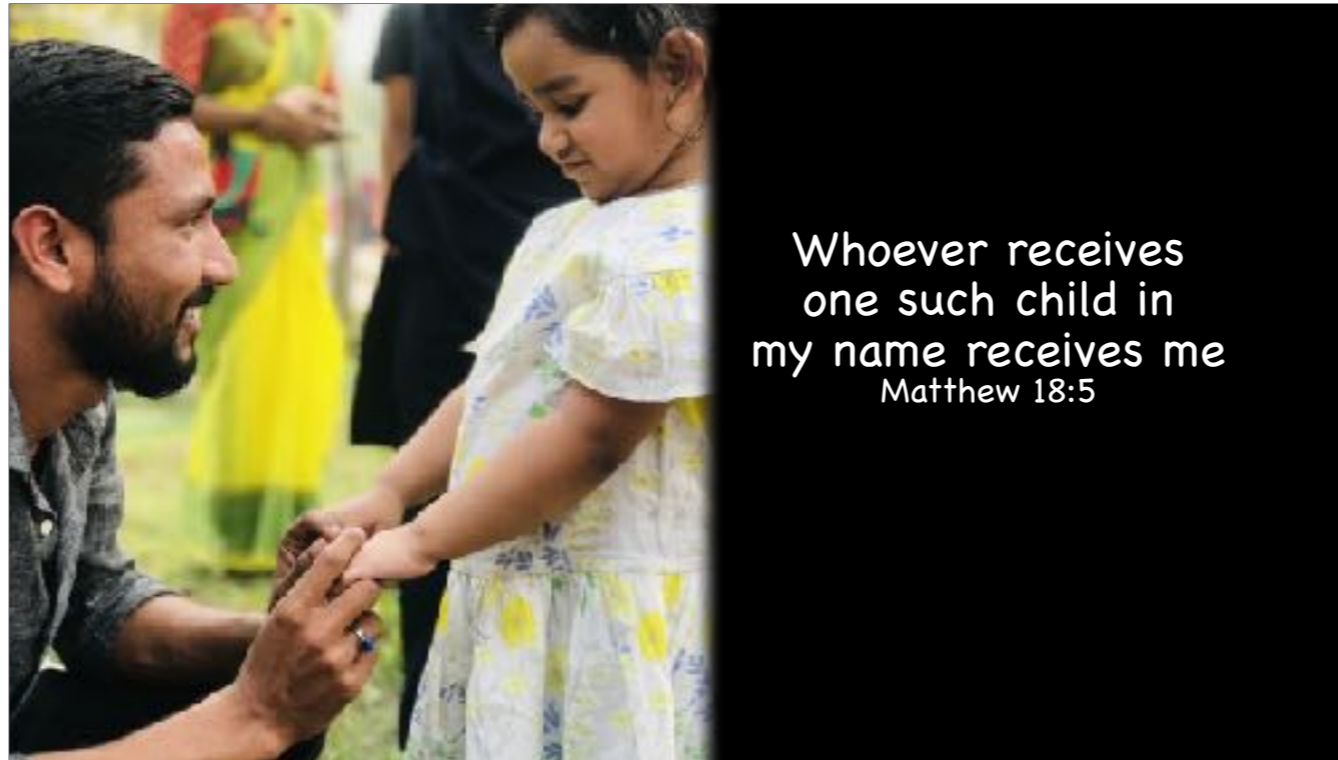




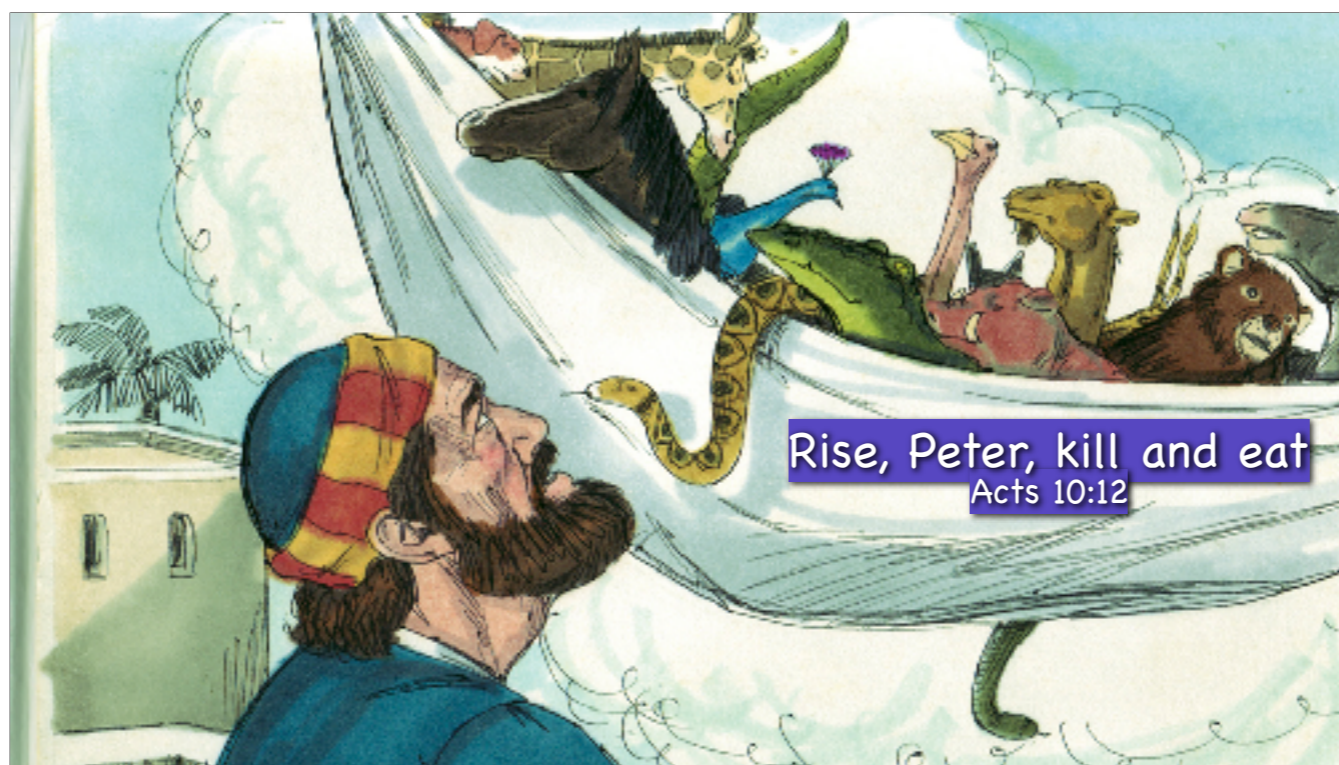
- Matthew 18



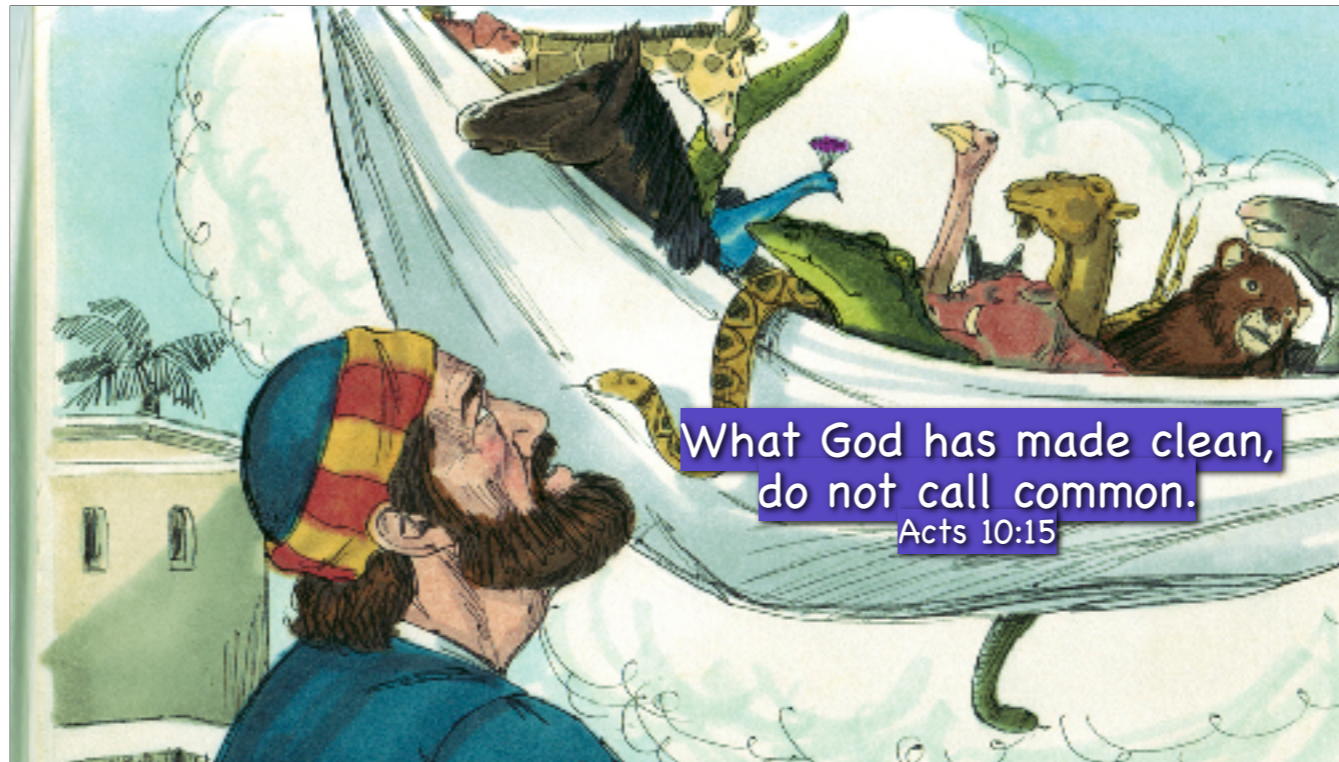
- Matthew 18:1-6 (ESV) 1 At that time the disciples came to Jesus, saying, “Who is the greatest in the kingdom of heaven?” 2 And calling to him a child, he put him in the midst of them 3 and said, “Truly, I say to you, unless you turn and become like children, you will never enter the kingdom of heaven. 4 Whoever humbles himself like this child is the greatest in the kingdom of heaven.



- 5 “Whoever receives one such child in my name receives me, 6 but whoever causes one of these little ones who believe in me to sin, it would be better for him to have a great millstone fastened around his neck and to be drowned in the depth of the sea.
- The gospel message was for all mankind
- Peter shows us the struggle



- Acts 10:12-15 (ESV) 12 In it were all kinds of animals and reptiles and birds of the air. 13 And there came a voice to him: "Rise, Peter; kill and eat." 14 But Peter said, "By no means, Lord; for I have never eaten anything that is common or unclean."



