



The Table Series Part 1

Pastor Christopher Miller

November 8, 2020

When we think of the Fall and Winter seasons, it may bring many thoughts, memories, and enjoyments to our hearts and minds. Whether it is deer hunting, football, camping, backyard campfires, or one of my personal favorites, Thanksgiving, and even Christmas. November of every year brings a special time in America where we gather together with family and friends to celebrate Thanksgiving; turkey, ham, dressing, and all the fixings to go along with it.

It is this event that serves as a capstone of the year to help us recalibrate our focuses and our pursuits to be reminded of what is most important: family and friends. And it is during this celebration that we give thanks, on Thanksgiving WE Give Thanks.

And throughout this year, we have endured many things and bore many hardships, many sorrows indeed, but I believe that the silver lining of all of this is found in one outcome, if you will, of having gone through all that we have; this year has forced us all to focus on what truly matters: our family and our friends. I have stood by many bedsides at the end of a person's life and one thing I have noticed that is that it is not a political party leader around the bedside nor a head coach of a favorite athletics team or even some celebrity or Hollywood actor.

No, the ones who gather at these times of transition into eternity are family and friends. When we get older, and the reality of life hits us head on, it causes us all to want to be with family, to live closer to family, and even make times like Thanksgiving a priority because family is what birthed you and at the end of your life, it is family that will bury you.

This may seem like a dispelling statement or perhaps be interpreted as gloomy but my goal is not to bring us down emotionally but rather to help us all to understand that at the end of it all, Family Matters and our time around the Table with family is important.

Sitting around the table sharing love and life with those we care for allows us to be postured to gain a very important insight about Christ! Some of the greatest revelations of God found in the Scriptures were delivered by Jesus sitting around a table! Sometimes those seated with him were family, other times friends and even at certain times, foes found their place at the table.

Sinners, and tax collectors and even His own disciples all learned a great deal while sitting at a Table with Christ. There are many things that Jesus reveals about the Father while at a Table but today I want to focus in on one specific text. Jesus reveals the Heart of God sitting around a Table in The Gospel of Saint Matthew 9:9-13

Matthew 9:9-13, “As Jesus passed on from there, he saw a man called Matthew sitting at the tax booth, and he said to him, “Follow me.” And he rose and followed him. ¹⁰ And as Jesus reclined at table in the house, behold, many tax collectors and Sinners came and were reclining with Jesus and his disciples. ¹¹ And when the Pharisees saw this, they said to his disciples, “Why does your teacher eat with tax collectors and Sinners?” ¹² But when he heard it, he said, “Those who are well have no need of a physician, but those who are sick. ¹³ Go and learn what this means: ‘I desire mercy, and not sacrifice.’ For I came not to call the righteous, but Sinners.”

In this Text, Jesus reveals the Heart of God sitting around a Table of Sinners. If you will notice with me the last verse of this section, verse 13, **“13 Go and learn what this means: ‘I desire mercy, and not sacrifice.’ For I came not to call the righteous, but Sinners.”** “Go and learn what this means...” What is Christ referencing to and to whom is Christ speaking to? In this text, we observe Christ with His disciples sitting at a table with Sinners and tax collectors and the Pharisees take issue with a Rabbi, a holy man and a teacher of the Torah, seated at a table with unclean, unholy people who are not obedient to Torah.

In their minds, Holy People do not associate with Un-Holy People because as observers of the Law of Moses, the Pharisees believed they were set apart and “better” than these Sinners because of their religious zeal and faithfulness to Torah. Notice Jesus’ response to their rebuttal of His presence being found with the ill repute of society, **“Those who are well have no need of a physician, but those who are sick.”**

Now I want to define three parties found in this text: Pharisees, Disciples, and Sinners. And Christ is revealing the Heart of God to all three parties simultaneously whether they understood that or not at the time. His Disciples were being Qualified, Sinners were being Comforted, and the Pharisees were being Corrected. The principle of the matter is that all three of these parties needed the Sacrifice that Christ would make upon the Cross but none of them knew just how necessary it was at the time.

