

September 21, 2024

Daily Reflections



Center for Spiritual Development

FEAST OF SAINT MATTHEW, APOSTLE AND EVANGELIST

By Elisabeth Beall

An Excerpt from Today's First Reading

*But grace was given to each of us
according to the measure of Christ's gift.
And he gave some as Apostles, others as prophets,
others as evangelists, others as pastors and teachers,
to equip the holy ones for the work of ministry,
for building up the Body of Christ*

EPHESIANS 4:7, 11-12

Reflection

You can be unhappy for a very long time.

Think of your friends or family who have languished in jobs where they were

miserable and unappreciated, or who have suffered in relationships that did not feed their spirits, but leeched the joy from them. Think of a situation in your own life that you knew was not right for you, but you didn't know how to get out of it – and maybe you didn't know where to go that might be better.

The evangelist Matthew is a guidepost for all of us who have felt adrift in our own lives.

A tax collector in the time of Jesus, he certainly was not popular in his community – he may even have been reviled. That doesn't sound like a happy situation, and clearly, there was little enough keeping Matthew in that role: the instant Jesus said to him, "Follow me," he did exactly that. Jesus called him, and Matthew responded. It was the start of a remarkably dramatic career change, from tax collector to evangelist. It was the first step toward Matthew living out the purpose of his life: to share the Good News with countless generations across millennia.

Each of us is gifted in unique ways, as the verses above say so clearly. But it isn't always easy for us to understand what our own gifts are, or how to deploy them for the glory of God, the fulfillment of our spirits, and the good of the world around us. Did Matthew feel as though he were living a fulfilling life, gathering taxes from the Jewish people? It seems clear he did not. But would he ever have guessed that he would become a follower of Jesus, and ultimately one of the most renowned writers in the history of the world, helping to bring untold numbers of souls to God?

God calls each of us. It is our mission to listen for that voice, to discern where God is calling us and why, and to heed that call. Only in that way can we become the people God created us to be.



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For Pondering

- What change might God be calling you to make in your life? Sit in silence and listen for God's voice. How will you respond?
- Which of your gifts are lying fallow? How can you dust off those gifts and put them to use?
- How do your gifts help build up the Body of Christ?

For Prayer

*God of Mercy,
I thank you for second chances,
For the opportunity to grow and change
and become the person you created me to be.
Grant me the wisdom to listen for your voice
And the openness of mind and heart to hear it.
Guide me in the footsteps of your servant Matthew,
Who heard your call and heeded it without a backward glance.
Amen.*

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