

Why Did Jesus Come?

Matthew 9:9-13

October 15th, 2017

Intro –

In their 2014 book titled *Mission Drift* Peter Greer and Chris Horst explore the common experience of organizations drifting from their founding principles. The incident that propelled their study happened with their own Christian organization, Hope International that addresses material and spiritual needs in places of intense poverty. A large potential donor loved their mission and wanted to direct sizeable support to them through the charitable arm of the company he worked for. There was just one problem. They were a publically traded corporation and didn't think they could give to such an overtly faith-based group. "Couldn't you just tone down the religious aspect of what you do?" They were faced with a decision. They needed this money. But if they toned down their founding principles.

They wrote:

Without careful attention, faith-based organizations will inevitably drift from their founding mission.

It's just that simple. It will happen.

Slowly, silently, and with little fanfare, organizations routinely drift from their original purpose, and most will never return to their original intent. It has happened repeatedly throughout history and it was happening to us.

Examples –

Pawn shops originally started in the west in Europe in 1300's by church friars as a way to help the poor.

YMCA as "Young Men's Christian Association" – now simply "The Y" and a good place to play basketball.

Pew Charitable Trust started by J. Howard Pew, a man with strong Christian convictions and a desire to fund Christian organizations. He helped finance Gordon-Conwell Theological seminary and the magazine, *Christianity Today*. Now, 40 years after his death, you'll hear Pew Charitable Trust mentioned if you listen to NPR because the trust supports many initiatives that aren't bad but are far afield from his original intent.

Mission statement of a well-known university: "To be plainly instructed and consider well that the main end of your life and studies is to know God and Jesus Christ." What school is this? Masters University? No, Harvard.

The author writes warmly of his own time at graduate school at Harvard and the rigorous academic environment. But it certainly doesn't match its founding principles.

The drift was happening at Harvard within 80 years so a group of concerned pastors and philanthropists started a new stronghold of Christian higher education. A man named Elihu Yale financed their efforts and they founded a school named after him. Yet Yale also drifted from the vision of its founders.

Jesus had a laser like focus on His mission, and we see it in this passage today.

1. An **unlikely** disciple (Matthew 9:9)
 - a. Jesus continues to defy expectations and surprise us
 - b. Matthew
 - i. Also called Levi – not uncommon to have two names (Simon/Peter)

- ii. Not mentioned often in the gospels – this account and then in a list of the 12 apostles in ch 10
 - iii. Working in a tax booth collecting taxes for Herod either along a commercial trading route that was about 4 miles from Capernaum or on the Sea of Galilee to tax fisherman.
 - iv. Would have been a loathsome figure – combination of a traitor and an extortioner – affiliating with the enemy of the Jewish people and gaining wealth by overcharging their countrymen.
 - 1. Would have been viewed similarly as those in France during WW2 who supported and worked for the occupying Germans.
 - 2. We might hear “tax collector” and think “accountant” and his peers would be doctors and lawyers. Instead think “mobster” and peers as thieves and murderers.
- c. Few details given so don’t want to over-read into the text.
- i. The crowds were coming to Jesus. People were asking to follow Him (8:19, 21). Yet Jesus pursues Matthew and says “follow me.”
 - ii. **Luke 5:27-28** After that He went out and noticed a tax collector named Levi sitting in the tax booth, and He said to him, “Follow Me.” ²⁸ And he left everything behind, and got up and *began* to follow Him.
 - iii. Matthew was willing to leave his lucrative operation and follow a preacher with nowhere to lay his head. Stark contrast to the men from chapter 8 who apparently wanted to delay or were unwilling to sacrifice their personal comfort.
 - iv. Barclay via Morris – Matthew “lost a comfortable job, but he found a destiny. He lost a good income, but he found honour. He lost a comfortable security, but he found an adventure the like of which he had never dreamed.”

2. An unexpected dinner party (Matthew 9:10-11)

- a. Luke tells us this was a reception held at Matthew’s house
 - i. **Luke 5:29** And Levi gave a big reception for Him in his house; and there was a great crowd of tax collectors and other *people* who were reclining *at the table* with them.
 - ii. Reclined – lie down with their heads facing the table and their feet extended out away from the table.
- b. Tax collectors and sinners dined with him
 - i. “behold” – Matthew’s term for “look at this!” “pay attention!”
 - ii. We already discussed tax collectors
 - iii. Sinners –
 - 1. Pharisees used it to describe those not careful in ceremonial duties, irreligious
 - 2. Could be used of unbelievers
 - a. **Luke 6:32-33** “If you love those who love you, what credit is *that* to you? For even sinners love those who love them. ³³ “If you do good to those who do good to you, what credit is *that* to you? For even sinners do the same.
 - 3. Could be used of those who were especially wicked or more obvious in their sin.
- c. What is implied in eating with them?