In reference back to verse 13, what did Jesus mean by, “Learn what this means...”, to what was Christ referring to? He was referring to a Scripture text found in **Hoses chapter 6 in verse 6 when the Prophet Hosea recorded the Word of the Lord, “For I desire steadfast love and not sacrifice, the knowledge of God rather than burnt offerings.”** What was Christ trying to teach all parties involved? Simply put, God desires our love and willingness to follow Him versus our willingness to offer sacrifice to appease him so that we can in turn tolerate sin in our lives; it’s the difference between being Religious in our Spiritual Expression versus being Relational in our Spiritual Expression.

The bigger impact of this statement is that Jesus’ offer of salvation to Sinners threatened the Pharisees way of life because Jesus taught acceptance of His Sacrifice and the Pharisees taught obedience to the Law of Moses. One taught salvation was obtained by one’s self and the other taught salvation from one’s self (REPEAT). The bottom line is that no one in this room can save themselves!

Remember the Words of Christ, “I desire Mercy and not Sacrifice”. Sacrifice summarized observance of religious rituals. God’s desire for Mercy, meaning steadfast love, should have led the Pharisees to care for these Sinners as Jesus did and not disdain them.

Their religious practice had made them merciless and not merciful; all the while missing the fact that their sins and the Sinners’ sins and the

disciples' sins and everyones' sins would need atonement; mercy and sacrifice quiet literally at the same time. We must bear in mind that Mercy sent the Sacrifice; we do not Sacrifice to get Mercy. (Repeat)

I want stop here at this point in our study and teach on a subject topic for a moment that many do not fully grasp nor understand. I've been chewing on a thought that I would like to teach through today to provide some context here. Too many of us have a pour theology on The Blood of Jesus. Many talk about the Blood of Jesus in regards to it being shed for you, but on the contrary the Blood of Jesus was not strictly shed for you; it was shed on you for Him. Now before some folks scream "Heresy", let me explain.

The Blood of Jesus deals with the Feast of Passover and the Passover was when God came to judge the Egyptians for their sins against the Hebrews and everywhere that the Blood was not applied was met with Judgment and Death. The Blood was shed for God to know who was a part of the Covenant and who was not. And we also must remember when Christ was crucified; during the Feast of Passover. The Blood was the marker of atonement and covenant; in which covenant, Jesus facilitated the need of the penalty for Sins in His own body in so that we could all become the Righteousness of God in Christ Jesus.

Thus, the Blood was not shed strictly for us but rather on our behalf; it was shed for God's judgment of sin to be appeased. The Bible is explicit in

the Old Testament that the Blood doesn't belong to man, the Blood belongs to God.

God gave instructions in the Old Testament that when you kill an animal, the Blood belongs to Him. You can keep the fat and the flesh but the Blood belongs to Him. This is why He prohibited Blood from being in meat when cooked for consumption because the Blood belongs to God. God's context of sacrifice is a life for a life. And if you eat meat with Blood in it, you take the Blood of that dead thing into yourself. The entirety of Leviticus 17 is based on the teaching on the Sanctity of the Blood.

Notice the text of Leviticus 17:13-14, ¹³“Whatever man of the children of Israel, or of the strangers who dwell among you, who hunts and catches any animal or bird that may be eaten, he shall pour out its blood and cover it with dust; ¹⁴for *it is* the life of all flesh. Its blood sustains its life. Therefore I said to the children of Israel, ‘You shall not eat the blood of any flesh, for the life of all flesh is its blood. Whoever eats it shall be cut off.’”

Only God can take the Blood of a dead thing unto Himself and cause it to become reconciling and a propitiating sacrifice. So the Blood is not shed for us, it is shed on us for HIM. So when He comes, the payment is the Blood and He gives to us life in exchange for the Blood of Christ. This is why you can't go around slinging the Blood and pleading the Blood.

Where is the Bible does it say to plead His Blood? And on that note, can I challenge us a little more on this topic? We don't plead the Blood; the Bible says that the Blood pleads itself.

