

**June 14, 2020**

**Pre-service**

**Opening Address**

**Hymn** “O Christ Who Called the Twelve” LSB 856

1 O Christ, who called the Twelve

To rise and follow You,  
Forsaking old, familiar ways  
For ventures bold and new:  
Grant us to hear Your call  
To risk security  
And, bound in heart and will to You,  
Find perfect liberty.

2 O Christ, who taught the Twelve

The truth for ages sealed,  
Whose words and works awakened faith,  
The ways of God revealed:  
Instruct us now, we pray,  
By Your empow’ring Word.  
True teacher, be for all who seek  
Their light, their life, their Lord.

3 O Christ, who led the Twelve

Among the desolate  
And broke as bread of life for all  
Your love compassionate:  
Lead us along the ways  
Where hope has nearly died  
And help us climb the lonely hills  
Where love is crucified.

4 O Christ, who sent the Twelve

On roads they’d never trod  
To serve, to suffer, teach, proclaim  
The nearer reign of God:  
Send us on ways where faith  
Transcends timidity,  
Where love informs and hope sustains  
Both life and ministry.

5 O Christ, the apostles' Lord,  
The martyrs' strength and song,  
The crucified and risen King  
To whom the saints belong:  
Though generations pass,  
Our tribute still we bring,  
Our hymns a sacrifice of praise,  
Our lives an offering.

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**The Invocation:** In the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit. Amen.

**The Confession:** If we say we have no sin, we deceive ourselves, and the truth is not in us. But if we confess our sins, God, who is faithful and just, will forgive our sins and cleanse us from all unrighteousness. Let us then confess our sins to God our Father. Most merciful God, we confess that we are by nature sinful and unclean. We have sinned against You in thought, word, and deed, by what we have done and by what we have left undone. We have not loved You with our whole heart; we have not loved our neighbors as ourselves. We justly deserve Your present and eternal punishment. For the sake of Your son Jesus Christ, have mercy on us. Forgive us, renew us, and lead us, so that we may delight in Your will and walk in Your ways to the glory of Your holy name. Amen.

**The Absolution:** In the mercy of almighty God, Jesus Christ was given to die for us, and for His sake, God forgives us all our sins. To those who believe in Jesus Christ, He gives the power to become the children of God and bestows on them the Holy Spirit. May the Lord, who has begun this good work in us, bring it to completion in the day of our Lord Jesus Christ.

**Prayer of the Day:** Let us pray...through Jesus Christ, Your Son, Our Lord, Who lives and reigns with You and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever. Amen.

**The Old Testament Reading** is written in the book of Hosea, chapters five and six.

<sup>15</sup> I will return again to my place,  
until they acknowledge their guilt and seek my face,  
and in their distress earnestly seek me.

<sup>6</sup> “Come, let us return to the LORD;  
for he has torn us, that he may heal us;  
he has struck us down, and he will bind us up.

<sup>2</sup> After two days he will revive us;  
on the third day he will raise us up,  
that we may live before him.

<sup>3</sup> Let us know; let us press on to know the LORD;  
his going out is sure as the dawn;  
he will come to us as the showers,  
as the spring rains that water the earth.”

<sup>4</sup> What shall I do with you, O Ephraim?  
What shall I do with you, O Judah?

Your love is like a morning cloud,  
like the dew that goes early away.  
<sup>5</sup> Therefore I have hewn them by the prophets;  
I have slain them by the words of my mouth,  
and my judgment goes forth as the light.  
<sup>6</sup> For I desire steadfast love<sup>[a]</sup> and not sacrifice,  
the knowledge of God rather than burnt offerings.

**The Epistle Reading** is written in the book of Romans, chapter 4, verses 13 to 25

<sup>13</sup> For the promise to Abraham and his offspring that he would be heir of the world did not come through the law but through the righteousness of faith. <sup>14</sup> For if it is the adherents of the law who are to be the heirs, faith is null and the promise is void. <sup>15</sup> For the law brings wrath, but where there is no law there is no transgression. <sup>16</sup> That is why it depends on faith, in order that the promise may rest on grace and be guaranteed to all his offspring—not only to the adherent of the law but also to the one who shares the faith of Abraham, who is the father of us all, <sup>17</sup> as it is written, “I have made you the father of many nations”—in the presence of the God in whom he believed, who gives life to the dead and calls into existence the things that do not exist. <sup>18</sup> In hope he believed against hope, that he should become the father of many nations, as he had been told, “So shall your offspring be.” <sup>19</sup> He did not weaken in faith when he considered his own body, which was as good as dead (since he was about a hundred years old), or when he considered the barrenness<sup>[a]</sup> of Sarah's womb. <sup>20</sup> No unbelief made him waver concerning the promise of God, but he grew strong in his faith as he gave glory to God, <sup>21</sup> fully convinced that God was able to do what he had promised. <sup>22</sup> That is why his faith was “counted to him as righteousness.” <sup>23</sup> But the words “it was counted to him” were not written for his sake alone, <sup>24</sup> but for ours also. It will be counted to us who believe in him who raised from the dead Jesus our Lord, <sup>25</sup> who was delivered up for our trespasses and raised for our justification.

