

# Matthew 9 Commentary

PREVIOUS

NEXT

**CLICK VERSE**  
**To go directly to that verse**

[Matthew 9:1](#)

[Matthew 9:2](#)

[Matthew 9:3](#)

[Matthew 9:4](#)

[Matthew 9:5](#)

[Matthew 9:6](#)

[Matthew 9:7](#)

[Matthew 9:8](#)

[Matthew 9:9](#)

[Matthew 9:10](#)

[Matthew 9:11](#)

[Matthew 9:12](#)

[Matthew 9:13](#)

[Matthew 9:14](#)

[Matthew 9:15](#)

[Matthew 9:16](#)

[Matthew 9:17](#)

[Matthew 9:18](#)

[Matthew 9:19](#)

[Matthew 9:20](#)

[Matthew 9:21](#)

[Matthew 9:22](#)

[Matthew 9:23](#)

[Matthew 9:24](#)

[Matthew 9:25](#)

[Matthew 9:26](#)

[Matthew 9:27](#)

[Matthew 9:28](#)

[Matthew 9:29](#)

[Matthew 9:30](#)

[Matthew 9:31](#)

[Matthew 9:32](#)

[Matthew 9:33](#)

[Matthew 9:34](#)

[Matthew 9:35](#)

[Matthew 9:36](#)

[Matthew 9:37](#)

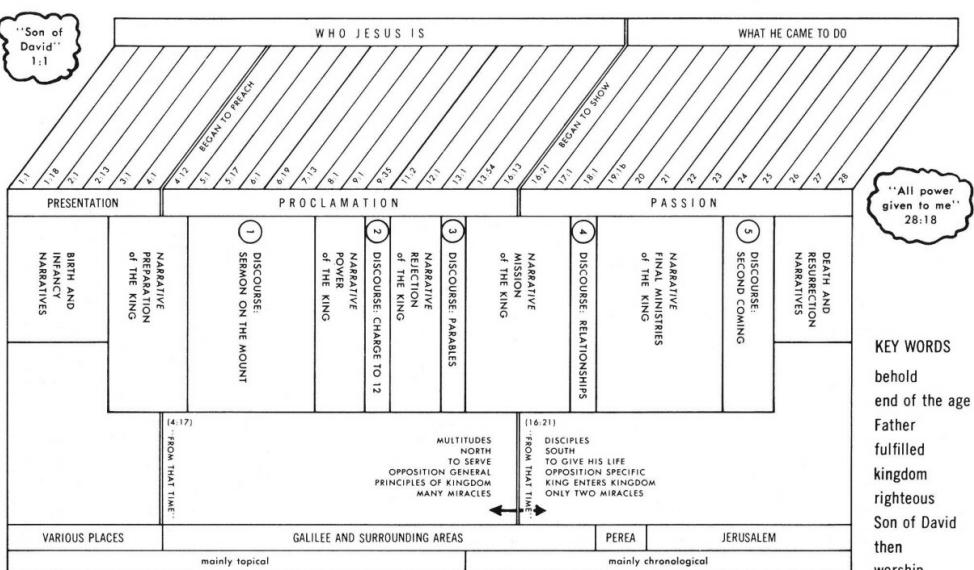
[Matthew 9:38](#)

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MATTHEW CONT.  
15 PARABLES  
20 MIRACLES

ES: 1:1 "The book of the generation of Jesus Christ, the son of David, the son of Abraham."

2:2 "Where is he that is born King of the Jews? for we have seen his star in the east, and are come to worship him."



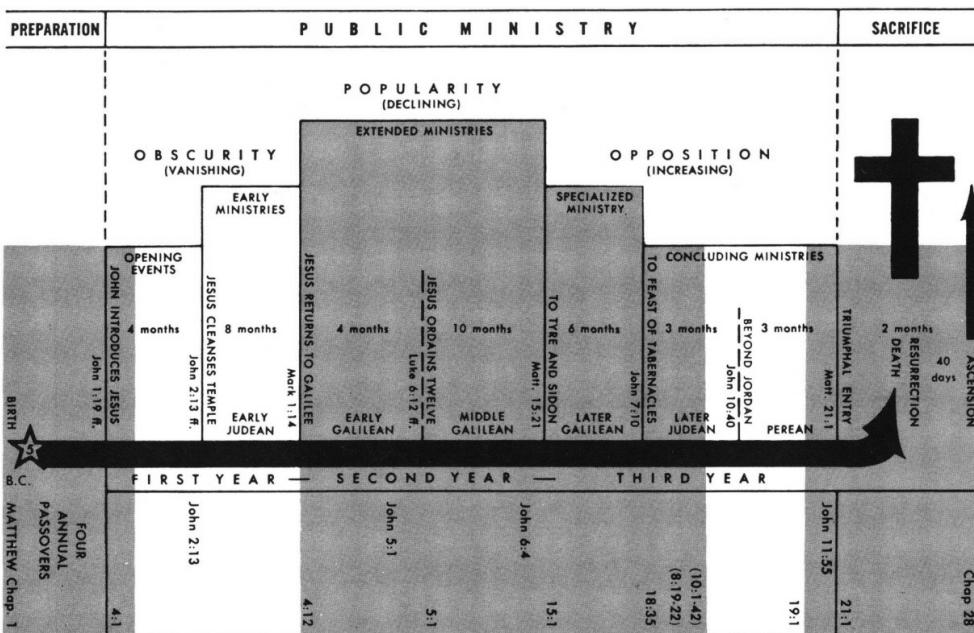
Click chart to enlarge

Charts from Jensen's Survey of the NT - used by permission

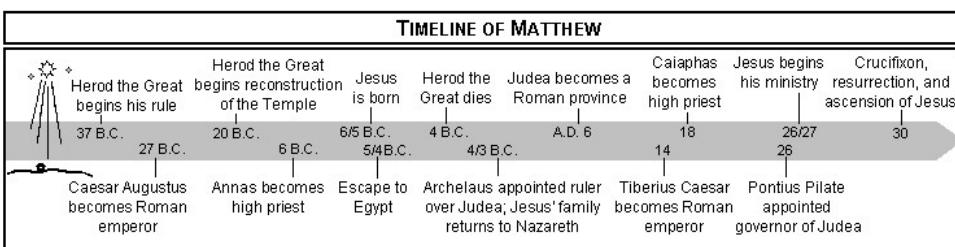
## Another Chart from Swindoll

## THE LIFE OF JESUS AS COVERED

BY MATTHEW (shaded area)



[Click chart to enlarge](#)



Source: Byrie Study Bible

**Matthew 9:1** Getting into a boat, Jesus crossed over the sea and came to His own city.

**My Amplified Paraphrase:** And getting into a boat, Jesus deliberately left the region where He had been ministering; He crossed over the lake again, returning across the Sea of Galilee, and came into His own city—the town that served as His ministry headquarters (Capernaum), the place where He taught, healed, and manifested His authority.

- **Getting into a boat, Jesus crossed over** - Mt 7:6 Mk 8:18,23 Mk 5:21 Lu 8:37 Rev 22:11
- **came to His own city** - Mt 4:13

#### Related Passages:

Mark 5:21+ When Jesus had **crossed over again in the boat to the other side**, a large crowd gathered around Him; and so He stayed by the seashore.

Luke 8:37+ And all the people of the country of the Gerasenes and the surrounding district asked Him to leave them, for they were gripped with great fear; and **He got into a boat and returned**.

## BACK TO HOME BASE

**Evans** - Matthew has rearranged the narrative sequence. Because the episode that immediately precedes the healing of the瘫痪 (paralytic) is the healing of the Gadarene (or Gerasene) demoniac(s), it is necessary to mention Jesus' crossing of the Sea Galilee before the new story can begin. (BKBC)

**Getting** (embaino) **into a boat** ([ploion](#)) This recalls a familiar pattern in the Gospels that Jesus often moves by boat to escape crowds, to transition to new ministry zones (as in this passage), to seek rest or solitude, or to intentionally position Himself for the next divine appointment. Matthew emphasizes that Jesus is always purposeful, never random, a great pattern for all of us to imitate as His disciples so that we most effectively redeem the short time we have on earth to carry out the Father's purposes.

**Jesus** (not in Greek but added) **crossed over the sea** - Jesus had just left the region of the Gadarenes/Gerasenes (Matt 8:28–34), where He delivered two demon-possessed men, the demons entered pigs but the townspeople begged Him to leave. The net effect was they rejected Him. Now He crosses back to an area where the people will (mostly) receive Him. This transition highlights 3 significant contrasts - (1) Rejection versus Acceptance. (2) Hostility versus Hospitality. (3) Spiritual darkness versus spiritual Light. This transition sets the stage for one of the greatest revelations in the Gospels, the truth that Jesus has the authority to forgive sins (Matt 9:6).

The **Sea** of Galilee. Matthew does not say Capernaum (as in Mark 2:1), but there is little doubt that Matthew's **His own city** is the equivalent of Mark's at home. He was going to Capernaum on the northern coast of the sea. Why did Jesus get into a boat? Is this just a random event? Context is always "king" in interpretation ([Keep Context King](#)) and so we read in Mt 8:34+ "And **behold**, the whole city came out to meet Jesus; and when they saw Him, they implored Him to leave their region." Woe! They want the Lord of the universe GONE! G-O-N-E! His casting out of the demons into the swine had destroyed their unlawful swine business.

**THOUGHT**- Beloved, if you do not want God around, He will leave (of course He is omnipresent, but this refers to personal interaction or communion). But make no mistake about it, His leaving will be judgment, because to not have the presence of God is a great curse on society (cf "away from the presence of the Lord and from the glory of His power" - 2 Th 1:8-9). Does this truth not make you tremble as a believer in America? Our godless society is doing everything it can to chase all remnants of God's influence out of America (it began in the 1962 [taking prayer out of schools](#), etc, as an aside [Steven Engel](#) is now facing the real "Supreme Court Judge!"). And do we not see the consequences of "telling God to leave America?" That's a rhetorical question! Moses so valued the presence of God that he did not want to travel without God's presence, declaring "If Your presence does not go with us, do not lead us up from here." (Exodus 33:15). O God raise up a generation of men and women like Moses who will seek Thy face and pray for revival while we still have time. In Jesus' Name. Amen.

**And came to His own city - His own city** is a designation for Capernaum which was Jesus' "base of operations" (fulfilling prophecy in Isa 9:1-3, Mt 4:13-16) in the Galilean campaign that began in Mt 4:12+. Lk 4:30-31+ records Jesus leaving His home town of Nazareth "But passing through their midst, He went His way. And He came down to Capernaum, a city of Galilee, and He was teaching them on the Sabbath."

**His own city = Capernaum** - **Capernaum** (Kfar = village + Nahum = "Nahum's Village) was a **city of Galilee** (Lk 4:31±), in the tetrarchy of Herod Antipas on the border of his brother Philip's domain. ([map of Jesus' Ministry in Galilee](#)) and was 680 feet below sea level (cf Nazareth at 1200 ft above sea level so Nazareth to Capernaum is "straight downhill" so to speak), located on the northwest shore of the Sea of Galilee and began Jesus' "headquarters" during His Galilean ministry. Mt 4:13+ tells us after "leaving Nazareth (BECAUSE OF THEIR UNBELIEF - READ ABOUT HIS RECEPTION AND REJECTION IN Lk 4:24-27, 28, 29+), He came and settled in **Capernaum**, which is by the sea, in the region of [Zebulun and Naphtali](#)." **Capernaum** was the largest city on the lake because it was a crossroads of a major trade routes. It had a customs tax office and a Roman garrison because it was a potential area of crime because there was so much action, so much trade, so much travel traffic. One modern source refers to **Capernaum** as "a ruined town in northern Israel, on the northwestern shore of the Sea of Galilee." If you click the aerial view of Capernaum above, you will see all that is left of this city once the headquarters of the Light of the world. Why is this once prosperous city now in ruins? In Lk 10:15± Jesus warned the city that because it had rejected the Light (Jesus actually lived there), "you, **Capernaum**, will not be exalted to heaven, will you? You will be brought down to Hades!" In a parallel statement by Jesus in Matthew He warned "**And you, Capernaum, will not be exalted to heaven, will you? You will descend to Hades; for if the miracles had occurred in Sodom which occurred in you, it would have remained to this day. Nevertheless I say to you that it will be more tolerable for the land of Sodom in the day of judgment, than for you.**" (Mt 11:23-24, cf Jn 1:11±, Mk 6:11)

Jesus the **Light of the World** (Jn 1:4-9+, Jn 8:12, Jn 9:5) had resided in **Capernaum** and shed much spiritual light in the city, speaking the word with authority (Mk 1:22+), healing illness and casting out demons (Mk 1:34+, cf Mk 2:1-12+) and yet for the most part there is only an occasional mention of belief (see Mk 2:5-12+). John spoke about the danger of rejecting the spiritual light of Jesus

So Jesus said to them, "For a little while longer the **Light** is among you. Walk while you have the **Light**, so that darkness will not overtake you; he who walks in the darkness does not know where he goes. 36 "While you have the **Light**, believe in the **Light**, so that you may become **sons of Light**." These things Jesus spoke (IN JERUSALEM), and He went away and hid Himself from them. 37 But though He had performed so many signs before them, **yet they were not believing in Him.** (Jn 12:35-37)

**THOUGHT** - The present ruins of the physical city of Capernaum are but a dim metaphorical picture of the spiritual doom that ultimately befell the souls of those who lived there and are now "[ruined](#)" forever in Hades and who have a future appointment to experience the [Second Death](#) when they are thrown into the [Lake of fire](#), the place of eternal punishment in [Gehenna](#) (Rev 20:15±), "into the outer darkness; in that place there shall be weeping and gnashing of teeth" (Mt 8:12), "where their worm does not die, and the fire is not quenched." (Mk 9:48). Dear reader, may God grant you the fear of the Lord and a proper fear of His righteous wrath and if you have not yet done so, that you by grace through faith (Eph 2:8-9±) receive Jesus as YOUR Savior, Redeemer and Lord. If you steadfastly refuse His offer of grace, one day that day of grace and the door of grace will be closed and you too will be suffer the fate of Capernaum, for you too are consciously choosing ([volitionally](#)) to continually reject the Light, even as that ancient city did! (read 2 Cor 6:2, Acts 16:31±, Ro 10:9-10±)

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### Marveling Multitudes Matthew 9:1-8

1. The Arrival of the Men (Matthew 9:1)
2. The Ailment of the Man (Matthew 9:2a)
3. The Ability of the Master (Matthew 9:2b)
4. The Anger of the Mumblers (Matthew 9:4)
5. The Ascertainment of Their Mindset (Matthew 9:4-6)
6. The Arising of a Miracle (Matthew 9:7)
7. The Applause of the Multitude (Matthew 9:8)

**Getting** (1684) **embaino** from **en** = in + **baino** = to step) means to step into, to embark. In certain contexts **embaino** occurs without a specific indication of a ship or boat in the immediate context, for example, "again embarking, he left for the other side" Mk 8:13. In a number of languages it is necessary to introduce into the context some specific reference to a boat or ship. This verb is found 18 times in the New Testament, almost exclusively in passages speaking of the act of stepping into a boat (cf. Matthew 8:23; 9:1; Mark 4:1; 5:18; Luke 5:3; 8:22; John 6:17,24; Acts 21:6). The word is also found in John 5:4 about the healing of a sick man at the pool of Bethesda.

