

Matthew 9:1-17

Section 1: 9:1-8

So he got into a boat, crossed over, and came to his own town. ²Just then some men brought to him a paralytic lying on a stretcher. Seeing their faith, Jesus told the paralytic, “Have courage, son, your sins are forgiven.” ³At this, some of the scribes said to themselves, “He’s blaspheming!” ⁴Perceiving their thoughts, Jesus said, “Why are you thinking evil things in your hearts? ⁵For which is easier: to say, ‘Your sins are forgiven,’ or to say, ‘Get up and walk’? ⁶But so that you may know that the Son of Man has authority on earth to forgive sins”—then he told the paralytic, “Get up, take your stretcher, and go home.” ⁷So he got up and went home. ⁸When the crowds saw this, they were awestruck and gave glory to God, who had given such authority to men.

Jesus arrives back in Capernaum after just having left a region where the people begged Him to leave. Last time we saw Jesus in Capernaum He was at Peter’s mother-in-law’s house healing many and casting out demons. So, it’s no surprise that as soon as Jesus arrives back in town that word spreads quickly.

Soon after Jesus arrives a few men bring their friend, a paralytic, to Jesus. I imagine the friends of the paralytic, bring him to Jesus for physical healing. But something much more miraculous happened. Jesus said to the paralytic, “*your sins are forgiven*.” Again, we see Jesus declaring things without conjuring the spirits or calling upon God. This again speaks to Jesus being “God with us”.

There was also some word play going on here. The Hebrew word “forgive” literally means “to lift up.” Being in Israel and scribes being present it is likely that Jesus was speaking Hebrew. Therefore, Jesus literally said, “son, your sins are lifted up.” Why is this significant? Because Jesus turns to the man later and says, “*lift up your mat*”. The word play was given so that the Pharisees would clearly see His authority to forgive sins. Also, to clearly state that He is God. Through this we learn that the sole purpose of this miracle was to prove that Jesus is the Son of God, the Messiah that has come to “*save His people from their sins*” (Matt. 1:21).

Discussion Questions

- ❖ The men saw a physical need in their friend, the paralytic. How do you respond when you see people in physical need? How should we respond as believers?
- ❖ Why is Jesus forgiving the sins of the paralytic so powerful?
- ❖ Jesus did physically heal the paralytic. What was the purpose in Jesus performing this miracle?
- ❖ Why is it important to remember that Jesus is the Son of God, the Messiah?

Section 2: 9:9-13

⁹As Jesus went on from there, he saw a man named Matthew sitting at the tax office, and he said to him, “Follow me,” and he got up and followed him. ¹⁰While he was reclining at the table in the house, many tax collectors and sinners came to eat with Jesus and his disciples. ¹¹When the Pharisees saw this, they asked his disciples, “Why does your teacher eat with tax collectors and sinners?” ¹²Now when he heard this, he said, “It is not those who are well who need a doctor, but those who are sick. ¹³Go and learn what this means: **I desire mercy and not sacrifice.** For I didn’t come to call the righteous, but sinners.”

Jesus repeatedly went to the people. Jesus didn’t wait for the people to come to Him. Likewise, as believers we need to seek after the lost to share the gospel. The Jews had become so “self-righteous” that they were unwilling to go to the people. We’ve seen that Jesus was willing to go after anyone; from touching the leper, to fellowshiping with the demon possessed man, to healing Peter’s mother-in-law and now He is eating with tax collectors. How did Jesus end up eating with all these tax collectors and sinners? Apparently, Matthew invited people to his house to meet Jesus. Matthew has been a follower for an extremely short period of time and is already introducing people to Jesus. As you may have noticed the story of Matthew becoming a disciple speaks volumes to us as to how a believer should respond to Christ. To recap, Matthew immediately started following Jesus and then quickly began introducing people to Jesus.

