans and than would rape financially the people for his own enrichment...
- Not only would he charge the going roman land use tax...but could charge whatever he would want on top of that pocketing it for himself.
- He could tax...for toll (use of the road) load(how many axles your cart had) any mail. Not to mention sales tax on good, produce and meat products...
- Used roman thugs to enforce the tax or confiscation of good if deemed necessary. All under the approval of the roman government.
- There were two kinds of tax collectors **Chief tax collector**...Zacchaeus in the gospel of Luke...
- **General tax collector** who would set up on key road intersections or in the market places.
- Such was Matthew.
- What did the Lord see in Matthew?
  14. he obviously saw a man of great courage...to be willing and actually step out and choose a profession and lifestyle that reject his people, religion, his family, his honor...his place in society...took a lot of courage
  15. money and pleasure were his high ambition...at least when he started out...as he threw off every constraint he had been raised with.
  16. I say that because this man wrote the gospel of Matthew ...which is written with a Jewish mind set...meaning he was learned in the Jewish faith.
  17. this is evident in that his gospel contains over 95 scriptures references to the Old Testament more than the other three gospels combined. including quotes from the Psalms and Prophets as well as the first five books...the Torah
  18. which tells us he was well versed in the Word and Jewish religious tradition.

19. Perhaps at a early age he was disillusioned by the discrepancies and hypocrisy between what was written and what was practiced.
20. he probably was one of those people ...who if it isn't real it no deal...
21. But the Lord saw in him...that he was not content...he was in too deep to get out...but what he initially thought would fill him left him empty...
22. He wanted the real thing or no thing...
23. being in the mist of the marketplace ...the hot bed of town gossip he most definitely heard of this ...different rabbi...who could heal, who preached with authority, and could dispatch demons...his heart must have been stirred
24. and when the word of the Lord Hit that fertile ground...he moved in characteristic courage...quit his job on the spot and followed Jesus
25. the first rabbi who would ever speak to him ...let alone invite him to go with him...
26. he would not let this opportunity pass him by....he messed up once he wont do it again.

What also strikes me is that his courage is encased in great humility...

- years and years of outward criticisms and inward self condemnation had certainly exposed his many flaws
- he full recognized his many and deep sin
- ...and he would never forget he was a product of Grace...
- In fact in his gospel he mentions himself only two times....once at his call and once in the list of the twelve apostles.
- His focus was on Jesus, his love of the lost, his call to the religious hypocrites to repent.

**You see when you reach someone....you reach their sphere of influence**

- **Often their people in messy situations**
- **But where there's a mess , there's a message**

Since he could not go...and probably would not want to go to the synagogue

- The first thing he does is hold a huge banquet at his house for Jesus and invites all those like him... and Jesus was there
- Ostracized from church...hurting on the inside...sinners on the outside...
- Just the type of people Jesus came for...the sick...
- **There are four types of sick... Jesus is speaking of spiritually sick**
  5. those who are sick know it and want help
  6. those who are sick know it and don't want help ...yet
  7. those who are sick, don't believe it, refuse to listen to the symptoms or diagnosis... and want to kill the doctor
  8. Those who are sick and don't know it and so they don't want help.. but when presented the symptoms and diagnosis in a way they can hear...will want help

Matthew knew the way to get the fourth group was to create an environment for them which was common to them...a banquet party...so they could hear Jesus....

Courageous and humble... and was willing to reach out to people like him with the good news of Jesus...in an environment they would be attracted too.

It take the courage of one to impact many for the Kingdom of God...

Jesus saw that in Matthew...that which Matthew did not see himself.

To do something he had never done before...

Now...I want to talk about us...there is the individual that God calls and the response takes courage...God is doing some things individually in you, and that takes courage

And there is a call that God does in us...the church and that takes courage and sacrifice

- Like Matthew we want to reach people like us...and there are many people like Matthews friends that will not come into a church like setting...and for many reasons...
- This church is in the process of stepping out in courage to do something we have not done before ...
- We are going to change the environment in which people can come and meet Jesus...
- A church with different types of banquets in which people can meet and investigate Jesus...

