



Sunday, June 7, 2026
Matthew 9:9-13, 18-26 (Second Sunday after Pentecost)

Ascension Lutheran Church
Pastor Tony Acompañado

Have you ever had one of those days where you wake up in the morning and wonder, "*Okay, what's next?*"

The coffee spills. The toast burns. The internet isn't working. The dog destroys your favorite shoes. Your child gets sick. The car won't start. There's a detour. You finally get one problem solved, and another one is already waiting in the queue.

Lately, I've started to wonder if there's a secret committee spying on me whose only purpose is to schedule inconveniences in my life.

First, I injured my foot and had to stop running and wear a walking boot. Then, before life fully finished with that lesson, I got rear-ended by a dump truck while stopped at a red light. And I guess a dump truck is pretty good way of making the story sound dramatic. Then, this past week I bought a new grill and when I opened the box, it was damaged.

Lately it's been feeling a bit like "*just one thing after another.*" And maybe some of you know exactly what that feels like. One medical appointment after another. One unexpected bill after another. One worry after another. One troubling bit of news after another.

And when we look beyond our own lives, the world seems to be experiencing the same thing. We watch political division deepen across our nation. We see communities struggling with economic uncertainty. We hear about violence, war, humanitarian crises, and growing anxiety around the globe. Every day seems to bring another crisis, another conflict, or another reason to worry about tomorrow. "*Just one thing after another.*"

Today's gospel from Matthew seems to speak directly to these moments because the entire chapter is essentially a story of Jesus dealing with one thing after another.

First, Jesus calls Matthew – a tax collector. Then religious leaders criticize him. Then a synagogue leader arrives with a family tragedy. Then a woman who's been suffering for twelve years reaches for healing. Then Jesus goes to a house where people are grieving.

One interruption after another. One need after another. One crisis after another. But Jesus never seems distressed. He never says, "*Could everyone please just form a line?*" He never says, "*I'm overwhelmed.*" He never says, "*This is too much.*"

Everywhere Jesus goes, people bring their pain, their fear, their grief, their sickness, and their desperation. And Jesus meets them there.

The story begins with Matthew sitting at a tax booth. Now Matthew wasn't exactly the person people expected Jesus to choose. Tax collectors were viewed as collaborators with the Roman government. They were often distrusted and despised.

Yet Jesus simply says, "*Follow me.*" And Matthew gets up and follows. It's a reminder that hope begins when Jesus sees possibilities where others see problems.

The religious leaders saw a sinner. Jesus saw a disciple. The crowd saw a tax collector. Jesus saw someone who would write a gospel. The world saw what Matthew had been. Jesus saw what Matthew could become. And that's still how grace works. God is always seeing more in us than we see in ourselves.

Then comes another interruption. A synagogue leader arrives. His daughter has died, or is dying, depending on which gospel you read. His world is collapsing. He falls before Jesus and pleads for help. And while Jesus is on the way to help him, another interruption occurs.

A woman who has suffered for twelve years reaches out and touches the fringe of his cloak. Think about that for a moment – *twelve years*. Twelve years of pain. Twelve years of disappointment. Twelve years of unanswered questions. Twelve years of wondering whether anything would ever change. And somehow she still has enough hope to believe that one touch might make a difference. Such extraordinary faith.

She doesn't make a plea. She simply reaches. And Jesus stops.



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In a crowd filled with urgent needs, Jesus notices one person. In a world filled with noise, Jesus hears one silent prayer. In a culture that had largely forgotten her, Jesus sees her and says, "*daughter, your faith has made you well.*"

Imagine hearing *that* after twelve years. *Daughter*. Not patient. Not problem. Not burden. *Daughter*.

Then Jesus continues on to the leaders house and raises the girl. Life where there was death. Hope where there was despair. A future where everyone thought the story had ended.

Which brings us back to this theme, "*just one thing after another.*" Truth is – *life* really is one thing after another.

And perhaps for all those who are graduating this year this next part may just be the best reminder you could get as you step into the next phase of your life.

Sometimes the next thing is wonderful. Sometimes the next thing is painful. Sometimes it feels overwhelming. But the good news for all of us is that Jesus is present through every "*next thing.*"

Notice that Jesus doesn't promise a life free from interruptions. He doesn't promise a life free from struggling. He doesn't promise a life free from suffering. What he does promise is his presence. He walks with Matthew into a new future. He walks with a grieving father into a house filled with sorrow. He walks with a suffering woman into healing. He walks into a room where death seems to have the last word – and he proves otherwise. And here's what's really beautiful – he still does.

As we face so much uncertainty – political tensions, international conflicts, economic concerns, and personal struggles, we may wonder whether hope is realistic.

And into this uncertainly, the gospel of Jesus answers, **YES**.

Not because circumstances are always easy. Not because problems magically disappear. But because Jesus is always present. Hope isn't denial. Hope is trust. Hope is believing that God's grace is larger than today's crisis. Hope is believing that God's future is bigger than today's fear. Hope is believing that even when life feels like *one thing after another*, God's mercy is also one thing after another. One blessing after another. One act of grace after another. One unexpected kindness after another. One new morning after another. One promise fulfilled after another. And ultimately, one resurrection after another.

Because Easter wasn't just something that happened to Jesus. Easter is God's declaration that death, despair, and darkness never have the final say. Not in Matthew's story. Not in the woman's story. Not in the leaders daughter's story. **Not in our story.**

So if life has felt like one thing after another lately, then remember this...

Jesus is still calling people. Jesus is still healing people. Jesus is still restoring people. Jesus is still raising hope where others see only endings. And no matter what tomorrow may bring, no matter what challenges await us this week, no matter what unexpected interruption arrives next, Jesus goes before us. One step at a time. One day at a time. One act of love after another. And this my friends is all we need to help us handle whatever comes next. Thanks be to God. Amen.