We see the Pharisees following Jesus around and condemning Him for eating with such people. Then Jesus responds with a cutting statement, “*For I didn’t come to call the righteous, but sinners*” (9:13)”. Why was this statement so pointed? To understand the gravity of that statement we need to refresh our memories on one of the major differences between the Pharisees and Sadducees. The Sadducees were convinced that only the first five books of the Bible were to be considered the Word of God. The Pharisees, on the other hand, were adamant that the Psalms and the other writings were just as much the Word of God. That brings us back to Jesus’ statement, “*For I didn’t come to call the righteous, but sinners*” (9:13). Let’s read Psalm 14:2-3 and Psalm 53:2-3 to understand the significance of this statement to the Pharisees:

Psalm 14:2-3

²The Lord looks down from heaven on the human race to see if there is one who is wise, one who seeks God. ³All have turned away; all alike have become corrupt. There is no one who does good, not even one.

Psalm 53:2-3

²God looks down from heaven on the human race to see if there is one who is wise, one who seeks God. ³All have turned away; all alike have become corrupt. There is no one who does good, not even one.

God clearing teaches us in the Psalms that all have sinned. And if these verses sound familiar, it is because Paul quotes these Psalms in Romans 3:10. Jesus is telling the Pharisees in front of everyone that they are sinners but are too self-righteous to admit it. There are some people that are just not willing to admit they are sinners. Of course, that is a very difficult admission. But that admission is necessary to experience the gospel. The gospel is a call to repent (*turn from sin, but you can only turn from sins if you admit you’re a sinner*) and believe.

Discussion Questions

- ❖ Jesus was willing to reach out to anyone, what are some examples of how you can reach out to the outcast of our community?
- ❖ How willing are you to share the gospel? What holds you back?
- ❖ How difficult is it for you to admit you’re wrong? Is it harder depending on the person you have to admit it to? Why is this the case?
- ❖ Why is admitting you’re a sinner an important part of accepting the gospel?
- ❖ What roll should repentance play in your day to day life?

Section 3: 9:14-17

¹⁴Then John's disciples came to him, saying, "Why do we and the Pharisees fast often, but your disciples do not fast?"
¹⁵Jesus said to them, "Can the wedding guests be sad while the groom is with them? The time will come when the groom will be taken away from them, and then they will fast. ¹⁶No one patches an old garment with unshrunk cloth, because the patch pulls away from the garment and makes the tear worse. ¹⁷And no one puts new wine into old wineskins. Otherwise, the skins burst, the wine spills out, and the skins are ruined. No, they put new wine into fresh wineskins, and both are preserved."

Jesus uses two different parables to give us two different truths about Himself.

First, let's examine the bridegroom parable. The bridegroom parable gives us the truth that Jesus is God. This parable makes more sense when you read Hosea 2:16-23. This passage of Scripture is God speaking to Israel saying He will be their bridegroom. The Pharisees would have quickly picked up on the reference that Jesus was making. It was clear that Jesus was claiming to be the bridegroom, thus, He was claiming to be God.

Second, let's examine the wineskin parable. The wineskin parable speaks of a new covenant. Simply put, a new way of life has come through Christ. A new way to relate to God, a new way to worship and a new way to treat one another. Jesus uses this parable to explain that the old wineskin speaks of the old covenant and old approach to God. Jesus, as the Messiah, is bringing a new covenant between God and man, a new way to relate to God. The old covenant has passed; therefore, we are no longer living under the law. We are now under grace. This is a massive shift. No more dietary laws, no more sacrifice, no more worshipping at the temple...we are to leave the old behind and embrace the new. Jesus has brought us grace and that grace is made available in a new covenant.

Discussion Questions

- ❖ Jesus is our bridegroom...if we, as the church, are to be married (joined) to Christ how should that impact our lives? Think about how an engaged couple should value one another.
- ❖ We have been given a new covenant in Christ, why do we continually run back to our "old ways" (our actions and attitudes before we became Christians)?
- ❖ Jesus was clear about who He was and His message...how clear are you about being a Christian to those around you?