

July 24th

MATTHEW Matt 9.9-13

exchanging faith

Sometimes we must give up what we have, to receive something better.

MATTHEW'S EXCHANGING FAITH: Matthew wants self-respect and to be treated as a person, not just a hated bureaucrat. But the life he has chosen isolates him from both his own people and his foreign employers. When Jesus calls him to be a disciple, Matthew can hardly believe it. But to respond to the call of Jesus, Matthew has to give up everything. Think about what he gained, in exchange for what he lost.

QUESTIONS

1. What had Matthew lost or given up in self-respect and reputation, to gain his income?
2. Do you think Matthew's gains outweighed his losses? What have you given up, to gain what you have? Are you content with the exchanges you have made?
3. Why do you think Jesus invited Matthew to be one of His assistants? Was this a good public image booster for Jesus' ministry?
4. What did it cost Matthew to accept Jesus' invitation to become a full-time helper? Do you think Matthew ever regretted what he gave up? What have you given up to gain Jesus? Is Jesus showing you anything else to give up, to bring you closer?
5. How do you think the disciples reacted to Jesus enlisting a wellknown racketeer from their hometown? Do you think they were glad to be at Matthew's party? What do you think they thought of the Pharisees' question? What had to happen in the "senior" disciples for them to accept Matthew? When did you begin to feel accepted by God's

family, after you were accepted by Jesus? How can you practice acceptance to new believers?

6. Why do you think Matthew put on a big dinner for Jesus, His disciples, and Matthew's business friends, right after deciding to quit his job? How do you think he introduced Jesus to his friends and explained his job change?

7. Why was Jesus a "friend of sinners"? Do you know the meaning of "I desire mercy, not sacrifice"? How did Jesus "see" sinners? How do you see and feel about people you know who do not know Christ? Which "sinners" would say you are their friend? Are you intending to bring them to Christ?

PRAYER

Jesus, thank you for inviting me to follow You! Thank you for not taking a survey to decide who You want to be Your disciples. Help me to keep in mind that whatever I thought I was "giving up" to follow You was of far less value than what I received from You in its place. You gave up so much to gain my everyday faith in You. I don't feel worth that much, but I am so glad You considered me worth what You paid for me. I gladly lay down all that I am and have, to live in Your constant presence and love in my life. Show me how to do this each day.

"GET INTO THE STORY" (Read Matthew 9:9-13; Mark 2:14-17; Luke 5:27-32. Write answers. Think on sentences. Fill in "TAKE OUT" (below). Allow to "soak in" during the week.)

1. Jesus "saw a man named Matthew, sitting at the _____
' _____ Me,' He told him, and Matthew _____ and _____ Him."
(Matthew 9:9)

2. Matthew has Jesus over for dinner. His wealth is implied by his catering resources and his house being large enough to accommodate " _____ tax

collectors and sinners (who) came and ate with (Jesus) and His _____." (Matthew 9:10)

3. The Pharisees have a major reaction to Jesus' social practices, and have to express their disapproval. They asked his disciples, "Why does your teacher eat with _____ and _____?" On hearing this, Jesus said, "It is not the _____ who need a _____, but the _____." (Matthew 9:11)

4. Then Jesus has a strong recommendation for these Pharisees who have demonstrated their ignorance of God's values: "But go and _____ what this _____: 'I (God) desire _____ and not _____.'" Then Jesus explains His alignment with the Father: "For I have not come to call the _____, but _____." (Matthew 9:13)

5. A few verses later, Matthew reports Jesus continuing to do what He came to do: "Jesus went through all the _____ and _____, _____ in their synagogues, _____ the good news of the _____ and _____ every disease and sickness." (Matthew 9:35) Then Jesus tells why He goes to parties with sinners and teaches and preaches and heals: "When He saw the _____, He had _____ on them, because they were _____ and _____, like _____ without a _____." (Matthew 9:36)

6. Matthew continues with Jesus' words to His disciples, then and now: "The harvest is _____, but the _____ are _____. _____ the Lord of the harvest, therefore, to _____ out _____ into _____ harvest field." (Matthew 9:37-38)

TAKE OUT FROM THE STORY: *How does this story impact you? Apply now, review later.*

LEARNED BY DOING: *What have you learned through applying "take out" to your life.*

July 31st

JAIRUS & HIS DAUGHTER Mark 5.21-43

'don't-give-up' faith

When Jesus says "Don't give up", don't give up!