**EMBAINO - 18V - embarked(1), entered(1), get(2), getting(3), got(9), stepped(1), went on board(1).** Matt. 8:23; Matt. 9:1; Matt. 13:2; Matt. 14:22; Matt. 15:39; Mk. 4:1; Mk. 5:18; Mk. 6:45; Mk. 8:10; Mk. 8:13; Lk. 5:3; Lk. 8:22; Lk. 8:37; Jn. 5:4; Jn. 6:17; Jn. 6:24; Jn. 21:3; Acts 21:6

**EMBAINO IN THE SEPTUAGINT** - Jonah 1:3, Nahum 3:14

**Boat** (4143) **ploion** from **pleo** = to sail) can refer to a rather large seagoing craft (Acts 20:13, 38; Acts 21:2f, 6; 27 Jas 3:4; Rev 8:9; Rev 18:19) or a small fishing craft boat as used on the Sea of Galilee (Mt 4:21f; Mt 9:1; Mk 1:19f; Mk 6:51, 54; Jn 6:19, 21f; Jn 21:3). See [Wikipedia description of the "Jesus Boat"](#) discovered in 1986.

**PLOION IN MATTHEW** - Matt. 4:21; Matt. 4:22; Matt. 8:23; Matt. 8:24; Matt. 9:1; Matt. 13:2; Matt. 14:13; Matt. 14:22; Matt. 14:24; Matt. 14:29; Matt. 14:32; Matt. 14:33; Matt. 15:39;

**Matthew 9:2 And they brought to Him a paralytic lying on a bed. Seeing their faith, Jesus said to the paralytic, "Take courage, son; your sins are forgiven."**

**My Amplified Paraphrase:** And behold, unexpectedly and dramatically, some people brought to Him a paralytic—a man completely helpless, unable to move on his own—lying on a bed; and Jesus, seeing their faith—faith visibly expressed in determined action and persistent effort—said to the paralytic, “Take courage, My son; your sins are forgiven.” He first addressed the deepest need of the heart (sin) before the outward need of the body (paralysis).

**NET** Just then some people brought to him a paralytic lying on a stretcher. When Jesus saw their faith, he said to the paralytic, "Have courage, son! Your sins are forgiven."

**GNT** καὶ ὄδοι προσφερον αὐτῷ παραλυτικόν πάντας νησίς βεβλημένον. καὶ δέ τοι ησούς τὸν πατέρα στον παραλυτικόν, Θεού τοῦ, φενταράσσον αὐτῷ μαρτυρῶ.

**NLT** Some people brought to him a paralyzed man on a mat. Seeing their faith, Jesus said to the paralyzed man, "Be encouraged, my child! Your sins are forgiven."

**KJV** 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.

**ESV** And **behold**, some people brought to him a paralytic, lying on a bed. And when Jesus saw their faith, he said to the paralytic, "Take heart, my son; your sins are forgiven."

**NIV** Some men brought to him a paralytic, lying on a mat. When Jesus saw their faith, he said to the paralytic, "Take heart, son; your sins are forgiven."

- **they brought** - Mt 4:24 Mt 8:16 Mk 1:32 Mk 2:1-3 Lu 5:18-19 Ac 5:15,16 19:12
- **seeing** - Mt 8:10 Mk 2:4,5 Lu 5:19,20 Joh 2:25 Ac 14:9 Jas 2:18
- **Son** - Mt 9:22 Mk 5:34 Joh 21:5
- **Take courage** - Ps 32:1,2 Ec 9:7 Isa 40:1,2 44:22 Jer 31:33,34 Lu 5:20 7:47-50 Ac 13:38,39 Ro 4:6-8 5:11 Col 1:12-14

#### Related Passages:

Mark 2:1-3+ When He had come back to Capernaum several days afterward, it was heard that He was at home. 2 And many were gathered together, so that there was no longer room, not even near the door; and He was speaking the word to them. 3 And they \*came, bringing to Him a paralytic, carried by four men.

Luke 5:18-19+ And some men were carrying on a bed a man who was paralyzed; and they were trying to bring him in and to set him down in front of Him. 19 But not finding any way to bring him in because of the crowd, they went up on the roof and let him down through the tiles with his stretcher, into the middle of the

crowd, in front of Jesus.

## SEEING THEIR VICARIOUS FAITH

Jesus saw their **invisible faith** through their **visible works** (What works? Mk 2:4+ says "they removed the roof above Him and when they had dug an opening, they let down the pallet.") And as John 2:23-25+ indicates He could see discern invisible faith (whether present or not) even without their works.

**And they brought** ([prosphero](#)) **to Him a paralytic** ([paralutikos](#)) **lying** ([ballo](#)) **on a bed** ([kline](#)) - The NAS, NIV and NET unfortunately do not translate the Greek word "**behold**" (see [idou](#)) which is surprising for it is an important interjection used to call one's attention to what follows. It points to a new, remarkable event in which Jesus announces a paralytic's sins are forgiven. **behold**" (see [idou](#)) signals a dramatic moment, a "look at this!" event. Matthew uses idou to draw attention to something surprising, significant, or spiritually weighty. This is indeed noteworthy! These were faithful, "faith-full" friends indeed. Note their compassion. Mark and Luke describe the scene with more detail (roof removal, lowering; see [below](#)).

**Brought** ([prosphero](#)) is interesting as it is used elsewhere of bringing offerings to God! is in the graphic [imperfect tense](#) so they more literally "were bringing" depicting it as ongoing. One writer adds that "Matthew vividly captures the manner of the coming *as a kind of sacrificial gift which these men lay before the feet of Jesus* (cf. same verb of magi in Mt 2:11+; Mt 5:23; 8:4; 9:32; 12:22; 14:35; 19:13)." **Lying** is [ballo](#) in the [perfect tense](#) tense indicating that he had been placed there and was fixed there so to speak. **Louw-Nida** says [ballo](#) and [kline](#) is an idiom, literally 'to throw on a bed' which means to make sick in Rev 2:22<sup>±</sup>. **NET** adds **on a bed** "Traditionally, could be confusing to the modern reader who might envision a large piece of furniture. In various contexts, [kline](#) may be translated "bed, couch, cot, stretcher, or bier" (in the case of a corpse)." It is worth noting that three times in Matthew 9 (Mt 9:1-8, Mt 9:18-19,23-25, Mt 9:32) healings come about because of the concern of others for the afflicted who either pleaded with Christ for the miracle or brought the afflicted to Christ for the miracle. This is wisdom -- bringing men to Christ for their needs, the greatest being their spiritual paralysis!

Note that Jesus had earlier healed the paralytic servant of the centurion in (Mt. 8:5-13) but that one was presumably a Gentile like his master and he was healed at a distance, whereas now a Jewish paralytic is brought into Jesus' presence. Notice that the pattern of "**vicarious faith**" was similar in the healing of the Centurion's slave, Jesus commenting on the "great faith" (Mt 8:10) of the Centurion. Matthew then records that "Jesus said to the centurion, "Go; it shall be done for you **as you have believed.**" And the servant was healed that very moment." (Mt 8:13) In that example of healing the paralyzed servant there is no mention of the servant's faith. And while there is no specific mention of the paralyzed man's faith in the account in Mt 9:1-8, the fact that his sins were forgiven would indicate that he had faith in addition to the faith of his four friends.

**MacArthur** notes that "Cripples have always suffered social stigma and neglect, but in the Jewish culture of Jesus' day the stigma was made immeasurably worse by the belief of most Jews that all disease and affliction was the direct result of someone's sin....Though it is true that affliction, pain, and hardship of every sort are the result of the presence of sin in the world, they are not necessarily brought on by some specific sin of the person who is suffering. Not all sickness is chastening, but all sickness is a graphic demonstration of the destructive power at work in the world because of sin. Like his fellow Jews, the paralytic no doubt believed his paralysis was direct punishment for his own sin or that of his parents or grandparents, and that thought must have added immensely to his suffering. In his own mind and in the minds of most of the people who saw him his paralysis was a vivid representation of his own sinfulness and of God's judgment. That belief gave crippled and diseased people even more reason to shun crowds." (See [Matthew Commentary - Page 50](#))

**Matthew** leaves out several details found in the accounts of the other two evangelists -

- (1) paralytic was **carried by four men** (Mk 2:3+),
- (2) Mark 2:1+ says they were unable to get him in the house (Mk 2:1 "at home") **unable to get to Him because of the crowd** (cf Lk 5:19).
- (3) Mark 2:4+ says **they removed the roof above Him; and when they had dug an opening, they let down the pallet on which the paralytic was lying.** Lk 5:19 is similar - **they went up on the roof and let him down through the tiles with his stretcher, into the middle of the crowd, in front of Jesus.**
- (4) Lk 5:17+ One day He was teaching; and **there were some Pharisees and teachers of the law sitting there, who had come from every village of Galilee and Judea and from Jerusalem;** and the power of the **Lord was present for Him to perform healing**

**Evans on seeing their faith** - Matthew once again condenses Mark's version of the story. However, in omitting mention of the digging through the roof and the lowering of the paralyzed man on a pallet (along with the omission of other details, such as how crowded room the room was; Mark 2:1-4), the Matthean evangelist has left his readers wondering what Jesus saw when he is said to be seeing their faith. Because we have Mark's fuller version, we know. (Ibid)

**Seeing their faith (pistis)** (Mk 2:5+, Lk 5:20+) - This phrase is surely important as it is found in all three synoptic accounts. **NET** says "The plural pronoun their makes it clear that Jesus was responding to the faith of the entire group, not just the paralyzed man." As an aside you do not bring people to Christ, if you do not have faith in Christ. How tragic that so many who have faith in Christ fail to bring their "spiritually paralyzed" friends to Him! (cf 2 Cor 6:2b)

What Jesus saw was their effort, their determination, the inconvenience, their sacrifice, their refusal to be deterred, the love of friends and the trust that Jesus alone could help. In short, Jesus saw their faith in their actions (James 2:18+).

**THOUGHT - THESE 4 HAD VICARIOUS FAITH (SEE ADDITIONAL NOTE) -- BUT WHAT IS VICARIOUS FAITH?** Obviously we as believers cannot take others to Heaven with us based solely on our faith. Each soul must express his or her own personal faith in Jesus? So what is vicarious faith as seen in these 4 men whose faith resulted in another man being brought to Jesus? Simply this -- they believed Jesus could heal their paralyzed friend if they could get him to Jesus. How is this vicarious faith manifested today? When we pray for others to believe in Jesus is that not vicarious faith. I prayed for my 2 youngest children for 20 years before they surrendered to Jesus! My father prayed for me for 20 years before I believed!

**A B Bruce** ([source](#)) writing on the **VICARIOUS FAITH** portrayed in this story recorded in all three synoptic Gospels (Mt 9:1-8, Mark 2:1-12+, Lk 5:17-26+) says "We have here a distinct recognition of the value of intercessory prayer, or, if I may so express myself, of **VICARIOUS FAITH**. God, we learn therefore, hears prayers of believing men offered up not for themselves but for others. (1) This doctrine is Scriptural. Abraham, Moses, &c. (2). This doctrine is reasonable. It can give a good account of itself before the bar of philosophy. It is a wise, God-worthy policy to encourage men to pray, live, and even die for one another, in the assurance that they pray not, live not, die not in vain. (3). The duty arising out of the foregoing doctrine is plain. It is without ceasing to desire and to pray for the well-being, spiritual and temporal, of all men, specially of those whose case Providence brings closest home to us. (Read the following passages and see if you can discern the principle of "vicarious faith." - Mk 5:25-34; Mk 7:24-30; Mt 10:46-52; Mt 8:5-13. And then practice "**VICARIOUS FAITH**."

