

**LIFE OF CHRIST**  
from the gospel of  
**Mark**

**LESSON 7**

**MATTHEW FOLLOWS  
JESUS**

**MARK 2:13-17**

# Life of Christ

## Matthew Follows Jesus

## Mark 2:13-17

### Younger Verse

I have come to get sinners to follow me. Mark 2:17

### Older Verse

I have not come to get those who think they are right with God to follow me.  
I have come to get sinners to follow me. Mark 2:17

### Lesson Goals

**Learn that Matthew left his job and followed Jesus**  
**Learn that Jesus was not afraid to be seen with “sinners”**  
**Understand that Jesus came to earth to bring forgiveness to all people**

### Opener

*Have you ever been “labeled” as a certain type of person? Maybe people say you’re smart, or a sports person, or a musician. Sometimes people have not-so-nice labels. Jesus loves people, no matter what label the world puts on them.*

### Bible Story

*Please note: This portion of the lesson is given to help in teaching the lesson. Please read through the story and read it in the Bible. Do **NOT** read from this piece of paper. Instead, make a note sheet and place it next to the story in the Bible.*

Last week, we learned how Jesus did two miracles in a man’s life. Jesus forgave the man of his sins, and He healed the man so that he could walk. After Jesus finished teaching the people in Capernaum, He returned with His followers to Lake Galilee. Does anyone remember what happened the first time Jesus went to the lake? He asked Simon, Andrew, James, and John to follow Him.

Many people followed Jesus to the lake. He began to teach the people. While He was there, Jesus saw a man named Matthew sitting at his work table. Matthew was a **tax collector**. These were people who worked for the government. They collected money from people and gave it to the government leaders. The problem was, many of these people kept some of the money for themselves. So they were not liked by most people. They were considered “sinners” and had a bad reputation.

Jesus looked at Matthew and said, “Follow me.” Matthew got up from his table and followed Jesus. He left the money and the work behind. He knew that following Jesus was worth more than all the money in the world. He must have felt so blessed to be chosen for such a special assignment. And the people must have been surprised that Jesus would choose a tax collector to be His disciple!

Later that day, Jesus ate at Matthew’s house. Matthew was excited to have Jesus over, so he invited several people to join him. He wanted those people to see how wonderful Jesus was, too. There were many tax collectors and “sinners” there. Jesus was glad to get to be with those people because he would get a chance to share about God’s love and forgiveness. They would have a chance to see and hear how much God loved them.

Some of the religious leaders, called the Pharisees, saw Jesus eating with the “sinners.” The Pharisees did not like Jesus or understand what He taught. It did not make sense to them for Jesus to spend time with people who had done many “bad” things. They did not understand that Jesus wanted everyone to know of God’s love and forgiveness of sin. So they went up to Jesus’ followers and asked, “Why does He eat with those people? Doesn’t He know what kind of people they are?”

Jesus heard them ask this question. Jesus answered them and said, “Healthy people do not need to see a doctor, but the sick do. I did not come to invite the “good” people. I came to invite the sinful people.” What did Jesus mean? Those who were called “sinners” knew that they needed Jesus to forgive them. But the religious leaders were too proud to admit that they were sinners, too. They judged everyone else, but they didn’t see the sin of pride in their own lives.

The Bible says that all people have sinned and need God to forgive them (Romans 3:23). Jesus came to earth to save all people. He died on the cross to pay the punishment for our sins. He loves us that much. We can receive God’s gift of eternal life if we will ask Jesus to come into our life and help us live for Him.

#### Review Questions

1. What did Matthew do before Jesus called him to be a disciple? (He was a tax collector.)
2. What did people think of tax collectors? (They thought they were stealing their money; “sinners”)
3. Jesus said He came to help what kind of people? (“Sinners” - those who knew they needed Him to forgive them)

#### Prayer Time

Thank God that Jesus came for ALL people. Ask God to forgive our sins and help us to follow Him like Matthew did.

#### Life Application

A few weeks ago, we talked about people with the skin disease called leprosy. These people had to live apart from everyone else because of their contagious disease. In much the same way, tax collectors were considered “sinners,” a label that caused people to stay away from them.

