[Narrator] Do you remember James and John? We met them awhile ago when Jesus asked them to stop being fishermen so that they could help him fish for people. in other words, he asked them to become two of his first disciples. When they started, they knew that they would learn many things but as you'll see in today's story even they didn't imagine what they would learn. In our story, Jesus showed them what it would look like to love everyone by showing them. Jesus showed his disciples how to love everybody by loving everybody himself. Let's see how it happened.

In our story are James and John, the tax collector Matthew, and a religious leader who doesn't like what Jesus is doing. Of course, and most important to our story, there is Jesus. Let's say hello to all of them and learn how Jesus loves everyone.

[Scene] Matthew is in place, with clipboard, pens, and paper. Jesus and followers come on, James and John are talking.

[James] You know, when we started I thought that we would go off somewhere and memorize things like scripture and well, learn. Well, we've been following, and I'm learning a lot, but I thought that disciples were supposed to help their teacher. I've been trying but I'm not really sure that I'm helping the teacher all that much.

[John] I know. Yesterday I thought that we were doing what disciples are supposed to do by keeping the children away from the teacher so that they wouldn't waste his time. Then he could teach the adults. I was surprised when the teacher told us to let the children come to him. Then he told us that God loves everyone, especially children.

[James] Yes, I'm still trying to get my head around what it means to love everyone.

[John] Do you ever wonder if Jews who really break the rules can be loved by God? I mean, like that tax collector over there.

[James] I doubt it. He's sold out his people to the Romans. I'm glad that we won't have to deal with him since we aren't doing any business today.

[John] What's the teacher doing?

[Scene] Jesus walks over to Matthew.

[Jesus] Hello Matthew, I've heard some very good things about you.

[Matthew] Who are you?

[Jesus] My name is Jesus and I'm from Nazareth.

[Matthew] I've heard about you, you tell people about the Kingdom of God, Right?

[Jesus] Yes and I'd like your help.

[Matthew] How could I help you? I'm a tax collector and Nobody likes me. my fellow Jews don't like me. The religious leaders don't like me. According to the religious leaders, even God doesn't like me. I've heard that time after time from all of the religious people. In fact, I'm surprised that you are even talking with me about something other than taxes.

[Jesus] Well, all of those religious people are wrong. God loves everyone, including you.

[Matthew] Tell you what. Why don't you and your followers come to my house for a meal and you can tell me and my friends more about how God loves everyone…even me.

[Narrator] So Matthew put aside his tax collecting documents and he and Jesus and all of the followers went to Matthew's home where they sat down and had a great meal. As the meal was ending one of the religious leaders came into Matthew's house. He came up to Jesus.

[Leader] Mr. Jesus, I just don't understand. Why do you and your followers spend time with riff raff like this tax collector. You should be telling good people how to follow God like I do.

[Jesus] People who are well don't need a doctor, but sick people do. The poor and the tax collectors and the other people that you look down on want to know about God's love and I'm here to tell them that God loves everyone.

[Narrator] So Jesus found a new disciple that day, the disciple Matthew. We remember that story because it shows all of us that Jesus loves everyone. Jesus showed us how God loves everyone by loving everyone. Jesus spent his time with us showing us what that means. The good news is that we can do the same thing that Jesus does. Jesus loves everyone, and so can we.