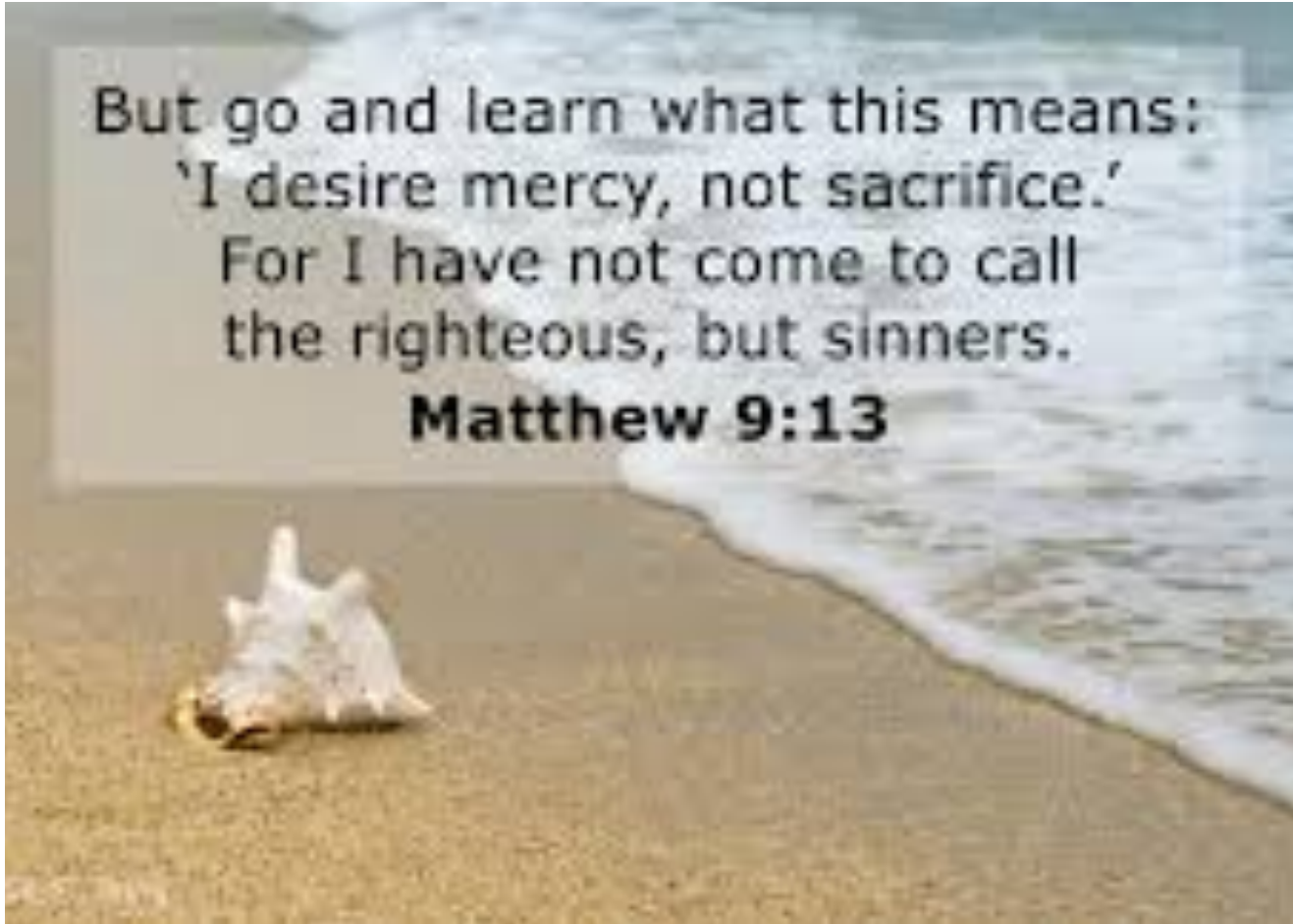

WORSHIP AT HOME

Prelude



Sweet hour of prayer! Sweet hour of prayer! That calls see from a world of care, and bids me at my Father's throne make all my wants and wishes known. In seasons of distress and grief, my soul has often found relief, and oft escaped the tempter's snare by they return, sweet hour of prayer.