Hebrews 12:22-24, “²² But you have come to Mount Zion and to the city of the living God, the heavenly Jerusalem, to an innumerable company of angels, ²³ to the ^lgeneral assembly and church of the firstborn *who are* registered in heaven, to God the Judge of all, to the spirits of just men made perfect, ²⁴ to Jesus the Mediator of the new covenant, and to the Blood of sprinkling that speaks better things than *that of Abel.*”

Why does this text draw a correlation between the Blood of Christ and the Blood of Abel? Because the Blood of Abel cried out for Vengeance! The Blood of Christ cries out for Mercy! His Blood has a voice; and we don't apply the Blood, it is He who applies the Blood as our High Priest after the Order of Melchizedek. Only the High Priest has the authority to apply the Blood which excludes all of us from the equation. The Blood is not to be applied to your car; His blood wasn't shed for your car, His Blood was shed for your life! The Blood is not applied to things, it is applied to lives! It is applied by Jesus who is the High Priest of our Faith and it is applied to us once and for all. The issue of the Blood is this; The Blood cannot be applied multiple times because for it to be applied multiple times, this constitutes multiple slayings. And there are not multiple slayings of Christ because Christ died once and for all!

Hebrews 10:26-31 records this very truth, “²⁶ For if we sin willfully after we have received the knowledge of the truth, there no longer remains a sacrifice for sins, ²⁷ but a certain fearful expectation of judgment, and fiery indignation which will devour the adversaries. ²⁸ Anyone who has rejected Moses’ law dies without mercy on *the testimony of two or three witnesses.* ²⁹ Of how much worse punishment, do you suppose, will he be thought worthy who has trampled the Son of God underfoot, counted the blood of the covenant by which he was sanctified a common thing, and insulted the Spirit of grace? ³⁰ For we know Him who said, “Vengeance is Mine, I will repay,” says the Lord. And again, “The Lord will judge His people.” ³¹ It is a fearful thing to fall into the hands of the living God.”

The Blood of Jesus does three things in the Life of the Believer:

1. It delivers you from You
 - a. Condemnation and Regret
2. It delivers you from God’s Wrath
 - a. God, in His righteous judgment, demands payment for your sins
3. It delivers you from the Accuser of the Brethren
 - a. It silences Satan from being able to bring an accusation against you because your sins have been atoned for.

In line with the Temple's Layout and Function:

1. The Blood provides us access to the Outer Court
 - a. Altar of Burnt Sacrifices
 - b. Brazen Laver
 - c. Worship

2. The Spirit provides us access to the Inner Court
 - a. Golden Menorah
 - i. Illumination
 1. The Flame existed because of the presence of the oil
 2. The Anointing maintains the Flame

 - b. Altar of Incense
 - i. Prayer
 1. The Altar of Incense required two items:
 - a. The Coals from the Altar of Sacrifice
 - b. The Mixture of Incense to be burned
 2. The Altar of Incense required the Altar of Sacrifice
 3. Sacrifice was required for Prayer to be accepted

c. Table of Shoe Bread

i. Provision

1. The bread found at this table was provision that only the priests could get access too
2. Remember the words of David in Psalm 23, “You prepare a table for me in the presence of my enemies”

3. Sonship provides us access to the Holy of Holies

a. The Ark of the Covenant is now the Mercy Seat

i. It contained three items:

1. Moses’ Rod that budded - Supernatural Power
2. The Ten Commandments - Supernatural Protection
3. A Jar of the Manna - Supernatural Provision

Nugget:

- 120 silver trumpets blasted on the day that Solomon’s Temple was dedicated.
- 120 Voices blasted forth in Tongues and Prophecy on the Day of Pentecost at the dedication of a New Temple that had not been built with hands!

But too many of us settle for an outer court experience and stop at the Blood when there is so much more to experience in God! And the beauty of this whole story is that you can't do anything to earn it; only receive it! Your salvation is not your own, your righteousness is not your own, your anointing is not your own, your holiness is not your own, the Blood of Jesus doesn't belong to you and even the Holy Ghost is not your own!

They are all gifts from God because of what Christ Jesus did in you and not what you do for God! When we all come to terms with the fact that there is nothing about you that makes you worthy of His Sacrifice for you, it further validates the awesomeness of God and His willingness to pour His very being into an existence of creation that has nothing to offer in return!