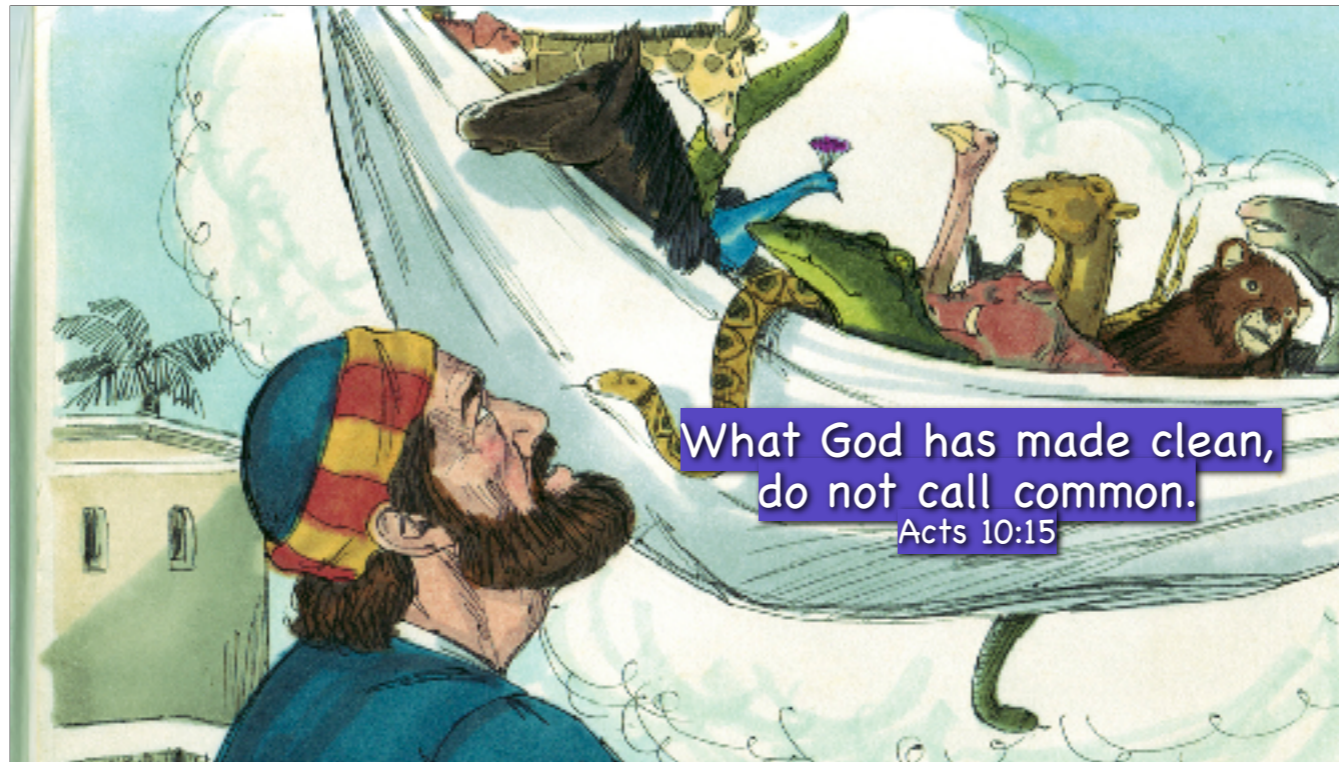
What God has made clean,
do not call common.
Acts 10:15

- 15 And the voice came to him again a second time, “What God has made clean, do not call common.”



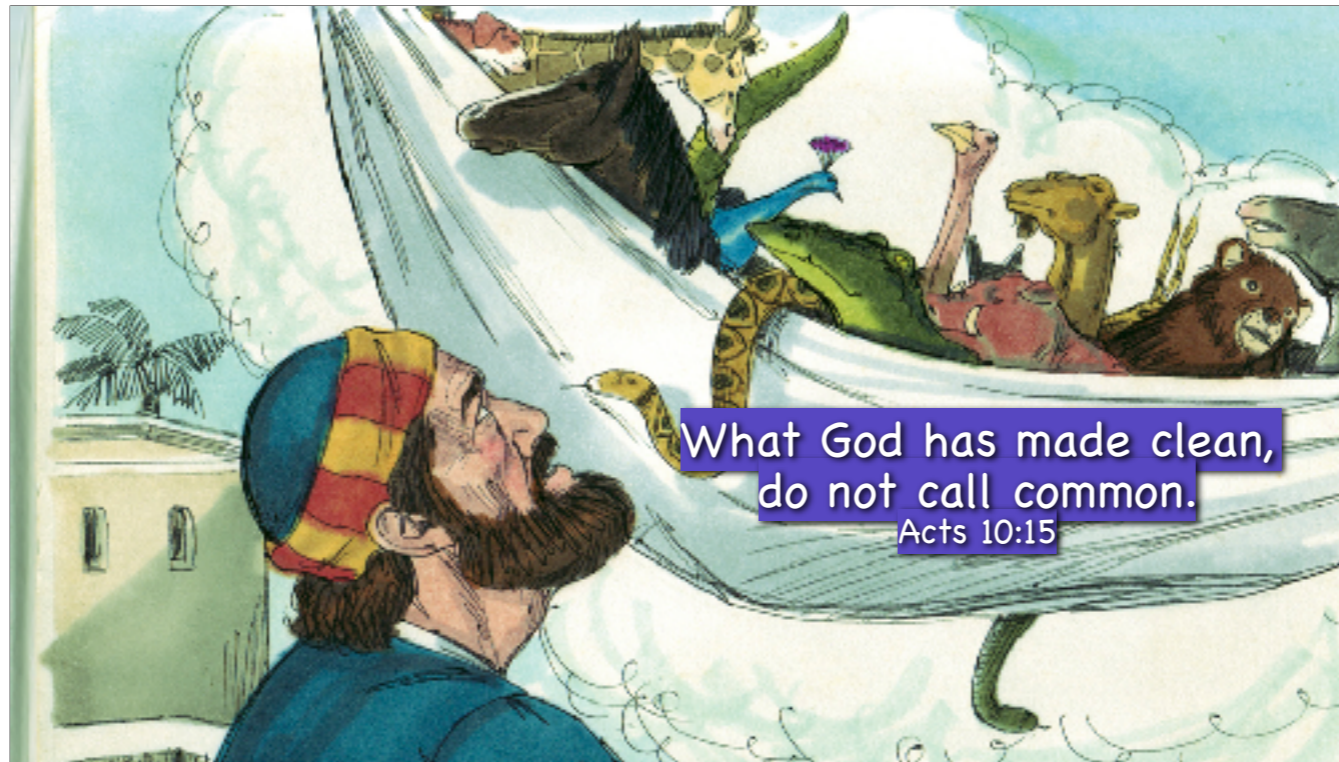
What God has made clean,
do not call common.
Acts 10:15

- Acts 10:18-20 (ESV) 18 and called out to ask whether Simon who was called Peter was lodging there. 19 And while Peter was pondering the vision, the Spirit said to him, “Behold, three men are looking for you. 20 Rise and go down and **accompany them without hesitation**, for I have sent them.”



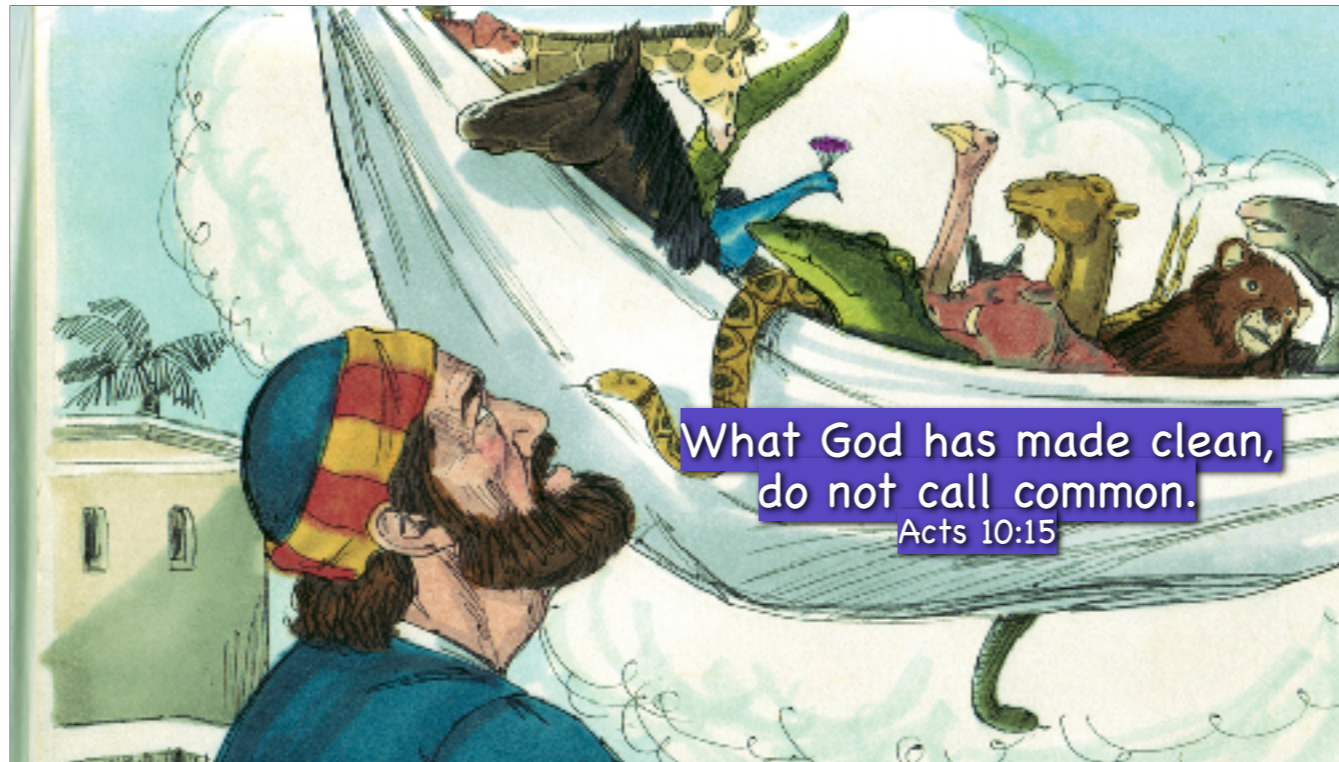
What God has made clean,
do not call common.
Acts 10:15

- Acts 10:28-29 (ESV) 28 And he said to them, “You yourselves know how **unlawful** it is for a Jew to associate with or to visit anyone of another nation,
 - (New Testament Commentary Series Hendriksen-Kistemaker (12 Vols.)) From infancy, every Jew has been told that being in the house of a Gentile and eating with him constitutes a violation of Jewish law.