See Hosea 6:6. Jesus fulfills the words of the Prophet by calling Matthew.

Lighting Our Soul Candles

Father, **let the light of mercy shine on sinners.**
Lord Jesus, **shine the light of mercy on me.**

Holy Spirit, **open my ears to the cries of sinners. Open my eyes to see why Jesus eats with sinners and Tax Collectors.**

Welcome

Jesus saw Matthew and said, **Follow me.** Matthew followed. Jesus had dinner **at Matthew’s house.** Why do sinners and Tax Collectors welcome Jesus? **Jesus says, “It is not the healthy who need a doctor, but the sick.”**

Special Music:

*Sweet hour of prayer! Sweet hour of prayer!
The joys I feel, the bliss I share of those
whose anxious spirits burn with strong
desire for thy return. With such I hasten to
place where God my Savior shows His face,
and gladly take my station there, and wait for
thee, sweet hour of prayer.*

Prayer of Confession

Lord, You call us to Follow You! The Teachers of the Law and the Pharisees tempt us with visions of perfection. We are tempted by pills, creams, and designer-labels that promise perfection. We are tempted to follow popular opinions, the latest trend, and the lure of “new and improved.” Hear the cries of those among us sick to death of empty promises. Lord of mercy, We need a doctor who heals?

“Sud accumsan libero pretium pharetra quis. Nunc elit lorem magna vitae.”

-DIAM NOBIS

listens, comforts, and patiently watches and waits while God heals.

Prayer of Thanksgiving



Jesus lives his Beatitudes!

Prayer of Intercession

Who has God placed upon your heart and mind? God already knows. As you pray with God and this person listen to the Holy Spirit guide you to be the Blessing who

Lord, we thank you! Thank you for calling sinners and Tax Collectors to Follow You. Thank you for eating with sinners and Tax Collectors. Thank you for answering our Legalistic and Morally Elite questions. Thank you for judging us with mercy. Thank you for delivering us from sin to heal our wounded hearts and troubled minds. Lord, in Your mercy heal our souls with Grace upon Grace until we gather with You, Father, Son, and Holy Spirit at the banquet table of Abundant Life. Amen.

Special Music

Sweet hour of prayer! Sweet hour of prayer! Thy wings shall my petitions bear to him whose truth and faithfulness engage the waiting soul to bless, and since he bids me seek his face, believe his word, and trust disgrace, I'll cast on Him my every care, and wait for thee, sweet hour of prayer.

The Word of God

As Jesus went on from there, he saw a man named Matthew sitting at the tax collector's booth. "Follow me," he told him, and Matthew got up and followed him. **10** While Jesus was having dinner at Matthew's house, many tax collectors and sinners came and ate with him and his disciples. **11** When the Pharisees saw this, they asked his disciples, "Why does your teacher eat with tax collectors and sinners?" **12** On hearing this, Jesus said, "It is not the healthy who need a doctor, but the sick. **13** But go and learn what this means: 'I desire mercy, not sacrifice.'^[a] For I have not come to call the righteous, but sinners."

It is not the healthy who need a doctor, but the sick. So far we have met a leper, a Centurion, Peter's mother in law, the demon possessed, and a paralyzed man. Today we meet sinners and Tax Collectors. They all have one thing in common. They have need of a doctor.

The Message

In Jesus' day there were people deemed unacceptable by God. From Leviticus 21 we see how less than perfect people were denied access to the temple, sacrifice, and therefore mercy. It helps to remember that the word Sin means to "miss the mark". People afflicted by Leprosy, Paralysis, not being born a Jew, blind, deaf, unable to bear children, or infected wounds all "missed the mark." Moreover these afflictions were thought to be divine punishments. They were often exiled from community, their homes, and from worship! Huh, all of this sound like life in the midst of a pandemic that politicians and religion have weaponized!

