

## Lesson 8: Chapter 9 “Your faith has made you well”

### Servant’s preparation:

[http://www.suscopts.org/pdf/presentations/biblestudy/NT/Matthew/Matthew\\_09.pdf](http://www.suscopts.org/pdf/presentations/biblestudy/NT/Matthew/Matthew_09.pdf)

### Brief introduction:

At the beginning of each lesson in the bible study of St. Matthew, please mention this book overview.

- ✓ Who is St. Matthew? He was one of the twelve disciples; he was a tax-collector before Jesus called him to follow Him.
- ✓ Who did he write his gospel to? The Jews, it is designed to prove that Jesus is the Messianic king of Old Testament (OT) prophecy.
- ✓ What is its theme? Jesus is the King of the Heavenly kingdom, Israel’s long-awaited Messiah.

### Remember:

Last lesson, we started a series of 10 miracles performed by Jesus, they demonstrated His power and authority over sickness, demons, and the weather. We studied 6 of them, today we would study the other four.

### Memory verse:

9:22 “Be of good cheer, daughter; your faith has made you well.”

### Lesson opener:

#### **A great job offer:**

- ✓ Long hours! Lots of overtime! Must be willing to work on weekends!
- ✓ Must be able to travel often! Must be willing to accept the cheapest modes of travel, generally by foot, for long distances!
- ✓ Dangerous! potential threats from thieves and soldiers! will not pay for hotels! sleep where and how you can, sometimes outside in the elements!
- ✓ Political climate in the country is dangerous! Performing job will put your life in danger! you will be exposed to public ridicule and persecution!
- ✓ **Compensation:** no pay! no insurance! no pension! no housing fund! no paid vacation!
- ✓ **Qualifications needed:** complete obedience. deny yourselves and obey the boss completely in every area!

**How does this job sound to you? You are all in a hurry to line up and apply?**

You are missing the last part of the job advertisement; it goes like this:

**Benefits:** Learn face to face from the Creator of the world. Become friends with the King of Kings. Discover real joy. Gain a new purpose in life. Eternal life. The costs of this job are high, but the benefits are worth it.

*Will you deny yourself and follow the Lord?*

### Lesson Goal:

Jesus is the Messiah, the Son of God, and has the authority to forgive sins. All those who were healed had great faith.

### **Lesson body:**

You will notice that in this chapter many of the events center on a controversy between Jesus and the spiritual leaders. There is controversy about Jesus' forgiving sins, about Jesus choosing sinners, about fasting, and about Jesus' power in casting out the demons. These were some of the key quarrels that the religious leaders focused on when attacking Jesus.

In this chapter we see a distinct difference from the last chapter. We have seen flocks of people following Jesus. Everywhere He went, He was popular. People crowded to see Him and listen to Him. But not everything was smooth. There was a key and powerful element of opposition to Jesus' ministry. This was partially motivated by the jealousy of the religious leaders who saw these flocks of people listening to Jesus instead of them. Take special note throughout the chapter of the disagreements, the motivation of these disagreements, and how Jesus resolves them. This was the beginning of the opposition that ended with the Cross.

In this chapter, we have the next 4 miracles out of the ten recorded in chapters 8 and 9. Jesus uses His power on people to demonstrate who He is. It also shows the love and compassion Jesus has for us.

### **Jesus Forgives and Heals a Paralytic (9:1-8)**

Jesus left the people of Gadara upon their request where He healed the demon-possessed man and went to Capernaum which became His new home after leaving Nazareth.

The paralytic had probably brought his sickness upon himself by means of his sins; but was now repentant. Christ goes to the source of the disease, which is sin and then heals the body of the man.

St Mark's gospel gives more details about how his friends brought him to Jesus by opening the ceiling. They didn't let any obstacles keep them from Him. What do we learn about friendship from what these men did for the paralytic? Do you have friends like this in your life? Are you this kind of friend towards others?