**The Holy Gospel** is according to St. Matthew, chapter 9, verses 9 to 13.

<sup>9</sup> As Jesus passed on from there, he saw a man called Matthew sitting at the tax booth, and he said to him, “Follow me.” And he rose and followed him. <sup>10</sup> And as Jesus<sup>[a]</sup> reclined at table in the house, behold, many tax collectors and sinners came and were reclining with Jesus and his disciples. <sup>11</sup> And when the Pharisees saw this, they said to his disciples, “Why does your teacher eat with tax collectors and sinners?” <sup>12</sup> But when he heard it, he said, “Those who are well have no need of a physician, but those who are sick. <sup>13</sup> Go and learn what this means: ‘I desire mercy, and not sacrifice.’ For I came not to call the righteous, but sinners.

**Apostles' Creed:** I believe in God, the Father Almighty, maker of heaven and earth. And in Jesus Christ, His only Son, our Lord, who was conceived by the Holy Spirit, born of the virgin Mary, suffered under Pontius Pilate, was crucified, died and was buried. He descended into hell. The third day He rose again from the dead. He ascended into heaven and sits at the right hand of God the Father Almighty. From thence He will come to judge the living and the dead. I believe in the Holy Spirit, the holy Christian Church, the communion of saints, the forgiveness of sins, the resurrection of the body, and the life everlasting. Amen

**Hymn** “My Faith Looks Up to Thee” LSB 702

- 1 My faith looks up to Thee,  
Thou Lamb of Calvary,  
Savior divine.  
Now hear me while I pray;  
Take all my guilt away;  
O let me from this day  
Be wholly Thine!
- 2 May Thy rich grace impart  
Strength to my fainting heart;  
My zeal inspire!  
As Thou hast died for me,  
Oh, may my love to Thee  
Pure, warm, and changeless be,  
A living fire!
- 3 While life’s dark maze I tread  
And griefs around me spread,  
Be Thou my guide;  
Bid darkness turn to day,  
Wipe sorrow’s tears away,  
Nor let me ever stray  
From Thee aside.
- 4 When ends life’s transient dream,  
When death’s cold, sullen stream  
Shall o’er me roll,  
Blest Savior, then, in love,  
Fear and distrust remove;  
O bear me safe above,  
A ransomed soul!

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**The Sermon:** Unlikely Apostle, Unlikely People

I don’t know about you, but I am a “Shark Tanker.” Do you know what that is? What is a “Shark Tanker?” It is a fan of the TV show that bears that name, “Shark Tank.” I love watching the various inventors and entrepreneurs bringing on their innovative, quirky, and unique products, and then trying to get a deal with the investors, aka “sharks.” I have to admit that my family has bought a few of these products. I especially enjoy hearing their stories, though. I find it fascinating to see how these people, often times without any experience, create a product and company from the ground-up, learning as they go! It is cool to see how the unlikelyest of people can create the next big business or product. Unlikely.

If anyone was to be an unlikely candidate for the office of apostle, it would have to be Matthew. For the next six months, we will focus on the book that bears this man’s name. I’m

calling our next series, “Matthew: Jesus Teaches the Church.” For today, I want to look at this unlikely apostle and the Gospel that bears his name. We’ll see what Matthew means to us.

The Gospel of Matthew was arguably the most important Gospel in the early Church. It was the most read and quoted by the Church Fathers. It was likely the first words of Jesus that many Christians had ever heard. The Gospel of Matthew, along with Gospel of John, was used heavily in the following centuries, especially the Middle Ages, and in the Reformation era. The Church has historically considered this to be the first Gospel, penned in the mid-50s, and attributed to Matthew. Every Greek manuscript that we have attributes this to Matthew in some way, shape, or form.

What do we know about Matthew? Not too much. It is thought that maybe he traveled to Persia (southwest Iran), Macedonia (part of northern Greece), Syria, Parthia (northeast Iran), Media (northwestern Iran), and Ethiopia. We think he died a martyr. Perhaps one of his brothers is a fellow Apostle, James son of Alphaeus. Mark 2:14 also calls Matthew, “Levi, son of Alphaeus.” Maybe they are related?