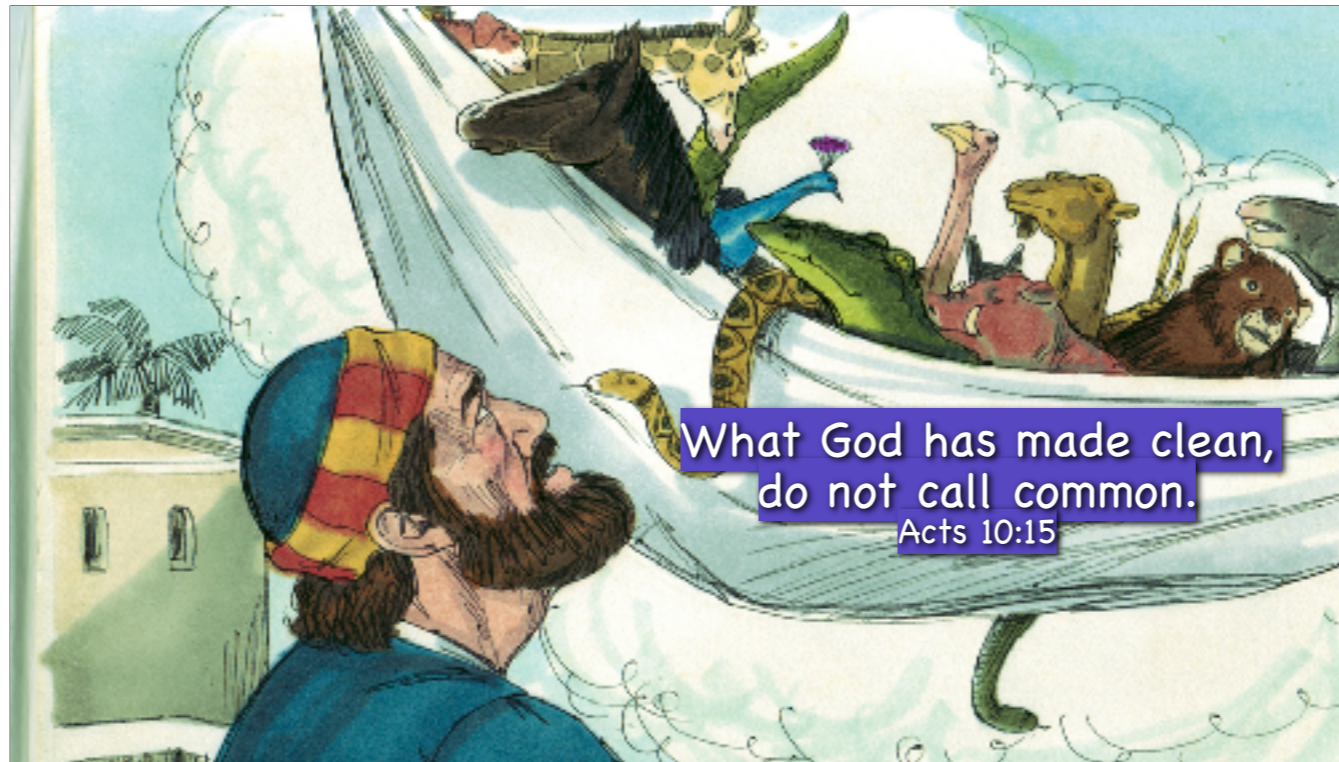
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- (Lenski's Commentary on the New Testament (20 Vols.)) The Mosaic law had no specific prohibition to this effect, but the entire law with all its regulations had such a prohibition as a result. The man who acted otherwise was going contrary, not to one item of the law, but to the law in its entirety. This was thoroughly understood in Judaism, and Peter takes it for granted that these Gentiles, too, know all about it.
- (Lenski's Commentary on the New Testament (20 Vols.)) Peter confesses that he would never voluntarily have gone contrary to that fixed principle of Judaism, Christian though he now was

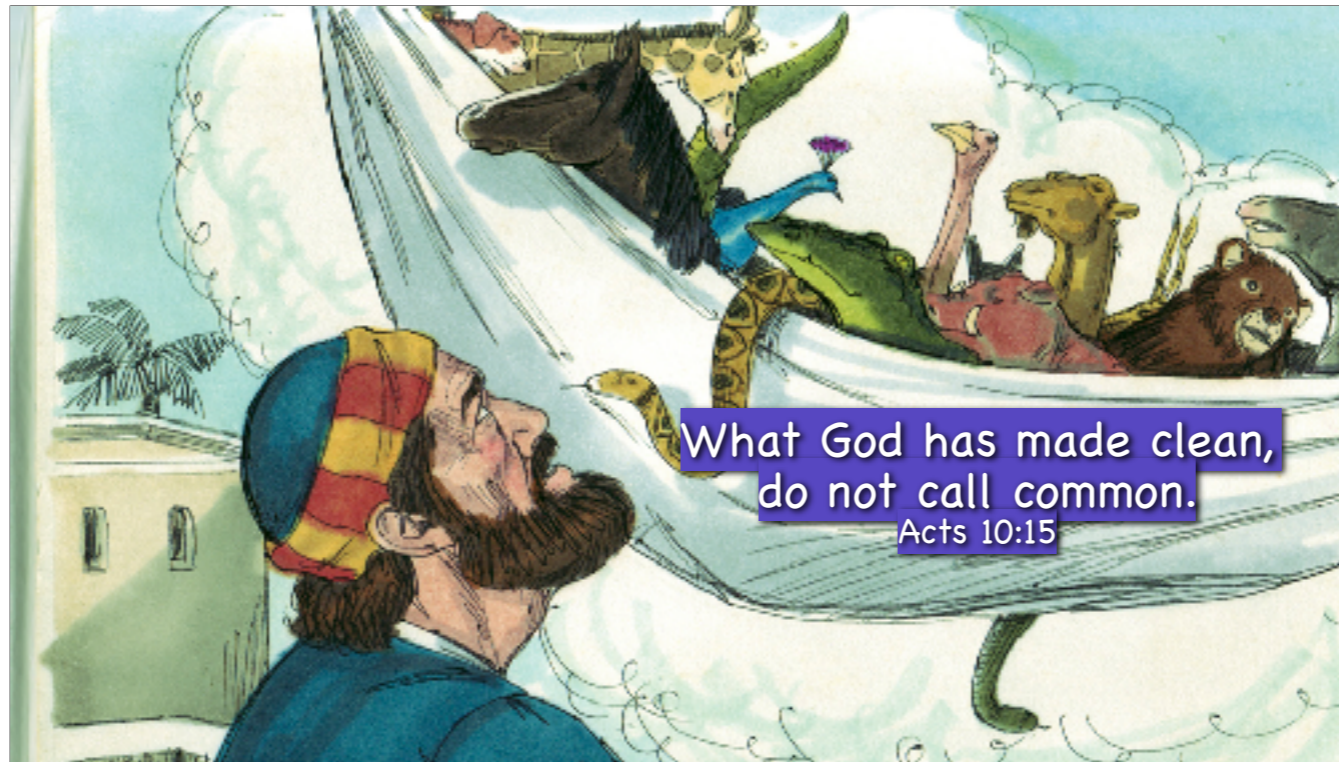


What God has made clean,
do not call common.
Acts 10:15

- Acts 10:28-29 (ESV) 28 And he said to them, “You yourselves know how **unlawful** it is for a Jew to associate with or to visit anyone of another nation, but God has shown me that **I should not call any person common or unclean.** 29 So when I was sent for, **I came without objection.** I ask then why you sent for me.”
- Who do we think of as common or unclean?
 - What makes us hesitate and object?



- Acts 10:34-35 (ESV) 34 So Peter opened his mouth and said: “Truly I understand that God shows no partiality, 35 but in every nation anyone who fears him and does what is right is acceptable to him.
 - Holy Spirit falls on Cornelius ... confirmation!
 - Believes and is Baptized
- Acts 11:2-3 (ESV) 2 So when Peter went up to Jerusalem, the circumcision party criticized him, saying, 3 “You went to uncircumcised men and ate with them.”



What God has made clean,
do not call common.
Acts 10:15

- Acts 11:12 (ESV) 12 And the Spirit told me to go with them, making no **distinction**. These six brothers also accompanied me, and we entered the man's house.
- No hesitation, objection, distinction
 - And this is our problem with
 - Those outside the church
 - Often those inside the church
 - We hesitate to receive each other.
 - We object to being fully with them
 - We make distinctions between us and them.
- Cornelius and his household are saved!



- Galatians 2:11-14 (ESV) 11 But when Cephas came to Antioch, I opposed him to his face, because he stood condemned. 12 For before certain men came from James, he was eating with the Gentiles; but when they came he drew back and separated himself, fearing the circumcision party. 13 And the rest of the Jews acted hypocritically along with him, so that even Barnabas was led astray by their hypocrisy. 14 But when I saw that their conduct was not in step with the truth of the gospel, I said to Cephas before them all, "If you, though a Jew, live like a Gentile and not like a Jew, how can you force the Gentiles to live like Jews?"



- Often note, along with Paul, the hypocrisy of Peter in doing this
 - Peter hesitated to stay with the brothers
 - Peter made a distinction between them.
- Consider for a moment how the Gentiles must have felt as Peter and Barnabas got up and left the table?
 - Dejection: We'll never be good enough for the Jews?
 - If Peter doesn't acceptance us, how could God?
 - Maybe some anger?
 - Maybe some sad?



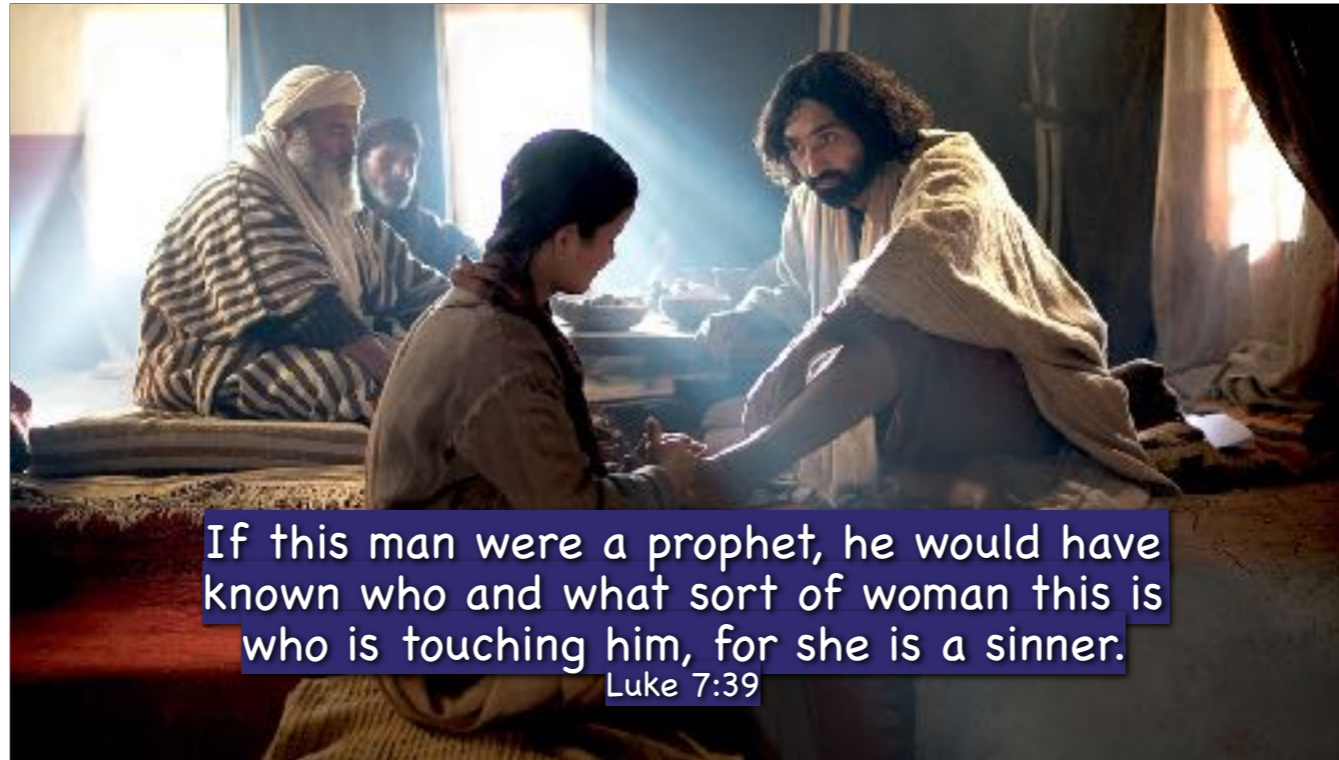
- Matthew 11:16-19 (ESV) 16 “But to what shall I compare this generation? It is like children sitting in the marketplaces and calling to their playmates, 17 ““We played the flute for you, and you did not dance; we sang a dirge, and you did not mourn.’ 18 For John came neither eating nor drinking, and they say, ‘He has a demon.’ 19 The Son of Man came eating and drinking, and they say, ‘Look at him! A glutton and a drunkard, a friend of tax collectors and sinners!’ Yet wisdom is justified by her deeds.”