**\*\*\*The central challenge for us followers of Jesus is giving up the expectation of Knowing what God is doing and where he is taking you ...and still trust him**

**@@@@@**

**He is regularly moving us away from the places we would rather stay... and moving us to places we would rather not go....**



**Often what we consider horrible and it is...yet is also God's way of blowing on the sails of our lives to move us into position to be testimonies of Him to a world that suffers but know not where to look for help**

*<sup>2 Cor 1:3</sup>All praise to God, the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ. God is our merciful Father and the source of all comfort. <sup>4</sup> He comforts us in all our troubles so that we can comfort others. When they are troubled, we will be able to give them the same comfort God has given us.*

- **Who is having a hard time ? walking in faith when the Spirit leads us in an area of suffering we never wanted to be led too.....**
- **Surrender to the Spirit as he is preparing you to minister to others similarly effected whom God wants to use you as a light to bring them to himself**

**\*\*\*\*But there is something more going on...**

- **God work includes much more that just his work in our individual lives...He is greatly concerned about other people who also are living in our time and God wants to reach them...**
- **and He is sovereign in how he accomplishes this**

*<sup>2 Cor 4:6</sup> For God, who said, "Let there be light in the darkness," has made this light shine in our hearts so we could know the glory of God that is seen in the face of Jesus Christ. <sup>7</sup> We now have this light shining in our hearts, but we ourselves are like fragile clay jars containing this great treasure. This makes it clear that our great power is from God, not from ourselves.*

- So the world is in darkness blinded by the enemy...and God wants to bring light to it...we are the light bearers...
- **And what opens their ears to hear us is that we suffer like they do...but we suffer differently...we know God!! And his power works in us through these damaged clay jars...**

*<sup>8</sup> We are pressed on every side by troubles, but we are not crushed. We are perplexed, but not driven to despair. <sup>9</sup> We are hunted down, but never abandoned by God. We get knocked down, but we are not destroyed. <sup>10</sup> Through suffering, our bodies continue to share in the death of Jesus so that the life of Jesus may also be seen in our bodies.*

- **When God wants to reach certain suffering people groups... he allows us to suffer similarly...so that we have commonality with the suffering**
- **It is the door opener to their ears ....which leads to their hearts..**
- **Our faith in the midst of suffering is for their benefit**

*<sup>15</sup> .... And as God's grace reaches more and more people, there will be great thanksgiving, and God will receive more and more glory. <sup>16</sup> That is why we never give up. Though our bodies are dying, our spirits are being renewed every day. <sup>17</sup> For our present troubles are small and won't last very long. Yet they produce for us a glory that vastly outweighs them and will last forever! <sup>18</sup> So we don't look at the troubles we can see now; rather, we fix our gaze on things that cannot be seen. For the things we see now will soon be gone, but the things we cannot see will last forever.*

**So what we consider horrible times...and they are....is one of the chief ways God's blows on the sails of our lives, to move us into position to be testimonies of Him to a world that does not know it's left hand from its right...**

- when you can abandon how you think it ought to be and you embrace what actually is...you realize your strength and resources are scant...you need God!
- And in that you also begin to realize that God wants to use you to minister to others who are similarly afflicted...as they witness you go through what they are going through ...and your God strengthening you ...God begins to become real to them also!

we are going to investigate to three different individuals who had life changing experiences with Jesus. A leper, a paraplegic, and an outcast. Only one of which we will study today.... We will look at the other two next week..

but there is something that all three have in common...and that something is ...

Courage!

- They all would rather risk criticism and experience failures in the pursuit of success, then remain silent and die on the sidelines.
- They would rather live with the prospects of having tried and failed.
- than live with the prospects of not having tried at all.
- Courage is when you fear Missing out ...More than Stepping out...
- That is the deadliest mind set of a fearful person...they would rather miss out, than step out...

You see without Courage we simply accumulate a collection of good ideas and a lifetime of regrets...

Do you realize that none of us lack insight and ideas; some lack the courage to do something about with them.

- Fear is what keeps one from taking a risk...from progressing
- Why? Because were not convinced the future will be better than the past..
- Fear is the enemy of courage

*JOS 1:1 After the death of Moses the servant of the LORD, the LORD said to Joshua son of Nun, Moses' aide: <sup>2</sup> "Moses my servant is dead. Now then, you and all these people, get ready to cross the Jordan River into the land I am about to give to them--to the Israelites. <sup>3</sup> I will give you every place where you set your foot, as I promised Moses. <sup>4</sup> Your territory will extend from the desert to Lebanon, and from the great river, the Euphrates--all the Hittite country--to the Great Sea on the west. <sup>5</sup> No one will be able to stand up against you all the days of your life. As I was with Moses, so I will be with you; I will never leave you nor forsake you.*