What do we know about him? Essentially everything we do know comes from our Gospel text and his call accounts from the Synoptics. We do know his job, work place, and boss. Matthew was a tax collector in the service of Herod Antipas in Capernaum, where Jesus taught and ministered in. A great trade route ran through Capernaum, called *the Via Maris* or “Way of the Sea”. Matthew had his booth set-up by the lake, where he could assess customs and taxes on salt, hides, fish, grain, oil, cosmetics, and gold carried by the travelers and caravans as they passed by. He could hit up the boats and people as they came and left; a great location! The sharks from Shark Tank would love his business placing.

And we do know how Tax Collectors were seen in those days. It wasn’t very good. Tax collectors were universally hated and distrusted. They worked for the sworn enemy of the Jewish people, the Roman Empire! They worked for their captors and oppressors, and made their living at their own people’s expense. As long as Rome got her cut and set amount, the rest was theirs, and they had the backing of the Roman Army to get this money. They were seen as traitors. You can see why they aren’t liked.

Jews especially hated Tax Collectors for theological reasons, too. Since they believed that God alone was king, they felt that paying taxes to any mortal ruler was an infringement to God’s rights and an insult to His majesty. And since tax collectors worked with Gentiles on a regular basis, they were seen as unclean. They were forbidden from entering the synagogue, and they weren’t allowed to serve as witnesses in court. They religious and social pariahs, considered excommunicated, and were lumped with robbers and murderers. Tax collectors were despised and seen as the worst of the worst! This is Matthew in the eyes of the world, and his countrymen. This we know.

But we also know that he was an apostle. What is an apostle? An apostle means “sent one,” and it comes from the Hebrew word, *sheliak*, which means the same thing. A Rabbi in Jesus’ day would send out apostles, *sheliaks*, in his name to represent him. Apostles speak for and represent the Rabbi. The apostles speak for and represent Jesus. Matthew of all people is a *sheliak*, an apostle. Matthew of all people is to represent and speak for the most famous Rabbi of all! Really, what an unlikely person for such an important job! Yet, Jesus chooses this person to represent Him!

And we know one other thing about Matthew, his call, which is our text for today. As Jesus walks through Capernaum, He sees Matthew working at his tax booth. Looking at him, Jesus says, “Follow Me.” And Matthew does. The call of Jesus is effective, and does what it

says. We don't choose Jesus. He chooses me. He chooses you. Matthew gets up, and he leaves his old way of life behind. He leaves his job and security, and leaves it all to follow Jesus. It must have been a scandalous thing for those people to see. Jesus, the pure, righteous, innocent Rabbi calls a man who is considered so bad, so sinful, that he isn't even allowed to step foot into the synagogue. Jesus, the pure, righteous, rabbi, calls a man who is considered unclean, a traitor, and no better than a robber or murderer. I'm sure some jaws dropped, some eyes rolled, some gasps were uttered, and gossip spread that day. We later find out that they did happen.

However, Matthew is touched and honored by this, and decides to host a banquet, a party. Matthew invites his fellow outcasts and misfits, the tax collectors and sinners, to join him for this as he hosts Jesus and some of His disciples. This famous Rabbi and teacher will be joining them for dinner. Jesus shows that He is willing to associate and be with such people!

But, remember, some jaws dropped, eyes rolled, and gasps escaped that day. The Pharisees see this and are outraged. They are scandalized. They can't believe their eyes. They complain to Jesus' disciples, "**Why does your teacher eat with tax collectors and sinners?**" You can hear the disgust in their voices. You can hear the judgment they make. You can hear their dismissal of Jesus. Their complaint essentially says, "Who does that? Who would interact with such sinful people? What kind of respected and wise teacher would do *that*?" The disciples don't give an answer. Jesus does.

He answers them with a metaphor. He says, "**Those who are well have no need of a physician, but those who are sick.**" He's right. The healthy don't need a doctor, the sick do. A good doctor will be with and see sick people. A good Savior sits with and ministers to sinners. A good Savior cares for and loves the outcasts, the lonely, the passed over, the broken, the hurting, and the unlikely. A good Savior interacts with sinners. But Jesus isn't done yet with the Pharisees.

He essentially tells them, "You don't get it, do you? Go study your Bible and the words of Hosea. **Go and learn what this means, 'I desire mercy, and not sacrifice.' For I came not to call the righteous, but sinners.**" The Pharisees don't get it. They don't see their sin. They don't see their need for Jesus. But you know who does? Matthew. He gets it. The one who is dismissed, cast aside, deemed unsavable and fit for service, the most unlikely person gets it.

Jesus came for him. Jesus calls sinners. He calls the "Matthews" of the world. He calls the failures, the sick, the addicts, the robber, the disabled, the dying, the diseased, and the divorced. He calls the old, the young, and those in between. He calls the hurting, the broken, and those cast aside. He calls the worst of the worst, and the best of the rest. He calls the ordinary, the normal, the least, the last, and unlikely! He calls sinners! He calls you! There is no one that Jesus *won't call* to Himself. That's what Matthew teaches us!