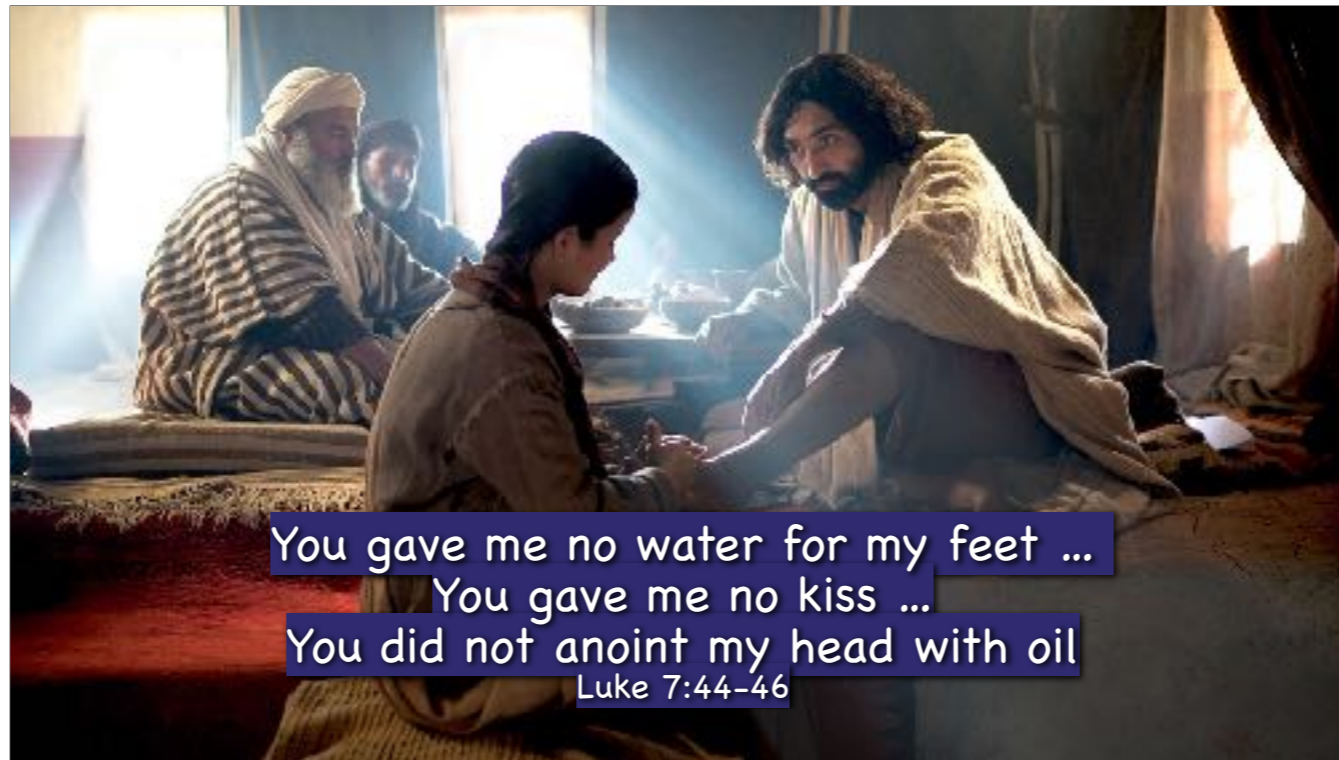
- Jesus did eat with a lot of people
 - His Disciples, and their families
 - Friends
 - Pharisees (who were wrong, sinful, constantly testing Jesus)
 - Samaritans
 - Crowds (5K, 4K): were they all pure?
 - Tax Collectors
 - Sinners
- Why is Jesus rebuked for eating with the wrong people?
 - Eating with them implied acceptance of them and their sin
 - (This is not in the law ... it was their reasoning!)



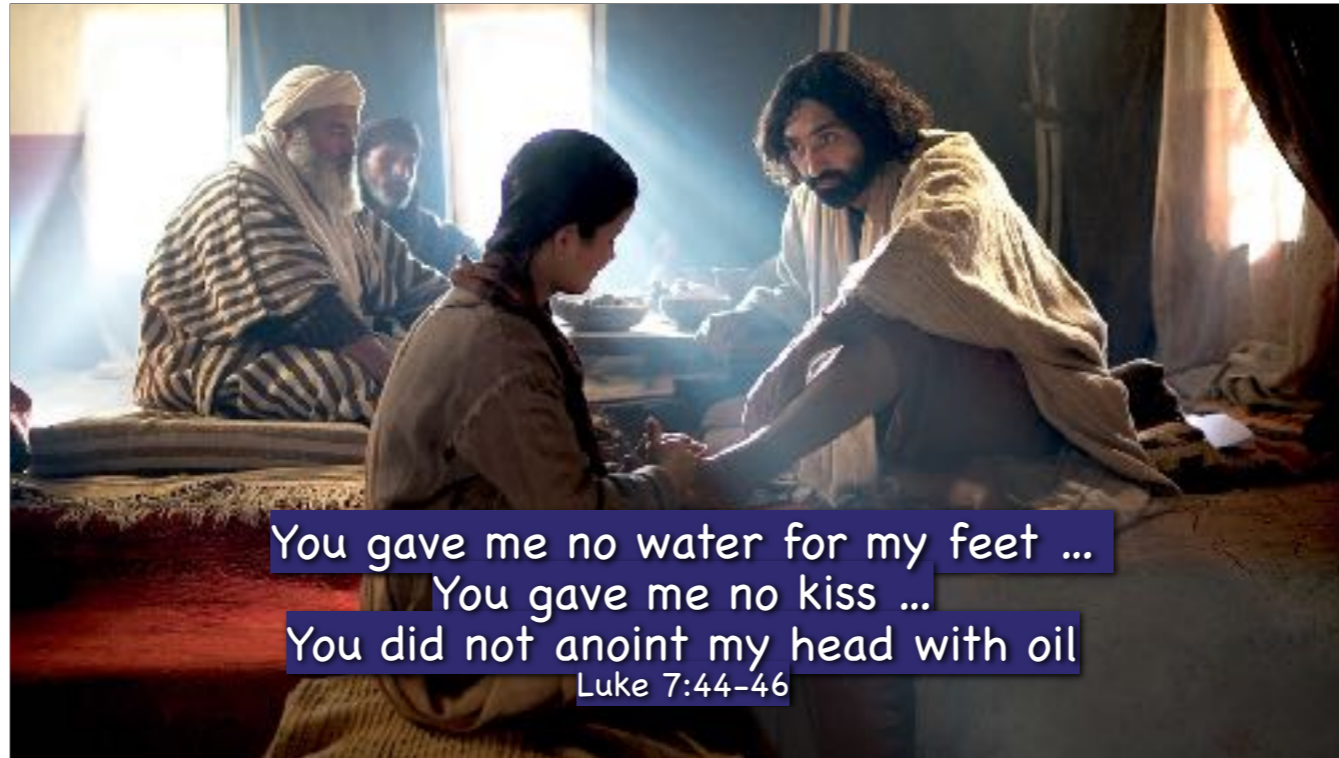
- Luke 7:36-50 (ESV) 36 One of the Pharisees asked him to eat with him, and he went into the Pharisee's house and reclined at table. 37 And behold, a woman of the city, who was a sinner, when she learned that he was reclining at table in the Pharisee's house, brought an alabaster flask of ointment, 38 and standing behind him at his feet, weeping, she began to wet his feet with her tears and wiped them with the hair of her head and kissed his feet and anointed them with the ointment.



- 39 Now when the Pharisee who had invited him saw this, he said to himself, “If this man were a prophet, he would have known who and what sort of woman this is who is touching him, for she is a sinner.”
- Jesus shouldn't let this sinful woman touch him.
 - He becomes unclean because of her touch.
 - If he wants to be pure, he should separate from her.



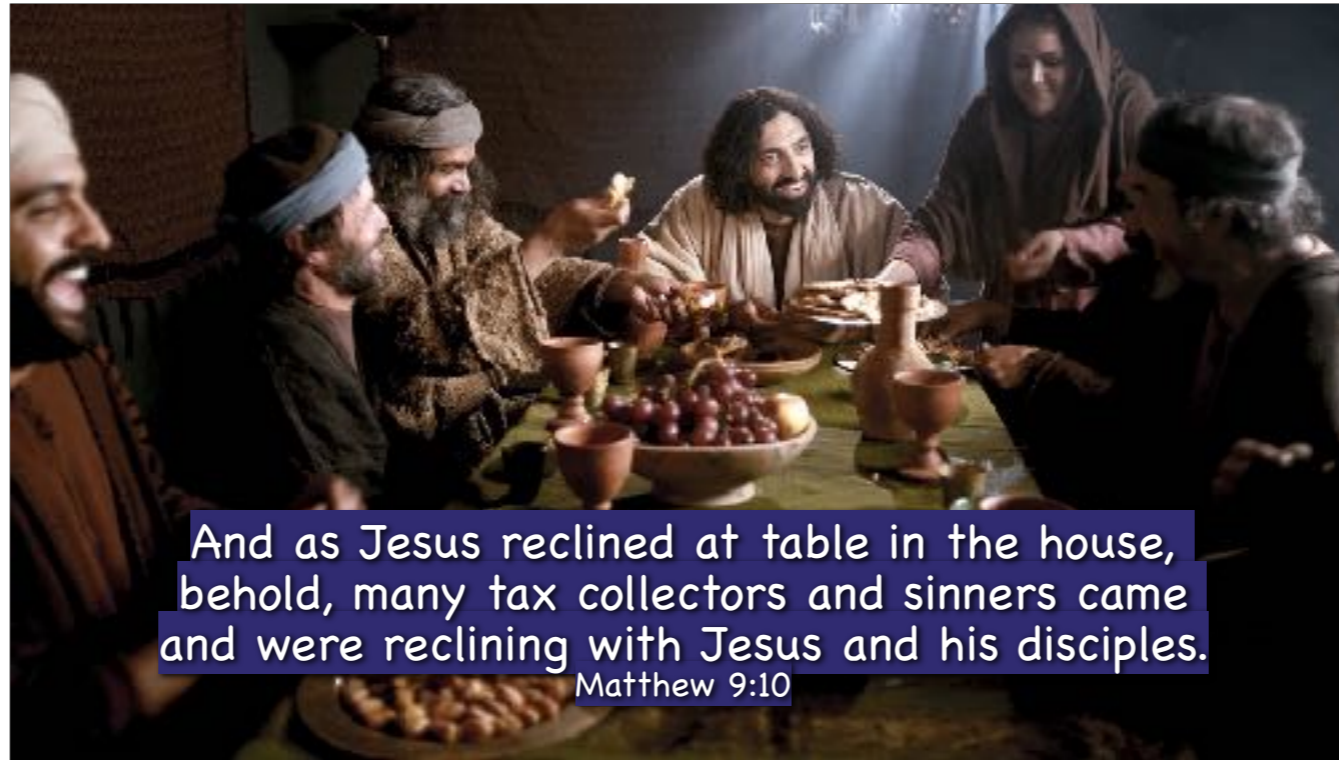
- 44 Then turning toward the woman he said to Simon, “Do you see this woman? I entered your house; you gave me no water for my feet, but she has wet my feet with her tears and wiped them with her hair. 45 You gave me no kiss, but from the time I came in she has not ceased to kiss my feet. 46 You did not anoint my head with oil, but she has anointed my feet with ointment.
- The Pharisee didn’t receive Jesus with normal hospitality: no foot washing; no kiss; no anointing.
- The woman has shown extreme acceptance of Jesus: tears to wet feet; kiss feet; anoint feet.