*JOS 1:6 "Be strong and courageous, because you will lead these people to inherit the land I swore to their forefathers to give them. <sup>7</sup> Be strong and very courageous. Be careful to obey all the law my servant Moses gave you; do not turn from it to the right or to the left, that you may be successful wherever you go. <sup>8</sup> Do not let this Book of the Law depart from your mouth; meditate on it day and night, so that you may be careful to do everything written in it. Then*

*you will be prosperous and successful. <sup>9</sup> Have I not commanded you? Be strong and courageous. Do not be terrified; do not be discouraged, for the LORD your God will be with you wherever you go."*

- The Lord would be with Joshua because he told Joshua to go...
- 3x he tells him to be courageous
- he is told to obey the word of the Lord and he will be successful where God sends ...God goes....
- **Only three things could defeat him...being terrified...giving into discouragement...forgetting God was with Him.....**
- Fear is the father of missed opportunities and the grandfather of regret...
- **And Fear of criticism (people), fear of failure, fear of the past (our history) and fear of the future... head the list of courage killers...**
- **Courage is what keeps one moving forward...a heart that says I do not want to miss out by not stepping out.**
- **Courage is what enables one to understand that failures, mistakes and setbacks are a part of success.**

**And true courage has great humility...it is absent of bravado....and machismo...**

2. true courage is humble because it knows there can be failure...so it is best entered into with concern
3. true courage is humble... because it knows there are factors outside of ones control, knowledge and experience.
4. true courage is humble...because it requires of one to step out and do something they do not feel qualified to do...
5. true courage is humble... because it knows success is dependent on more than yourself... on more than ones will...other people and other resources are needed
6. So it is a we rather than I thing...
7. The problem with a self made man is that there is a lid on what one can teach oneself and the height one can raise one self.
8. Because everyone only knows so much...and unless one is willing to learn from others...he will hit the lid of growth.

Courage always starts with an individual...but it results will impact many.....

The call of the apostle Matthew is one such example...

The Lord had been once again in the town of Capernaum and staying at the house of Peter.

When he goes for a walk...really a mission ...he is going to call his fifth disciple who will become an apostle... another whose heart the Lord would write his message upon.

*<sup>MK 2:13</sup> Once again Jesus went out beside the lake. A large crowd came to him, and he began to teach them. <sup>14</sup> As he walked along, he saw Levi son of Alphaeus sitting at the tax collector's booth. "Follow me," Jesus told him, and Levi got up and followed him.*

*<sup>MK 2:15</sup> While Jesus was having dinner at Levi's house, many tax collectors and "sinners" were eating with him and his disciples, for there were many who followed him. <sup>16</sup> When the teachers of the law who were Pharisees saw him*

eating with the "sinners" and tax collectors, they asked his disciples: "Why does he eat with tax collectors and sinners?"

*MK 2:17 On hearing this, Jesus said to them, "It is not the healthy who need a doctor, but the sick. I have not come to call the righteous, but sinners."*

- Of all the apostles Matthew who was a Jew would arguably considered the greatest sinner of his day...the lowest of the low... hated by the populace, rejected by the religious and literally banned from the synagogue ...considered a traitor by his own nation... a sell out to the occupying Roman government... the shame of his family and considered completely and irrevocably rejected by God.
- They are always grouped in the Gospels by the religious with sinners...those outside of relationship with God...pagans, and gentiles
- they were spoken of in the same breath and matched up to prostitutes
- Jesus denouncing the religious hypocrites said this...

*MT 21:33 For John came to you to show you the way of righteousness, and you did not believe him, but the tax collectors and the prostitutes did. And even after you saw this, you did not repent and believe him.*

