

Read: Matthew 9:10-12

God's Mercy is for Sinners Like Matthew and Me

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.

Do you have ranidaphobia? That's a fear of frogs. Maybe you have chronomentrophobia? Fear of clocks. If you suffer from iatrophobia, you have . . . anyone? It's a fear of going to the doctor.

Sometimes people are afraid of going to the doctor. But it's important that we do, especially when we're sick. The doctor can tell us what's wrong. He can prescribe medicine that will help us feel better.

Did you know Jesus was a doctor? Not a doctor with a white lab coat and a stethoscope. Jesus is a doctor for our souls. That's what he says in God's Word for us today.

One of the things the Bible teaches us is that we are all sick. Not "body sick" but soul sick with a disease called sin. What are its symptoms? Getting angry and throwing a fit when it's not appropriate. Sassing mom or dad. Saying bad things about our classmates.

While hearing the news that you're sick is not usually a good thing, in this case it is. People who are soul sick are exactly the ones Jesus is looking for. He's not only the doctor. He's also the medicine that cures us. His holy precious blood seeks out our sin, finds it, and erases it once and for all in God's sight.

It's pretty awesome that the doctor, Jesus, wants to see and hear from us! Matthew and his friends were not a very popular group. Others looked down on them and tried to keep them at a distance. But Jesus didn't run away from them. Jesus shows mercy to the outcasts, the losers, and the spiritually sick. He shows mercy to you and me. There are many things in this world that make us afraid. But we do not need to be afraid to stand before God on Judgment Day. Why? Because Jesus stands there *with* us.

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 Younger Children

- Why were the Pharisees upset?
- How did Jesus show love and mercy to Matthew and his friends?

Questions for Elementary Age Children

- How can you tell when you are sin-sick?
- How is Jesus both the doctor and the cure for sin?

Questions for Middle School and Above

- Someone might be afraid to go see a doctor. Why do you think someone might be afraid to go see Jesus, our spiritual doctor?
- The Pharisees were respected and popular people. While popularity by itself isn't a bad thing, name three ways that popularity might be bad for our spiritual health. *(Examples: We may only listen to our own thoughts but ignore Jesus' words. A popular person doesn't automatically make him/her a truthful person. Even popular people can be spiritually sick . . . they just might not know it because they don't know Jesus. Scary!)*

Closing Prayer:

Lord Jesus, your love for me led you to take my place. Thank you for living perfectly for me. Thank you for dying for me. Help me to live each day as your redeemed child. Amen.

Hymn: CW 596:1 – Let Me Be Yours Forever

Let me be yours forever,
My faithful God and Lord;
Let me forsake you never
Nor wander from your Word.
Lord, do not let me waver
But give me steadfastness,
And for such grace and favor
Your holy name I'll bless.