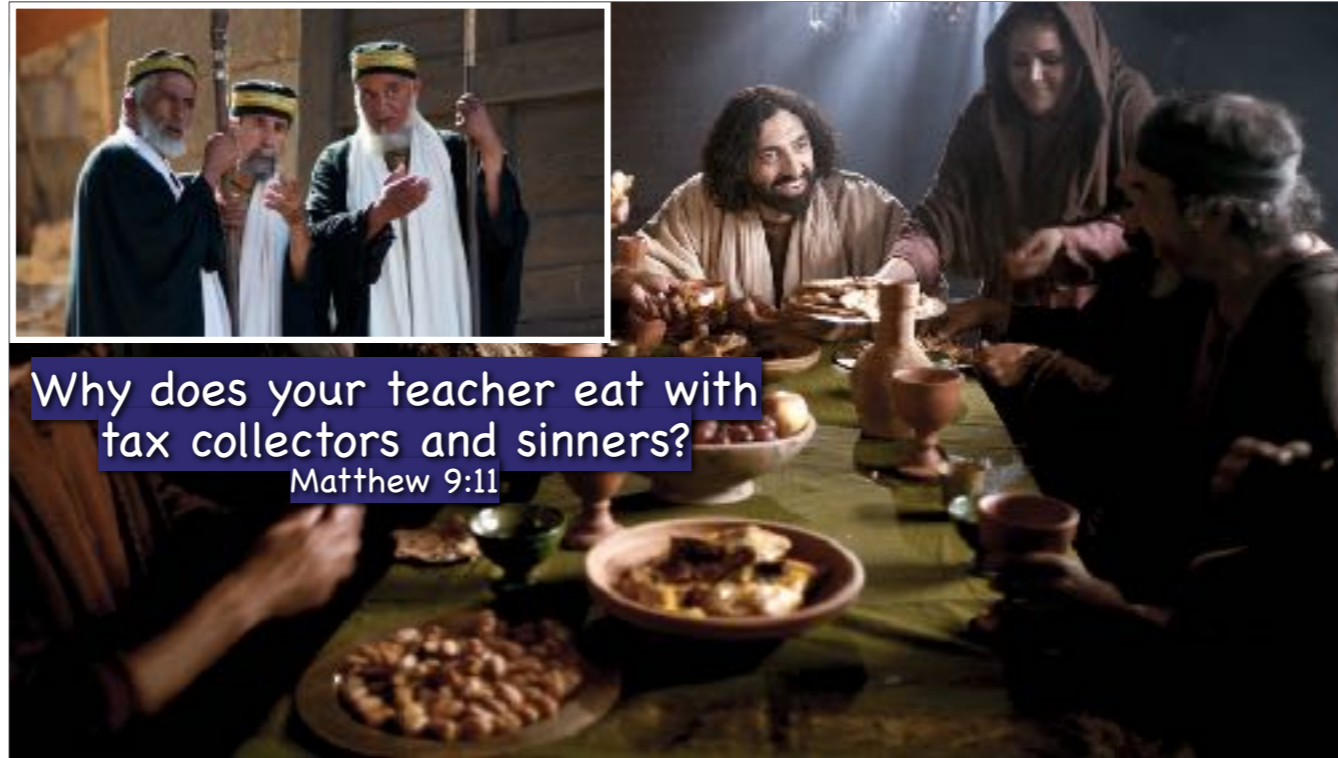
- Jesus is choosing to eat with a Pharisee who is intentionally inhospitable,
- Jesus is receiving this Pharisee
- choosing to make it clear that he does not accept Jesus
 - Two accusations:
 - If he were a prophet he would know this woman was a sinner,
 - And therefore not let her do anything to him.
 - Who is Jesus to forgive sins?
 - Implying that Jesus is claiming too much authority for himself
- Even after Jesus tries to teach them, they reject him.
 - But he's still trying to help them!



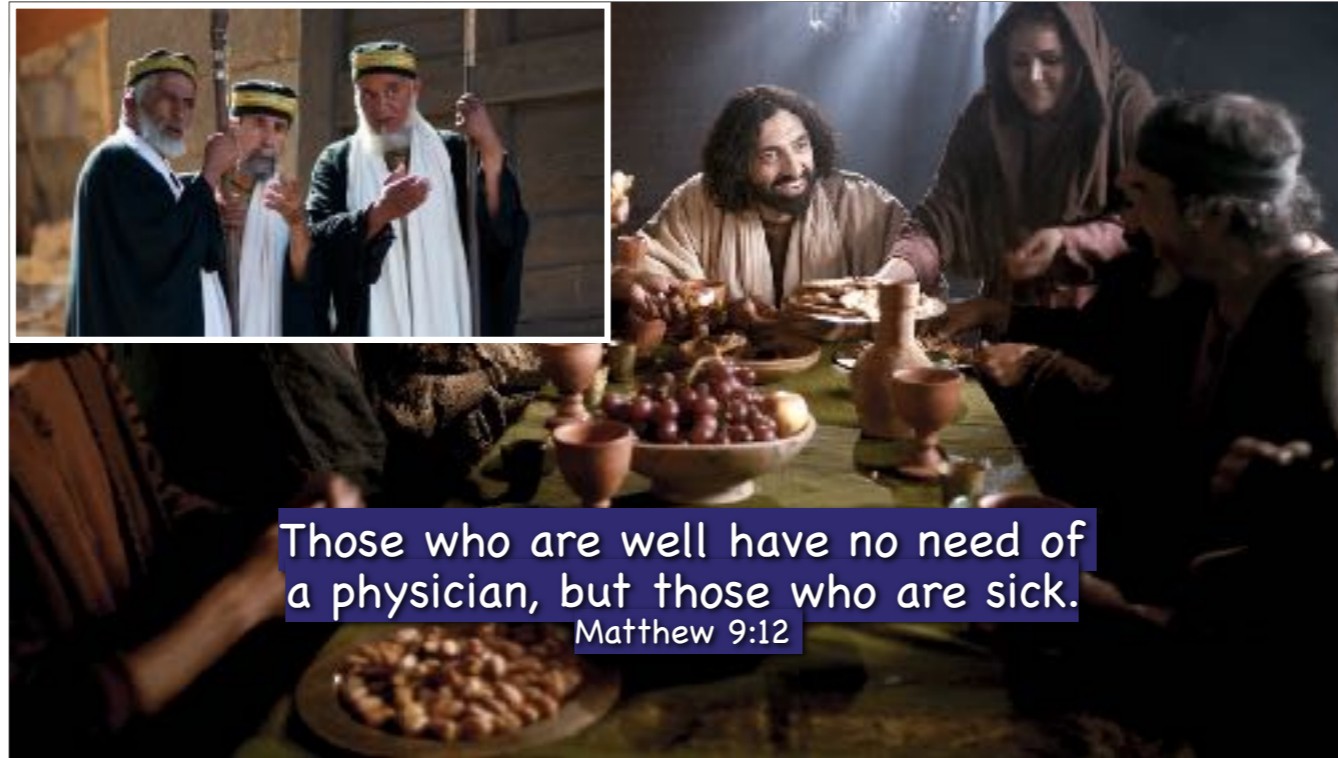
- Jesus, instead, demonstrates his love and mercy and acceptance of this woman
 - Your faith has saved you, go in peace.



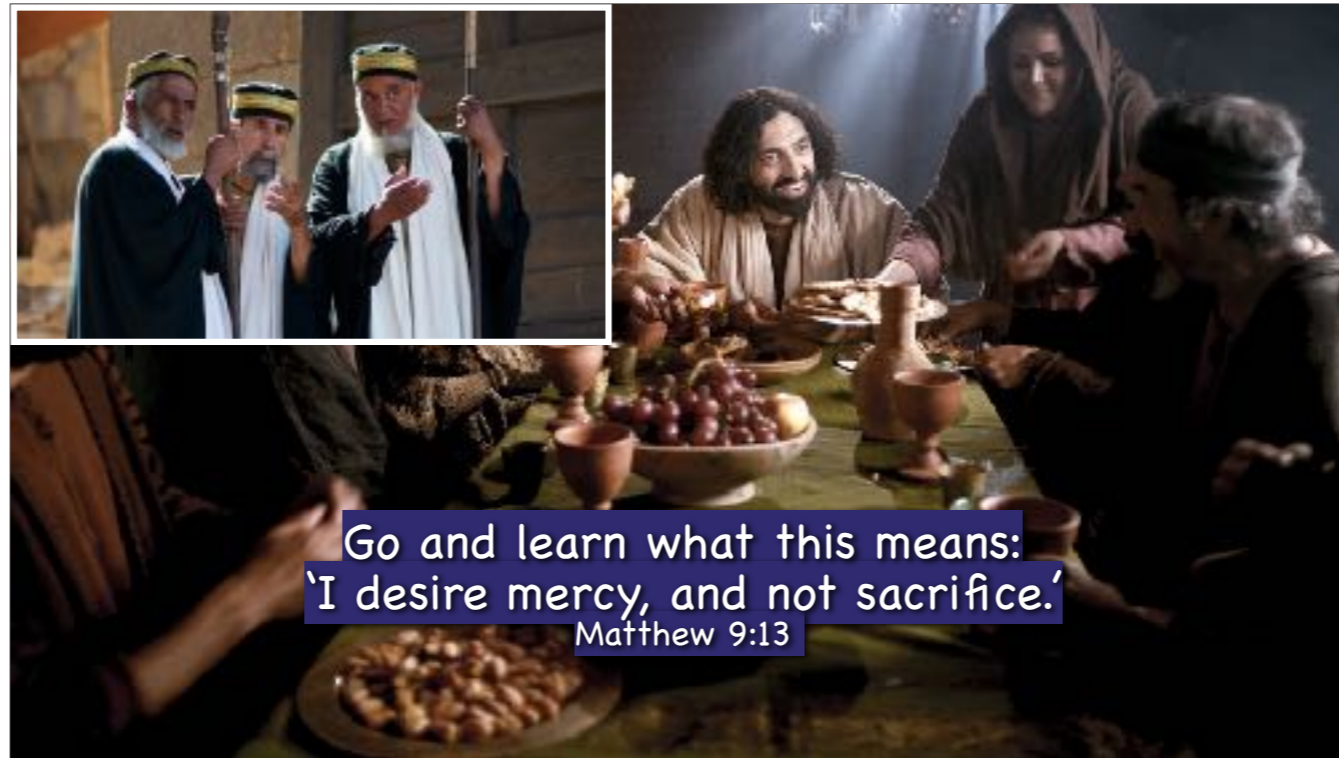
- Matthew 9:9-13 (ESV) 9 As Jesus passed on from there, he saw a man called Matthew sitting at the tax booth, and he said to him, "Follow me." And he rose and followed him. 10 And as Jesus reclined at table in the house, behold, many tax collectors and sinners came and were reclining with Jesus and his disciples. 11 And when the Pharisees saw this, they said to his disciples, "Why does your teacher eat with tax collectors and sinners?" 12 But when he heard it, he said, "Those who are well have no need of a physician, but those who are sick. 13 Go and learn what this means: 'I desire mercy, and not sacrifice.' For I came not to call the righteous, but sinners."



