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“There is no saint without a past, no sinner without a future.”
[Augustine]

ICEBREAKER

If you could go back in time and relive one event from your past, what would it be and why?

BEGIN WITH PRAYER

Spend a moment praying this passage, beginning your time together in humility and gratitude!

“You’ve gone into my future to prepare the way, and in kindness you follow behind me to spare me from the harm of my past. You have laid your hand on me!”
[Psalm 139:5 TPT]

BIG IDEA

We can ask God this about our past: “How will your grace transform me to become more like Jesus?”

PASSAGE

- Matthew 9:9-13

DISCUSSION

1. How does Matthew respond to Jesus' call? What does his response teach us about our call to be disciples of Jesus?
2. In the sermon we heard, *“Jesus meets us where and as we are, not where or who we should be.”* How does that encourage you in your current season of life?
3. What does Jesus mean when He says, “I desire mercy, not sacrifice”? How might God be inviting to apply Jesus' emphasis on mercy over sacrifice in your daily life?
4. What does Matthew's transformation from tax collector to disciple teach us about the transformative power of encountering Jesus?
5. How can we emulate Jesus' approach to evangelism? Who is God inviting you to reach out to more consistently?
6. What does this passage teach us about the character of God?
7. How does Jesus' call of Matthew challenge our understanding of who is worthy of God's love and grace?

8. In the sermon we heard, *“Be careful what you listen to about your past.”* What story about your past are you giving more attention and value to than what God says about who you are? What is a better story to tell yourself about your past and potential future?
9. How does the story of Matthew's call and transformation encourage our own discipleship journey?
10. How can we cultivate a heart of mercy and compassion in our daily lives, following Jesus' example?

STEP OF OBEDIENCE

Because of God's extraordinary grace, we are able to move forward with Jesus, full of hope, purpose and promise! Based on the Holy Spirit's prompting today, **what is a step of obedience that you can take?** Here are a few specific questions to consider as you embrace all of God's grace:

- What sin do you need to confess from the past?
- What can you thank God for in the present?
- How is God meeting you where and how you are now?
- What invitation is God giving you to move forward?

PRAYER FOCUS

Off Limits

- Pray that God would reveal the areas in your life that need to be surrendered to His transforming power.
- Pray that God would give you and others the courage to surrender the areas that are the biggest strongholds in your mind and heart, so that no area of your life is off limits to Him.

SPIRITUAL PRACTICE *Optional*

Centering prayer is a practice that leads one into the inner room of the soul and can usher you deeper into prayer, opening yourself up to the transforming power of God's grace more readily!

- [Centering Prayer](#) or rockbridge.cc/centering-prayer-2