Jesus is challenged when He forgives the sins of the paraplegic man. In Jewish thinking, it was blasphemy, pure and simple, for any mortal to presume to forgive sins (reserved for God only) and that was a crime punishable by death. Jesus rebukes the critics by asking which is easier, spiritual cleansing or physical healing. Before they answer, He also heals the man. Actually, spiritual cleansing is easier because no one could see proof that it happened but in order to prove the first, He did the physical healing as it was an obvious sign. Jesus wanted to tell them that if He can do the most difficult, then He can do the easier. External miracles are the proof of internal ones.

Of course, the crowd is impressed but read verse 9:8 carefully. ". . . they praised God, who had given such authority to men." They still didn't get it. They thought God had given such power to men, failing to recognize this one "man" as the Son of God. They forgot that his sins were forgiven, sometimes miracles are not enough to change people.

Jesus demonstrated power over illness by healing him, which also proved that He had power to forgive sins. Imagine that the man didn't get up. Jesus commands him to rise, but nothing happens,

and he tries and collapses back to the ground. What would have happened to Jesus' ministry? The crowds would have gradually dispersed. The Pharisees would have smugly pronounced that Jesus couldn't forgive sins OR heal. But that didn't happen. The man did get up. This is a reminder that Jesus and His miracles were real. If He was fake, His ministry would have collapsed. If He was just a good magician, someone would have finally discovered His "tricks" and exposed them, and His followers would disband. The belief and sacrifice of those closest to Jesus continue to be a strong evidence that Jesus is who He said He was.



### **Matthew the Tax Collector (9:9-13)**

In the time of Jesus, tax collectors had a very bad reputation. Firstly, they were considered to be sellouts to the Romans. The Romans were a foreign occupying force over Judea. They were often times very cruel and mistreated the Jews. In addition to acts of brutality, they taxed them, severely.

Tax collectors were Jews who worked for the Romans for personal gain. Basically, they helped Rome gather taxes from their own countrymen. Tax gatherers are never popular in any country, but especially in this case. They were also hated because they often collected much more than the amount required and pocketed the difference. Only a person of the lowest moral character who valued money above all else would be willing to sell out his own country like this. Matthew was one of them. . Jesus is not afraid of the backlash of choosing Matthew as a disciple.

To follow Jesus, Matthew would have to give up this life, his source of income and security, his sinful life and friends.

How blessed it is to be obedient to the first call of Christ? how much happiness and glory are lost by delays?!!

Being humble, Matthew didn't mention that he planned a feast for Jesus and invited his colleagues, this was mentioned in St. Luke's gospel. The Pharisees by asking why He is eating with tax-collectors accused Christ of seeking the society of such sinners being their friend. They thought that He could not be Himself righteous, since He delighted in the company of abandoned people, they despised

Jesus because they thought they are without sins while the tax-collectors felt they needed correction so they were ready to repent.

### **Jesus Is Questioned About Fasting (9:14-17)**

John's disciples question Jesus to learn and understand something which they don't understand. They had been taught that fasting was normal and beneficial, so to see Jesus and His disciples not fasting was confusing. Yet, they were to be blamed for joining the Pharisees in interrogating Him.

Jesus gave them three reasons why they aren't fasting:

1. Fasting is usually a sign of sorrow. Jesus' coming to the earth was a cause for celebration. While the disciples were with Him, they do not need to fast. In other words, there is a time and a place for fasting, there is a time for rejoicing in the Lord and a time for seeking the Lord with humility and fasting and for mourning over sin. At the same time, He shows them that they should not judge others for not doing the same since there can be legitimate reasons for not fasting at a particular time.
2. Cloth parable – Nowadays we live in a time when clothes are bought pre-shrunk. Back then, cloth had to be naturally shrunk, and it would keep shrinking for a long time. New cloth and old cloth would shrink at different rates. So, if you had an old robe that had a hole in it and then sowed a new piece of cloth over the hole that new cloth would shrink at a faster rate and would rip itself off the old cloth. The result would likely be a bigger tear than the original hole.
3. Wine skin parable – New wine is fermenting over time, releasing gases which give pressure. New wine skins are elastic enough to take the pressure, but old wine skins could easily burst if you store new wine in them because they are hard. The meaning of this parable is the same as the cloth parable. If brand new wine is placed in that brittle and stiff old wine skin, it could cause that wine skin to burst and waste the wine. On the other hand, new leather is soft and could change shape or expand as necessary to accommodate the fermenting wine.