JAIRUS' 'DON'T GIVE UP' FAITH: Jairus' 12 year old daughter is on the verge of dying. He has seen Jesus put His hands on sick people and heal them. He believes that if he can bring Jesus in time, his daughter will not die. He succeeds in finding Jesus, Who agrees to come, but on the way is delayed by a desperate woman. During the delay, news comes that Jairus' daughter has died, so there is no use in Jesus coming. Jesus insists on going, for good reason.

QUESTIONS

- 1.** How do you think Jairus and his wife had been feeling as they watched their daughter getting closer and closer to death? What do you think was going on in Jairus' mind and heart that motivated him to find Jesus?
- 2.** Jairus' faith seems to be dependent on Jesus coming while his daughter is alive, and touching her to impart healing. How do you think Jairus felt about the delay with the bleeding woman, and then when word came that his daughter had died? Have you ever been urgently asking God to do something, and it seemed that God was delaying His answer until the situation was getting beyond help?
- 3.** At this point, what were Jesus' words to Jairus, and what effect do you think they had on him? Do you have a desperate need? Can you hear Jesus saying the same to you?
- 4.** In the Jewish culture of that time, anyone who touched a dead body was considered religiously, and by health standards, unclean. How did

Jesus reverse that process when He touched the dead little girl? When God tells you to "touch" someone, can He protect you from being harmed by their problems?

5. How do you think Jairus felt after Jesus brought his daughter back to life?

6. How do you think the daughter felt about being brought back to life? Luke 8:55 says "her spirit returned". Do you think she felt disappointment at having to return, considering where she had been?

7. Do you think she ever feared death for the rest of her life? Do you fear death? Are you at peace with the potential of death as a daily reality, or do you "put it out of your mind"? Pray until you are at peace with death.

PRAYER

Jesus, You gave me faith to believe that You could stop a situation in my life that seemed to be going out of control. I thought I knew how You would intervene, but then You did not do what I asked You to do. Help me to hear You saying, "Don't be afraid. Just believe." Lord, I give this situation into Your hands, for You to do whatever is in Your plan. I still trust You with my life, and all the specific situations in my life, even when You don't answer my prayers the way I pray them.

"GET INTO THE STORY" (Mark 5:21-43; Matthew 9:18-26; Luke 8:40-56; Write the answers. Think on the sentences. Fill in "TAKE OUT" (below). Allow to "soak in" during the week.)

1. Jairus was a synagogue official someone who was not afraid to approach other persons. He still may have had difficulty reaching Jesus, because of a "large _____ gathered around Him while He was by the _____." (Mark 5:21)

2. In spite of the crowd, Jairus pressed on until he " _____ at (Jesus) feet, and _____, earnestly with him saying, 'My little _____ is _____'.

Please _____ and _____ Your _____ on her, that she will be healed

and live." (Mark 5:22-23)

3. Picture the scene described in Mark 5:24: "So Jesus went _____ him. A large crowd followed and _____ him."

4. Jesus was stopped by the bleeding woman, and then word came that Jairus' daughter had died, so it was unnecessary for Jesus to come. How did Jesus handle this news? (Mark 5:36) "_____ what they said, Jesus told Jairus, "Don't _____; just _____." (Luke 8:50 says Jesus added: "She will be _____.")

5. Upon arriving at Jairus' house, Jesus encountered the paid mourners. They were "_____ and _____ loudly." (Mark 5:38) Jesus pronounced their mourning as pointless, because "'the child is not _____ but _____.' But they _____ at Him." (Mark 5:39-40)

6. Jesus took three disciples and the parents into the room with the girl's body, and He "_____ her by the _____ and said to her...'Little girl, I say to you, _____.'" (Mark 5:41)

7. "_____, the girl _____ and _____. At this they were completely _____, and (Jesus)...told them to _____ her something to _____." (Mark 5:42-43)

TAKE OUT FROM THE STORY: *How does this story impact you? Apply now, review later.*

LEARNED BY DOING: *What have you learned through applying "take out" to your life.*

