

Matthew Chapter 9

Matthew 9:1 "And he entered into a ship, and passed over, and came into his own city."

“His own city”:

Jesus had left Capernaum to get away from the crowds for a time (8:18).

Matthew 9:2 "And, behold, they brought to him a man sick of the palsy, lying on a bed: and Jesus seeing their faith said unto the sick of the palsy; Son, be of good cheer; thy sins be forgiven thee."

“Thy sins be forgiven”:

The fact that the man was brought on a bed indicates that his paralysis was severe.

Jesus’ words of forgiveness may indicate that the paralysis was a direct consequence of the man’s own sin (John 9:31).

Now remember, in our last lesson, Jesus had been asked to leave when He delivered the demoniac man.

He didn't argue with the people.

He just got in a boat and came back across the Sea of Galilee to more familiar territory.

Many have seen His miracles and heard his teachings on the Mount of Beatitudes.

When He arrived back, it seems some people were waiting.

We discussed before that palsy is a disease similar to a short circuit that is in the brain and nervous system.

This palsy had advanced so that this man was unable to walk.

Not only did the man have faith that Jesus could heal him, but his friends had faith, as well (the ones who brought him).

As we have said before, not all illness is associated with sin, but some are.

Matthew 9:3 "And, behold, certain of the scribes said within themselves, This [man] blasphemeth."

“This man blasphemeth”:

This would be a true judgment about anyone but God incarnate, for only the One who has been sinned against has the prerogative to forgive.

Jesus' words to the man were therefore an unequivocal claim of divine authority.

We have said so times in these lessons, they did not recognize Jesus for who He really was.

They were familiar with the law and knew that it taught that only God can forgive sins.

The reason they thought that Jesus blasphemed, was that they saw Him as a man.

To impersonate God is blasphemy, but He was not an impersonator.

He was, is, and always will be God.

Matthew 9:4 "And Jesus knowing their thoughts said, Wherefore think ye evil in your hearts?"

“Knowing their thoughts”:

See 12:25; John 2:24.

Though the Lord Jesus humbled Himself (Phil. 2:4-8), and set aside the independent use of His divine prerogatives in incarnation (John 5:30), He was still fully God and therefore, omniscient (see Mark 13:32; Luke 2:52).

Matthew 9:5 "For whether is easier, to say, [Thy] sins be forgiven thee; or to say, Arise, and walk?"

“For whether is easier”:

It is certainly easier to claim the power to pronounce absolution from sin than to demonstrate the power to heal.

Christ actually proved His power to forgive by instantly healing the man of his paralysis.

If He could do the apparently harder, He could also do what seemed easier.

The actual forgiving of the sins was in reality the more difficult task, however because it ultimately requires Him to sacrifice His life.

Matthew 9:6 "But that ye may know that the Son of man hath power on earth to forgive sins, (then saith he to the sick of the palsy,) Arise, take up thy bed, and go unto thine house."

You see from the above Scriptures, that the scribes did not just come right out and accuse Jesus out loud.

They were afraid that the mobs whom Jesus had healed, would attack them, if they said anything to Him.

These accusations were just thoughts in their hearts.

Jesus knew their thoughts and their hearts, and spoke to the doubt there.

This act was evidence of who He is, and also of His power.

When this power commands, it happens, as we see in verse 7.

Matthew 9:7-8 "And he arose, and departed to his house." "But when the multitudes saw [it], they marveled, and glorified God, which had given such power unto men."

Again here, we see the fact that these people related Jesus to all the other prophets.

They did not really know who He was.

They did have the right idea.

"They glorified God".

This man had such a dramatic healing, that he walked home for everybody to see.

Jesus had come from a childhood of obscurity to a time of popularity because of His miracles.

Verses 9-12:

"The receipt of custom" refers to the tollbooth in the street where tax collectors sat to receive various taxes.

"In the house" means at home.

We know from the other synoptic writers that this house was Matthew's.

See (Mark 2:15; Luke 5:29), where the expression is phrased "in his house."