- i. Meal fellowship would be the most intimate social custom.
 - ii. The Pharisees in v. 11 sure took it as in some way approving of their sin or staining him with their sin.
 - iii. Jesus doesn't condone their sin. He does compare them to the "sick" who need a doctor.
- d. They were coming near to listen
 - i. **Luke 15:1-2** Now all the tax collectors and the sinners were coming near Him to listen to Him. ² Both the Pharisees and the scribes *began* to grumble, saying, "This man receives sinners and eats with them."
 - ii. **Mark 2:15** for there were many of them, and they were following Him.
 - iii. What was it about Jesus that so drew them?
 - 1. He was calling people to repent, so it wasn't the approval of their sin.
 - 2. Perhaps it was because they didn't need to be convinced they were sinners. They knew it. Jesus gave them the solution to their sin.
- e. Again controversy arises.
 - i. Last week in the first part of chapter 9 it was controversy over His claim to have authority to forgive sins. They saw that as effectively claiming to be God and accused Him of blasphemy.
 - ii. Now the controversy is about his close interaction with those who need forgiveness that He alone has authority to grant.
 - 1. "Keep thee far from an evil neighbor and consort not with the wicked" ('abot 1:7) was the rabbinic dictum.
 - 2. The Pharisees would have received repentant sinners, but they would not seek them out. Jesus did. He actively sought sinners to bring them to repentance.
 - iii. Conflict rises as the chapter goes on. First about forgiveness, now about association with sinners, then (v. 14) about fasting, and culminating in v. 34 with attributing His works to Satan.
- 3. A clear **mission** statement (Matthew 9:12-13)
 - a. They spoke to the disciples but it was Jesus himself who heard and answered.
 - b. Analogy – who does a doctor go to? Those who are sick. A doctor doesn't spend all his time with the healthy people! There's no work to be done there!
 - i. They don't understand Jesus' mission. They think the Messiah should come gather the righteous for battle rather than coming to call sinners to repentance.
 - ii. Jesus here is not so much splitting people into two groups (righteous and sinners) as he is challenging this false conception of the Messiah's mission.
 - c. Go and learn – I desire compassion and not sacrifice
 - i. Rabbinic formula for when they wanted someone to look more closely at the text to get to its meaning – make a genuine effort to understand.
 - ii. Quotes from Hosea 6:6 – powerful pictures of God's steadfast love to a people who reject Him over and over.

- iii. The people of Hosea's day kept the formal ritual of temple worship but had lost the core truth at the center. God wasn't concerned with mere ritual. He wanted compassionate hearts that were faithful to Him.
- iv. Comes back to this passage again later in Matthew
 - 1. **Matthew 12:7** "But if you had known what this means, 'I DESIRE COMPASSION, AND NOT A SACRIFICE,' you would not have condemned the innocent.
 - a. Context is scruples about the Sabbath that took priority over the heart of the Sabbath
- d. Key verse – at the end – I did not come to call the righteous but sinners
 - i. He came from somewhere
 - 1. His life on earth is a parenthesis not a beginning. He has eternally existed as God before taking on humanity.
 - 2. **Philippians 2:5-8** Have this attitude in yourselves which was also in Christ Jesus, ⁶ who, although He existed in the **form** of God, did not regard equality with God a thing to be grasped, ⁷ but emptied Himself, taking the **form** of a bond-servant, **and being made in the likeness of men.** ⁸ Being found in appearance as a man, He humbled Himself by becoming obedient to the point of death, even death on a cross.
 - a. ⁶ **who, although He existed in the form of God,**
 - i. *Morphe* – lifestyle, way of living, essence
 - ii. Jesus is fully God (v. 6) – *morphe* used of the inner nature or substance of something – see v. 7 for form of a servant – he didn't just take on the outward appearance of a servant – He possessed equality with God and nothing is equal with God except God
 - b. **did not regard equality with God a thing to be grasped,**
 - i. Did not cling to the lifestyle and status of equality
 - ii. Doesn't say He got rid of His divine "essence" – didn't stop being God
 - iii. Jesus didn't insist on holding onto all the privileges and benefits of his position of equality with God – he did not clutch or grasp his place of equality
 - c. ⁷ **but emptied Himself,**
 - i. *Kenosis* – take away the status, "made himself nothing" (ESV, NIV), "made Himself of no reputation" (KJV)
 - ii. Jesus emptied himself by pouring himself into a truly human form – not that He poured out the deity *from* himself but that He poured Himself out while remaining fully God – He emptied Himself by adding on the *morphe* of a servant in the likeness of men
 - d. **taking the form of a bond-servant,**
 - i. *morphe* – lifestyle, way of living, essence
 - e. **and being made in the likeness of men.**
 - i. Jesus added human attributes that limited the use of some of His divine attributes.
 - ii. John 1:14 The Word became flesh . . .
 - iii. Example: World's fastest runner who competes in a 3-legged race with a child, still the fastest runner but took on the limitations of the child.
 - iv. **Colossians 2:9** For in Him all the fullness of Deity dwells in bodily form

