

## **The Twelve: Walk A Mile in Their Shoes**

### **Matthew: The Despised & Thomas: The Doubter**

Various Texts

*“They were not elite. They were not known for their education. They were the commonest of the common. They were fishermen....Christ deliberately passed over those who were aristocratic & influential & chose men mostly from the dregs of society.” John MacArthur*

**Main Idea:** God is neither troubled by my past behavior, nor revolted by my present problems, because Jesus came to save & call people just like me.

#### **Two Issues that Jesus Overcomes to Save & Call People Like Me:**

##### **I. The Issue of Past Behavior**

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

**Tax Collector:** A profession of the wicked for several reasons: 1) Required loyalty to the occupying forces (Rome), 2) Demanded extortion of one's own people by use of force, if necessary, 3) Anyone willing to deceive their neighbors as a tax collector could get rich.

*“He also told this parable to some who trusted in themselves that they were righteous, & treated others with contempt: ‘Two men went up into the temple to pray, one a Pharisee & the other a tax collector. The Pharisee, standing by himself, prayed thus: ‘God, I thank you that I am not like other men, extortioners, unjust, adulterers, or even like this tax collector. I fast twice a week; I give tithes of all that I get.’” Luke 18:9-12*

*“But the tax collector, standing far off, would not even lift up his eyes to heaven, but beat his breast, saying, ‘God, be merciful to me, a sinner!’ I tell you, this man went down to his house justified, rather than the other. For everyone who exalts himself will be humbled, but the one who humbles himself will be exalted.” Luke 18:13-14*

##### **II. The Issue of Present Problems –**

*“Now Thomas, one of the twelve, called the Twin, was not with them when Jesus came. So the other disciples told him, ‘We have seen the Lord.’ But he said to them, ‘Unless I see in his hands the mark of the nails, & place my finger into the mark of the nails, & place my hand into his side, I will never believe.’ Eight days later, his disciples were inside again, & Thomas was with them. Although the doors were locked, Jesus came & stood among them & said, ‘Peace be with you.’ Then he said to Thomas, ‘Put your finger here, & see my hands; & put out your hand, & place it in my side. Do not disbelieve, but believe.’ Thomas answered him, ‘My Lord & my God!’ Jesus said to him, ‘Have you believed because you have seen me? Blessed are those who have not seen & yet have believed.” John 20:24-29*

**Nearly every time we see Thomas; he is being anxious & pessimistic.**

*“So Thomas, called the Twin, said to his fellow disciples, ‘Let us also go, that we may die with him.’” John 11:16*

*“Thomas said to him, ‘Lord, we do not know where you are going. How can we know the way?’” John 14:5*

*“Now when he rose early on the first day of the week, he appeared first to Mary Magdalene, from whom he had cast out seven demons. She went & told those who had been with him, as they mourned & wept. But when they heard that he was alive & had been seen by her, they would not believe it.” Mark 16:9-11*

*“After these things he appeared in another form to two of them, as they were walking into the country. And they went back & told the rest, but they did not believe them.” Mark 16:12-13*

Jesus didn't throw Thomas away for his doubt; he transformed Thomas from a pessimistic, anxious man into a dynamic evangelist & leader in the church!

*“Thomas answered him, ‘My Lord & my God!’” John 20:28*

#### **What was it about Jesus that his friends Adored & his enemies Hated?**

- **Jesus Preached that ALL PEOPLE Have Issues!**

*“But what comes out of the mouth proceeds from the heart, & this defiles a person. For out of the heart comes evil thoughts, murder, adultery, sexual immorality, theft, false witness, slander.” Matthew 15:18-19*

- **Jesus Hung Out with People WHO KNEW they Had Issues!**

*“Now the tax collectors & sinners were all drawing near to hear him. And the Pharisees & the scribes grumbled, saying, ‘This man receives sinners & eats with them.’” Luke 15:1-2*

- **Jesus Rebuked People Who PRETENDED NOT to Have Issues!**

*“Woe to you, scribes & Pharisees, hypocrites! For you are like whitewashed tombs, which outwardly appear beautiful, but within are full of dead people's bones & all uncleanness. So you also outwardly appear righteous to others, but within you are full of hypocrisy & lawlessness.” Matthew 23:27-28*

#### **Do You Have Issues? Are you ashamed of your Past Behavior? Are you disappointed by your Present Problems?**

**Jesus Said:** *“For I came not to call the righteous, but sinners.” Matt 9:13*

**The only issue Jesus can't overcome in my life is my unwillingness to admit my issues and ask him for help!**

#### **Sources and Further Reading Opportunities:**

- *Bible Exposition Commentary* – Warren Wiersbe (1996)
- *New Bible Commentary* – D.A. Carson (1994)
- *New American Commentary Series* – Craig Bloomberg (1992)
- *Daily Study Bible Series* – William Barclay (1976)
- *Word Pictures in the New Testament* – A.T. Robertson (1933)
- *MacArthur New Testament Commentary* - John MacArthur (1987)
- *Tony Evans Book of Illustrations* – Tony Evans (2009)
- *Matthew Henry's Commentary* – Matthew Henry (1994)
- *Tyndale Bible Dictionary* – W.A. Elwell (2001)
- *Twelve Ordinary Men* – John MacArthur (2002)