August 7th

THE CENTURION Luke 7.1-10

'Taking orders' faith

*Faith in Christ recognizes
the authority of Christ.*

THE CENTURION'S 'TAKING ORDERS' FAITH: Rome ruled over the Jews, often with a cruel hand. Roman citizens considered themselves superior to all others. The Roman centurion in Capernaum is unusual. First, he really loves one of his Jewish servants, who is deathly sick. It will take a miracle for him to be well, and the Roman officer believes a member of the slave nation named Jesus can perform that miracle. But the centurion does not even feel worthy to approach this Jewish teacher, so he sends the Jewish elders as his messengers. And they go eagerly on his behalf. As the officer thinks about the source of his own authority, he understands how Jesus can do miracles and grasps the true meaning of faith in Christ.

QUESTIONS

1. What was the Roman centurion's attitude toward the Jewish people whom he ruled? What was their regard for him. (Luke 7:2-5) (Compare Acts 10:1-2) What do you think was a more typical attitude and use of authority by Roman military officers?
2. What does the centurion show us about how God wants those with authority to use it? How will it affect those served? How can you use your authority to serve others?
3. What do you think the centurion "heard about Jesus" that made him think Jesus could rescue his servant from dying? (Luke 7:2-3) What insight about his own authority helped the officer have faith in Jesus' authority, even at a distance, over his servant's sickness? (Luke 7:7-8) What situation do you have that you would like Jesus to step in and change? Do you have faith that Jesus can "say the word"

and the problem will be solved?

4. What did Jesus say about the centurion's faith. (Luke 7:9) What do you think Jesus has to say about your faith?

5. What connection can you see between a) Your obedience to God's written and spoken Word, and b) God's willingness to answer your prayers? Is there anything He has told you to do in the situation you thought of under #3?

6. Where are you on the journey of obedience to these instructions? (i.e. What are you obeying? What have you yet to start on?)

7. Have you seen any results from your faith, after it was accompanied by obedience?

PRAYER

Jesus, help me to always trust in your authority over me and the specific situations of my life. Help me to always remember that I honor You and help myself when I obey You. Also, I rob You of honor and hurt myself when I do my own thing. I can't lose when I obey You, and I can't win when I disobey You.

"GET INTO THE STORY" (Read Luke 7:1-10; Matthew 8:5-13. Write answers. Think on sentences. Fill in "TAKE OUT" (below). Allow to "soak in" during week.)

1. (Luke 7:4-5) When the Jewish elders "had come to Jesus, they _____ with Him." Why were they urging Jesus so strongly to help this foreign strong man in their town? They said, "This man _____ to have You do this, because he _____ our nation, and has _____ our synagogue." How do you think their description was different from what they would have said about the average centurion "keeping the peace" in a small Jewish town? _____

2. How did the centurion view himself, alongside of this Jewish teacher named Jesus? (v.6-7)

3. The Roman officer said, "I am a man _____ authority, with soldiers _____ me." (Luke 7:8) The officer understood that all authority on earth is _____ by others with higher authority, and ultimately by _____ in heaven.

What did Jesus say about the centurion's message? (Luke 7:9) _____

4. How did the officer's understanding of authority increase his faith in what Jesus could do - and how He could do it? (Luke 7: 7) "Just _____ the word, and my servant will be _____."

TAKE OUT FROM THE STORY: *How does this story impact you? Apply now, review later.*

LEARNED BY DOING: *What have you learned through applying "take out" to your life.*

August 14th

SIMON PETER Luke 7.1-10 ***cooperating faith***

Jesus calls us to be with Him.

*To be changed. Jesus goes with us,
to bring change.*

SIMON PETER'S COOPERATING FAITH: Peter, the everyday working man, wants to be a disciple of Jesus, even though he seems an unlikely candidate. He battles his own limitations and failures, but gradually learns to cooperate with Jesus to become one of His fishers of men.