- ii. He came for something
 - 1. there was a purpose behind His coming.
 - 2. He came for sinners.
 - 3. He came to call sinners to repent
 - a. Luke 5:32 – adds call sinners “to repentance”
- e. Jesus came to save sinners. (1 Timothy 1:15; Luke 19:10; Matthew 9:13)
- f. Do you view yourself as the righteous (healthy) or the sinner (sick) that needs the physician?
 - i. For the Pharisees the sinners were those “other people.”
 - ii. **Luke 19:10** “For the Son of Man has come to seek and to save that which was lost.”
 - iii. **1 Timothy 1:15** It is a trustworthy statement, deserving full acceptance, that Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners, among whom I am foremost *of all*.
 - 1. Resist the urge to tune out here and think this is the part where I talk to those who aren’t Christians.
 - 2. In the Bible every book and every chapter with the exception of the first two chapters in Genesis and the last two chapters of Revelation deal with the theme of sin and the need for salvation.
 - iv. We need to understand some things about the nature of sin. Genesis 3 (Wayne Grudem)
 - 1. In Genesis 3 sin gave a different answer to the questions:
 - a. “What is true?”
 - i. God said Adam and Eve would die if they ate from the tree (Gen. 2:17), but the serpent said, “You will not die” (Genesis 3:4)
 - ii. Typical of sin in general. We doubt what God says is true.
 - b. “What is right?”
 - i. God said it was right not to eat from that one tree (Gen. 2:17), Satan said it would be right because they would become “like God” (Gen. 3:5)
 - c. “Who am I?”
 - i. Creatures of God dependent on Him, or follow autonomous and able to decide our own ethics.
 - ii. We must understand sin from this God-centered perspective. The reason sin is such a problem is not merely because of the cultural effects (although the cultural wreckage brought by sin is evident), or because of the personal harm, but because it is a violation of our Creator-Creature relationship
 - 2. Sin is any lack of conformity to God’s will in attitude, thought, or action, whether committed actively or passively. The center of all sin is autonomy, which is the replacing of God with self. Always closely associated with sin are pride, selfishness, idolatry, and lack of peace (shalom). (*Biblical Doctrine*)

- v. Recognizing our sin before God is incredibly freeing.
 - 1. Sin can be forgiven and God can transform us. If every problem is chalked up to personality, circumstances, or a medical problem, we can feel very trapped.
 - 2. We no longer need to protect a fragile image of perfection. We don't need to establish a veneer of self-righteousness. We can be honest about weakness.
 - 3. We don't need to build ourselves up in the eyes of others
 - 4. We can handle conflict because we already know we are sinners.
 - a. My example from last Sunday, abundance of words sin is not lacking
- vi. Recognizing our sin causes the brightness of God's glory to shine all the more, like brilliant stars against a cold, dark night sky. (example of being in Montana and seeing the Milky Way)

4. Key ideas

- a. Repent and believe the gospel – recognize that you are a sinner Christ came to call.
- b. Don't allow our church to experience mission drift.
 - i. Many good things we could do. At the heart of it though we want people to come, grow, and go make disciples.
 - ii. **Matthew 28:19-20** "Go therefore and make disciples of all the nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and the Son and the Holy Spirit, ²⁰ teaching them to observe all that I commanded you; and lo, I am with you always, even to the end of the age."



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Genesis 3:4b "You surely will not die!

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Genesis 2:16-17a The LORD God commanded the man, saying, "From any tree of the garden you may eat freely; ¹⁷ but from the tree of the knowledge of good and evil you shall not eat,

Genesis 3:5 "For God knows that in the day you eat from it your eyes will be opened, and you will be like God, knowing good and evil."

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