But Jesus knew people’s hearts. He knew that ALL people have done sinful things. He wanted the religious leaders to understand that they were sinners, too. And He wants us to understand and know that He loves us, no matter what we have done, or what label someone has put on us. Jesus can change us and make us into a new person. The Bible says that “If anyone belongs to Christ, then he is made new. The old things have gone; everything is made new!” (2 Cor. 5:17)

Just like Jesus changed Matthew from a “sinner” to a disciple, He can change us and make us new. Our sins can be forgiven and we can live for Jesus.

Planning for Lesson 8  
Jesus Enters Jerusalem  
Mark 1:1-11

## Preschool Lesson for Matthew Follows Jesus

*Share with the children that Jesus is going to invite someone to follow Him, and encourage them to listen to find out what that person does.*

Jesus had many of his special friends, called disciples, with Him again. They returned to a place they had been before. (Walk with your fingers.) They went to a lake. (Make a wave motion with hands.) Once they were there, they started to walk right next to the water. (Make watery noises)

Later on, Jesus saw a man named Levi, or Matthew, at a table near the lake. What do you think he was doing? He was a **tax collector**! Tax collectors worked for the government. They collected money from people and gave the money to the leaders. (Bring some pennies or fake money to show them the process of the money exchange.) A lot of the tax collectors were not very nice. They would take more money than they were supposed to. So most people did not like them very much. (Make the thumbs down sign.)

Jesus looked over at Matthew. Jesus said to him, "Follow me." (Motion your hand like you want someone to come.) Matthew had a choice to make. He could stay at his job, or he could leave his job and go with Jesus. What do you think he did? That's right, he left all the money, the table, and the chair and started following Jesus. Wow! He must have noticed something very special about Jesus. Jesus wanted to teach him how to love God and share that with others.

Later that day, Matthew invited his new friend, Jesus, and his old friends over for dinner. (Make a sound like you're hungry.) Matthew also invited many other people as well. (Have the children say, "Come in!" to each other.) Some of those people were tax collectors just like him. Jesus loved everybody. Jesus loved the chance to get to meet Matthew's friends. He probably shared about God's love with those people, too.

While they ate, some people who worked in the church were watching. Those people were called Pharisees. The Pharisees did not like Jesus or believe that He was God's Son. They did not like that Jesus was eating with the tax collectors because they had done bad things. They went over to some of Jesus' disciples and asked, "Why does Jesus eat with people like them?"

Jesus heard them ask the question, so He answered them. "If you are sick, you go to see the doctor. If you are healthy, you do not go. I came to help the people who want to get all the bad things out of their heart." Jesus was trying to help them understand that when we do bad things, it is like we are sick. We need to go see the doctor, Jesus, and He cleans our heart of all the sins, the bad things we do. Following Jesus starts with us asking Jesus into our heart. Then we show He is in our heart by doing things the way Jesus would.

Thank Jesus for loving all people.

## **Hands-on Activities for Matthew Follows Jesus**

Bring play money. Hand out the money to the students. Then, every time a certain word is used, like Matthew, take different amounts of the students' money. They will probably say this isn't fair; explain that the tax collectors took too much of the people's money, and that REALLY wasn't fair!

Bring chocolate coins to hand out for the snack.

Before class, wrap a piece of paper with the word "God" on it in clear wrap and hide it inside a box or pan of sand. Ask the kids to carefully dig for treasure in the sand. What is the treasure—God! (Teachers: you may want to do this outside so sand is easy to clean up.)

Pass out construction or drawing paper. Have the kids draw some coins on one side of the paper. Then have them turn the paper over and draw a picture of Jesus or write "Jesus." Ask them which one is more important—money or Jesus. Then have them put an X over the coins and hang up the picture of Jesus. They could also write today's memory verse on the paper.

Hide some articles around the room or outside. As the kids look for and find the items, remind them about the Bible verse—that Jesus came to look for those who were lost.