QUESTIONS

1. Jesus gave the brothers a command and a promise. Could Jesus fulfill His promise to them, if they did not obey His command?
2. How did Jesus show authority? (See Mark 1:14-15, 18, 20-27, 29-34, 40-42) Jesus' authority is closely related to who He is. How did Peter come to know for sure who Jesus is? (Matthew 16:17) Can you know the same way?
3. At the Last Supper, was Peter surprised to see his Lord act as the lowest of servants? (John 13:5-10) How did Peter discover that Jesus the servant is still Jesus the leader? How do you think Peter's future leadership attitude was guided by this event?
4. Peter promised Jesus he would be loyal to the end. How did he do with that promise? (Matthew 26:33-75) What was Peter's main blunder in using his sword for Jesus? What has Peter learned about cooperating with Jesus, when he writes I Peter 1:2; 4:11?
5. In light of Peter's behavior during Jesus' final hours, do you think Peter needed the message: "Tell His disciples and Peter... to meet Him in Galilee". (Mark 16:7 - emphasis)

added) to reassure him that Jesus really did want to see him again?

6. Did Jesus still expect Peter to be one of His "fishers of men"? How confident do you think Peter felt? Does this give you hope that God can use you? (Read about Peter's "comeback" in Acts 4:13.)

7. How did Peter "let go of his life" to cooperate with Jesus? (Read Matthew 16:24-25.) What caused Peter to change as he "remained with" Jesus? (John 15:4-5) How have you changed as a result of "remaining with" Jesus.

PRAYER

Jesus, help me to keep in mind and heart that Your heart is to serve others. I so easily focus on my own needs, and I know they are important to You. But I know you want me to focus on being a pipeline of Your blessing to other people. To do this, I must cooperate with You in everything I do, not "leaning to my own understanding, but in all my ways acknowledging You and letting You direct my paths". Lord give me strength to do your will.

"GET INTO THE STORY" (Read Mark 1:14-20; Matthew 16:13-28; 26: 30-75.

See also;

Mark 1:14-34; 8:27-35; 14:27-31, 66-72; John 1:35-42, 44; I & II Peter. Write answers.

Think on sentences. Fill in "TAKE OUT" (below). Allow it to "soak in" during the week.)

1. Jesus gives Peter and Andrew a command and a promise. (Mark 1:16-17) a) The

command was: "come, _____ Me." b) The promise was: "I will make you

_____ of _____." When did they obey Jesus' command? (Mark 1:18)

2. As Jesus begins His ministry, "the people were _____ at His teaching, because He

taught them as one who had _____, not as the _____ of the law." (Mark 1:22)

Then a man "possessed by an evil spirit." challenges His authority. How does Jesus respond? (Mark 1: 23-27)

3. Peter and the other disciples eventually discover Who Jesus is. Matthew 16:15-17:

"(Jesus) asked, 'Who do you say I am?' Simon Peter answered, 'You are the _____, the _____ of the living _____.' Jesus replied, 'Blessed are you, Simon, son of Jonah, for this was not _____ to you by _____, but by My _____ in heaven.'"

4. Not long after his famous confession, Peter finds himself disbelieving and disagreeing with the Son of God, Who is predicting His coming torture and execution. "Peter took Him aside and began to _____ Him. '_____, Lord!' he said. 'This shall _____ happen to

You!'" (Matthew 16:21-22) When Jesus predicted desertion by His disciples, Peter's claim is, "Even if all _____ on account of You, I _____." And then, "Even if I have to _____ with You, I will never _____ You." The others said the same. (Matthew 26:31-35)

5. Peter's beliefs and promises are better than his behavior. a) Matthew 26:36-46: Jesus asked Peter and two others to "_____ with Me" while Jesus prayed. Instead of

"watching", Jesus found them _____ b) Matthew 26:51-52: When Jesus is arrested, without any command from Jesus, Peter "reached for his _____, drew it out and

_____ the servant of the high priest, _____ off his _____." Summarize what Jesus says to Peter? (Matthew 26:52-54)

c) After Jesus is arrested, Peter goes into the courtyard where Jesus is on trial. There

Peter is three times recognized as a follower of Jesus. Peter "denied it before them all. 'I don't _____ what you are _____ about,' he said." Then twice he cursed and claimed, "I don't _____ the man." Then he remembered Jesus' prediction, and "he went _____

and _____ bitterly." (Matthew 26:69-75)

6. After Jesus rose from the dead, an angel told the ladies at the tomb, "Tell His

_____ and _____ to meet him in Galilee?" (Mark 16:5-7) Jesus wasn't finished with Peter! He

was in the group Jesus commissioned in Matthew 28:18-20, "All _____ has been

given to Me...Go..._____ of all nations...Surely I am _____ you always..."