**G Campbell Morgan** on "**Jesus seeing their faith.**" That is the statement which first arrests attention on reading the story. Details are not given here, beyond that of the faith with which these men came. (Mark) tells us that they broke up the roof, and let the sick man down into the midst. The fact here standing out is, that "He saw their faith." There has been a good deal of speculation as to whose faith is referred to, but of one thing we may be perfectly sure, it was not only the faith of the men who brought him. "**Their faith**" demands some other interpretation; it demands the faith of the man, as well as the faith of the men who brought him, because Christ said to him, "Thy sins be forgiven thee." It would appear that our Lord saw that in his heart there was a desire for something deeper than physical healing; and that he was conscious that physical disability was the result of his own sin; and therefore with a great tenderness, in words thrilling with the music of the evangel He had come to create, He said to him, in effect: "Be of good cheer I am able to deal with the deepest matter; thy sins are forgiven." That word was a response to faith. And yet, while we believe there was faith in the heart of the man himself, **we must not miss the important fact here that there is such a thing as VICARIOUS FAITH. It is possible to help a man's faith. "Jesus seeing their faith."**

*Jesus goes straight to the real paralysis — sin.*

**Jesus said to the paralytic (paralutikos) Take courage (tharseo), son (teknon); your sins (hamartia) are forgiven (aphiemi)** - The **NAS** says **Take courage** but I like the **KJV** "be of good cheer" because nothing brings so much "good cheer" as knowing one's sins are forgiven (cf David's "good cheer" in Ps 32:1-5). Notice Jesus calls him "**Son**" which is the Greek [teknon](#), a word which speaks not only of Jesus authority (it was often used of a parent and child) but especially of his tenderness towards the paralyzed man. Healing of the soul precedes healing of the body! The former is eternal, the latter only temporal (although when we are glorified our new body will be eternal!) As an aside have you noticed how quick people are to request prayers for physical healing (and there is nothing wrong with that) but seldom request prayer for spiritual healing! Survey Paul's prayers for the churches and you will see they almost always deal with the spiritual rather than the physical (cf Col 1:9-12<sup>+</sup>, Eph 1:16-19<sup>+</sup>). What would happen in our churches if we prayed more like Paul? Just wondering! Here Jesus calls him **son** as in Mark 2:5+. Luke 5:20+ says **Friend** (NAS, NET, NIV) but it is literally "man" (anthropos). It is also notable that this is also the first time **sins (hamartia)** is uttered by Jesus and He says **sins** in the plural which is the essence of His Name. Matthew 1:21 records the angel's words to Joseph that Mary "will bear a Son; and you shall call His **Name Jesus**, for He will save His people from their sins." **Jesus**, for He will save His people from their **sins (PLURAL)**."

Note Jesus is not saying "God has forgiven" but Jesus presents Himself at that very moment as the One Who is carrying out the

forgiveness of the paralytic's sins, in effect sending them away, just as foreshadowed in the scapegoat being sent into the wilderness on the [Day of Atonement](#) in Lev 16:10+ (where "send" in Septuagint = [aphiemi!](#)). Jesus' words **are forgiven** is in the [present tense](#), which **A T Robertson** says refers is the [aoristic present](#) which is used of an action or event coincident in time with the act of speaking, and conceived of as a simple event. Most frequently the action denoted by the verb is identical with the act of speaking itself, or takes place in that act. **Chamblin** adds that **are forgiven** is in the "[present](#) indicative in the [passive voice](#)", signaling that the sins are forgiven as the words are uttered (an '**instantaneous present**'), and that God is the one who forgives (a 'divine passive')." (Mentor Commentary-Matthew) Stated another way the present tense here indicates that his sins were forgiven then and there, at that very moment! The [passive voice](#) (of [aphiemi](#) in all three synoptic accounts) indicates the power to forgive the sins of the paralytic came from without, ultimately from God (the so-called "[divine passive](#)"). The very One pronouncing this forgiveness, would a few years later become the very One who would assure continual/forever forgiveness by becoming the Lamb of God Who **takes away** ([present tense](#)) the sin of the world (Jn 1:29+).

**COMMENT** - When you compare Lk 5:20+ where Jesus declared "**Friend, your sins are forgiven you,**" the same verb [aphiemi](#) is used as in Mark 2:5+ and Matthew 9:2, but there is a difference in tense which is worth noting. In Luke 5:20+ **forgiven** ([aphiemi](#)) is in the [perfect tense](#) which indicates the abiding state of the forgiveness, in essence the permanence of divine forgiveness! Once Jesus forgives a person of their sins, He does not take that declaration back and "un-forgive" a forgiven person. Once forgiven by Jesus, forever forgiven! As an aside **forgiven** in the [perfect tense](#) supports the truth of [Eternal security](#) of our salvation. Once you are **truly** saved, you cannot lose salvation (a truth seen even with the verb tense in Lk 5:20!) The [present tense](#) in Mark 2:5 and Matthew 9:2 is good, but the [perfect tense](#) in Lk 5:20+ gives an added degree of certainty to the popular phrase "**Once Saved, Always Saved.**" (which of course assumes that the person making this declaration is genuinely saved and not simply relying on a verbal **profession** they made many years earlier but instead have experienced a true **possession** of Christ (Col 1:27b+) and His Spirit (Ro 8:9+))!

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**Paralytic** ([3885](#)) (**paralutikos** from [paraluo](#) = to paralyze = verb in Lk 5:17-26 - **pará** = from + **lúō** = to loose) is one who is lame, crippled or paralyzed, disabled or weak of limb, usually in the feet or legs and unable to walk. KJV has "sick of the [palsy](#)."

**PARALUTIKOS** - 10x in 9v - Matt. 4:24; Matt. 8:6; Matt. 9:2; Matt. 9:6; Mk. 2:3; Mk. 2:4; Mk. 2:5; Mk. 2:9; Mk. 2:10. Not found in Septuagint.

**Bed** ([2825](#)) (**kline**) English - clinic) is any piece of furniture employed for reclining or lying on and so means a couch or divan for dining or a bed for resting (Mk 4:21, Mk 7:30 Lk 8:16 Lk 17:34) or a pallet or stretcher for carrying a sick person (Lk 5:17, 24, Mt 9:2, 6). **Gilbrant** adds "In classical Greek **klinē** is anything on which one would lie or recline. It also can refer to a bier; i.e., the supporting framework for a coffin. The Septuagint translates **mittāh** by **klinē**, referring to a place for reclining or stretching out. It comes from a root word meaning "to extend." **Zodhiates** says "The diminutive is **klinídion** [2826](#), a little couch or bed. In the NT, **klinē** is generally used only when referring to the sick (Mark 7:30; Rev. 2:22; Sept.: Gen. 48:2; 49:33; 2 Sam. 4:7; 1 Ki 17:19); also of a bed on which the sick are borne (Matt. 9:2, 6; Luke 5:18; Acts 5:15). (Complete Word Study Dictionary)

**KLINE** - 8x in NT - Matt. 9:2; Matt. 9:6; Mk. 4:21; Mk. 7:4; Mk. 7:30; Lk. 5:18; Lk. 8:16; Lk. 17:34; Acts 5:15; Rev. 2:22.

**KLINE** - **Septuagint** = Gen. 48:2; Gen. 49:33; Exod. 8:3; Deut. 3:11; 1 Sam. 19:13; 1 Sam. 19:15; 1 Sam. 19:16; 2 Sam. 3:31; 2 Sam. 4:7; 1 Ki. 17:19; 1 Ki. 21:4; 2 Ki. 1:4; 2 Ki. 1:6; 2 Ki. 1:16; 2 Ki. 4:10; 2 Ki. 4:21; 2 Ki. 4:32; 2 Ki. 11:2; 2 Chr. 16:14; 2 Chr. 22:11; 2 Chr. 24:25; Est. 1:6; Est. 7:8; Job 7:13; Ps. 6:6; Ps. 41:3; Ps. 132:3; Prov. 7:16; Prov. 26:14; Song 1:16; Song 3:7; Ezek. 23:41; Amos 6:4;

**Take courage** (be encouraged, take heart, be of good cheer) ([present imperative](#)) ([2293](#)) (**tharseo** from **tharsos** = boldness, courage) means to have courage. It refers to subjective courage, that which is deep and genuine—in contrast to [tolmaō](#), which refers to outward boldness. **Tolmaō** would be characterized by gritting the teeth to help endure pain or whistling in the dark to stave off fear. It is the kind of courage that tries to master fear by sheer willpower and determination. But **tharseo** represents the courage that eliminates fear. Be of good courage, be of good cheer or be unafeard. The idea is that the recipient of this command is to have confidence and firmness of purpose in the face of danger or testing.

**BDAG** = "to be firm or resolute in the face of danger or adverse circumstances, be enheartened." 6/7 NT uses are in the [imperative mood](#) as a command for the distressed to be encouraged. Jesus is the only One who gives this command doing so 7 times (Mt 9:2 = "**Take courage**, son; your sins are forgiven"; Mt 9:22 = "Daughter, **take courage**; your faith has made you well.); Mt 14:27 = "**Take courage**, it is I; do not be afraid." ; Mk 6:50 = "Take courage; it is I, do not be afraid."; Mk. 10:49 = "**Take courage**, stand up! He is calling for you.); Jn. 16:33 = "**Take courage**; I have overcome the world."); Acts 23:11 = "**Take courage**; for as you have solemnly witnessed to My cause at Jerusalem, so you must witness at Rome also.")

**THARSEO** - 7V - ALL TRANSLATED "**TAKE COURAGE**" (COMMANDS) - Matt. 9:2; Matt. 9:22; Matt. 14:27;

**Sins** (266) (**hamartia**) literally conveys the idea of missing the mark as when hunting with a bow and arrow (in Homer some hundred times of a warrior hurling his spear but missing his foe). Later **hamartia** came to mean missing or falling short of any goal, standard, or purpose. **Hamartia** in the Bible signifies a departure from God's holy, perfect standard of what is right in word or deed (righteous). It pictures the idea of missing His appointed goal (His will) which results in a deviation from what is pleasing to Him. In short, sin is conceived as a missing the true end and scope of our lives, which is the Triune God Himself. As **Martin Luther** put it "Sin is essentially a departure from God."

**HAMARTIA IN MATTHEW** - Matt. 1:21; Matt. 3:6; Matt. 9:2; Matt. 9:5; Matt. 9:6; Matt. 12:31; Matt. 26:28;

**Are forgiven** (863) (**aphiemi**) from **apo** = prefix implies separation + **hiemi** = send; cf **aphesis**) conveys the basic idea of an action which causes separation and means to send from one's self, to hurl away, to put away. **Aphiemi** conveys the basic idea of bringing about total detachment from a previous condition, a wonderful picture when we think of God forgiving our sins! In one secular writing we read "let the pot drop" (aphiemi) which gives us a vivid picture of what we are to do when we forgive others! Don't bury the pot with the handle showing! The Gospel of Matthew frequently uses **aphiemi**

**APHIEMI IN MATTHEW** - Matt. 3:15; Matt. 4:11; Matt. 4:20; Matt. 4:22; Matt. 5:24; Matt. 5:40; Matt. 6:12; Matt. 6:14; Matt. 6:15; Matt. 7:4; Matt. 8:15; Matt. 8:22; Matt. 9:2; Matt. 9:5; Matt. 9:6; Matt. 12:31; Matt. 12:32; Matt. 13:30; Matt. 13:36; Matt. 15:14; Matt. 18:12; Matt. 18:21; Matt. 18:27; Matt. 18:32; Matt. 18:35; Matt. 19:14; Matt. 19:27; Matt. 19:29; Matt. 22:22; Matt. 22:25; Matt. 23:13; Matt. 23:23; Matt. 23:38; Matt. 24:2; Matt. 24:40; Matt. 24:41; Matt. 26:44; Matt. 26:56; Matt. 27:49; Matt. 27:50

The basic idea of sending or driving away the sins is picked up in these OT passages...

Psalms 103:12 As far as the east is from the west, So far has He removed our transgressions from us.

Micah 7:19 He will again have compassion on us; He will tread our iniquities under foot. Yes, You will cast all their sins Into the depths of the sea.

**ILLUSTRATION** - When missionaries in northern Alaska were translating the Bible into the language of the Eskimos, they discovered there was no word in that language for forgiveness. After much patient listening, however, they discovered a word that means, "not being able to think about it anymore." That word was used throughout the translation to represent forgiveness, because God's promise to repentant sinners is, "I will forgive their iniquity, and their sin I will remember no more" (Jer. 31:34). (MacArthur)

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**Steven Cole** - Sometimes a severe problem—a health problem, an emotional problem, a family problem, a financial catastrophe—can be the best thing in the world for us. Later, this man would have looked back on his paralysis and thanked God for it, because if he had never been paralyzed, he never would have begged his friends to carry him to Jesus. He never would have heard those words, "Your sins are forgiven." With the psalmist, he could say, "Before I was afflicted, I went astray, but now I keep Your word" (Ps. 119:67). Jesus wasn't necessarily implying that the man's paralysis was the direct result of his sins. It may have been. In opposition to the rabbis of His day, Jesus taught that while all suffering is due to the fall of the human race into sin, not all suffering is due to specific sin on the part of the individual (Luke 13:1-5; John 9:1-3). But Jesus knew that the main need of every sinner is not to get our health or emotional or financial or whatever problems solved. Those problems should drive us to seek God. When we do that, it becomes clear that our main problem is our alienation from Him due to our sins. Thus forgiveness of sins is our main need. ([Helping Our Friends Find Forgiveness](#))

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**Adrian Rogers** - Jesus healed him physically only to give a credibility to the spiritual miracle. Jesus did something that they could see, so that they might understand and believe that which they could not see. Do you understand the importance? The important thing to Jesus that day was not healing that man's body; the important thing was forgiving his sin. The healing of the body only attested to the greater unseen spiritual miracle—and so it is with this man

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**Illustration of a Friend** - A young boy, dirty and dressed in scruffy clothes, came into a Christian bookshop in an English village. His head reached just above the counter. He asked the shopkeeper, "How much are yer Bibles, mister?" The man pulled his cheapest Bible off the shelf, one with children's pictures, but the £1.5 in the boy's grubby hand was not enough.

