

Read: Matthew 9:9-13

Is There a Doctor in the House?

Matthew 9:12

Jesus said, "It is not the healthy who need a doctor, but the sick."

In the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit. Amen.

Have you ever played "doctor" before? Did you ask, "Mommy, where does it hurt?" Maybe you needed to wrap Mommy's arm up in a bandage or take Daddy's temperature. They were never actually sick, but it felt nice to "nurse" them back to health.

In today's Bible reading, Jesus called Matthew to be one of his disciples. Matthew, a tax collector, was "sick." Maybe not physically, but spiritually. Tax collectors were known for being greedy and collecting more money than people actually owed. They did not have the best reputation among the people, and yet, Jesus told Matthew "Follow me" (Matthew 9:9).

Jesus was helping someone who needed it. Matthew needed to be healed by God's grace. He was sick with sin, and Jesus was his healer.

After calling Matthew out of his tax booth, Jesus went over to his house for dinner. How special that must have been for Matthew and all of his friends! But other people were watching and didn't like it. Pharisees were people who thought they were better than others. They looked down on anyone who sinned more than they did. They were upset that Jesus would dine with a sinner like Matthew and his friends. They asked, "Why do you eat with tax collectors and sinners?"

Jesus answered, "It is not the healthy who need a doctor, but the sick" (Matthew 9:12).

Don't ever be afraid to admit, "I am sick" because Jesus came for sick people. While it is true we may have never stolen any money, each of us have our own personal struggles. Maybe we get mad way too easily. Maybe we tear people down with our words, disobey our parents, or love things of this world more than God. The same Jesus that called Matthew to be his disciple wants us to be his disciples too.

We live in a world full of sickness that weakens our ability to follow Jesus. Matthew might not have felt qualified to be a disciple of Jesus. We might feel like that at times too, but we are not alone. We have the greatest doctor on our side. He is the one with the power to heal our sin-sick soul. "By his wounds, we are healed" (Isaiah 53:5b).

The questions below are to help families discuss this devotion. The questions are divided by age group as suggestions, but anyone could reflect on any of the questions as they desire.

Questions for the Younger Children

- What was the name of the man Jesus called to follow him? What did he do for a living?
- How are you like Matthew? What did Jesus do to heal you?

Questions for Elementary Age Children

- What did Jesus mean when he said, "It's not the healthy who need a doctor, but the sick"?
- Discuss the difference between "sinners" and "Pharisees." Which one did Jesus say he came for? Why?

Questions for Middle School and Above

- Jesus ate dinner with Matthew. What meal are you getting ready to receive in the future in which Jesus promises to dine with you? (Lord's Supper)
- What is in the Lord's Supper that heals a sin-sick soul?

Closing Prayer:

Dear Great Physician, forgive us when we fall short. Thank you for healing us. Give us strength as we share your news to our sick world. Amen.