TAKE OUT FROM THE STORY: *How does this story impact you? Apply now, review later.*

LEARNED BY DOING: *What have you learned through applying "take out" to your life.*

August 21st

THE RICH YOUNG RULER Luke 18.18-30

faith in worldly wealth

Know where to put your faith.

THE YOUNG RULER'S FAITH IN WORLDLY WEALTH: He definitely wants eternal life, but he is not sure how to get it. He believes Jesus will have the answer, but when he hears it, he decides to hang on to what he can't keep, and give up what he can't lose.

QUESTIONS

1. What urgent question does this young man ask Jesus, after he runs and falls on his knees? Are you asking Jesus any urgent questions?
2. How does the young man seem to be trying to obtain entrance to heaven? Why do you think he is uncertain about his destination?
3. The young man inquires about "eternal life", but what does he reveal that is most important to him? (How do we express our real values?) What determines the value of money in our lives? In God's eyes? (1 Timothy 6:8-10; 17-19)
4. What does Jesus tell the man to do with his property, and with the resulting money in hand? What new treasures does Jesus say the man would gain by his investment? Is there risk in trusting Jesus as your broker? Do you agree in practice with His values?
5. Does Jesus suggest or command the man to sell and give and follow? How does his reaction show the true "Lord" of his life? How do you see his response in light of the first commandment? (Exodus 20:2-3) Why did Jesus let the young man walk off?
6. What or who rules your life? Is Jesus one of your priorities? If He is Lord of your life, then He is first on

your priority list? Is anything worth the cost of having any "Lord" but Jesus? Ask Him to help you demote or discard anything or anyone on your list that is above Him.

7. Jesus treasured having the man's heart and eternal relationship with him. (Mark 10:21) After seeing the man run to Him, how do you think Jesus felt at seeing him walk off? How do you think Jesus feels whenever you back off from coming closer to Him through obedience?

DAILY PRAYER

Wealth, I put my trust in your immediate pleasure, and pretend that you will always be there whenever I need you. I want to get rich and get richer. I try to forget that I will leave all of you behind when I die. Meanwhile, I will collect as much as I can, as soon as I can and then buy as many things as I can and see how much I can enjoy for myself during my few short years alive. I will deal with eternity when I get there. Sufficient for the day are the pleasures thereof.

"GET INTO THE STORY" (Mark 10:17-31; Matthew 19:16-26; Luke 18:18-27. Write answers. Think on sentences. Fill in "TAKE OUT" (below). Allow to "soak in" during week.)

1. The rich young man did something unusual for the prideful manner of the wealthy. He"_____ up to (Jesus) and _____ on his _____ before Him." (Mark 10:17)
2. The young man asked Jesus, "Good teacher, what must I _____ to inherit eternal life?" Jesus goes down the "religious" road with him by saying, "You know the _____" ...and the (young man) said to Him, "Teacher, all these I have _____ since I was a boy." (Mark 10:19-20) But he still feels that his performance alone will not get him into heaven.
3. Jesus' own heart goes out to this eager and searching young man. "Jesus looked at _____ and _____ him. 'One thing you _____,' He said. 'Go, _____ _____ have and _____ to the _____, and you will have _____ in _____. Then come, _____ Me.'" (Mark 10:21)

4. Now the young man had the answer, clear and simple, to his question, "What shall I ____?" (Mark 10:17) But, "at _____, the man's face _____. He went away _____, because he had _____." (Mark 10:22) He discovered what he was not willing to do.

5. Could Jesus have had tears in His eyes when He " _____ around and said to His _____, 'How _____ it is for the _____ to enter the _____ of God.'" (Mark 10:23-27) The young man spoke of inheriting "eternal life". Here Jesus describes it as entering "the _____ of God." But in the kingdom of God, there is only one King!