"Hang on, I've got more money in my sock," the boy said. He sat down on the floor, pulled off a shoe and then a long, woolen sock. "The Bible's not for me; it's for me mate. I want him to know Jesus like I do."

"You can have the Bible," the shopkeeper said. "Shall I rub the price off?" Putting his sock and shoe back on, the boy answered, "No,

leave it on. I want me mate to know how much I like him." As he walked out the door with the Bible, he stopped, turned and said with a grin, "It's a good book, ain't it mister?"

By seeking to bring his friend to Jesus, that boy was being the best kind of friend in this world.

**To help our friends find forgiveness,  
we must bring them to Jesus  
Who has authority to forgive sins.**

Play [Michael Smith's "Friends are Friends Forever"](#)

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### **Bringing Our Friends to Jesus**

When Jesus saw their faith, he said to the paralyzed man, "Son, your sins are forgiven." Mark 2:5

Today's Scripture & Insight: Mark 2:1-12

During my childhood, one of the most feared diseases was polio, often called "infantile paralysis" because most of those infected were young children. Before a preventive vaccine was developed in the mid-1950s, some 20,000 people were paralyzed by polio and about 1,000 died from it each year in the United States alone.

In ancient times, paralysis was viewed as a permanent, hopeless condition. But one group of men believed Jesus could help their paralyzed friend. While Jesus was teaching in the village of Capernaum, four of the men carried the man to Him. When they couldn't reach Jesus because of the crowd, "they made an opening in the roof above Jesus by digging through it and then lowered the mat the man was lying on" (Mark 2:1-4).

"When Jesus saw their faith, he said to the paralyzed man, 'Son, your sins are forgiven' " (v. 5), followed by "Get up, take your mat and go home" (v. 11). How remarkable that in response to the faith of the men who brought their friend, Jesus forgave his sins and healed his incurable condition!

When someone we know is facing serious physical difficulty or a spiritual crisis, it is our privilege to join together in prayer, bringing our friends to Jesus—the only One who can meet their deepest needs. David C. McCasland ([Our Daily Bread, Copyright RBC Ministries, Grand Rapids, MI. — Reprinted by permission. All rights reserved](#))

### Reflect & Pray

Lord Jesus, we know that You can speak the words of eternal life and healing to people in great need. We bring them to You in prayer today.

Praying for others is a privilege—and a responsibility.

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### **Wholeness Of Life**

Son, your sins are forgiven you. . . . I say to you, arise. —Mark 2:5,11

Social worker Margaret Sangster told her colleagues about seeing a young boy in an urban ghetto who appeared little more than a bit of twisted human flesh. He had been struck by a car several months earlier and had not received proper medical attention.

Although he was not a part of her caseload, she took the boy to an orthopedist, who performed surgery on his legs. Two years later the boy walked into Sangster's office without crutches. His recovery was complete. Margaret recalled that as the two embraced, she thought, If I accomplish nothing else in my life, I have made a real difference with at least this one!

Sangster then told her colleagues, "This was all several years ago now. Where do you think that boy is today?" They suggested that he might be a teacher, a physician, or a social worker. With deep emotion, she responded, "No, he's in the penitentiary for one of the foulest crimes a human can commit." Then she said, "I was instrumental in teaching him how to walk again, but there was no one to teach him where to walk."

Our mission is to point people to Jesus. Only through Him can those with broken bodies, broken dreams, broken homes, and broken hearts experience wholeness of life. ([Our Daily Bread, Copyright RBC Ministries, Grand Rapids, MI. — Reprinted by permission. All rights reserved](#))

Lord, help us to tell of Your love for mankind—  
A love for the sin-sick, the broken, the blind;

And help them to see by the way that we live  
The wholeness of life that You long to give. —DJD

Only Jesus can give wholeness of life to a broken world.

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#### **HYMNS AND CHORUSES THAT RELATE TO Mt 9:1-2**

"Jesus, Thy Blood and Righteousness" – Nicolaus von Zinzendorf

"Bold shall I stand in Thy great day... Fully absolved through Christ I am." Connects with Jesus saying, "Your sins are forgiven."

2. "Come Ye Sinners, Poor and Needy" – Joseph Hart

"Let not conscience make you linger, nor of fitness fondly dream; All the fitness He requireth is to feel your need of Him." The paralytic came in need—and Christ forgave and healed.

3. "There Is a Fountain Filled with Blood" – William Cowper

"The dying thief rejoiced to see that fountain in his day; And there may I, though vile as he, wash all my sins away." Highlights the joy of being forgiven, as Jesus said to the paralytic.

4. "Pass Me Not, O Gentle Savior" – Fanny J. Crosby

"Savior, Savior, hear my humble cry; While on others Thou art calling, do not pass me by." Captures the spirit of the paralytic's friends bringing him to Jesus.

5. "Jesus Paid It All" – Elvina Hall

"Sin had left a crimson stain, He washed it white as snow." Resonates with Jesus' declaration of forgiveness.

#### **Modern Choruses / Worship Songs**

1. "You Are My King (Amazing Love)" – Billy Foote

"Amazing love, how can it be, that You my King would die for me?" Reflects awe at Christ's gracious declaration.

2. "He Knows My Name" – Tommy Walker

"He sees each tear that falls, and He hears me when I call." Jesus sees the paralytic—and the faith behind the action.

3. "Healing Is in Your Hands" – Christy Nockels

"No sickness, no secret, no chain is too strong." Matches both physical healing and forgiveness in this passage.

4. "Faithful One" – Brian Doerksen

"Faithful one, so unchanging... I call out to You again and again." Reflects the faith of those who brought the paralytic to Jesus.

5. "I Am the God That Healeth Thee" – Don Moen

"I am the Lord your healer. I sent My word and healed your disease." A direct reflection of Jesus' authority over body and soul.

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#### **The Sick of the Palsy Joseph Parker**

And, behold, they brought to him a man sick of the palsy, lying on a bed (Matthew 9:2).

And he entered into a ship and passed over and came into his own city." That does not tell us half the truth. A reference to this verse will show you the necessity of reading the Scriptures through, and of paying attention not to the text only, but to the context. Anybody would think, from reading this first verse, that Jesus had, upon His own will and motion, returned into **His own city**: we should have no hesitation in coming to the conclusion that Jesus did this because He wanted to do it or had willed so to do. Is there not a cause? Refer to the verse which concludes the previous chapter if you would find the key of the verse which opens the ninth chapter.

**"Behold the whole city came out to meet Jesus, and when they saw him they besought him that he would depart out of their coasts, and he entered into a ship and passed over."** (Mt 8:34 see [note above](#)) Now the whole case is before you. You thought He came away spontaneously, whereas the fact is He was driven out. He never leaves the human heart of His own will; He never said to any one of you, "I have been here long enough, I must now leave you to yourself."

But you tell me that Jesus Christ is no longer with you, you say you sigh to think of happier days, you recall the hour when Jesus Christ was the only guest of your heart, and now you mourn that He is no longer present in the sanctuary of your consciousness and your love. He never left of His own accord. I cannot allow your mourning to go without one or two sharp and piercing inquiries. How did you treat Him—did His presence become a shadow in the life—was His interference burdensome—did He dash some cups of pleasure from your hands—did He call you to sacrifices which were too painful for your love? Search yourselves and see. I never knew Him to leave a human heart because He was tired of it, weary because He had expended His love upon it—but I have known Him whipped out, scourged away, entreated to go, banished.

**"And he entered into a ship and passed over and came into his own city."** How He looked as He did so! No picture can ever tell us how the eyes fell upon the dust in shame for those who had desired His banishment. How His heart quivered under a new and sharp pain as He realized that He was indeed despised and rejected of men! How He felt as His good deeds became the occasion of a desire on the part of those who had seen them to send Him away from their coasts! This is a mystery on which there is no light. Do not imagine that you began the story with the first verse of the ninth chapter. It is true that Jesus entered into a ship and passed over, but it is also true that the people besought Him that He would depart out of their coasts. So when my heart is empty of His presence and I wonder whither He has gone, I will revive my recollection, I will command my memory to be faithful and to tell me the white truth, the candid fact, and when it speaks it will shame me with the intolerable reminiscence that I *besought* Him to go. Let us be honest, or we shall never be healed; let us face the stern, fierce facts of life, or we shall make no progress in purity or in spiritual knowledge.

**"And behold they brought unto him a man sick of the palsy, lying on a bed, and Jesus, seeing their faith."** Is it possible for *faith* to be greater than the *palsy*? Are such miracles wrought in the consciousness of man? Does the soul ever rise in its original majesty and put the body down? Sometimes. Is it possible for the will to be so inflamed and inspired to rise above the palsy and to say, "I am master!" I like such flashes of the divinity that is within us. We are too easily cowed; our physicians complain that our will does not cooperate with their endeavors, so that we too easily go down. There is something in us that can conquer the palsy. I cannot gather together all the subtle influences which make up the present economy of things, but again and again in the history of others, and now and then in my own history, I have seen such a rising up of the inner nature as has said to the body, "I am master." I magnify these occasional revelations of the latent force of a kind of suppressed divinity, until I see death dead, the grave filled up, and the whole universe full of life.

Magnify all the *best* hints of your nature; be ready to accept suggestions of new power; never take the little and dwindling view of your life. If now and then your heart leap up like sparks of fire in prayer seize every one of them. *That* is where your grandeur is; that is your true self. Caught in some mean conception, conscious of some unworthy fancy—know that that is the *leper* that has to be healed. Caught in some rapture of worship, some sweet desire for heaven—know that that is the *angel* that is in you, and that by and by nothing shall be left in you but the angel, the true spirit, conqueror through Him who wrought its redemption.

**"And Jesus, seeing their faith—."** That was just like Him. He always sees the best of us; He never takes other than the greatest view of our lives and their endeavors. "And Jesus, seeing their faith." Shall we amend the text? "And Jesus, seeing their—sectarianism." That would fill up a line better than *faith*; it is a longer word; it has more syllables in it; it fills the mouth better—shall we put it in? "And Jesus, seeing their—denominationalism." There is a word that would almost make a line by itself. That word ought to have something in it; polysyllables ought not to be empty. "And Jesus, seeing their—Congregationalism, their attachment to Episcopalianism, their deep love of Roman Catholicism." I fancy we cannot amend the text. We can take out the little word *faith* and put in the long words I have named; these would not be amendments, they would be spoliations; they would be blasphemies; they would belittle the occasion; they would taint it with a human touch. Let the word *faith* stand; it is universal; it is a cord that stretches itself around the starlit horizon; it touches those of you who belong to no sect, the dumb, the groping, the wondering, as well as the clear-minded and the positive as to religious principle and conviction.

Jesus Christ always startled His hearers by seeing something *greater* in them than they had ever seen in themselves, and always seemed to credit His patients with their own cure. He said, "Daughter, thy faith hath made thee whole." He gave the woman to feel as if she had all the time been her own healer. And the broad and everlasting meaning of that assurance is that you and I have it in us at this moment to get the healing that we need. The Physician is here; His prescription is written in syllables clear as stars, and in lines open as the heavens. What He waits for is our faith. "Lord, I believe; help thou mine unbelief." "Lord, increase our faith." "Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ and thou shalt be saved." "Be it unto thee according to thy faith." "Believest thou that I am able to do this?" There is something then for *us* to do. Find it out and do it, and God will be faithful to His Word.

"And Jesus, **seeing their faith**, said unto the sick of the palsy, Son, be of good cheer, thy sins be forgiven thee." But this was a question of the *palsy*. the man had not come as a *religious* inquirer, had he? I was not aware that Jesus was sitting down somewhere for the purpose of holding religious conversation with people. This man is sick of the palsy; he cannot move a limb; it requires four people to carry him; and Jesus Christ gives a *religious* turn to the event. We want this sick man healed; we do not want to hear anything about *sins*; we are not religious inquirers, we are afflicted men. How we do belittle everything we touch! If we pluck a flower it dies. Jesus Christ said, "All these afflictions have a common root: sin is the explanation of every scab on that leper's brow; and look at the trembling in that paralytic; sin drove the sight from those eyes, and the hearing from those ears, and the strength from those ankle bones. This is the accursed work of sin." He is a fundamental Teacher; He does not treat symptoms; He treats the central and vital *cause* which expresses itself in symptoms so patent and so distressing.

This is the great lesson which the world is so unwilling to receive. Give us acts of Parliament, give us better houses for this class and for that class, give us better drainage and larger gardens and better ventilation, and we shall cobble the world up to stand on its rickety legs ten years longer. All these things are in themselves right enough; no sane man has one word to speak against them. If they be brought in, however, as *causative*, they must be rejected, they are collateral, they are cooperative, they are helpful, and in that sense they are necessary, but the world's stream will never be pure until the world's fountain has been cleansed. We think we can cure the world by officialism and by small sanitary pedantries, by congresses and conferences—all these things have their place and their use, but until we get at the root and core and center and heart we are as men who are throwing buckets into empty wells and drawing them up again. The world will not believe this, so the world has not yet risen and taken up its bed and walked.

