



Sermon Discussion Guide

The God Of Second Chances

Jesus Makes Headlines – Part 2

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*“Anyone who belongs to Christ has become a new person.
The old life is gone; a new life has begun!” 2 Corinthians 5:17 (NLT)*

The story of Matthew is one of many Bible stories about people with scandalous or sinful backgrounds to whom God gave second chances. Begin by reading this short story in Matthew 9:9-13. Matthew’s own Jewish people hated him because he was a tax collector, seemingly permanently rejected by God. Yet Jesus stepped into Matthew’s life and changed everything, and God uses this story to teach you how deeply he loves you as well. He wants to offer you a new life based on his grace, regardless of who you are or what you have done: Jesus sees you and loves you as you are; Jesus calls you as you are, and won’t leave you as you are. God wants you to hear how much he loves you and longs to give you a second chance, and here we’ll discuss how accepting God’s gift can impact how we view ourselves and others.

OPEN YOUR GROUP WITH A PRAYER. THIS IS ONLY A GUIDE – SELECT THE POINTS YOU WANT TO DISCUSS.

*“As Jesus went on ... he saw a man named Matthew sitting at the tax collector’s booth.
‘Follow me,’ he told him, and Matthew got up and followed him.” Mathew 9:9 (NIV)*

1. Matthew 9:9 says Jesus “saw” Matthew. To “see” someone means to focus and give attention to. Why would people feel loved by knowing Jesus is focusing on them? Why might people feel ashamed or uncomfortable by that same thought?
2. What do you think this story can teach us about how God wants to impact our lives? If we adopted the same perspective that God has, how might that change the way we view and interact with the other people in our lives?

“He who began a good work in you will carry it on to completion.” Philippians 1:6 (NIV)

3. This verse says Jesus won’t leave you until he carries the good work in you to completion. What are examples of good works begun in people that Jesus will complete?

*“For it is by grace you have been saved, through faith — and this is not from yourselves,
it is the gift of God.” Ephesians 2:8 (NIV)*

4. As you examine yourself, why do you think you are chosen to receive God’s mercy and grace?
5. When you surrender to God, God’s salvation is the first step of your life transformation, not the final step. What do you think next steps would be?

Diving Deeper (optional)

1. Many people see us as we used to be, but we may see ourselves differently and God sees us as we can be. How might the way we see ourselves influence the way we think God sees us? How can knowing that God already sees and accepts us just as we are help us?

“I have not come to call the righteous, but sinners.” Matthew 9:13 (NIV)

2. Why do you think Jesus wants to have a relationship with sinners rather than just the righteous?
3. With other people, we rarely get second chances, but with God there are unlimited second chances. Share with your group a time when you utilized a second chance that God offered.

REVIEW ANY ASSIGNMENTS OR COMMITMENTS MADE DURING YOUR PREVIOUS MEETING.

Sermon Discussion Guide Leader Notes

Suggestions for This Week’s Study

- Have group members give a few examples of people in the news who somehow seemed to get second chances that dramatically changed their lives.
- Lead group members to see that Matthew’s story illustrates how God loves all of us just as we are, and wants to offer us new lives based on his grace. Emphasize how understanding this will impact how we view ourselves and others.
- Pray: Father, thank you so much for your mercy and your grace. Thank you for loving me and calling me just as I am. Knowing that you won’t leave me as I am, I choose to follow you and I accept your offer to write a new future for my life. Please let me never lose sight of your love in my life, and help me recognize the potential of your love and grace for every other person I encounter. I ask all this in confidence through your son Jesus. Amen.

Preparing to Lead Your Group

- ✓ **PRAY** for insight as you begin to prepare for leading your group. Ask for God’s wisdom, that the Holy Spirit will be the teacher and that you will be God’s instrument to lead the group to greater understanding and a willingness to commit to becoming more like God. Prayer should be your primary source of personal preparation for leading your group.
- ✓ **PLAN** where you want to take your group in the next 60-90 days. Is your group strong in some areas and weak in others? How can you challenge the members to live more balanced Christian lives? Consider God’s five purposes for the church: Fellowship, Discipleship, Ministry, Mission and Worship, and make a plan to encourage your group members to growth and commitment in their weak areas.
- ✓ **PONDER YOUR PROGRESS** after each session and at the end of a series. Reflect on what went well and what didn’t. Re-evaluation is key to your growth as a leader. Consider whether your plan is being effective in moving the group to greater understanding and commitment. How are you doing with leading the discussion: is it stimulating, challenging, and meaningful? Are you able to keep the group on track? Do you need to make some changes?

Using This Sermon Discussion Guide

- Talk It Over is a tool to aid you in meeting the needs of your group. We’ve designed it so it can be completed easily within 30-45 minutes. As the discussion leader, you should preview and evaluate the questions based on the needs of your group. Decide in advance what is most important to focus on, should time not allow for the entire lesson.
- Feel free to adapt the format to meet the needs of your group. If your group is mature and wants to dig deeper, consider using the Diving Deeper section or add additional Scripture and ask suitable questions. Remember that this is only a guide.
- The questions relating to Bible study methods are helpful to develop Bible literacy and spiritual maturity in our lives. You can help your group be aware of their needs in these areas by using these questions as a regular part of each discussion.
- Personal applications are essential for growth and should be included in every discussion. When discussing how they will apply principles, group members may state very general goals such as “I need to spend more time in prayer.” It is important for you to help people make goals that are very specific and commit to specific plans of action by asking, for example, “How are you going to begin?” An example is to get up 25 minutes earlier each morning, spending 15 minutes reading the Bible and 10 minutes in prayer. Encourage each group member to be accountable to the group for personal progress at the next meeting.
- Your goal as the leader is to bring the group into a stimulating discussion that helps the members recognize their needs for personal life change. Ultimately you want them to be willing to commit to change with accountability to the group. Accountability helps us to persevere in our commitments and achieve the blessings of success.