Matthew 9:9 "And as Jesus passed forth from thence, he saw a man, named Matthew, sitting at the receipt of custom: and he saith unto him, Follow me. And he arose, and followed him."

"Matthew":

Also called Levi, an apostle, was by occupation a tax collector.

He seems to have been an agent for Herod Antipas, stationed at Capernaum to collect revenue on goods passing between Damascus and the Mediterranean ports.

Tax collectors (publicans), were despised by the Jews and regarded as the lowest of sinners.

They were perceived as extortionists and even as traitors since they served Rome.

Matthew's own humility is seen here.

He did not disguise his past or make any excuse for it.

Whereas (Mark 2:14 and Luke 5:27), employ his former name, Levi.

Matthew himself used the name by which he was known after becoming a disciple (Mark 3:18; Luke 6:15).

Tax collectors were among the most despised persons in this society.

The money they collected was often partly extorted for personal gain (Luke 19:8), and partly a tax for Rome, which made them not only thieves, but also traitors to the Jewish nation.

When Jesus called him, he immediately obeyed.

From early times the church has regarded Matthew as the author of the first gospel.

All of the tax collectors were hated by the people.

Matthew was probably a man of means.

He was surely a publican himself.

Very little was written in the Scriptures about Matthew.

Jesus was probably, already acquainted with Matthew.

At any rate, Matthew did not question when Jesus told him to follow him.

He just obeyed.

This call was even harder than most, because Matthew had to give up the opportunity to make even more money than he already had.

He would lose his position of authority as well.

This shows that nothing is more important than following Jesus.

If necessary, we too should be willing to give up all, and follow Him.

Matthew 9:10-11 "And it came to pass, as Jesus sat at meat in the house, behold, many publicans and sinners came and sat down with him and his disciples." "And when the Pharisees saw [it], they said unto his disciples, Why eateth your Master with publicans and sinners?"

Here we see Jesus associating with these hated Roman tax collectors and people who knew none of the Jewish law.

Even if they did, they would not have practiced the law; because they were idolaters. To the Pharisees, they would have been unclean spiritually. A Pharisee would have nothing at all to do with them.

I believe these Pharisees were afraid of Jesus, so they asked the disciples. Jesus knew in His heart their evil intentions, and instead of letting the disciples answer this accusation, He answered for Himself.

Matthew 9:12 "But when Jesus heard [that], he said unto them, They that be whole need not a physician, but they that are sick."

“Whole ... sick”: The Pharisees thought they were well, religiously pure and whole.

The outcasts knew they were not.

Salvation can't come to the self-righteous.

Verses 13-15:

“The righteous:”

The word is used here in an ironic sense, meaning self-righteous.

Ultimately, as the Scripture tells us, “There is none righteous, no, not one” (Rom. 3:10).

“The children of the bridechamber” refers to the wedding guests.

“As long as the bridegroom is with them,” that is, while the wedding festivities last, which might be for some days.

“When the bridegroom shall be taken from them” an allusion to His coming death and ascension.

Matthew 9:13 "But go ye and learn what [that] meaneth, I will have mercy, and not sacrifice: for I am not come to call the righteous, but sinners to repentance."

“Go ye and learn what that meaneth”:

This phrase was commonly used as a rebuke for those who did not know something they should have known.

The verse Jesus cites is (Hosea 6:6; compare 1 Samuel 15:22; Mic. 6:6-8), which emphasizes the absolute priority of the law's moral standards over the ceremonial requirements.

The Pharisees tended to focus on the outward, ritual, and ceremonial aspects of God's law, to the neglect of its inward, eternal, and moral precepts.

In doing so, they became harsh, judgmental and self-righteously scornful of others.

Jesus repeated this same criticism (in 12:7).

Righteous people are already saved.

They do not need to be saved.

If you are not sick, you do not need to go to the doctor.

Jesus did not come to change the law; He came to fulfill the law.

Self-righteous is different from righteous.

To be righteous, we must be in right standing with God.

Jesus brought the message of hope to a dying and sinful world.

He provided the way out for those who were lost.

His message is a message of good news (gospel).