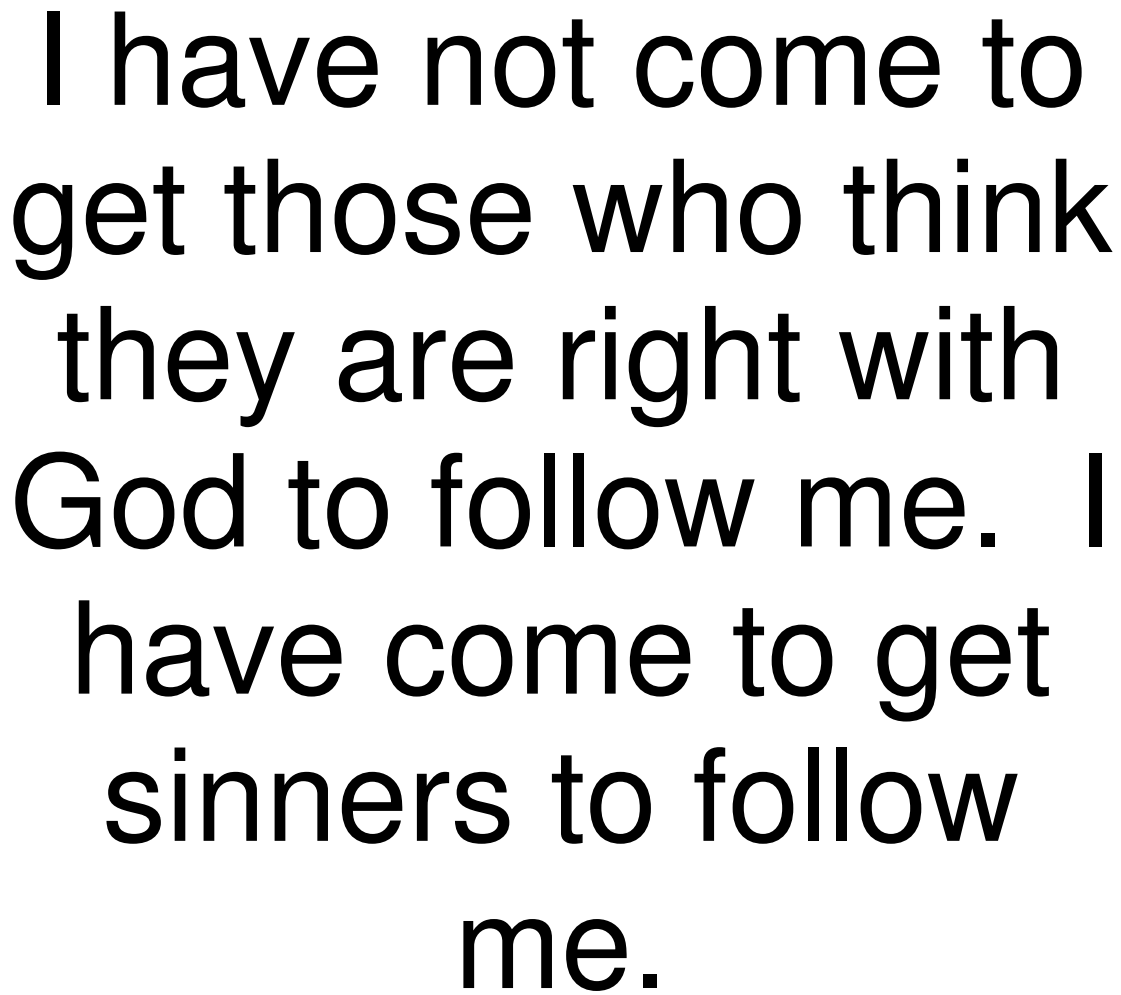
Talk about how Matthew invited his friends to meet Jesus. Ask the kids for ideas on how to invite their friends to church. They can make invitations. Think of fun ways to help new people come. Maybe you could plan a dinner.

Have the children name some different places they can go. Then give them a chance to draw themselves following Jesus at that place. i.e. Following Jesus in the store, at school, playing outside. Remind them that following Jesus means obeying the things He taught.