So, the "new" doctrines do not match with the old rites of the Pharisees. There is a right place for the old as well as the new. Jesus says the kingdom of heaven is like a householder who brings out of his treasure what is new and what is old (Matthew 13:52)

He doesn't want us to hold rigidly to the past and to be resistant to the new work of His Holy Spirit in our lives. He wants our minds and hearts to be like new wine skins open and ready to receive the new wine of the Holy Spirit. Fasting in the NT is all about loving God, it is different than the way the Jews used to fast.

That whole illustration has to do with the way people misunderstood Jesus' ministry and purpose. Jesus was "starting something new" and His purpose was not understood by the religious Jews of that day.

## **A Girl Restored to Life and a Woman Healed (9:18-26) [1<sup>st</sup> and 2<sup>nd</sup> miracle]**

The parallel passages to these miracles are in Mark 5:21-43 and Luke 8:40-56, putting them together we get a full scene of how they happened.

A ruler [Jairus] came and bowed down before Jesus (v 18), showing Him respect before telling Him the terrible thing that just happened. My daughter has just died. She was still a child and according to Mark and Luke was twelve years old, Jairus's only daughter (Mark 5:42; Luke 8:42).

This man shares this dreadful news with a hope-filled faith. But come and lay Your hand on her, and she will live (v 18). He had no doubt heard, or perhaps even witnessed, Jesus performing miracles healing lepers, paralytics, people with fever, and casting out demons. Now that his daughter had died, he had nowhere else to turn. Based on what he had heard or seen, he believed that Jesus had the power to bring her back to life. Jesus got up and began to follow this father to his home (v 19). His disciples did the same.

Along the way, Matthew tells us that a woman who had been suffering from a hemorrhage follows after Jesus. Apart from the physical suffering she would have endured, she would have also been considered ritually unclean according to the Mosaic Law (Leviticus 19:15-30). She had been suffering under these physical and social conditions for twelve years.

As Jesus passed by, the woman came up behind Him and touched the hem of His garment (v 20). Matthew tells us that she did this because she was saying to herself, "If I only touch His garment, I will get well" (v 21). She knew Jesus had the power to heal her hemorrhage. But she appeared to be ashamed or afraid to publicly ask Him to make her well. She attempted to seek healing covertly by touching Jesus's garment.

If she had stopped Jesus, or grabbed Him, it would have likely caused a scene and potentially brought more shame upon her. By only touching the hem, she believed that she could be made well without attracting unwanted attention.

After she touched Jesus in faith, He turned around, saw her, and said "Be of good cheer, daughter; your faith has made you well." (v 22). He told this fearful daughter to not be afraid or ashamed but to take courage. Christ's power had healed her, but she received His healing grace through her faith in His power. Matthew concludes this encounter by explaining that at once the woman was made well (v 22).

If Jesus didn't say anything, the woman would have gone home without ever talking to Him. I believe she would have regretted this for the rest of her life. She would likely have felt some shame and guilt at the way she received her healing and blamed herself for not either asking or thanking Jesus. Here Jesus kindly gives her an opportunity to come clean and take the weight off her own conscience. To her credit, the woman admitted it. Jesus recognized the lady's faith. She did have a lot of faith, and this is why Jesus was happy to heal her. He also blessed her.

Mark and Luke added that as this event was occurring, a report came from Jairus's house that his twelve-year old daughter died (see Mark 5:24-36; Luke 8:43-50).

