

# Episode 49

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*"I have not come to call the 'righteous,' but to call those who know they are sinners and bring them to repentance."*

- Luke 5.32

Jesus was addressing the religious leaders, the experts of the law, the self-appointed Pharisees who had criticized Matthew for throwing a banquet for Jesus. Matthew had stumbled on the good news of the gospel and desperately wanted to share what he had found with those nearest and dearest to him, only to have the Pharisees object to those being allowed access to the gospel.

I don't know about you, but I am a certified objector myself. I have set a spectacularly high standard of just how well I need to be doing to deserve God's grace, and every day I fall short of my self-imposed 'deservometer' and go without this desperately needed grace in my life.

So what is it that Jesus confronts in the Pharisee in me, that he celebrated in Matthew?

The Pharisee in me is sorry for what I did, while Matthew would be sorry for who he was. The Pharisees in me will easily confess (should I ever sin), while Matthew was continuously repentant because of the sinfulness he saw in himself.

The Pharisee in me demands a quick resolution so that Jesus will get off my back, while Matthew would recognize he is in this for the long haul, so he would need Jesus to hang in there with him.

The Pharisee in me always seems to recoil in feigned shock, saying 'I can't believe I am like that. Let's not talk about it anymore.' Matthew however, would say 'I can believe I am like that. I need you to fill me even more.'

The Pharisee in me always cowers behind an anaemic 'but I can explain', but Matthew would be the first to offer no explanation, clinging instead to the gift of salvation.

The Pharisee in me glows as I prove how sorry I am by making sure to do it right the next time, but Matthew would repent that he has no righteousness of his own, nothing to hope for in himself and instead, abandon himself to Jesus and his gift of righteousness in place of his sin.

At the very core, the Pharisee in me is only sorry because I got found out, while Matthew would humble himself before Jesus, knowing that Jesus alone had the power and grace to 'bless this mess'.

And lastly, the Pharisee in me parades my apology, always needing to tailor the perception others have of me. Matthew would grieve over the fact that his sinful heart is so offensive, clinging all the more to Jesus, the author, and perfecter of his faith.

I have not come to call the righteous, but to call those who know they are sinners and bring them to repentance, Jesus said.

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