**I have come  
to get sin-  
ners to follow  
me.**

**Mark 2:17**

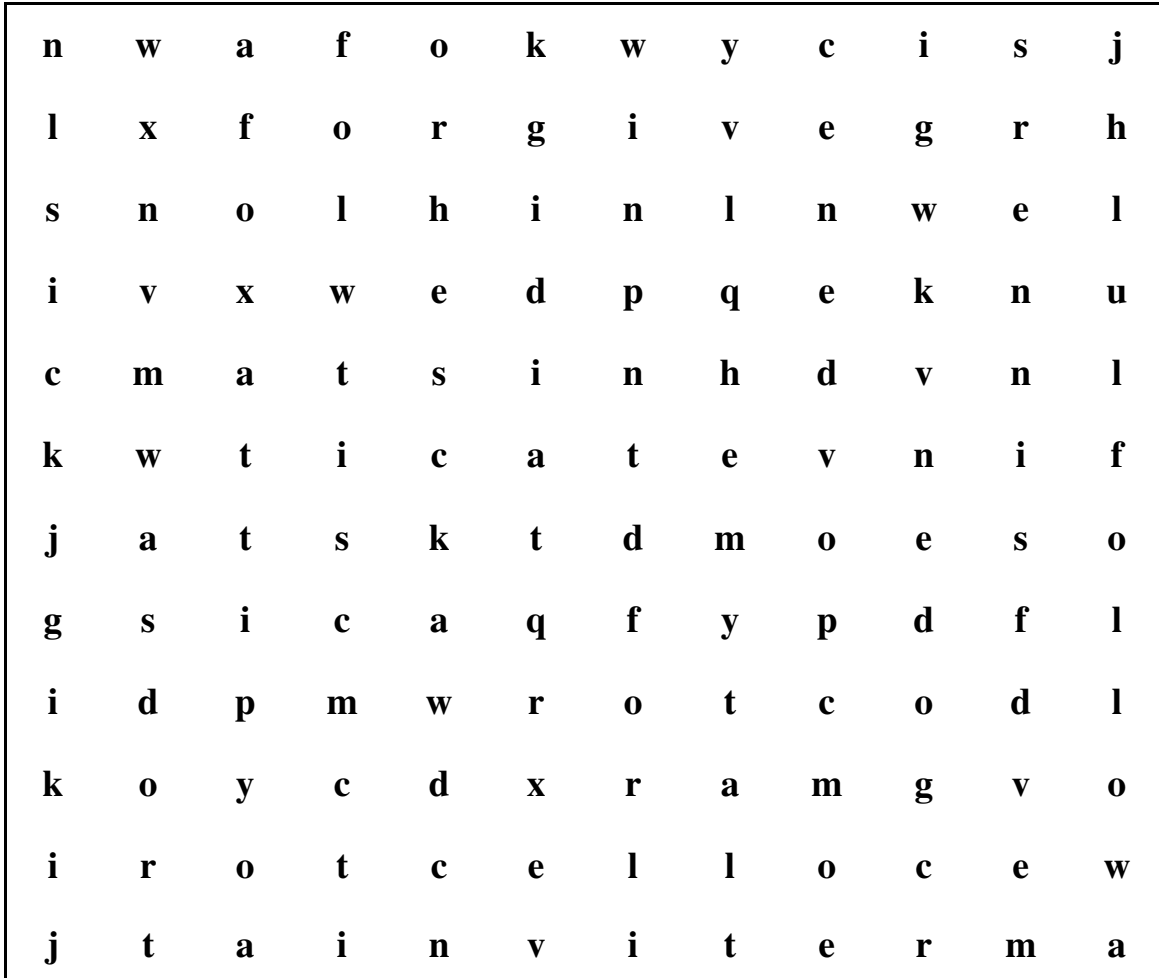


I have not come to  
get those who think  
they are right with  
God to follow me. I  
have come to get  
sinners to follow  
me.

