Matthew’s encounter with Christ teaches us that Christ wants the sick, not the well. He wants to change lives rather than get those who think their lives are changed. Students will be challenged to give control of their lives to God instead of trying to change on their own.

**Activity**

**PENGUIN FOOTBALL**

Give each person a rag about four inches wide and two feet long (sheets torn into strips work well). Each person then ties the rag securely around his knees to make running impossible; players can move only by shuffling their feet.

Now divide into teams and play football using a Nerf football. The game becomes hilarious when players must hike, run, throw, and kick with their knees tied together.

**Visual**

Tonight we’re going to be talking about one of Jesus’ disciples - aka, his team. There were only 12 of them, and these disciples went EVERYWHERE and did EVERYTHING with Jesus. Before we do, I want to show you a trailer of a movie from my childhood, Little Giants. It’s about a little league football team made up of kids who get cut from the town’s official team. Check it out:

[https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=XS2LB5-dl7s&noredirect=1](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=XS2LB5-dl7s&noredirect=1)

**Scripture**

Matthew 6

**Talk**

I love this movie because oftentimes, I felt like the Little Giants - not good enough for the A Team, but still wanting to play. I liked that in Hollywood, the B team could get picked, but in real life, the B team sits on the bench. So, what does this have to do with Jesus? Check out how he selects disciples for his team:

*Matthew 6:9 - “As Jesus went on from there, he saw a man named Matthew. He was sitting at the tax collector’s booth. “Follow me,” Jesus told him. Matthew got up and followed him.”*

Now it said Matthew was sitting behind a tax collector’s booth. Tax collectors were the lowest of low. They weren’t the B team - they were the Z team! Jewish tax collectors like Matthew were considered the worst because they took money from their people - the Jews - and gave it to the Roman government. They were double agents. And usually, tax collectors would ask for extra money, and keep part of it! In return, they had lots of money and lived the high life...but they were hated by everyone. No one ever asked him to hang-out; no one even wanted to be seen with him. People probably hid when they saw Matthew coming because they were afraid he would take their money.
**Talk cont...**

This is THE guy Jesus picks. In other words, Jesus doesn’t pick the good guy - he picks the neighborhood thug who just robbed somebody’s house. And not only that, but the thug just gets up, leaves everything behind, and follows.

Later, Jesus is getting some slack for picking Matthew for his team. He’s hanging out at Matthew’s house and some teacher of the law - AKA pastors, preachers, and church-goers - find his followers and basically say, “What gives? Why are you hanging out with this tax collector (thug)?! Don’t you know how BAD he is?” I love how they don’t even have the guts to talk to Jesus so they complain to his crew. Anyway, Jesus hears this, and instead of staying silent, he jumps on their question:

*(Matthew 6:12)* 12 Jesus heard that. So he said, “Those who are healthy don’t need a doctor. Sick people do. 13 Go and learn what this means, ‘I want mercy and not sacrifice.’ I have not come to get those who think they are right with God to follow me. I have come to get sinners to follow me.”

That’s right - Jesus wants SINNERS. If you fall into that category, you’re who Jesus wants! He’s not interested in the people who get it right - he’s interested in showing mercy and changing the lives of people who get it wrong. He wants the sick of heart, the messed up, the confused!

A lot of people will say, “I need to get my life together before I start going to church or before I start following Jesus.” But they have it backwards! Look at Matthew - he was in the middle of work, in the midst of robbing people of their money, when Jesus found him. Does he say, “Jesus, let me straighten up before I follow you. I’m just not ready.” No! He gets up, and follows. He realized he was never going to change on his own - but once he encounters Jesus, started following Jesus, the doctor, everything changed.

(this is a great place for the speaker to share about a time he or she was healed - physically, spiritually, emotionally, mentally, etc - when he or she encounters Christ and starts to follow Him.)

When it comes to following God, a lot of us want to be perfect and then follow. But that is backwards - once we encounter Jesus, we need to trust Him and follow, then He begins doing His job, changing us from the inside-out. So what about you? Are you following or trying to do it on your own? Are you being called like Matthew was? Let’s talk about this in our small groups.

**Small Group Questions**

1. Share names and a job you would NEVER want to have.

2. Jesus calls Matthew while he’s in the middle of his job. If you were Matthew, what would your response have been and why?

3. Do you hear people say they need to get their life right before they follow Christ? Why do you think they say that?

4. Why do you think Jesus isn’t interested in people who “think they are right with God”?

5. Would you say you follow Christ or are trying to get your life together on your own? Why?