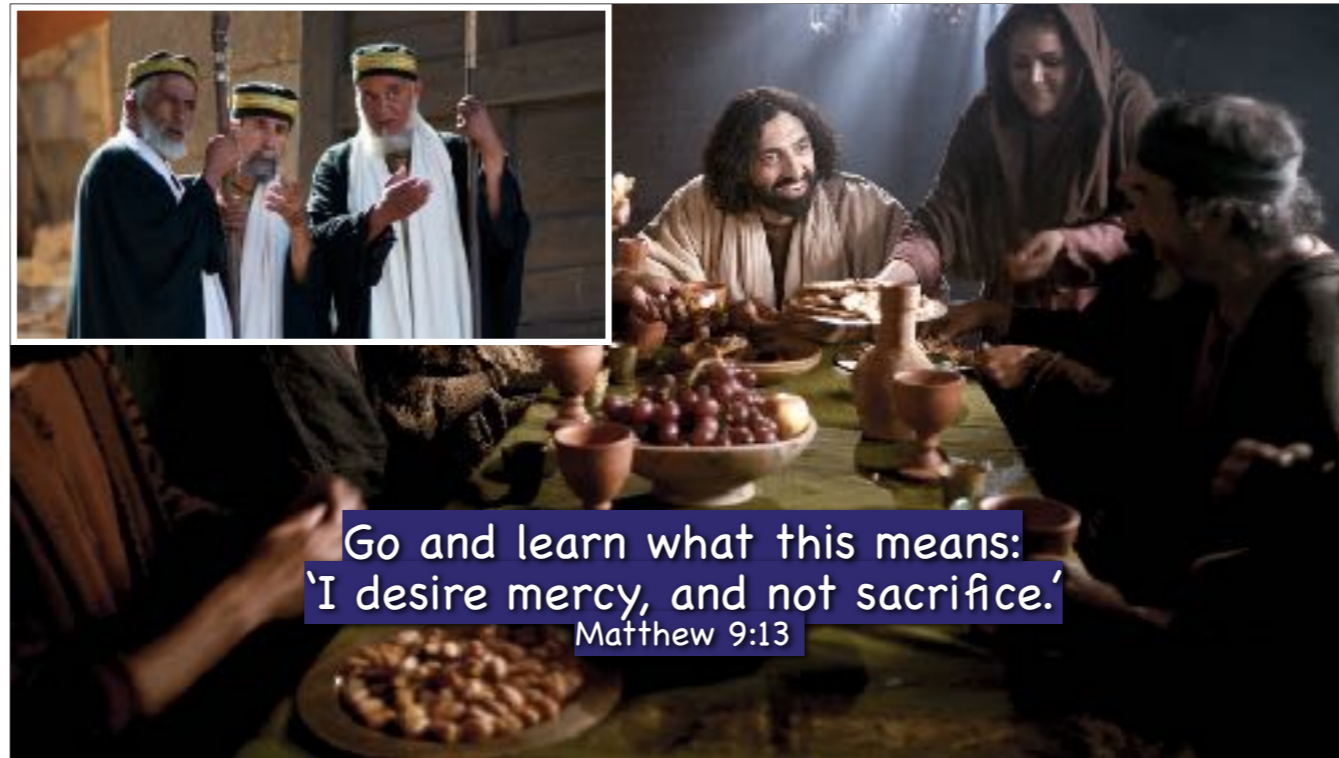
- 11 And when the Pharisees saw this, they said to his disciples, “Why does your teacher eat with tax collectors and sinners?”
- Why do they ask this?
 - Genuinely curious? Or Accusation?
 - Jesus is accepting these men ... and he shouldn't be.



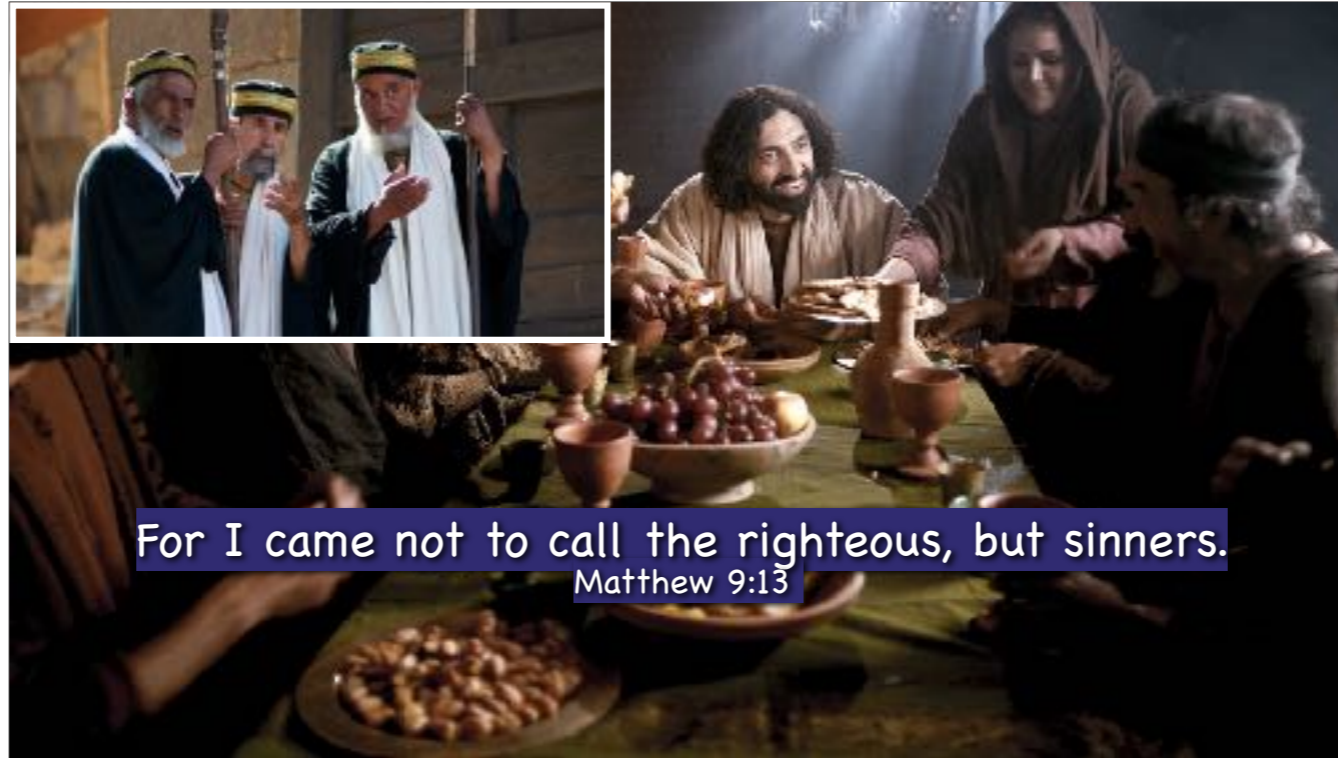
- 12 But when he heard it, he said, “Those who are well have no need of a physician, but those who are sick.
- Jesus doesn’t deny that those he is eating with are not what they should be.
- He also makes it clear that he’s exactly where he needs to be.
 - He doesn’t walk away (like Peter?)
 - He recognizes that to save these souls, he must receive them.



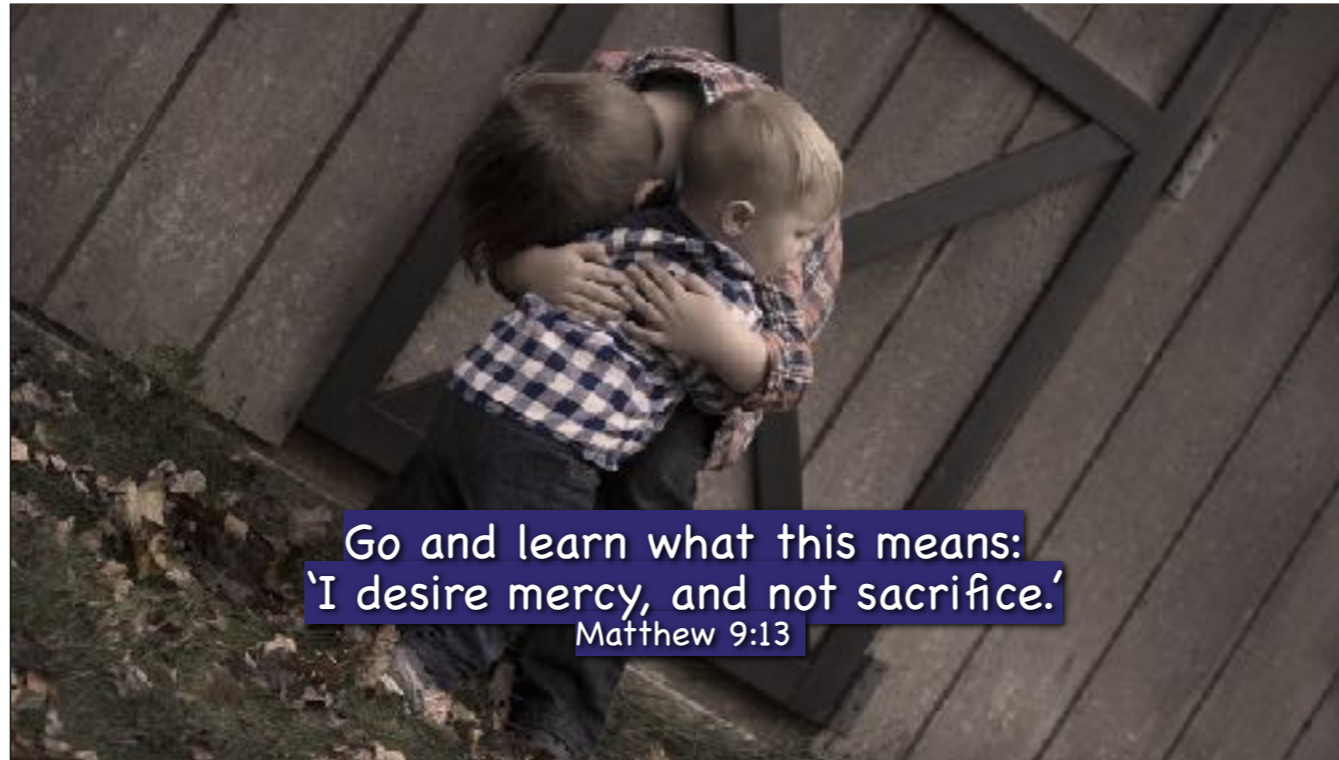
- Matthew 9:13 (ESV) 13 Go and learn what this means: 'I desire mercy, and not sacrifice.'
- From Hosea 6:6
 - Israel was worshiping ritually, doing the right things, but they didn't live correctly.
 - Not just that some were sinning
 - But also that they weren't doing what was right
 - In this case: MERCY
 - They had confused "worship" and outward "obedience" with Righteousness and Character.
 - They were not faithful to God.
- Jesus points them to this passage



- Jesus points them to this passage
 - Were these Pharisees guilty of the same thing as ancient Israel?
 - They cared more about their self-derived rules than about the souls of the lost.
 - They considered their “purity” more important than the saving souls.
 - Jesus was determined to show mercy, and he wasn’t afraid of “getting dirty” to do it.
 - He got into the company of those who are sick, who were sinners, and engaged them
- Learn this:
 - Choose to show mercy.
 - Beware of excuses for not being merciful.