When He said He would have mercy and not sacrifice, I believe it meant He provided the sacrifice for us.

He is the perfect Lamb sacrifice.

Through His mercy and grace, we receive it. Not of ourselves that we might boast, but through faith in Him.

Matthew 9:14 "Then came to him the disciples of John, saying, Why do we and the Pharisees fast oft, but thy disciples fast not?"

“Disciples of John”:

Luke implies that the Pharisees asked this question (Mark 2:18-20).

Evidently, some Pharisees were still present when John’s disciples came.

Both groups together may have asked this question.

Matthew 9:15 "And Jesus said unto them, Can the children of the bridechamber mourn, as long as the bridegroom is with them? but the days will come, when the bridegroom shall be taken from them, and then shall they fast."

We must remember that Jesus is the Groom of the bride of Christ.

There is no mourning and sadness preparing for a wedding.

John the Baptist preached repentance and people who are repentant weep and mourn.

You can easily see why John's disciples would fast.

They were repenting, seeking for the Savior.

“Then shall they fast”:

Using the analogy of a wedding party, Jesus answered that as long as Christ was present with them there was too much joy for fasting, which was connected to the seasons of sorrow and intense prayer.

The Pharisees remind me of some religions today.

They believe you have to do specific things to be saved (penance).

The followers of Jesus were rejoicing and happy, because the salvation that Jesus offered was a free gift.

As long as the gift was there, it was hard to be sorrowful.

You see, when Jesus is not here with us physically, we will be as John's disciples.

It will be necessary to fast for strength and power from God.

We are all in a state of mourning now, waiting for that great day when the Groom will come for His bride.

Matthew 9:16 "No man putteth a piece of new cloth unto an old garment, for that which is put in to fill it up taketh from the garment, and the rent is made worse."

“New cloth unto an old garment”:

That new cloth does not work on old material is analogous to trying to patch New Covenant truth onto old Mosaic ceremonial forms.

Matthew 9:17 "Neither do men put new wine into old bottles: else the bottles break, and the wine runneth out, and the bottles perish: but they put new wine into new bottles, and both are preserved."

“New wine into old bottles”:

Animal skins were used for fermentation of wine because of their elasticity.

As the wine fermented, pressure built up, stretching the wineskin.

A previously stretched skin lacked elasticity and would rupture, ruining both wine and wineskin.

Jesus used this as an illustration to teach that the forms of old rituals, such as the ceremonial fasting practiced by the Pharisees and John’s disciples, were not fit for the new wine of the New Covenant era (Col. 2:17).

In both analogies (verses 16-17), the Lord was saying that what the Pharisees did in fasting or any other ritual had no part with the gospel.

This putting the material together, new and old, could be speaking of how hard it is for the Jews and Gentiles to worship together.

If a group of new Christians try witnessing to Jewish people, they will listen, as long as you call Jesus the Messiah.

We Christians, are looking for our Savior; the Jews are looking for their King.

The same, but just two different views of Him.

Matthew 9:18 "While he spake these things unto them, behold, there came a certain ruler, and worshipped him, saying, My daughter is even now dead: but come and lay thy hand upon her, and she shall live."

“Ruler”:

In (Mark 5:22 and Luke 8:41), we find this was a ruler of the synagogue named Jairus.

Matthew 9:19 "And Jesus arose, and followed him, and [so did] his disciples."

The man who came was of some importance in the community.

They called him a "ruler".

He had great faith.

Even though his daughter had been pronounced dead, he knew that Jesus could still raise her from the dead.

Jesus did not answer him.

He just went with the man and took the disciples with Him.

Great faith brings great results.

Verses 20-22:

“I shall be whole” (literally, “I shall be saved, i.e. healed):

A rabbi customarily addressed a young girl as “daughter.”

Jesus’ exhortation to “be of good comfort” means to cheer up.

The further statement “thy faith hath made thee whole” indicates that God’s blessing on our behalf is usually in proportion to our willingness to trust Him.

