

LETTING GO, HOLDING ON

*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.
Matthew 9:9*

REFLECTION

Matthew was a tax-collector for the Roman Empire. As a tax collector Matthew had a stable job, though it might have been tough for him and came with little social status but it paid well. As a tax collector he was also despised by his own Jewish people because of his work for the Romans and "ripping off" his own people. Yet, Matthew seemed to have found security in his job. But when Matthew heard Jesus' call to follow after Him, he did so willingly, abandoning everything (Lk.5:28).

What made Matthew able to let go of his security and follow after Jesus? Was it for an ideology, a way of life, better benefits, a more embracing community, etc.? He had a choice not to respond and stay where he was. Perhaps, it is a knowing when the Master called him, Matthew knew with certain conviction that he was to let go and follow. Perhaps, Matthew had heard so much about Jesus, His teachings and deeds that when Jesus met him and their eyes met, the Master's voice of invitation connected with Matthew's mind and spirit also; and he responded with his will and being, leaving everything and holding on to Jesus.

Have you had such an encounter with the Lord Jesus? When was the last time you heard Jesus calling out to you to follow Him? What was it like? How did His voice touch you or speak into your spirit? What was His call to you about? Was it to follow after Him? It may have been something to do with an area of your life and He wants you to follow after Him or in His ways. How did you respond then? Did you respond immediately like Matthew? Or you may not have responded so willingly. If that was so, take the time to consider what hindered you and tell the Lord why you hesitated or what your struggles were. Know that he is patient, merciful and gracious with each of us. What would it take for you to respond willingly to the Master if He is to call again, how will you respond?

PRAYER

Lord Jesus, thank You for calling me into a living relationship with You. This journey with You has not always been one where I always followed after You. Please forgive me. Grant me the will and strength to respond favourably to Your voice whenever You call me to follow You. In Jesus' name I ask, Amen.

SUPPLICATION

- Recall the time where you turned your life to believe in the Lord. It might have been via a dramatic encounter; it might not have been. Nevertheless, give thanks to God for "calling out" to you and saving you. God continues to "call out" to us. Are we listening? Tell Him that you desire for Him to call you to His purpose and will. As He calls to you, Are you willing let go earthly things and to follow after Him? Lay your heart and will before God and allow Him to work in and through you.
- Do you know of someone who may need to hear the Lord calling out to them to follow after Him? Pray for this person(s), asking that the Lord would cause them to hear His voice clearly. Is the person finding it difficult to respond to the Lord's call? Pray that he/she would be responsive towards His voice.
- There are many in this world who have yet to know who Jesus really is. Some have heard His voice before; others not have. Some have responded to His voice; others ignored Him. Pray for the Holy Spirit to work deeply in the hearts of those yet to be saved. May they hear the Lord's call to salvation and be saved.
- The world is still battling with many issues such as the COVID-19 pandemic, civil unrest, political tensions, etc. and there seems to be no definite or workable solution to these issues. Pray for God to intervene in the hearts and minds of the leaders of each country that they would care for the well-being of the people and not be concerned about personal reputation and benefits.

*Jesus said to all:
"If anyone would come after Me,
let him deny himself and
take up his cross daily and follow Me."
Lk.9:23*

**If you need any prayer or pastoral care support, kindly contact the pastoral care team via:
Email: wecare@brmc.org.sg
Contact: 6592 4011 or 6592 4012**