Today we meet the Pharisees. Jesus tells the Pharisees to go and learn what Hosea means, "I desire mercy, not sacrifice." He would waste his breath saying such to the Teachers of the Law. They did not ascribe to the Prophets teachings.

I have thought a lot about what Hosea means. I hear Jesus saying He is God. I hear him saying He desires mercy.

Matthew, the Tax Collector who Follows Jesus, wants us to see Jesus practicing what he says in Matthew 7: 1-5 “Do not judge, or you too will be judged. **2** For in the same way you judge others, you will be judged, and with the measure you use, it will be measured to you. **3** “Why do you look at the speck of sawdust in your brother’s eye and pay no attention to the plank in your own eye? **4** How can you say to your brother, ‘Let me take the speck out of your eye,’ when all the time there is a plank in your own eye? **5** You hypocrite, first take the plank out of your own eye, and then you will see clearly to remove the speck from your brother’s eye.”

The person with the speck in their eye is the same as the person with a plank. They both need a doctor, not a judge. Judges sacrifice! Doctors heal!

Let me tell you how I get the plank out of my eye. I follow Jesus. Jesus clearly says, If you want to come after me you must deny yourself. Do you know that I have a robe and a bench to pound. To follow Jesus I must deny my robe and my bench. I must deny the Judge who lives in my head and heart. Do you know that that I have a 401k, a pension, a savings account, a Mdiv, and a house overflowing with stuff. It took me years to see this stuff is the plank in my eye. Somewhere I learned that God wants my stuff. I learned that if I give 10% of my stuff it will please God and I will receive a blessing. Friends if you want to give 10% or all of your stuff to God go ahead. (See I Corinthians 13:3) Make that sacrifice and then Follow Jesus. Jesus desires mercy, not sacrifice. Grace is the free gift of God. The narrow way into God’s Grace is to deny works righteousness to receive Christ’s mercy. Follow Him and learn what God does for us that we could never do for ourselves or neighbors. This is faith! Deny self. Follow him.

I am fond of saying, Let people be...you cannot change them. Let opinions be...listen to people’s opinions and you will see the speck in their eye. But the moment you see the speck in their eye know for certain that you have put on your Judge’s robe. In that moment both people need a doctor.

Follow Jesus. Freely he gives, freely receive. Surely we know by now that Grace is the free gift of salvation. Do we know that mercy removes the plank and the speck. Do we understand that a merciful person will make the way straight for their neighbor to kneel at Jesus’ feet. The merciful person teaches their neighbor to pray in such a way that they hear God themselves.

Jesus is God. Jesus came to invite us to Follow Him. Sacrifice does not please God. Judges serve at the altar of opinions sacrificing their neighbors. The tithe and a gift are different in every way. A tithe is a sacrifice. A gift is free. Salvation is God’s Gift. It is like a double edge sword. First it delivers us from sin. Second, it heals.

I trust that you believe in Jesus. Have you learned to let him deliver you again and again from shame, guilt, and blame? (Sanctification)

I trust that you are faithful to the Church. Have you learned that prayer is a conversation with God that gives you ears to hear God's still small voice, the Holy Spirit? Do you find that hearing God's voice gives you eyes to see your self and neighbor through Jesus' mercy, grace, and love? Jesus is the head and heart of the Church. The Church is His Body on earth as it is in heaven. Such is the Kingdom of Heaven!

Jesus delivers us from our Nation, our kindred, and our daddy's house. He delivers us from the very people who teach us to be sacrificial judges. Only the delivered follow Jesus. Once delivered the healing begins.

I am a recovering Judge. I am not the Doctor Jesus espouses. I hope to be a witness of Jesus Christ, the Doctor. Who are you?

Tithes and Offerings

Postlude