"And, behold, certain of the scribes said within themselves, This man blasphemeth." There again is the belittling which man does in all his interpretations. Oh, if the sermon could be equal to the text in all cases, what preaching we should have and what hearing! Christ said, "Thy sins are forgiven thee." The scribes said, "This man blasphemeth." We always drag down what we touch; the day of rapture is gone, the sacred hour of enthusiasm has withdrawn itself because we have besought it to depart. Men never speak in fire now: we have fallen upon an age of prudence, and word measurement, and we are tricksters in the uses of syllables and in the adaptations of phrases, and never get beyond the poor range of little speech, or utter as with the heart those sentences which are revelations. We like to hear the little mincing voice that dare not utter one word louder than another; we like to hear the multiplication table repeated every Sunday from the first line to the last; we like to keep within statistical proofs and references that have been scheduled and that can be verified. The great prophet of fire, Elijah, is gone—were he to come again we would take him by the throat and thrust him into the dungeon.

The scribes were right from their own point of view. It would have been blasphemy in any one of them to have spoken a noble word about anybody. There are some throats that were never made to emit one noble sound. There are men to whom prayers are lies, and revelations are delusions, and prophecies are but the witnesses of the weakness of their speakers. A man cannot hear above his own level. "He that hath ears to hear let him hear." Every *dog* has ears—yes, but not to *hear*. Men carry the standard of judgment within them; from the little man the little judgment, from the great man the noble criticism, from the divinest, the divinest love. It is better to fall into the hands of God than into the hands of men.

**"And Jesus, knowing their thoughts—."** See how He never relinquishes the *spiritual* line in all this incident. Jesus **seeing their faith**—that was a spiritual perception: Jesus seeing their thoughts—there is the same power of working mental miracles. He reads our minds; there is no curtain made yet by human hands, how cunning soever, that can shut out those eyes. He understands every pulsation of the heart, He reads every motion of the will, all things are naked and open to the eyes of Him with whom we have to do. The eyes of the Lord run to and fro throughout the whole earth—sometimes the universe seems to me to be all eyes; I am surrounded by eyes of fire. All speech seems to sum itself into one pregnant sentence—"Thou God seest me."

Do not lightly pass over these words, for they open the great sphere of the *mental miracles* performed by Jesus Christ. We are accustomed to read about His physical miracles and to doubt them. Any scribe can doubt. It is no great thing to doubt. The doubter never did anything for the world; the doubter never put one stone upon another. The world is indebted to its faith for its life and for its progress. Jesus not only cured the palsy, He read *thoughts*: already He begins to forecast the day when physical miracles shall depart, and the miracles that shall astound shall be heart-readings, and heart-companionships and spiritual revelations, and moral opportunities and destinies. We live in that dispensation now; miracles of an ordinary and outward kind have all gone, but the miracles of the Holy Spirit are being performed every day.

"For whether is easier—." It would appear—for I regard this statement as elliptical—that some thought had occurred to the mind of the scribes that it was easy enough to say, "Thy *sins* be forgiven thee," but the thing to do was to cure the man of the *palsy*. It was easy to talk blasphemies, but what about performing the *cure*? There was a kind of self-gratulation as they suggested that Jesus Christ had taken the easy course of talking blasphemies and letting the substantial thing that was to be done alone, so He says, "Whether is easier to say, 'Thy sins be forgiven thee,' or to say 'Rise and walk?'" The scribes committed the mistake which the whole world has ever since been repeating. Where is there a man who does not think of every intellectual effort as quite easy? It is very difficult for a man to walk upon a tight rope across a river—that is something amazing—worth a shilling to look at. But for any man to

preach—why, of course that is easy enough, any fool can do that; everybody knows that anybody can preach a sermon! To suggest a *thought*, to flash an idea upon the intellectual horizon—any man in a family who is good for nothing else can do that.

We always send the imbeciles into the church. To go into the army requires a man, and to go into the navy requires a kind of man and a half, and to go into the law requires a good many men, but to go into the church—why, the soft sap of a family will go into the church. This is possible—possible in relation to all the communions into which the great Christian church is broken up. There are no doubt soft men and imbecile men in every pulpit in Christendom—that is to say in every section of the church in Christendom—but do not understand that the intellectual is always so easy. It is sometimes hard work, even to preach. There are those who think the spiritual worthless. It is easy to give advice; nothing could be easier than to address oneself to spiritual necessities, and such service is worthless. Whoever thinks of paying a schoolmaster or a preacher?

There are those who think of religion as merely sentimental, as having no practical value in it; yet there is not a man among us who does not owe his social status to religion. You would never have had the customers that flock around your counter but for religion; you would never have got your debts collected but for religion; you would never have been saved from the gutter and the workhouse if an angel of religion had not come after you and brought you in. Religion is not a colored cloud, an evaporating sentiment, it is a most practical factor in the creation and redemption and sanctification of human life.

"And when the multitude saw it, they marveled and glorified God." Trust to the great broad human instincts, and do not ask the scribes what they think. Take your case to the scribes and say, "Gentlemen, what is your learned opinion about this man's cure?" and they, having rolled themselves around and around in the thickest bandages of the reddest tape, begin to consider. I have faith in broad human instincts: I will not altogether withdraw from our proverbial sayings—*Vox populi vox Dei*—I know the crowd has been wrong, I know the mob has been out of the way again and again (I am not speaking of mere crowds or mere mobs: I am speaking of the average human instinct all over our civilization), yet it answers the true voice in the long run, it knows the right man, it knows the right cures, it knows the right books. That human instinct is the next best thing for our guidance to divine inspiration. Make friends of the people, and let little cliques and coteries rot in their own isolation.

Observe the course which Jesus Christ takes, "But that ye may know that the Son of man hath power on earth to forgive sins. Arise, take up thy bed and go unto thine house." We must sometimes prove our religion by our *philanthropy*. Sometimes a man can understand a loaf when he cannot master an argument; sometimes a man can understand a kind action done to his physical necessities when he cannot comprehend or apply the utility of a spiritual suggestion; you do not relinquish the ground that the spiritual is higher than the material when you accommodate yourself to the man's weakness and say to him in effect, "You cannot understand this spiritual argument, therefore I will come down to your ground and do what you can understand." Thus the church must often prove its religion by its philanthropy. The world cannot understand our creed, but the world can understand our collection. There are masses of men in London today who could really not understand what I am endeavoring to expound; it is beneath them, or above them, or beyond them, but they will be perfectly able to ascertain what we have done for cases of necessity that may now be appealing to our liberality.

This is God's method of proving His own kingdom and claim. "The goodness of God," the apostle says, "should lead us to repentance." Every good gift given to the body and given to society is an angel that should lead us in a religious direction. God says to us every day, "That ye may know how to care for your souls, I will show you how to care for your bodies." Now what has He done for the body? Look at that lamp He has lighted, now shining as the southern zenith; look at the meadows He has spread and the gardens He has drawn around our habitations; look at the loving air, the hospitable summer, the abundant autumn, the restful sleep of the winter—and if He has done so much for the body, He says, "But that ye may know what I would do for your mind, for your soul, for your higher faculties, I give you these witnesses, that you can lay your hand upon and examine for yourselves."

It is an argument I cannot refute, it is an appeal I would gladly obey.

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**Matthew 9:3 And some of the scribes said to themselves, "This fellow blasphemes."**

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NET Matthew 9:3 Then some of the experts in the law said to themselves, "This man is blaspheming!"

GNT Matthew 9:3 καὶ δοῦλοι τινες τὸν γραμματέα ἀντικαθιστάντες εἶπον τῷ αὐτῷ Κύριῳ, Οὐ τοσούτος βλασφημεῖ.

NLT Matthew 9:3 But some of the teachers of religious law said to themselves, "That's blasphemy! Does he think he's God?"

KJV Matthew 9:3 And, **behold**, certain of the scribes said within themselves, This man blasphemeth.

ESV Matthew 9:3 And **behold**, some of the scribes said to themselves, "This man is blaspheming."

NIV Matthew 9:3 At this, some of the teachers of the law said to themselves, "This fellow is blaspheming!"

ASV Matthew 9:3 And **behold**, certain of the scribes said within themselves, This man blasphemeth.

CSB Matthew 9:3 At this, some of the scribes said among themselves, "He's blaspheming!"

- **some of the scribes**- Mt 7:29 Mk 2:6,7 7:21 Lu 5:21 7:39,40
- **This** - Mt 26:65 Lev 24:16 Mk 14:64 Joh 10:33-36 Ac 6:11-13

## CRITICS COMMENCE COGITATING

**Cogitate** means to consider carefully and deeply; to think about; devise; to reflect upon; to turn over in one's mind; to ponder usually intently. "Chew over." You can mark it down, that whenever God's work is being done and bringing Him glory, there will always be criticizing naysayers! It was true in the first century and it is true today!

**And some of the scribes said to themselves**(cf description in Mk 2:7+, Lk 5:21+) - They did not speak aloud, but reasoned in their evil hearts. Beware how you think, for God is aware of our thoughts and we are accountable for our thoughts! **KJV** has "And, **behold**, certain of the scribes (**Behold** [*idou*] is in Greek text but unfortunately omitted by NASB, NET, NIV, HCSB)" which draws the reader's attention to the next dramatic development in this story, specifically the presence of the Jewish religious leaders. They were not speaking this out loud but as Mark says they **were sitting there and reasoning in their hearts** (Mk 2:6) The word **Some** suggests not **all** had a critical spirit or perhaps they did but just were not "cogitating" on it. **Gundry** adds the interesting note that "The Jews of Jesus' day expected forgiveness in the messianic age... but did not expect the Messiah himself to forgive sins or to be divine."

**Scribes** ([1122](#))(**grammateus** from **grapho** = to write) was one skilled in Jewish law and theology scribe, expert, scholar (Mt 2.4). **Grammateus** also referred to a chief executive officer of a governmental entity such as a town official secretary, town clerk (Acts 19.35). Jesus gives a long rebuke including **8 WOES** primarily to the Scribes and Pharisees which should be read to help understand how this group of Jewish religious men functioned (See Mt 23:1-39, 13, 14, 15, 16, etc). Most sources consider the **lawyers** (*nomikos* - meaning one skilled in the Mosaic law) to be scribes specialized in the jurisprudence of the Law of Moses. Finally the scribes in Lk 5:17 (*nomidaskalos*) were teachers of the Jewish law who were equal to the lawyers and scribes. In the Septuagint **grammateus** frequently used for a political officer who assisted kings or magistrates by keeping written accounts of public acts and occurrences or royal revenues (2 Ki 12:10) (See [Brown-Driver-Briggs definition of saphar](#)).

**Matthew** frequently mentions the **scribes** - Matt. 2:4; Matt. 5:20 (For I say to you that unless your righteousness surpasses that of the **scribes** and Pharisees, you will not enter the kingdom of heaven.); Matt. 7:29; Matt. 8:19; Matt. 9:3; Matt. 12:38; Matt. 13:52; Matt. 15:1; Matt. 16:21; Matt. 17:10; Matt. 20:18; Matt. 21:15; Matt. 23:2; Matt. 23:13; Matt. 23:14; Matt. 23:15; Matt. 23:23; Matt. 23:25; Matt. 23:27; Matt. 23:29; Matt. 23:34; Matt. 26:57; Matt. 27:41

**This fellow blasphemes** - **Fellow** is not in the Greek text. It's addition presumably intends to convey their low opinion of Jesus. Collins Dictionary has one definition of **fellow** as "a person considered to be of little importance or worth." **Robertson** quips "See the sneer in "this fellow."" Their logic was that only God can forgive sin; so if Christ forgives sin, then He must be claiming to be God. But the scribes and pharisees (for the most part) did not believe Jesus was God, and so they concluded that He had blasphemed in forgiving the paralytic his sins. **Chamblin** adds "These **scribes** accuse Jesus of blaspheming God, of reviling His holy Name, because He – in their eyes a mere man (cf. Mt 9:8b) – usurps the divine prerogative." (Ibid) Mark 2:7+ adds the grounds for this charge in their minds - **He is blaspheming; who can forgive sins but God alone?**

**Blasphemes** ([present tense](#) = continually) ([987](#)) (**blasphemeo**) from **blapto** = hinder, injure, hurt + **pheme** = report, rumor, fame from **phemí** = to speak; see study of verb form **blasphemeo**) means literally **to speak to harm** and in general therefore means to bring into ill repute, to speak verbal abuse against someone which denotes the very worst type of slander. To **defame** which means to harm the reputation of by libel or slander. In Scripture, blaspheming refers to intentional and overt defilement of the divine name, and so is any abusive speech or action directed against God, especially against the majesty, nature and power of God. The scribes are (correctly) reasoning that Jesus is taking for Himself a right that is reserved for God alone!

Ironically, it was not Jesus who was blaspheming, but the scribes themselves, who ascribed his miracles to Satan (cf. Mt 9:34; 12:24, 31; 26:65).

**John MacArthur** explains that "Blasphemy was the most heinous crime in Jewish thought, since it was a direct affront to the person of God. They defined three levels of blasphemy. First, one blasphemed God by speaking evil of His law, as Stephen (Acts 6:13) and Paul (Acts 21:27–28) were falsely accused of doing. A more serious form of blasphemy was to slander, speak evil of, or curse God Himself (Lev. 24:10–16; cf. Ex. 20:7). But the ultimate form of blasphemy was to assume the rights and prerogatives of God; to usurp the role of God and act as if one were God. It was this third and most severe type of blasphemy that the scribes and Pharisees accused Jesus of (cf. John 5:18; 8:58–59; 10:33; 19:7)." (Luke Commentary)

**Blasphemy** was a frequent charge leveled against Jesus (Mk 14:64; Jn 5:18; 10:33, 36) and would eventually become the basis of Jesus' conviction and crucifixion. Jesus would repeat this "crime" of declaring "Your sins are forgiven" in Luke 7:48–49+ (as He was dining with one of the Pharisees).

