

Matthew

About Matthew himself we know very little.

We read of his calling by Jesus Christ in **Matthew 9:9** and **Mark 2:14**.

Levi is another name for Matthew.

We know that he was a tax collector and thus he was a bitterly hated man for the Jews hated members of their own race who had entered the civil service of their conquerors.

Matthew would be regarded as nothing better than a quisling.

More than any other disciple, Matthew had a clear idea of how much it would cost to follow Jesus Christ, yet he did not hesitate for a moment.

When Matthew left his tax-collecting booth he guaranteed himself unemployment. For several of the other disciples who followed Jesus Christ, there was always fishing to return to, but for Matthew there was **no** turning back.

Mark 2:15 [New King James] *“Now it happened, as He was dining in Levi’s house, that many tax collectors and sinners also sat together with Jesus and His disciples; for there were many, and they followed Him.”*

The same day that Matthew [Levi] was called by Jesus Christ, he held a meeting at his house to introduce others to Jesus.

Matthew invited the only people who would accept such an invitation, other tax collectors and sinners. Matthew did not waste time in starting to share what had happened to him.

Two major things happened to Matthew when he decided to allow Jesus Christ –

Jesus Christ gave him a new life –

Matthew not only belonged to a new group of people, he now belonged to Jesus Christ.

Acts 20:28 [New King James] *“Therefore take heed to yourselves and to all the flock, among which the Holy Spirit has made you overseers, to shepherd the church of God which He purchased with His own blood.”*

Every person who becomes a Christian, a follower of Jesus Christ, becomes a purchased bond slave of Jesus Christ.

1 Corinthians 6:19-20 [New King James] *“Or do you not know that your body is the temple of the Holy Spirit who is in you, whom you have from God, and you are not your own? For you were bought at a price; therefore glorify God in your body and in your spirit, which are God’s.”*

We are now to live a life that will bring honour and glory to our Saviour and Master, not only with our body, but also in our human spirit [**Job 32:8; 1 Corinthians 2:11; Proverbs 20:27**].

Matthew out of gratitude towards Jesus Christ accepting him as a friend [**John 15:13-16**] offered his whole life to Jesus Christ.

Romans 12:1 [NIV] *“Therefore, I urge you, brothers, in view of God’s mercy, to offer your bodies as living sacrifices, holy and pleasing to God, this is your spiritual act of worship.”*

“*Bodies*” is the English translation of the Greek word “*soma*” meaning whole life, physical body, mind and human spirit.

Jesus gave Matthew a new purpose for his natural skills –

When Matthew followed Jesus Christ he brought with him one skill that most of the other disciples did not have, putting words together on paper.

God made Matthew a record-keeper, he was a keen observer and recorded all he saw happening around him.

The gospel that bears his name is a result of his diligent work.

Matthew’s experience points out to every Christian that from the beginning of our life we are God’s work in progress.

Much of what God wants us to do for Him, He has given us the skills and experience, long before we consciously responded to Him.

God has trusted us with skills, abilities, opportunities and experience ahead of our work as a disciple of His, a Christian.

God has made us each capable of being His servant in some area of life.

When we trust God with what He has given us, we begin a life that is a real adventure.

Matthew could **not** have known that God would use the very skills he had sharpened as a tax collector to record the greatest life ever lived by a human being Who was also the Son of God.

Have you recognised Jesus Christ’s call to follow Him? –

What has been your response so far?

Are you allowing Jesus Christ to use the skills and experience that you have had in your life before that calling to follow Him?

Jesus Christ constantly accepted people to become disciple of His from every level of society when He was on earth, He has **not** changed this in any way today.

Sometimes the decision to follow the path in life that Jesus Christ wants us to tread requires difficult and painful choices, Matthew left behind a lucrative career.

Luke 14:25-27 [New King James] *“Now great multitudes went with Him. And He turned and said to them, ‘If anyone comes to Me and does not hate his father and mother, wife and children, brothers and sisters, yes, and his own life also, he cannot be My disciple. And whoever does not bear his cross and come after Me cannot be My disciple.’”*

Matthew was an example of a person who had counted the cost and gave greater value to becoming a disciple of Jesus Christ.

The Greek word translated “*hate*” is “*misēō*” meaning love less by comparison.

To “*bear our cross*” means the total crucifixion of our old way of life.

Romans 6:3-6 [New King James] *“Or do you not know that as many of us as were baptised into Christ Jesus were baptised into His death? Therefore we were buried with Him through baptism into death, that just as Christ was raised from the dead by the glory of the Father, even so we also should walk in newness of life. For if we have been united together in the likeness of His death, certainly we*

also shall be in the likeness of His resurrection, knowing this, that our old man was crucified with Him, that the body of sin might be done away with, that we should no longer be slaves of sin.”

Our baptism by total immersion is symbolic of the death of our old life as is our old life being crucified.

Becoming a disciple of Jesus Christ involves changes to every part of our life, with **no** turning back, [2 Peter 2:20-22].