

Jesus teaching on spiritual health

The call of Matthew

The writer of the gospel puts his call to follow between the classic teaching of the Master on His power to forgive sin and the Lord's statement that "the sick" need a physician. Matthew Levi had moved from his religious work to be a tax farmer on the lucrative shores of Galilee where ships discharged cargoes of marble etc. He had glowing reports -nay-maybe glowing memories of the Sermon on the Mount for Tabgha was but a few hundred yards from the traditional site of that address. The man who was called "a gift" was a taxman and on that day of His call he was as glad to leave his former life as Zacchaeus. He received the gift of a full and free forgiveness.

Matthew had been a rebel from the Levite rule for he found no satisfaction there. But the reality and quality of Christ's life attracted him

The lesson of Hosea 6.6

The fact that the Lord Jesus fraternised with publicans and sinners came in for strident criticism from the Pharisees. They asked the disciples why Jesus ate with such people. Jesus overheard and gave this epic reply to an epic or bellicose question. "The healthy do not require surgery but the sick do need a doctor's treatment.

Clearly the question remaining was, "Are we sick?" The answer is found in the reference from Hosea-which directs attention to the prior need for repentance and faith -which attract the mercy of God whereas sacrifice of tithes etc does not build a relationship between a holy God and sinful creature in the absence of the former.

Not come to call the righteous

Jesus is not come for the righteous. Jesus would not come for the righteous. Jesus recognises no righteous simply because there are not any natural righteous on the planet. "All have sinned and come short of the glory of God." As Paul shows in Romans 3 the tongue the throat the feet the heart the whole man is corrupt. So we have to understand that *universal sinfulness* and *total corruption* are absolutely fair descriptions of human nature as we know it the world over. The world did not stand most in need of a teacher to improve it or a philosopher to develop a plan to perfect the people and their rulers but rather of a Saviour to forgive its sin and our Lord Jesus Christ was pointing that out. In the absence of salvation there was no hope for mankind acting in and of itself to regain the paradise that Adam lost much less improve on that.

From Paper to Practice



What was there in Christ's way to bring back a rebel like Matthew to God?

Without what responses to the divine call of the Spirit cannot spiritual health improve?

What are the two realities of the condition of man as a sinner?