**Johann Bengel** adds that "Blasphemy is committed when (1.) things unworthy of God are attributed to Him; (2.) things worthy of God are denied to Him; (3.) when the incommunicable attributes of God are attributed to others."

**Ellicott** comments on blasphemers - The words were but an echo of the charge that had been brought at Jerusalem, that "He made Himself equal with God" (John 5:18 - "For this reason therefore the Jews were seeking all the more to kill Him, because He not only was breaking the Sabbath, but also was calling God His own Father, making Himself equal with God."), and may well have come from some of the same objectors.

#### Matthew 9:4 And Jesus knowing their thoughts said, "Why are you thinking evil in your hearts?

NET Matthew 9:4 When Jesus saw their reaction he said, "Why do you respond with evil in your hearts?

GNT Matthew 9:4 καὶ δὲ οὐ οἶδον τις νθυμόν σεις αὐτὸν επεν, νατὸν νθυμόν σθε πονηρὸν ταῖς καρδίαις μὲν;

NLT Matthew 9:4 Jesus knew what they were thinking, so he asked them, "Why do you have such evil thoughts in your hearts?

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

ESV Matthew 9:4 But Jesus, knowing their thoughts, said, "Why do you think evil in your hearts?

NIV Matthew 9:4 Knowing their thoughts, Jesus said, "Why do you entertain evil thoughts in your hearts?

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

CSB Matthew 9:4 But perceiving their thoughts, Jesus said, "Why are you thinking evil things in your hearts?

- **knowing** - Mt 12:25 16:7,8 Ps 44:21 139:2 Mk 2:8 8:16,17 12:15 Lu 5:22 Lu 6:8 7:40 9:46,47 11:17 Joh 2:24,25 6:61,64 16:19,30 21:17 Heb 4:12,13 Rev 2:23
- **Why are you** - Eze 38:10 Ac 5:3,4,9 8:20-22

### JESUS ACCEPTS THE CRITICS CHALLENGE

**And Jesus knowing their thoughts** - Mk 2:8+ has "aware in His spirit." **Knowing** is the same verb translated **seeing** in Mt 9:2, in both cases indicating supernatural perception. Thus **Knowing** is perhaps better rendered "perceived" (to become aware of through the senses, in this case supernatural senses!) the verb eido which means He supernaturally knew beyond a shadow of a doubt (cf similar supernatural perception by Jesus in Lk 6:8, Lk 9:47, Mk 12:15, Jn 2:24-25, Jn 4:29, Mt 12:25, Mt 22:18). In this aspect Jesus was not giving us an example to follow as He usually is in His actions and behavior (cf 1 Jn 2:6<sup>+</sup>, 1 Pe 2:21<sup>+</sup>), for only God can know the thoughts of a man's heart. This was Jesus exercising His divine power. In a similar way, when "many believed in His name, observing His signs which He was doing" in John 2:23+, John then records "But Jesus, on His part, was not entrusting Himself to them, for He knew all men, and because He did not need anyone to testify concerning man, for He Himself knew what was in man." (John 2:24,25+) And of course today Heb 4:12 says that even His Word is able "to judge the thoughts and intentions of the heart." "The Lord looks at the heart" (1 Sam. 16:7) and knows the hearts of all men (1 Kings 8:39). He even "searches all hearts, and understands every intent of the thoughts" (1 Chron. 28:9; cf. Jer. 17:10; Ezek. 11:5).

**Thoughts** ([1761](#))(enthumesis) from **en** = in + **thumos** = strong feeling, passion, mind, thought) means an inward reasoning or deliberation and conveys the idea of pondering or thinking out. Our English word "reflection" is an accurate translation. Westcott notes that the word refers to the action of the affections and is

related to the will.

**Said, "Why are you thinking** ([enthumeomai](#) in [present tense](#) = continually) **evil in your hearts?** - Mk 2:8+ lacks the moral element (evil) rendering Jesus' question "Why are you reasoning about these things in your hearts?" Jesus knows what they are **thinking**, and so He asks a rhetorical question so that they would know that He knew! Imagine their thoughts now which might have been something like "This man has did performed a miracle by accurately reading our minds!" The word for **evil** is [poneros](#) ([see below](#)) which speaks of malice or active evil, evil that desires to do harm (thus the name given to the devil in Mt 13:19) and not mentioned in either Mark or Luke. An **evil** heart is a heart that plots against God. An evil heart speaks evil words (Mt 12:34, 35, 15:19, 20, Lk 6:45+). Jesus not only laid bare what they were thinking but exposed the wickedness behind the thoughts. The **heart** of their problem (and all mankind) is an evil heart. Now they were just thinking evil, but thoughts result in actions and in time these evil thoughts would lead them to crucify Jesus. It all begins with a thought. This is why we all need to heed Paul's exhortation to take "every thought captive to the obedience of Christ," (2 Cor 10:5<sup>±</sup>). Jesus speaks of His supernatural omniscience that enables Him to know hearts in Rev 2:23<sup>±</sup> "And I will kill her children with pestilence, and all the churches will know that **I am He who searches the minds and hearts;** and I will give to each one of you according to your deeds."

**Hearts** ([2588](#)) ([kardia](#)) does not refer to the physical organ (over 800 mentions and none refer to the physical organ!) but is always used figuratively in Scripture to refer to the seat and center of human life, the seat of thoughts and affections. The **heart** is the center of the personality, and it controls the intellect, emotions, and will. No outward obedience is of the slightest value unless the heart turns to God. **Heart** in effect describes our "**control center**" (to make a play on the "[air traffic control center](#)" at the airport which carefully guards and guides what flies in and what flies out. How applicable to our "hearts" which are so prone to wander!). Our heart is the "heart" of most of our problems! **Kardia** refers to the the [affective](#) center of our being wherein lies the capacity of moral preference and volitional desire. The **kardia** generates thoughts that make the decisions which the mind works out. In other words, our logic flows out of our heart-decisions and not vice versa. **Gleason Archer** called the **kardia**, the "desire-producer that makes us tick" for it is the place where our "desire-decisions" occur, and which establish who we really are.

**THOUGHT** - WHO ARE YOU? HAVE YOU HAD A HEART CHECK UP RECENTLY? We are assiduous to do this medically, but woefully lax in doing it spiritually (beloved, I speak from experience!). At regeneration God reverses the spiritual atherosclerosis of our old sinful heart by giving us a total heart transplant! Daily confession and repentance are thereafter necessary to avoid "spiritual atherosclerosis" and gradual, subtle hardening (and becoming cold to the things of God) of our heart! (Practice daily "preventative maintenance" = 1 Jn 1:9<sup>±</sup>, Pr 28:13<sup>±</sup>)

**Evil** (wicked, bad) ([4190](#)) (**poneros** from **poneo** = work or toil, Robertson says the idea is that labor is an annoyance, bad, evil; Noun **poneria** derived from **poneros**) means evil including evil, malignant character, pernicious (see Webster 1828 definition below), that which is morally or socially worthless, wicked, base, bad, degenerate. **Poneros** denotes determined, aggressive, and fervent evil that actively opposes what is good. **Poneros** is not just bad in character (like [kakos](#) - see below), but bad in effect (injurious)! **Poneros** describes evil in active opposition to good. It means not only evil in its nature but viciously evil in its influence and actively harmful. **Poneros** used to describe Satan (ho poneros = "Evil one"), the god of this age, who is corrupting man and dragging him to destruction. This denotes someone who is not content in being corrupt themselves. They seek to corrupt others and draw them into the same destruction! In Mt 15:19 Jesus describes evil coming from the heart, a description which would be very appropriate for the scribes and pharisees who were confronting Him - "**For out of the heart** come evil (poneros) thoughts ([dialogismos](#) = same word to describe "reasonings" of scribes in Lk 5:22+), murders, adulteries, fornications, thefts, false witness, slanders." = a good description of these scribes and pharisees!

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## Too Nice

Why do you think evil in your hearts? —Matthew 9:4

Today's Scripture:Matthew 23:1-15

Sometimes we tend to be too nice. When people are doing wrong, we are afraid to confront their behavior, and we choose just to be nice. When a friend is slipping into an illicit relationship or a relative is becoming an alcoholic, we ignore the situations and do not confront them. When an unsaved friend is trusting in good works for eternal life, we remain silent about Christ and His death on the cross. But believers should not compromise obedience to God's Word just to be nice.

A US Supreme Court Justice said that "in the effort to be civil in conduct, many who know better actually dilute [their] firmly held views to avoid appearing judgmental. They curb their tongues, not only in form but also in substance. . . . This is not civility, it is cowardice. Or well-intentioned self-deception at best."

In Matthew 9, Jesus wasn't concerned about being nice. He looked the Jewish teachers of the law in the eye and said, "Why do you think evil in your hearts?" (v.4). Nor was He worried about being civil when He called the Pharisees "whitewashed tombs . . . full of dead men's bones" (23:27). He courageously confronted them and exposed their sin.

Sometimes being nice isn't nice. —David C. Egner ([Our Daily Bread, Copyright RBC Ministries, Grand Rapids, MI. — Reprinted by permission. All rights reserved](#))

#### Reflect & Pray

Some will hate you, some will love you;  
Some will flatter, some will slight;  
Cease from man, and look above you,  
Trust in God and do the right.

—Macleod

Being too nice can be a disguise for cowardice.

#### Matthew 9:5 "Which is easier, to say, 'Your sins are forgiven,' or to say, Get up, and walk'?

NET Matthew 9:5 Which is easier, to say, 'Your sins are forgiven' or to say, 'Stand up and walk'?

GNT Matthew 9:5 τὸ γέρων στιν εἰπειν τερον, εἰπειν δὲ τὸν εὐτακτον αὐτοῦ μαρτυρίαν, εἰπειν δὲ τὸν γείρην καὶ περιπτώσιν;

NLT Matthew 9:5 Is it easier to say 'Your sins are forgiven,' or 'Stand up and walk'?

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

ESV Matthew 9:5 For which is easier, to say, 'Your sins are forgiven,' or to say, 'Rise and walk'?

NIV Matthew 9:5 Which is easier: to say, 'Your sins are forgiven,' or to say, 'Get up and walk'?

ASV Matthew 9:5 For which is easier, to say, Thy sins are forgiven; or to say, Arise, and walk?

CSB Matthew 9:5 For which is easier: to say, 'Your sins are forgiven,' or to say, 'Get up and walk'?

- **Which is easier-** Mk 2:9-12 Lu 5:23-25
- **Get up, and walk -** Isa 35:5,6 Joh 5:8-14,17,18 Ac 3:6-11,16 4:9,10 9:34 14:8-11

## CHRIST CHALLENGES CRITICS

NAS and NET do not translate (ESV, HCSB, KJV do translate) the **gar** which means **for** and serves as a term of explanation.

**Which is easier, to say 'Your sins are forgiven,' or to say, Get up (egeiro), and walk (peripateo)** - Both **get up** and **walk** are present imperative. Jesus often taught by asking questions and in this case He surely adds a touch of rebuke. He is the ultimate trial Lawyer so to speak. In this case He paints these religious leaders into a proverbial corner, with no escape. And apparently He does not even give them time to voice a reply because the "right" answer is so obvious. Alternatively, they were at least smart enough to keep their mouths shut because they knew the answer! Jesus knows (and they also know) that it is easy to say one's sins are forgiven, but not "easy" to tell a paralytic to walk!

**Larry Chouinard** - Jesus' argument is in accord with basic rabbinic reasoning, where what applies to the easy or light will surely apply to the more difficult or heavy. (College Press NIV Commentary – Matthew)

**Knox Chamblin** notes that "Jesus' question acknowledges the close connection between the guilt of sin and the afflictions of the body (cf. Ps. 103:3). According to the Scriptures a physical ailment is sometimes judgment for personal sin: see Numbers 12:8-10 (Miriam); John 5:14 (another paralyzed man); 1 Corinthians 11:29-32 (participants in the Lord's Supper). But the Bible also warns against universalizing that principle: see the story of Job; John 9:2-3 (which denies, not that the man and his parents sinned, but that his or their sin caused his blindness); 2 Corinthians 12:7 (the thorn in the flesh to discourage sin). At the deepest level, of course, Scripture traces all suffering to the Fall, and to the entry of sin and death into the world in consequence of Adam's disobedience (Rom. 5:12). This is precisely why Jesus begins as he does: his words in Matthew 9:2b (exactly repeated in 9:5) address the man's severest malady and deepest need. ( A Mentor Commentary – Matthew)

**John Broadus** makes an interesting statement - We are often told at the present day that Jesus always relied on his teaching to convince men, and not at all on his miracles; but here he distinctly appeals to miracles as establishing the truth of his teachings. (Commentary on the Gospel of Matthew)

**Matthew 9:6 "But so that you may know that the Son of Man has authority on earth to forgive sins"--then He said to the paralytic, "Get up, pick up your bed and go home.**

NET Matthew 9:6 But so that you may know that the Son of Man has authority on earth to forgive sins"-- then he said to the paralytic- "Stand up, take your stretcher, and go home."

GNT Matthew 9:6 να δ εδ τε τι ξουσ αν χει υ σ το νθρ που π τς γς φι ναι μαρτ ας- τ τε λ γει τ παραλυτικ , γερθε σ ρ ν σου τ ν κλ νην κα παγε ε σ τ ν ο κ ν σου.

NLT Matthew 9:6 So I will prove to you that the Son of Man has the authority on earth to forgive sins." Then Jesus turned to the paralyzed man and said, "Stand up, pick up your mat, and go home!"

KJV 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.

ESV Matthew 9:6 But that you may know that the Son of Man has authority on earth to forgive sins"-- he then said to the paralytic-- "Rise, pick up your bed and go home."