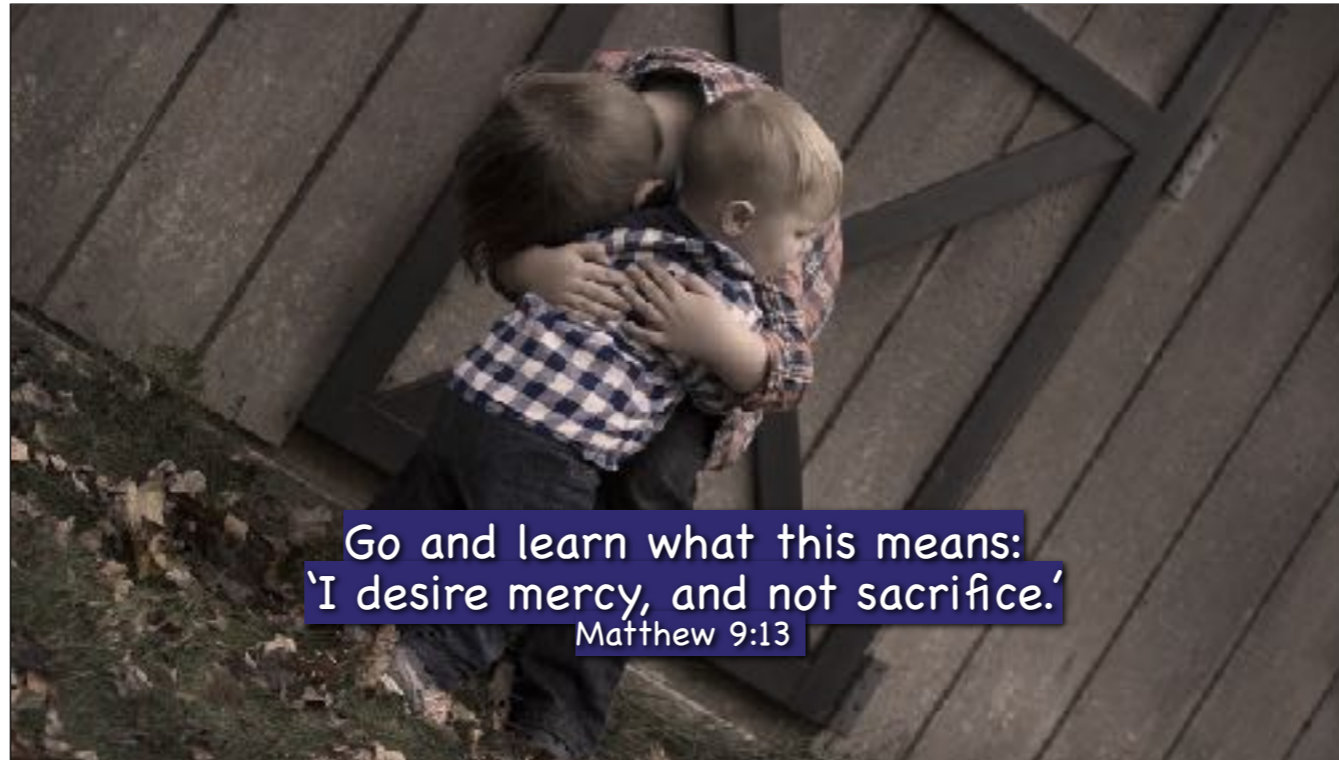


- For I came not to call the righteous, but sinners.
- Jesus' focus was on doing what was needed to save sinners
 - (Caveat: he didn't do something "unlawful" ... he just didn't give in to the unjust criticism of others. We can't save others by engaging in sin.)

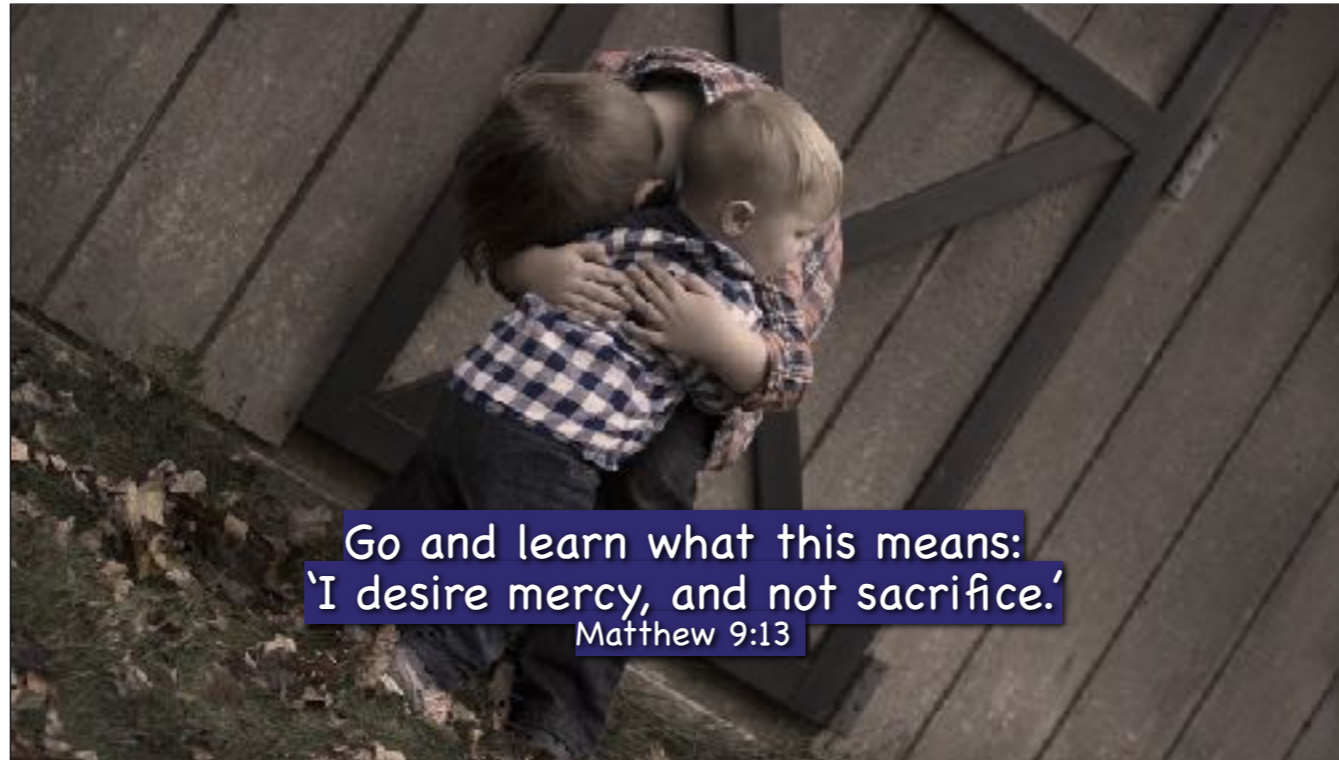


Go and learn what this means:
'I desire mercy, and not sacrifice.'
Matthew 9:13

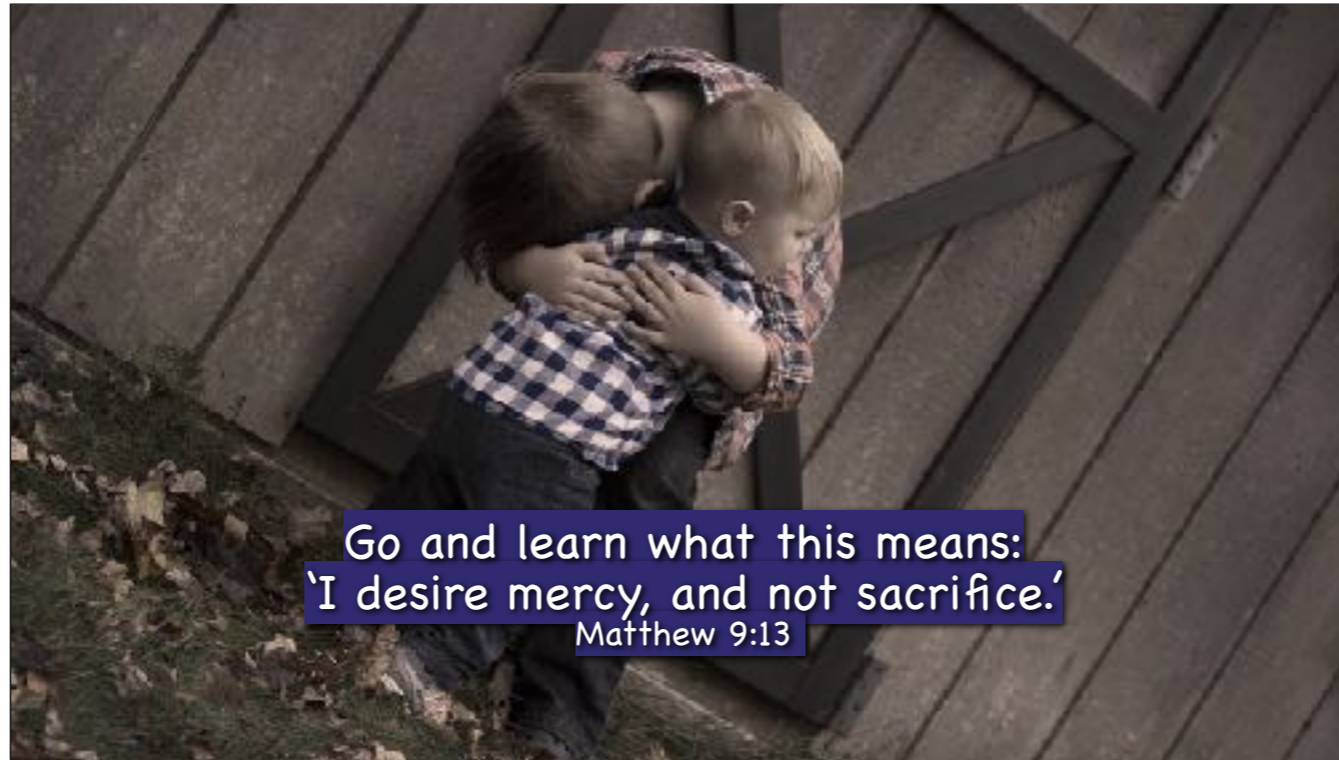
- Matthew 18:3-5 (ESV) 3 and said, “Truly, I say to you, unless you turn and become like children, you will never enter the kingdom of heaven. 4 Whoever humbles himself like this child is the greatest in the kingdom of heaven. 5 “Whoever receives one such child in my name receives me,
- Jesus first teaches us that we must become children to enter the kingdom of heaven.
- That we must humble ourselves.
- And that we receive a child in his name.
- Children receiving children.