And what does Jesus give? A most unlikely thing: grace. Jesus gives God's undeserved mercy and kindness that spills and overflows into our lives. He won it at Golgotha and confirmed it at the garden tomb. By God's grace we have been made His children and heaven's heirs.

And what does Jesus do with such unlikely people with his unlikely gift? He uses them for His service. One commentator insightfully says, "We must note what Matthew left and what Matthew took. He left his tax-collector's table; but from it took one thing-his pen...[Matthew] whose trade had taught him to use a pen, used that skill to compose the first handbook of the teaching of Jesus, which must rank as one of the most important books the world has ever read." Just think what Jesus can do through you by His grace! What gifts has God given you that you can use to serve Him and your neighbor?

Matthew reminds us that God calls an unlikely apostle and unlikely people.

### **Prayer of the Church**

In peace, let us pray to the Lord.

#### *Brief silence*

For the Church and her witness of hope to the world, that in every city, village and home across the globe the voice of the Lord may be heard by the faithful preaching of the Gospel, let us pray to the Lord: **Lord, have mercy.**

For those who labor in the fields of the Lord today and for the Lord to raise up laborers for His harvest fields, that their work may be blessed and they may be protected and defended against the enemies of the Kingdom, let us pray to the Lord: **Lord, have mercy.**

For our Synod and Matthew, our Synod president; for our congregation and \_\_\_\_\_, our pastor(s); and for the resources to accomplish what the Lord has given us to do despite all obstacles and temptations, that united in the faith we may serve the Lord with joy, let us pray to the Lord: **Lord, have mercy.**

For all who live under the flag of our nation, for those who govern in this country, and for the causes of peace and justice, that we may all be given grace and freedom to serve the Lord honorably and in accord with His Word, let us pray to the Lord: **Lord, have mercy.**

For the poor and hungry, the homeless and unemployed, and the oppressed, that the Lord would grant them mercy, and that we may help to relieve their suffering and want, let us pray to the Lord: **Lord, have mercy.**

For the sick, that the Lord would grant them healing; for the wounded in spirit, that the Lord would make them whole; and for the grieving, that the Lord would comfort them, especially all affected by the ongoing pandemic and its effects [*and those whom we now name* \_\_\_\_\_], let us pray to the Lord: **Lord, have mercy.**

For those who know the riches of the Lord's blessings, that they may cheerfully return to the Lord the tithes and offerings of a grateful heart and give generously to the many agencies of the Church working to help those in need, let us pray to the Lord: **Lord, have mercy.**

For the dying, that they may have peace at the last; and for our grateful remembrance of all those who have died in Christ, that in the fullness of time the Lord may bring us with them into His everlasting presence where sin and death will trouble us no more, let us pray to the Lord: **Lord, have mercy.**

O blessed Lord, through Moses You called a people to Yourself and from them You delivered up Your own Son to be our Savior. By His sufferings and death, He has redeemed us sinners from our sins, and by His resurrection He has released us from the fear of death. Help us to live as Your own people, doing the good works for which we were created, and praying with confidence

the petitions and supplications of our hearts; through Jesus Christ, Your Son, our Lord, who lives and reigns with You and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever. **Amen.**

**The Lord's Prayer:** Let us pray the prayer Jesus has taught us to pray: Our Father who art in heaven, hallowed be Thy name, Thy kingdom come, Thy will be done on earth as it is in heaven. Give us this day our daily bread; and forgive us our trespasses as we forgive those who trespass against us; and lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil. For Thine is the kingdom and the power and the glory forever and ever. Amen.

**The Benediction:** The Lord bless you and keep you. The Lord make His face shine on you and be gracious unto you. The Lord look on You with His favor and give you peace. Amen.

**Final Hymn** "Joyful, Joyful, We Adore Thee" LSB 803

1 Joyful, joyful we adore Thee,  
God of glory, Lord of love!  
Hearts unfold like flow'rs before Thee,  
Praising Thee, their sun above.  
Melt the clouds of sin and sadness,  
Drive the gloom of doubt away.  
Giver of immortal gladness,  
Fill us with the light of day.

2 All Thy works with joy surround Thee,  
Earth and heav'n reflect Thy rays,  
Stars and angels sing around Thee,  
Center of unbroken praise.  
Field and forest, vale and mountain,  
Flow'ry meadow, flashing sea,  
Chanting bird, and flowing fountain  
Call us to rejoice in Thee.

3 Thou art giving and forgiving,  
Ever blessing, ever blest,  
Wellspring of the joy of living,  
Ocean-depth of happy rest!  
Father, Son, and Holy Spirit,  
Fountainhead of love divine:  
Joyful, we Thy heav'n inherit!  
Joyful, we by grace are Thine!  
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**Closing Address and Announcements**

**Postlude** "Shout to the North"