6. To what did Jesus compare the level of difficulty of a rich person entering heaven? _____ The disciples "were even more _____, and said to each other, _____?" (Mark 10:26)

Jesus reassures them that "with man this is impossible, but not with _____; _____ things are _____ with _____." (Mark 10:27)

7. Peter inquires about his and the other disciples' future, since they had "left _____ to follow" Jesus? (Mark 10:28) Jesus replied, "I tell you the truth, ...no one who has left _____ or _____ or _____ or _____ or _____ or _____ or _____ for Me and the _____ will fail to receive a hundred times as much in this present age (homes, brothers, sisters, mothers, children and fields - and with them _____) and in the _____ to come, _____ life. But many who are _____ will be _____, and the last _____." (Mark 10:29-31)

TAKE OUT FROM THE STORY: *How does this story impact you? Apply now, review later.*

LEARNED BY DOING: *What have you learned through applying "take out" to your life.*

August 28th

THE WOMAN AT THE WELL John 4.1-26

worshiping faith

Worship is about the heart and the facts

THE SAMARITAN WOMAN'S WORSHIPING FAITH: She was thirsty for a meaningful and happy life, but she had many questions, a burdensome past, and was a member of a despised minority group. Jesus broke through barriers of race, gender, and religion to bring her "living water" and true worship.

QUESTIONS

1. How does Jesus use surprise and curiosity to build a conversational bridge with this woman? (John 4:7-15) Are you surprised, as were His disciples (John 4:27), that He would talk with this woman? Why?
2. What do you think of Jesus' reply, after she said a misleading, "I have no husband"? (John 4:17-18) What do you think she felt when Jesus complimented her honesty and then told her marital history and present sinful relationship? (Ladies speak first on this in discussion.)
3. Why do you think the woman brought up a religious controversy after her past was exposed by Jesus? (John 4:19-20) What kind of impact do you think Jesus' answer about worship had on her?
4. What do you think happened in her mind and heart when Jesus told her who He is? (John 4:25-26)
5. How did Jesus surprise you when He pursued conversation with you? How did He handle your questions?
6. Tell about how you became convinced of Who Jesus is, and then how you accepted His offer of "living water". What made you want to trust Him with your life?
7. What can you learn from Jesus and

the woman that will help you to share the Good News? Why was the woman so successful, when she had no training or experience in witnessing? (Read also Colossians 4:2-6.)

PRAYER

Jesus, I thank You that You don't see me and feel about me based on my social identity or my past performance. What is important to You is that I know the true You, as You really are, and that I connect with You in my spirit - the real me - deep down inside. Jesus, I thank You that I don't have to be highly educated or have an important position to be valued by You. Thank You that You love me like I am, and that You love me too much to leave me that way. Help me to welcome and pursue every change You show me that You want to make in me.

"GET INTO THE STORY" (Read John 4:3-43. Write answers. Think on sentences. Fill in "TAKE OUT" (below). Allow to "soak in" during the week.)

1. How did God use a natural situation to set up a "divine appointment"? (John 4:3-6) _____
2. It is not surprising that Jesus is thirsty after walking all day in the heat. Why is the woman surprised at His request for a drink? (John 4:7-9) _____
3. What information does Jesus say the woman needed to know, before she would ask for "living water"? (John 4:10) _____
Where in the story does He give her this information? _____
4. How does Jesus' describe the water He offers? (John 4:10,13-14) _____
5. Jesus willingly responds to this woman's many questions. How does He answer the local argument about places of worship? (John 4:19-24) _____
6. What other life changing truth does Jesus give to this woman? (John 4:25-26) _____
What do you think Jesus is feeling when he tells her who He is? (John 4:31-34; Matthew 11:25-30) _____
(Read again John 4:10.)
7. What impression do you get in this story about this woman's personality, her past and her character? (Review entire story, and also John 4:6b-7a, 9, 16-17, 25, 28-30, 42) _____

What did Jesus say about the woman's marital situation, and what was her reaction? (John 4:17-19) _____

8. How did this woman's untrained, inexperienced "witness" result in the whole town believing in Jesus? (John 4:39-43) _____

Do you think she experienced John 4:34? _____

9. What answer does Jesus' actions give to this woman's question about why He would have contact with Samaritans? _____

Compare Jesus' attitude toward them with His disciples' attitude. (John 4:27, 35; Luke 9:51-56; Acts 1:8) _____

TAKE OUT FROM THE STORY: *How does this story impact you? Apply now, review later.*

LEARNED BY DOING: *What have you learned through applying "take out" to your life.*

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