- A tax collector would often be considered lower than a prostitute...And this is why... a prostitute only sells her body...
- A Jewish tax collector sold himself to the Romans and than would rape financially the people for his own enrichment...
- Not only would he charge the going roman land use tax...but could charge whatever he would want on top of that pocketing it for himself.
- He could tax...for toll (use of the road) load(how many axles your cart had) any mail. Not to mention sales tax on good, produce and meat products...
- Used roman thugs to enforce the tax or confiscation of good if deemed necessary. All under the approval of the roman government.
- There were two kinds of tax collectors **Chief tax collector**...Zacchaeus in the gospel of Luke...
- **General tax collector** who would set up on key road intersections or in the market places.
- Such was Matthew.
- What did the Lord see in Matthew?
  27. he obviously saw a man of great courage...to be willing and actually step out and choose a profession and lifestyle that reject his people, religion, his family, his honor...his place in society...took a lot of courage
  28. money and pleasure were his high ambition...at least when he started out...as he threw off every constraint he had been raised with.
  29. I say that because this man wrote the gospel of Matthew ...which is written with a Jewish mind set...meaning he was learned in the Jewish faith.
  30. this is evident in that his gospel contains over 95 scriptures references to the Old Testament more than the other three gospels combined. including quotes from the Psalms and Prophets as well as the first five books...the Torah
  31. which tells us he was well versed in the Word and Jewish religious tradition.
  32. Perhaps at a early age he was disillusioned by the discrepancies and hypocrisy between what was written and what was practiced.
  33. he probably was one of those people ...who if it isn't real it no deal...
  34. But the Lord saw in him...that he was not content...he was in too deep to get out...but what he initially thought would fill him left him empty...
  35. He wanted the real thing or no thing...
  36. being in the mist of the marketplace ...the hot bed of town gossip he most definitely heard of this ...different rabbi...who could heal, who preached with authority, and could dispatch demons...his heart must have been stirred

37. and when the word of the Lord Hit that fertile ground...he moved in characteristic courage...quit his job on the spot and followed Jesus
38. the first rabbi who would ever speak to him ...let alone invite him to go with him...
39. he would not let this opportunity pass him by....he messed up once he wont do it again.

What also strikes me is that his courage is encased in great humility...

- years and years of outward criticisms and inward self condemnation had certainly exposed his many flaws
- he full recognized his many and deep sin
- ...and he would never forget he was a product of Grace...
- In fact in his gospel he mentions himself only two times....once at his call and once in the list of the twelve apostles.
- His focus was on Jesus, his love of the lost, his call to the religious hypocrites to repent.

**You see when you reach someone....you reach their sphere of influence**

- **Often their people in messy situations**
- **But where there's a mess , there's a message**

Since he could not go...and probably would not want to go to the synagogue

- The first thing he does is hold a huge banquet at his house for Jesus and invites all those like him... and Jesus was there
- Ostracized from church...hurting on the inside...sinners on the outside...
- Just the type of people Jesus came for...the sick...
- **There are four types of sick... Jesus is speaking of spiritually sick**
  9. those who are sick know it and want help
  10. those who are sick know it and don't want help ...yet
  11. those who are sick, don't believe it, refuse to listen to the symptoms or diagnosis... and want to kill the doctor
  12. Those who are sick and don't know it and so they don't want help.. but when presented the symptoms and diagnosis in a way they can hear...will want help

**Matthew knew the way to get the fourth group was to create an environment for them which was common to them...a banquet party...so they could hear Jesus....**

**Courageous and humble... and was willing to reach out to people like him with the good news of Jesus...in an environment they would be attracted too.**

**It take the courage of one to impact many for the Kingdom of God...**

**Jesus saw that in Matthew...that which Matthew did not see himself.**

**To do something he had never done before...**

Now...I want to talk about us...there is the individual that God calls and the response takes courage...God is doing some things individually in you, and that takes courage

And there is a call that God does in us...the church and that takes courage and sacrifice

- Like Matthew we want to reach people like us...and there are many people like Matthews friends that will not come into a church like setting...and for many reasons...
- This church is in the process of stepping out in courage to do something we have not done before ...
- We are going to change the environment in which people can come and meet Jesus...
- A church with different types of banquets in which people can meet and investigate Jesus...
- 

**S**

## ***5. Move you from your position...this takes great courage...fear is a reaction and curgae is a decision...Winston Churchill***

It takes courage to step out...we all need courage...

- They all would rather risk criticism and experience failures in the pursuit of success, then remain silent and die on the sidelines.
- They would rather live with the prospects of having tried and failed.
- than live with the prospects of not having tried at all.
- Courage is when you fear Missing out ...More than Stepping out...
- That is the deadliest mind set of a fearful person...they would rather miss out, than step out...

You see without Courage we simply accumulate a collection of good ideas and a lifetime of regrets...

Do you realize that none of us lack insight and ideas; some lack the courage to do something about with them.

- Fear is what keeps one from taking a risk...from progressing
- Why? Because were not convinced the future will be better than the past..
- Fear is the enemy of courage