Mark 2:17

# Word Search

## Matthew Follows Jesus

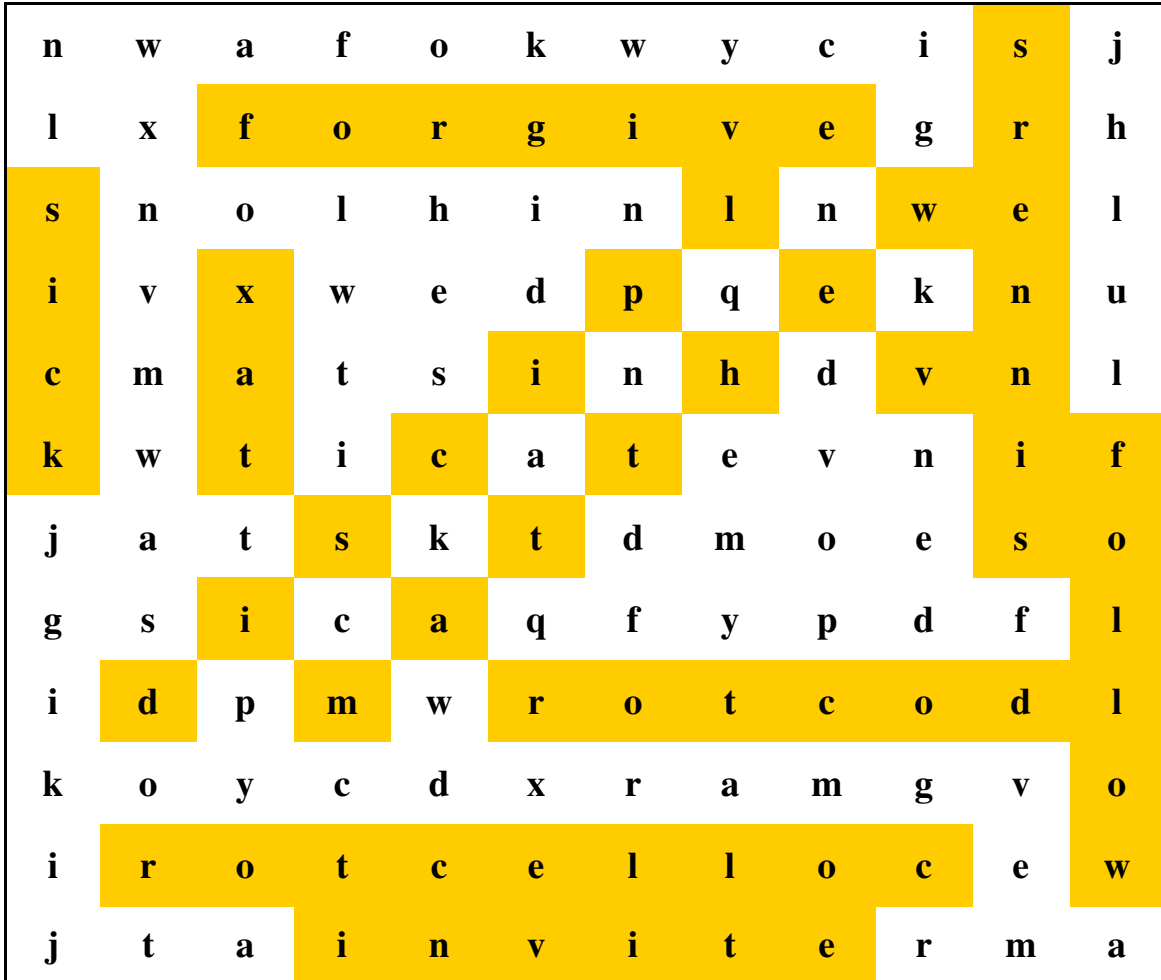


<b>Matthew</b>	<b>Levi</b>	<b>tax</b>
<b>collector</b>	<b>sinners</b>	<b>forgive</b>
<b>doctor</b>	<b>sick</b>	<b>disciple</b>
<b>follow</b>	<b>invite</b>	



# Word Search

## Matthew Follows Jesus



<b>Matthew</b>	<b>Levi</b>	<b>tax</b>
<b>collector</b>	<b>sinners</b>	<b>forgive</b>
<b>doctor</b>	<b>sick</b>	<b>disciple</b>
<b>follow</b>	<b>invite</b>	

What was Matthew's job?

T\_\_X  
C\_\_LL\_\_CT\_\_R

What did Jesus say to  
Matthew?

Follow Me