Matthew 9:20 "And, behold, a woman, which was diseased with an issue of blood twelve years, came behind [him], and touched the hem of his garment:"

“Issue of blood twelve years”:

This woman’s affliction not only was serious physically but also left her permanently unclean for ceremonial reasons (Lev. 15:25-27).

This meant she would have been shunned by all, including her own family, and excluded from both synagogue and temple.

“The hem of his garment”: (14:36).

Probably one of the tassels that were woven to the corners of a garment in order to remind the wearer to obey God’s commandments (Numbers 15:38-40; Deut. 22:12).

Matthew 9:21 "For she said within herself, If I may but touch his garment, I shall be whole."

Whole, made well, literally “saved you”.

Matthew 9:22 "But Jesus turned him about, and when he saw her, he said, Daughter, be of good comfort; thy faith hath made thee whole. And the woman was made whole from that hour."

Even though Jesus was headed to restore the little girl, He was still interested in helping others along the way.

This woman's belief was great, and she was not disappointed.

Even touching the hem of His garment could totally restore, as it did for her.

Other accounts of this story tell us she had spent everything she had, on worldly physicians.

Just one touch of Jesus' garment, and she was whole.

Verses 23-26:

The scene described here is typical of a Middle Eastern home where someone lay dead.

Mourners were actually hired to make noise.

The “minstrels” were flutists.

Jesus’ statement that “the maid is not dead, but sleepeth” meant that her death, though real, was

ultimately going to be a temporary “sleep” in the light of the fact that He would quickly raise her back to life again.

Matthew 9:23 "And when Jesus came into the ruler's house, and saw the minstrels and the people making a noise,"

“Minstrels (flute players) ... people making a noise”:

Typical fixtures at a time of mourning in that culture (2 Chron. 35:25).

The crowd at a funeral usually included professional mourners, women whose task it was to wail plaintively, while reciting the name of the departed one, as well as any other loved ones who had died recently.

The result was a noisy, chaotic din.

Matthew 9:24 "He said unto them, Give place: for the maid is not dead, but sleepeth. And they laughed him to scorn."

“Sleepeth”:

Jesus was not saying that her death was a misdiagnosis.

This was a prophecy that she would live again.

He made a similar comment about Lazarus’ death (John 11:11), and then had to explain to the disciples that he was speaking metaphorically (John 11:14).

Sleep is a designation for death in the New Testament (1 Cor. 11:30; 15:51; 1 Thess. 5:10).

“They laughed him to scorn”:

How quickly their paid act of mourning turned to derision.

Matthew 9:25-26 "But when the people were put forth, he went in, and took her by the hand, and the maid arose." "And the fame hereof went abroad into all that land."

These "minstrels" were paid mourners.

Jesus was about to stop their wages.

No paid mourners would be necessary.

They laughed; but Jesus had the last laugh.

This dead girl arose.

Jesus is the resurrection and the life. He raises every one of us from the dead and gives us life.

The fame would spread rapidly.

Who was this, that He could raise the dead?

Notice Jesus put the doubters out before He raised her.

Matthew Chapter 9 Questions

1. What did Jesus say to the man sick of the palsy?
2. What did the scribes say within themselves about Jesus?
3. What did Jesus say of the scribes?
4. What was Jesus showing them that He had power on earth to do?
5. What instruction did Jesus give the sick of the palsy?
6. What did the multitude do, when they saw this miracle?
7. What did Matthew have before Jesus called him?
8. Who ate with Matthew and Jesus?
9. Who did Jesus say needed a physician?
10. What did Jesus say He would have in place of sacrifice?
11. Who has Jesus called to repentance?
12. Why did the disciples of Jesus not fast?
13. Tell your opinion of what putting new wine in old bottles mean?
14. Tell your opinion of what putting a piece of new cloth in an old garment means?
15. Why did the ruler come to Jesus and worship him?
16. How long had the woman had the issue of blood?
17. What had the woman said within herself.
18. What did Jesus tell the woman had made her whole?
19. What were minstrels doing in the ruler's home?
20. What did Jesus tell them to do? Why?

21. What happened to the girl?

22. What were the results?