When Jesus came into Jairus's house, He saw the crowd in noisy disorder (v 23). Lamentations and dirges filled the air. When Jesus saw and heard this commotion, He tried to disperse the crowd, telling them to Leave. There was no cause to mourn, for, Jesus claims, the girl has not died but is asleep (v 24). By saying that, He taught us not to be in dread of death, since it was reduced to the condition of a sleep. If you believe this, why do you vainly weep? Why do you afflict yourself? This is what the Gentiles do, who have no faith.

But when He said this, the crowd began laughing at Him (v 24). Their laughter was a scoffing laugh in offense to what He just said. When the crowd had been sent out, Jesus entered the room where the dead body lay, and took the girl by the hand, and the girl got up (v 25). She was pronounced dead. Now she was alive. Jesus had raised the girl to resume life. Not surprisingly, this news spread throughout all that land (v 26) (Galilee and beyond).

### **Two Blind Men Healed (9:27-31) [3<sup>rd</sup> miracle]**

These men obviously had a lot of faith in God. They knew that Jesus could heal people. But more than that, they showed that they believed Jesus was the Messiah. The title "Son of David" was used to refer to the Messiah, God's chosen One. So, these men showed great faith.

Why do you think Jesus asked the men what they wanted? Didn't He already know their need? Jesus wanted the men to tell Him what they needed. He likes to hear from us about our needs. God knows all our needs. But He still wants us to ask Him for the things we need. He wants us to talk to Him about everything!

### **A Mute Man Speaks (9:32-38) [4<sup>th</sup> miracle]**

The demon possessed man – The demon caused the man to become mute. Jesus healed the man without the man making a statement of faith – Jesus works in different ways at different times. The man was indeed incapable of verbally expressing faith in Jesus since the demon was controlling Him.

Referring to Jesus: "Moreover He did not only cast out devils, but He cleansed the lepers, raised the dead, calmed the storm, forgave sins by His own power, preached the eternal felicity of heaven, and brought back man to God: all which the devil never could, never would bestow upon mankind". (St. Chrysostom, hom. xxxiii.)

Jesus felt compassion for them – This is one of Jesus' key character traits which He exhibits again and again. He didn't lose patience. He dealt with crowds of needy (and often annoying) people day after day without complaint and without rest.

## Takeaways and lesson delivery ideas:

### From the paralytic miracle:

God warns us against looking at the outside of a person not the heart, like the scribes in this story who judged Jesus and condemned His order of forgiving sins. There was a story about a bishop who heard that one of the church girls was tempted to join a house for prostitution. It was during the holy week when he went to the business owner of the house to request taking the girl back to her family. The owner insisted that she wouldn't give him the girl unless he eats a meal of duck with her. Can you imagine how people would look at a bishop going into a house like that and eating non-fasting food during Holy Week? Out of love, he did as she requested, broke his fast and restored the girl back to her family.

Let us not judge by the appearance. Matthew looked bad from the outside being a tax collector, but he ended up obeying Jesus's call to follow Him while the scribe from last chapter who appeared religious asking Jesus to be a follower, ended up going home and following Him.

### From the parable of the cloth and wineskins:

We have our own ideas, prejudices, and habits like the Jews. Are we willing to change them when confronted with God's Word? Is our heart stiff and unbending, made of stone? Or are they soft? Are you like a brick that cannot be molded by the potter? Or are you like a soft piece of clay, willing to change yourself to fit into how God wants you to be?

Here is an example. You may have heard people say things like "That is just how I am." They may say this about their blunt or rude communication, about their lack of compassion for others, or about their forgetfulness or disorderliness, "That is just how I am." The list can go on and on. Probably it is how we are. But saying "that is how I am" is not a good excuse. And this is the wrong perspective. The better approach is to ask a question, "How does God want me to be?" or "How should I be?" Answer that question and then adjust your personality and character to become like that.