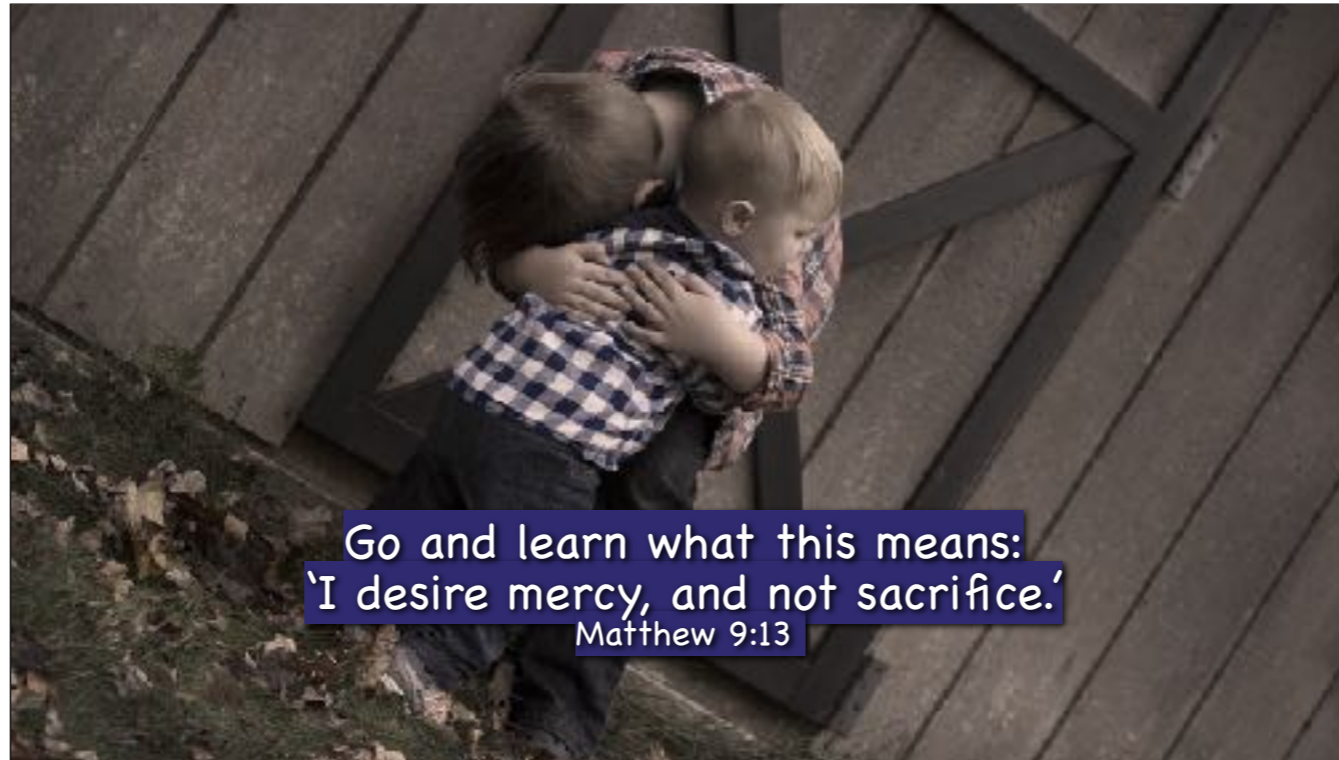
- Children receiving children.
- Like Peter and the Pharisees we often struggle with receiving others.
 - We hesitate, we object, and we make distinctions (that God doesn't make!!!)
 - We expect that only those who are, essentially, without sin or who are obviously righteous, as determined by us are the ones we should receive, welcome, and associate with.



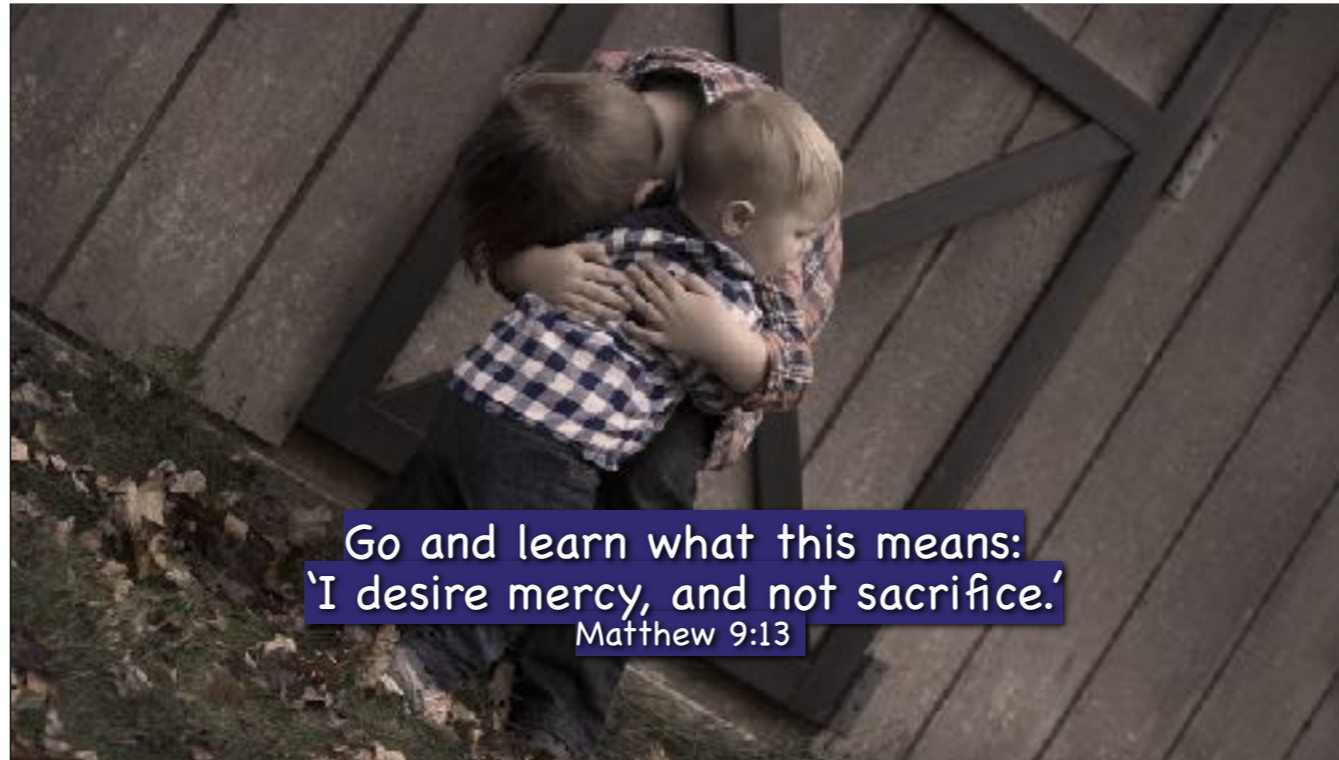
- We even quote passages that we interpret to mean that we are to stay away from certain people
 - 1 Corinthians 15:33 Do not be deceived: "Bad company ruins good morals."
 - 2 Corinthians 6:17 Therefore go out from their midst, and be separate from them, says the Lord, and touch no unclean thing; then I will welcome you,
 - (The context of both of these is to get our own lives right before God.)
- But Jesus chose to be with those who were known to be sinners and who were sick.



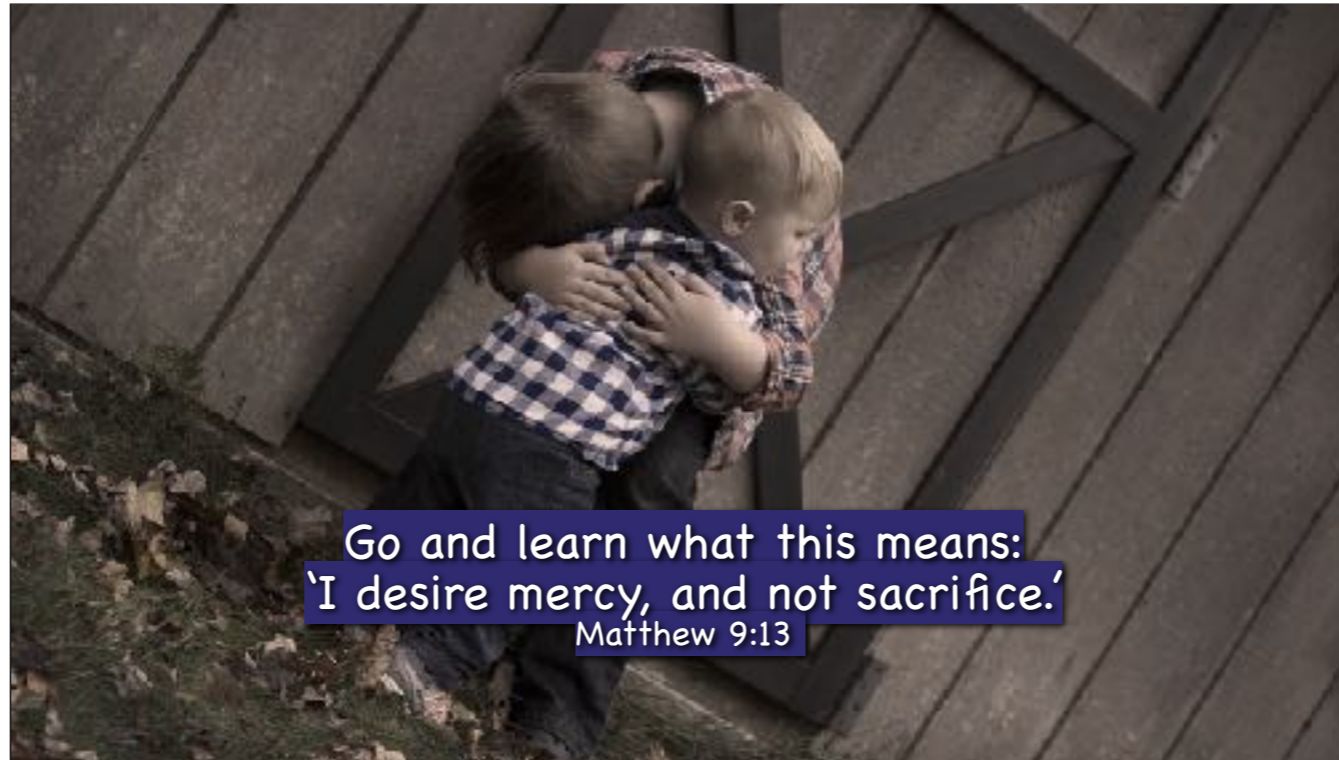
- Children receiving children
 - Implies that neither of us is mature, or fully what we should be,
 - That we are also sometimes sick, sometimes sinners
 - And yet it's imperative that we follow the example of Jesus
 - Receive the child
 - Which is like receiving Jesus.
 - And this demands that we show mercy
 - Like Jesus did to the woman who washed his feet.
 - Like Jesus did to the tax collectors and the sinners.



- Matthew 18:6 (ESV) 6 but whoever causes one of these little ones who believe in me to sin, it would be better for him to have a great millstone fastened around his neck and to be drowned in the depth of the sea.
- Jesus emphasizes the danger of not receiving one another with the warning about causing them to sin.



- Consider this admonition about the Pharisees
 - Matthew 23:13 “But woe to you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! For you shut the kingdom of heaven in people's faces. For you neither enter yourselves nor allow those who would enter to go in.
- If we fail to receive a child, one another, we may be leading them to sin
 - And we won't enter the kingdom of heaven.



- We need to learn lessons from Jesus
 - Our desire must be to save souls.
 - We must learn to receive our fellow children.
 - We must be merciful to those who are less than they ought to be, whether sinners or sick.
 - Commend the faith of those who are struggling.
 - Sometimes others will be critical of our choices because we don't follow their rules.
 - Be careful that we don't cause a child to sin by our refusal to receive them.
- Learn what this means: I desire mercy and not sacrifice.

We implore you
on behalf of Christ,
be reconciled to God.

2 Corinthians 5:20

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Children Receiving Children

Matthew 18:5

Synopsis: Jesus teaches us that we must receive children. But we have a long track history of separating instead of receiving. In this lesson we are reminded by Jesus to seek out those who are sick and sinners, to show mercy, to commend the faith of those who are struggling.

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“Let all that you do be done with love.”