And as Disciples of Christ, we must never forget what Christ saved us from but also remember what Christ saved us to! And if we are born again and the have the Holy Ghost living on the inside of us, the very Heart of God should be evident in our daily lives! Jesus revealed the Heart of God in this chapter and there are three points that we should make a personal practice.

1) **The Heart of God is to be open to Ministering to People who are Broken!** (Note Verse 10 of the Text)

a) ¹⁰ **And as Jesus reclined at table in the house, behold, many tax collectors and Sinners came and were reclining with Jesus and his disciples.**

- b) If we don't see the value of ministering to broken people then we don't see the value of the blood of Jesus delivering us from our Brokenness.
- c) We must never forget that the same Blood of Jesus that was shed for you was also shed for them and if we ever fall into the mindset that our Righteousness is a byproduct of our religious zeal then we have become like the Pharisees.
- d) The Heart of God is to be open to Ministering to People who are Broken!
- e) And as Blood Washed Believers, our hearts should be open to do the same.
- f) Not only is the Heart of God to be open to Ministering to People who are Broken... (Point #2)

2) The Heart of God is to be willing to go after the Sick and not just minister to the Well, to go after the Lost and not just cater to the Saints!

(Note Verses 11-12 of the Text)

- a) ¹¹ And when the Pharisees saw this, they said to his disciples, "Why does your teacher eat with tax collectors and Sinners?" ¹² But when he heard it, he said, "Those who are well have no need of a physician, but those who are sick.
- b) Asking Jesus why He was eating with tax collectors and Sinners is like asking a Doctor why he's in a hospital!

- c) As I stated earlier, God's desire for Mercy should have led the Pharisees to care for these Sinners as Jesus did and not disdain them but their religious practice had made them merciless and not merciful. But sadly all the Pharisees had ever known was sacrifice on their part thus building a sense of pride in themselves because of their religious fervor and zeal. God's Grace demands that we have Grace for others. It is impossible for a Christian to not demonstrate Grace because we are all the byproduct of Grace.
- d) Our Testimony of what Christ has done in us should make us tender towards those who battle with the very things Christ has delivered us from. I have a heart for certain people based upon their struggles because I understand the shame of addiction and substance abuse. Pastor Beck has a heart for restoring families and seeing families strong in the Lord. Pastor Brad has a heart for people to experience God in worship and see the power of the Holy Spirit manifest in the lives of those who have heavy hearts. It is those burdens that come from deep places in our spirits. And it is our testimonies that should make us tender towards others and not critical.
- e) The Heart of God is to be willing to go after the Sick and not just minister to the Well, to go after the Lost and not just cater to the Saints!

- f) And as Blood Washed Believers, our hearts should be open to do the same.
- g) Not only is the Heart of God is to be willing to go after the Sick and not just minister to the Well, to go after the Lost and not just cater to the Saints... (Point #3)

3) The Heart of God is to give mercy to the Sinner for it is the Sinner who needs to hear the call from Master (Note verse 13 of the Text)

- a) ¹³ Go and learn what this means: ‘I desire mercy, and not sacrifice.’ For I came not to call the righteous, but Sinners.”
- b) Notice the last words of Christ in this verse, “I came not to call the righteous, but sinners.” But there is one caveat that ties into this verse... There is none that are righteous, no not one.
- c) The Apostle Paul declared in Romans 3:9-12, “⁹What then? Are we Jews any better off? No, not at all. For we have already charged that all, both Jews and Greeks, are under sin, ¹⁰as it is written: “None is righteous, no, not one; ¹¹no one understands; no one seeks for God. ¹²All have turned aside; together they have become worthless; no one does good, not even one.”

- d) When Jesus was stating that He was not calling the righteous but rather the sinner, the premise of this statement was that there were no righteous to call. For all have sinned and fallen short of the Glory of God according to Romans 3:23.
- e) The Heart of God is to give mercy to the Sinner for it is the Sinner who needs to hear the call from Master!
- f) And as Blood Washed Believers, our hearts should be open to do the same.
- g) Our World is Hurting and needs to experience the Heart of God and it is our responsibility to make sure that happens!

Altar Call