



Sermon Discussion Questions

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Series: Restored

Week 2: Restored from Misunderstood Identity

1. ICE BREAKER: Today we're talking about Matthew, who was defined by his job as a tax collector. What was the first job that you ever held? What about the hardest, strangest, or most fun? Share with your group.
2. Read our Scripture for this week, Matthew 9:9-13:

⁹As 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.

¹⁰While Jesus was having dinner at Matthew's house, many tax collectors and sinners came and ate with him and his disciples. ¹¹When the Pharisees saw this, they asked his disciples, "Why does your teacher eat with tax collectors and sinners?"

¹²On hearing this, Jesus said, "It is not the healthy who need a doctor, but the sick. ¹³But go and learn what this means: 'I desire mercy, not sacrifice.' For I have not come to call the righteous, but sinners."

Discuss this passage of Scripture. What questions do you have? What are you noticing for the first time? How do you think Matthew is feeling at different points throughout the story?

3. Reread Matthew 9:9. This verse records an interaction between Jesus and Matthew. It appears that Jesus saw Matthew, says "Follow me," and Matthew just gets up from his job and leaves!

What do you think about this? How would you have responded to Jesus? What might have been going through Matthew's mind? Why do you think Matthew followed Jesus immediately?

4. Identity is a popular conversation in our culture right now, and there are two main ways that people often find their identity. The traditional understanding of identity is that it comes from outside of you and is imposed upon you. For example, your dad was a fisherman, so you will be a fisherman. The more modern understanding is that your identity comes from inside you and your hopes and dreams for your life.

Discuss as a group some places that people tend to find their identity. Why do you think there has been a shift from the traditional to modern understanding of identity? Talk about where and how you find your identity.

5. The first concept we see in Matthew's story is "Insufficient Identity." As an example of this, Pastor Dale said that sometimes people identify themselves by what they do for a career.

What was Matthew's 'insufficient identity' in Scripture? What is your answer to the common question 'What do you do?'. Why would this be called insufficient identity? Have you ever struggled with this? Why or why not?

6. Pastor Dale said, "Jesus doesn't invite us to be Christians. He invites us to follow Him."

Discuss what this statement means. In your opinion, what is the difference between being a Christian and following Jesus? How do you see this play out in your own life?

7. Beyond insufficient identity, there may be a case that we hold an "Incorrect Identity." In other words, we might start to believe things about ourselves that aren't necessarily true. The defining question here is: "Is this all there is?"

Given what you know about Matthew and his story, what do you think are some lies that Matthew may have believed? What are lies that you have believed around your identity in the past?

8. Finally, the identity we are all created with and that waits to be restored within us is "Image-bearer Identity." Jesus wants to infuse what you do with His eternal purpose, and He does it with a personal invitation into His presence that transforms our lives.

Discuss how eternal purpose is present in every person who follows Jesus. Pastor Dale said that we are all ministers of the Gospel. What does that mean? What does that look like? Share some of the eternal purposes and callings that you feel God has placed on your life.

9. Danish Theologian Søren Kierkegaard once wrote, "Now, with God's help, I shall become myself." Truly, this is what restoration is about.

Discuss this quote. What is the significance of this statement? How can we 'become' ourselves? What is God's role in this process?

10. PRACTICE: Ephesians 2:10 says, "For we are God's handiwork, created in Christ Jesus to do good works, which God prepared in advance for us to do."

As a group, pray for each other that the Holy Spirit would reveal the good works that He has called you to do. You may choose to pray in any way that works for your group, but challenge yourselves to pray out loud. You could pray for the person sitting to your right, or go one by one, and allow several group members to pray over each person. Use this time to encourage each other and ask the Spirit to work in mighty ways through our lives.