NIV Matthew 9:6 But so that you may know that the Son of Man has authority on earth to forgive sins..." Then he said to the paralytic, "Get up, take your mat and go home."

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

CSB Matthew 9:6 But so you may know that the Son of Man has authority on earth to forgive sins"-- then He told the paralytic, "Get up, pick up your mat, and go home."

- **that the Son of Man** - Isa 43:25 Mic 7:18 Mk 2:7,10 Lu 5:21 Joh 5:21-23 10:28 17:2 Joh 20:21-23 Ac 5:31 7:59,60 2Co 2:10 5:20 Eph 4:32 Col 3:13
- **Get up**,- Mt 9:5 Lu 13:11-13 Ac 9:34

## JESUS WILL PROVE HIS AUTHORITY TO FORGIVE SINS

**But so that you may know that the Son of Man has authority on earth to forgive(aphiemi) sins (hamartia)** - NLT has "So I will prove to you." Jesus accepts their challenge and apparently does not give His opponents time to answer the question in Mt 9:5, but here presents the purpose for the question. **So that (hina)** introduces His purpose. **Authority** is first in the clause for emphasis (literally "authority He has" in present tense = Jesus continually possesses **authority!**) He wanted them to know (eido) this truth beyond a shadow of doubt that He had the Messianic power **on earth** to forgive sins even as God does in Heaven! He would demonstrate the unseen by means of the seen, the unseen spiritual forgiveness by the seen physical healing! Normally "seeing is believing" but that would not prove true in the case of these hard-hearted religious leaders!

**Son of man** was used frequently by Ezekiel to describe the prophet himself, but Daniel used **Son of Man** to refer to a prophecy of the Messiah = ""I kept looking in the night visions, And behold, with the clouds of heaven One like a **Son of Man** was coming, And He came up to the Ancient of Days And was presented before Him. (Da 7:13<sup>+</sup>). Based on their knowledge of this OT passage this designation of **Son of Man** by Jesus should have raised thoughts about whether this man was claiming to be the Messiah! In the NT **Son of Man** is used in 84 verses the majority referring to Jesus. **Son of Man** was Jesus' favorite description of Himself. By using the phrase "**of Man**" Jesus demonstrates His compassionate willingness to identify with fallen mankind.

**MacArthur** adds that "The scribes and Pharisees knew well the Old Testament predictions that miraculous healings would accompany the Messiah when He came to earth, and the Son of Man (the title of His humiliation) was now about to give them a special, front-row view of one of those miracles....Many individuals and groups through the centuries have claimed the power to absolve sins, but they have had no proof. Any pretender can utter the words, "Your sins are forgiven," but only God's divine power can both tell a paralytic to walk and then make it happen." (Ibid)

As **Bock** says "If the paralytic walks, the miracle talks about the **Son of Man**'s authority to forgive sin. If the **Son of Man** possesses

such unique authority, then who is the **Son of Man** other than God's unique agent of salvation? That is the question that the miracle raises." (And in effect answers for any who had eyes to see and ears to hear spiritual truth!)

**Authority** ([1849](#)) ([exousia](#)) in simple terms means Jesus has both the **right** to do this and the **might** to accomplish it (the power to send the man's sins away)! Jesus had the privilege, the permission and the power! **Authority** is repeated in Mt 9:8 of the crowds but as discussed not in recognition of Jesus' authority as God. And recall at the end of the Sermon on the Mount the people recognized " He was teaching them as one having **authority** ([exousia](#), and not as their scribes." (Mt 7:29<sup>+</sup>). The truth of Jesus' **authority** ([exousia](#)) is an important theme in Matthew's Gospel until the very end - see his uses in Matt. 7:29; Matt. 8:9; Matt. 9:6; Matt. 9:8; Matt. 10:1; Matt. 21:23; Matt. 21:24; Matt. 21:27; Matt. 28:18

**Then He said to the paralytic** ([paralutikos](#)) **get up** ([egeiro](#)), **pick up** ([airo](#)) **your bed** and **go** ([hupago](#)) **home** - **Pick up** or "Pack up at once ([aorist imperative](#)) the rolled-up pallet." (Robertson [Matthew 9 Commentary](#))

You can just imagine the tension in the room in this mili-second moment!

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### The Cure

Read: Mark 2:1-12

The Son of Man has power on earth to forgive sins. —Mark 2:10

A man with a nagging cough tried all the over-the-counter remedies he could find, but none worked. Finally he went to a doctor, who quickly discovered that he was suffering from pneumonia. The man was trying to ease the symptoms when what he needed was a cure. The doctor treated the deeper, more serious problem and in a short time the cough was gone.

When Jesus was in Capernaum, a large crowd came to the home where He was staying (Mk. 2:1-2). As He was teaching, some men made an opening in the roof and lowered a paralyzed man on a mat. Jesus initially responded not by healing the man but by saying, "Son, your sins are forgiven" (v.5). The deepest need of the man was not physical but spiritual. Then, to show His authority to forgive, Jesus healed the man and sent him on his way—not only with legs that moved but with a heart that was forgiven (v.12).

The world is full of pain and problems. It's tempting to spend a lot of time and resources to treat the surface symptoms and feel that we have done our part. Like Jesus, however, we need to deal with the heart issues. We need to tell people that their sins can be forgiven through faith in Christ. The gospel holds the cure for our deepest need. David C. Egner ([Our Daily Bread, Copyright RBC Ministries, Grand Rapids, MI. — Reprinted by permission. All rights reserved](#))

The Great Physician holds the cure

That kills the virus of our sin;

It's by His own atoning blood

That we're made whole and pure within.

—DJD

Sin is the disease, Christ is the cure.

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### Actions Speak Louder

My little children, let us not love in word or in tongue, but in deed and in truth. —

Today's Scripture: Matthew 9:1-8

Irritated with a young athlete who had accomplished little yet boasted about his ability, a TV commentator said, "Don't tell me what you're going to do—tell me what you've done!" Actions speak louder than words.

This principle is seen in Jesus' life. In Matthew 9, a paralytic was brought to Him. Jesus' response? "Your sins are forgiven." When the religious leaders objected, He raised the question of the hour: "Which is easier, to say, 'Your sins are forgiven you,' or to say, 'Arise and walk'?" (v.5).

The answer is obvious. To say He had forgiven the man's sins was simple, because it couldn't be proven or disproven. But, to say "Arise and walk" was different. It was instantly verifiable. So, to prove His authority to forgive sins, Jesus said to the paralytic, "Arise, take up your bed, and go to your house" (v.6). And he did!

Jesus' actions supported His words, and so should ours. John wrote, "My little children, let us not love in word or in tongue, but in deed and in truth" (1 John 3:18). What we say is significant to a watching world only if it's consistent with what we do. As we tell

people about Christ's love, those words will communicate powerfully if surrounded by acts of love and kindness. Actions do speak louder! By: Bill Crowder ([Our Daily Bread, Copyright RBC Ministries, Grand Rapids, MI. — Reprinted by permission. All rights reserved](#))

#### Reflect & Pray

I'd rather see a Christian  
Than to hear one merely talk,  
I'd rather see his actions  
And behold his daily walk.  
--Herrell

Our works and words should say the same thing.

**Matthew 9:7 And he got up and went home.**

### IMMEDIATE OBEDIENCE

**And he got up (egeiro) and went home** - He had a much easier time getting out of the house than entering! One can picture the awestruck crowd parting like the sea! The physical confirms spiritual. And yet this is about as matter of fact a statement as you will ever read, but it marks without a doubt the fact that God had come to earth in the form of the Messiah (for those who had eyes to see it)! And He has the authority to forgive sins! Luke 5:25+ adds that he "**picked up what he had been lying on and went home glorifying God.**" Mark 2:12+ has that "**he got up and immediately picked up the pallet and went out in the sight of everyone**"

Jesus' point is brought home in full force -- If His declaration to be healed proved true, would not His words about forgiveness also prove true? One can only imagine what evil (and confused) thoughts were going through the minds of the religious leaders in light of this miraculous healing!

**John Butler** - The proof of the Deity of Christ was in the healing of the man. It was irrefutable proof, for the critics could not deny the miracle. The miracle manifested the forgiveness of the man's sins. But the critics still did not believe in Christ. Evidence does not always end unbelief. Evidence shames unbelief but does not always stop unbelief. That shows how belligerent unbelief really is. (Analytical Bible Expositor – Matthew)

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#### All Rise

Arise, take up your bed, and go to your house. —Mark 2:11

Today's Scripture: Mark 2:1-12

When I asked my husband to buy eggs on his way home so I could make cornbread for supper, he said, "I've got something better than cornbread." Coming from Jay, that was a surprising statement. But I learned what he meant when he walked into the house and handed me a fresh loaf of homemade cinnamon bread. A label on the wrapper said, "Thanks for the dough. We kneaded it." The bread was made by Sue Kehr and given as a "thank you" for a donation to a youth organization.

Sue started making bread after she had to quit her job as a nurse because of a head injury. Instead of letting circumstances pull her down when she could no longer help people in her usual ways, Sue rose to the challenge and created a unique expression of gratitude. She now makes and gives away delicious homemade bread to ministries that can then distribute the loaves to others.

Although Sue did not receive complete physical healing like the paralytic Jesus healed (Mark 2), she did rise up and cause many to be amazed at the work of God in her life.

God has something for each of us to do, despite our limitations. Rise up and ask what He might want to do through you. By: Julie Ackerman Link ([Our Daily Bread, Copyright RBC Ministries, Grand Rapids, MI. — Reprinted by permission. All rights reserved](#))

#### Reflect & Pray

When God asks you to lay aside  
Some cherished work you loved to do,

Accept His choice of someone else  
And let Him give new work to you.  
—Fasick

Step up to the tasks and do what God asks.

#### Matthew 9:8 But when the crowds saw this, they were awestruck, and glorified God, who had given such authority to men.

NET Matthew 9:8 When the crowd saw this, they were afraid and honored God who had given such authority to men.

GNT Matthew 9:8 δέντες δέ οἱ χλοι φοβ θησαν καὶ δέξασαν τὸν θεόν τὸν δέντα ξουσίαν τοιατὴν τὸν θρόνοις.

NLT Matthew 9:8 Fear swept through the crowd as they saw this happen. And they praised God for sending a man with such great authority.

KJV Matthew 9:8 But when the multitudes saw it, they **marvelled**, and glorified God, which had given such power unto men.

ESV Matthew 9:8 When the crowds saw it, they were afraid, and they glorified God, who had given such authority to men.

NIV Matthew 9:8 When the crowd saw this, they were filled with awe; and they praised God, who had given such authority to men.

ASV Matthew 9:8 But when the multitudes saw it, they were afraid, and glorified God, who had given such authority unto men.

CSB Matthew 9:8 When the crowds saw this, they were awestruck and gave glory to God who had given such authority to men.

- **when** - Mt 12:23 15:31 Mk 2:12 7:37 Lu 5:26 7:16
- **and** - Mt 15:31 Lu 5:25 17:15 23:47 Ac 4:21 Ga 1:24

### AWESTRUCK BY AN AWESOME GOD

**But when the crowds saw this, they were awestruck- Saw this** begs the question **saw what?** Undoubtedly everything that had transpired in Mt 9:2-7. To this point only the scribes had been mentioned but we know there were crowds because the men had to come in through the roof not the crowded front door. Matthew says when they saw this, indicating they were not focusing on what they had heard Jesus say (your sins are forgiven) but on what they could see. Simply stated, by focusing on the man's healing, and making no mention of his forgiven state, they missed the greater work. **Awestruck** is **phobeo** which means they were filled with fear, not cringing fright, but reverential awe, but not enough to truly fear God, for such fear is the beginning of wisdom! As Solomon said "The fear of the LORD is the beginning of knowledge; Fools despise wisdom and instruction." These crowds would be in the latter category of fools because they missed the truth of what Jesus was trying to convey.

**Awestruck** ([5399](#))**phobeo** from **phobos** = fear source of our English "phobia" means to be in an apprehensive state that can range from mild uneasiness to stark terror as when one is frightened, terrified or alarmed. (Mt 10:31). **Phobeo** can be a fear of man (Lk 20:19, Mt 2:22, Mt 21:26, 46) as when Peter feared "the party of the circumcision" (Gal 2:12) which motivated him "to withdraw and hold himself aloof." The most common use of **phobeo** in the New Testament represents reverential awe, not cringing fright and thus expresses the feeling of a person who is in the presence of someone infinitely superior.

**Phobeo** in Matthew - Matt. 1:20; Matt. 2:22; Matt. 9:8; Matt. 10:26; Matt. 10:28; Matt. 10:31; Matt. 14:5; Matt. 14:27; Matt. 14:30; Matt. 17:6; Matt. 17:7; Matt. 21:26; Matt. 21:46; Matt. 25:25; Matt. 27:54; Matt. 28:5; Matt. 28:10;

Notice that Matthew has the reaction of the crowds, whereas whereas Mark 2:12+ says "they were **ALL** amazed and were glorifying God." Luke 5:26+ says "they were **ALL** struck with astonishment and [began] glorifying God." The use of "**ALL**" in the other synoptic accounts at least suggests that some of the religious leaders joined in with this reaction. Compare the fact that Matthew earlier had

said "SOME of the scribes" (Mt 9:3) but does not say **ALL**, which would also support that some of the scribes may have joined the amazed crowd in glorifying God. Interesting!

**TECHNICAL NOTE:** Some manuscripts have thaumazo (thus KJV = "marvelled") instead of phobeo, but the NET Note says the reading of phobeo is "surely authentic."

