

## St. Matthew, 9/ 21/ 24

1 Apostle and Evangelist, also celebrated as a martyr.

2 Apostle – called from the “receipt of custom” - tax collector. Earned their living via taxing more than the levied tax and keeping the difference so considered duplicitous. Collaborators with Rome, hated by Jews and therefore outcast. Opens Jesus up to criticism from religious leaders.

3 The story of M. therefore highlights the drastic change that conversion brought about in his life. From a duplicitous traitor, to a living sacrifice unto God, ending in a true sacrifice of his life for Christ’s sake. Turns back on life of luxury and finds forgiveness and purpose in Christ.

4 It might seem to us, that the worst of sinners might have an easier time converting than those of us who are not so blatantly anti-Christ. Sinners, like St. Matthew, know that their sin is open to the world. Their confession of sin surprises no one.

5 For those of us who follow Christ as baptized members of the Church, our sins are hidden. We are ashamed to confess what we have done. Often, we therefore continue to struggle with our besetting sins. We are afraid to open ourselves up to others for we fear rejection if we are not “perfect”.

6 Yet we do not walk in integrity and honesty if we cannot be open with each other about our struggles. Sometimes, we cannot even see our weaknesses and sins without being open to receive input from the godly saints within our midst.

7 Our growth in godliness does not progress if we are not open to our family in God. Neither does the gospel of the Lord progress in this world in a duplicitous context. Both personal growth and kingdom growth depend upon our integrity and honesty, our

8 Epistle reading says as much. “THEREFORE seeing we have this ministry, as we have received mercy, we faint not; but have renounced the hidden things of dishonesty, not walking in craftiness, nor handling the

word of God deceitfully; but by manifestation of the truth commending ourselves to every man's conscience in the sight of God.”

9. M. left his conniving and grasping behind to follow Christ. He is our example today to do the same. What hidden sins are you afraid to bring out into the light? Do you have a confessor? A more mature Christian who can mentor you and bring an outside perspective to speak into your life? To be the voice of Christ, calling you to leave the old life behind and to follow Christ more closely?

10. This is what M. did. This is the example set before us today. Let us not hang on to the hidden and malign things that keep us from the joyous life of Christ. Let those things be revealed, bring them to the light, leave them at the foot of the cross, and follow Jesus.