**And glorified (doxazo) God, Who had given such authority (exousia) to men** - Note the phrase **authority to men** indicates they viewed Jesus as a mere man who was given authority by God but they did not recognize or acknowledge Him as God. They missed the graphic lesson completely and failed to understand the linkage of Deity regarding physical and spiritual healing (forgiveness). As one writer says "The unmistakable divine character of Jesus in the Gospel does not yet entail the direct equation of Jesus and God." (Word Biblical Commentary – Matthew)

Compare the crowd's reaction with the dinner guests in Luke 7:49+ "Those who were reclining at the table with Him began to say to themselves, "Who is this man who even forgives sins?"

**Butler** writes "That they "glorified" God simply means they believed it was Divine power that worked the healing. Because of the later rejection of Christ by the people, this reaction of the people to the miracle does not indicate they were converted, only that they were amazed. They were moved emotionally but not spiritually." (Ibid)

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## Amazing!

All were amazed and glorified God. —Mark 2:12

Today's Scripture: Mark 2:1-12

When Jesus healed a paralytic as proof of His authority to forgive the man's sins, the people who witnessed the event were amazed, and they "glorified God, saying, 'We never saw anything like this!'" (Mark 2:12). More than a dozen times in the gospel of Mark, we read accounts of people reacting in a similar way to the words and works of Jesus.

The word translated as "amazed" or "astonished" carries the meaning of "being thrown into a state of surprise or fear, or both." We may sometimes feel that way when we encounter Jesus Christ as we read God's Word. Like the disciples, we may be amazed when we read of Jesus saying, "How hard it is for those who have riches to enter the kingdom of God!" (10:23). So often we think that having lots of money would solve all our problems.

Those who saw a man delivered from a legion of demons reacted with amazement (5:20). But why? Did they think he was beyond God's power to save? Do we feel the same way when God saves certain people?

Jesus is not bound by our limitations or expectations. He speaks and acts with authority and wisdom far beyond ours. With reverence and awe, let's hear Jesus' words and look for the transforming touch of His mighty hand. David C. McCasland ([Our Daily Bread, Copyright RBC Ministries, Grand Rapids, MI. — Reprinted by permission. All rights reserved](#))

## Reflect & Pray

I bow, O Lord, before Your throne  
In awed humility  
When I reflect on who You are  
And all You've done for me.  
—Sper

Never measure God's unlimited power by your limited expectations.

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**Matthew 9:9 As Jesus went on from there, He saw a man called Matthew, sitting in the tax collector's booth; and He said to him, "Follow Me!" And he got up and followed Him**

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NET Matthew 9:9 As Jesus went on from there, he saw a man named Matthew sitting at the tax booth. "Follow me," he said to him. And he got up and followed him.

GNt Matthew 9:9 Καὶ πάρα γων ἦσαν οἱ θεοὶ εἰδὲν οὐθέωπον καθ μενον πὶ τὸ τέλον, Μαθθαὶ οὖν λέγει μενον, καὶ λαζαὶ αὐτοῦ, κολοθεὶ μοι. καὶ ναστὶς κολοθεῖν αὐτοῦ.

NLT Matthew 9:9 As Jesus was walking along, he saw a man named Matthew sitting at his tax collector's

booth. "Follow me and be my disciple," Jesus said to him. So Matthew got up and followed him.

**KJV** 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.

**ESV** Matthew 9:9 As Jesus passed on from there, he saw a man called Matthew sitting at the tax booth, and he said to him, "Follow me." And he rose and followed him.

**NIV** Matthew 9:9 As Jesus went on from there, he saw a man named Matthew sitting at the tax collector's booth. "Follow me," he told him, and Matthew got up and followed him.

**ASV** Matthew 9:9 And as Jesus passed by from thence, he saw a man, called Matthew, sitting at the place of toll: and he saith unto him, Follow me. And he arose, and followed him.

**CSB** Matthew 9:9 As Jesus went on from there, He saw a man named Matthew sitting at the tax office, and He said to him, "Follow Me!" So he got up and followed Him.

**NKJ** Matthew 9:9 As Jesus passed on from there, He saw a man named Matthew sitting at the tax office. And He said to him, "Follow Me." So he arose and followed Him.

**NRS** Matthew 9:9 As Jesus was walking along, he saw a man called Matthew sitting at the tax booth; and he said to him, "Follow me." And he got up and followed him.

**YLT** Matthew 9:9 And Jesus passing by thence, saw a man sitting at the tax-office, named Matthew, and saith to him, 'Be following me,' and he, having risen, did follow him.

- **called Matthew** - Mt 21:31,32 Mk 2:14-17 Lu 5:27,28, Levi, Lu 15:1,2 19:2-10
- **Follow** - Mt 4:18-22 1Ki 19:19-21 Ga 1:16

#### Parallel Passages:

Mark 2:13+ And He went out again by the seashore; and all the people were coming (GRAPHIC **IMPERFECT** = THEY KEPT COMING, ONE CAN SEE THE CROWD SWELLING) to Him, and He was teaching (ALSO GRAPHIC **IMPERFECT**) them. 14 As He passed by, He saw Levi the son of Alphaeus sitting in the tax booth, and He said to him, "Follow Me!" And he got up and followed Him.

Luke 5:27-28+ After that He went out and noticed a tax collector named Levi sitting in the tax booth, and He said to him, "Follow Me." 28 And he left everything behind, and got up and began to follow Him.

## **MATTHEW SITTING COLLECTING TAXES**

**As Jesus went on from there** - Mark 2:13+ adds some additional detail that Jesus "went out again by the seashore; and all the people were coming to Him, and He was teaching them."

**Background** - The messianic Jewish writer **Alfred Edersheim** has an interesting note on the call of Matthew - It is in the light of what we have just learned concerning the Rabbinic views of forgiveness and repentance that the call of Levi-Matthew must be read, if we would perceive its full meaning (Here is what Edersheim wrote as background for the call of Levi-Matthew). There is no need to suppose that it took place immediately on the cure of the paralytic. On the contrary, the more circumstantial account of St. Mark implies, that some time had intervened. If our suggestion be correct, that it was winter when the paralytic was healed at Capernaum, we may suppose it to have been the early spring-time of that favoured district, when Jesus 'went forth again by the seaside.' And with this, as we shall see, best agrees the succession of after-events. (Life and Times of the Messiah)

**MacArthur** - Edersheim states that there were two categories of publicani. The first, whom the Jews called gabbai, collected general taxes, which included those on land and other property, those on income, and those referred to as poll, or registration, taxes. The basic land tax (the amount paid to Rome) was a tenth of one's grain and a fifth of one's fruit and wine. Income tax amounted to one percent of one's earnings, and the amount of the poll tax varied. The second type of tax collector was called a mokhes, who collected a wide variety of use taxes—taxes similar to our import duties, tollway fees, boat docking fees, business license fees, and the like. The mokhes had almost unlimited latitude in their taxing powers and could attach a tax to virtually

any article or activity. They could, for instance, levy a tax on a person's boat, on the fish he caught with it, and on the dock where he unloaded it. They could tax a traveler's donkey, his slaves and servants, and his goods. They had authority to open private letters to see if a taxable business of some sort might be related to the correspondence. There were two kinds of mokhes. One kind, called the great mokhes, hired other men to collect taxes for them and, by virtue of partial anonymity, protected at least some of their reputation among their fellow countrymen. The other kind, called small mokhes, did their own assessing and collecting and therefore were in constant contact with members of the community as well as with all travelers who passed their way. The gabbai were despised, the great mokhes were more despised, and the small mokhes were despised most. Matthew was obviously a small mokhes, because he himself was sitting in the tax office as Jesus passed through the outskirts of Capernaum. (Matthew Commentary)

**He saw a man called Matthew, sitting in the tax collector's booth-** Matthew uses [horaō](#) for **saw**, but Luke uses a more descriptive word [theaomai](#) (from **θάομαι** = to wonder, English = theatrical) which describes an intelligent beholding, a "careful and deliberate vision which interprets its object" and thus means that Jesus had an attentive, contemplative look implying that one is impressed by what he saw (e.g., use in Mt 22:11).

Interestingly, **Matthew** (means "gift of God") does not give his name **Levi** here but both Mark 2:14+ and Lk 5:27+ have **Levi** in place of Matthew and Mark adds that he is **the son of Alphaeus**. Do not be confused for Matthew 10:3 mentions another disciple who was a son of Alphaeus, the disciple James, often called James the Less to distinguish him from James the brother of John. While Matthew does not specifically state that he was a **tax collector** clearly that would be the implication if he was sitting in a tax collector's booth. Lk 5:27+ leaves no doubt writing that Jesus "noticed a **tax collector** named Levi sitting in the **tax booth**." Someone has said that Matthew's account (he could have written "Jesus saw me") reflects his humility and authenticity in that he did not attempt to hide his past heinous occupation or make excuses for what he had done. In support of this thought is that even in the list of disciples in Mt 10:3 Matthew designates himself as "Matthew the tax collector!" And frankly who he HAD BEEN presents a striking testimony to the power of the Gospel of Jesus Who made him who he NOW WAS! As an aside it is good to be ready to tell others our "before/after" testimony, of course not giving defiling detail of our prior sins, but focusing on the divine deliverance from them! ([My personal testimony to God's grace](#)) **Matthew** is the name that **Levi** went by after becoming a disciple of Jesus (of Mk 3:18+, Lk 6:15+). Two names were common in Jesus' day, one Jewish and one Greek, usually given at birth and so he was named Matthew Levi (however the name Levi does not suggest he was of the tribe of Levi). Notice that just as God had called Moses while he was tending his flock (Ex 3:1), so Jesus called Levi while he was at his regular occupation.

**THOUGHT** - Jesus calls men where they are. He called Peter, James and John while they were carrying on a successful fishing business and "they left everything and followed Him" (Lk 5:8+, cf Mt 4:18-20+). He called Martyn Lloyd-Jones as a medical doctor. You may be in business or some other professional occupation, so here is the question - if Jesus calls you, will you respond and follow His call? It might be a call to the mission field, to the pulpit or to some other place of strategic ministry. You might have a successful occupation in the world's eyes, but your "success" here will pale in comparison to the "success" you experience eternally because you were faithful to heed the Master's call! Dear reader, may God's Spirit give you ears to hear the Master's call. Amen

**Robertson** on the **tax collector's booth** - The tax-office or custom-house of Capernaum placed here (sitting at the toll-gate on the Great West Road from Damascus to the Mediterranean) to collect taxes from the boats going across the lake outside of Herod's territory or from people going from Damascus to the coast, a regular caravan route. They were detested because they practised graft. Even Gabinius the proconsul of Syria was accused by Cicero of relieving Syrians and Jews of legitimate taxes for graft. He ordered some of the tax-officers removed. Already Jesus had spoken of the publican (Mt 5:46) in a way that shows the public disfavour in which they were held...He was a publican (*telōnēs*) who collected toll for [Herod Antipas](#). The Jews hated or despised these publicans and classed them with sinners. (As **Spurgeon** so aptly phrases it Matthew ""was at this time busy **taking**, but he was called to a work that was essentially **giving**.)

**Lane** observes that ""When a Jew entered the customs service he was regarded as an outcast from society: he was disqualified as a judge or a witness in a court session, was excommunicated from the synagogue, and in the eyes of the community his disgrace extended to his family." (Commentary on Mark)

## **MATTHEW CALLED BY JESUS**

**Follow Me** is not a suggestion and not even an "invitation" per se (invitations usually don't come as commands!), but is actually a command in the [present imperative](#). **Follow Me** and keep on following Me as a way of life, with the implication of doing so for the

rest of your life. Given that our fallen human flesh does not seek after God, one has to propose that in some way the Holy Spirit was actively working in Matthew's heart to give him both the desire and the power to leave everything and follow Jesus. [See discussion of the Need for the Holy Spirit to obey NT commands](#). As J I Packer said "Sinners cannot obey the gospel, any more than the law, without renewal of heart."

**And He said to him, "Follow Me!"** - Can you imagine the shock on the faces of the other disciples at Jesus' command to a notorious tax collector? The parallel passage in Luke 5:28+ adds a significant detail that Levi (Matthew) **left** (*kataleipo* = totally abandoned!) **everything** (How much? Greek = *pas* = no exceptions!) **behind** and rose and began to follow Him." "Matthew was probably very wealthy—tax collecting was a lucrative occupation; so when Matthew walked away from his booth, he snubbed Rome and a lifetime of potentially great wealth. Several of the other disciples could always return to fishing, but Matthew could never turn back....Levi, who left behind a material fortune in order to gain a spiritual fortune!" (Barton) Matthew's omission of mentioning the cost to himself underscores his modesty and humility. It would have been so tempting to say "Look what I gave up to follow Jesus!" In fact, in the very Gospel Matthew penned, he never records that he personally says anything (the only other disciples who never speak are James the Less and Simon the Zealot)! Matthew let's his light shine in his Gospel recorded in the New Testament!

**THOUGHT** - In truth, when we get a proper perspective on what we have forsaken or left behind in this temporal world and what we have eternally gained in Jesus, we realize there is simply no comparison when we have come to know the One "**in whom are hidden all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge.**" (Col 2:3+) Matthew left earthly treasures for the eternal treasures in Christ and gained an "**inheritance which is imperishable and undefiled and will not fade away, reserved in heaven**" (1 Pe 1:4+) And frankly, it simply does not get any better! Barton observes that "Following upon the discussion of Jesus' ability to forgive sins (Mt 9:1-8), this episode dramatically demonstrated the range of sinners that Jesus could and would forgive." (LAC) As a despised tax collector Matthew would have fully understood Jesus' words that "the Son of Man has come to seek and to save that which was lost." (Lk 19:10+)

**GET UP AND GO** When Jesus called Matthew to be one of his disciples, Matthew got up and followed, leaving a promising career and a wealthy lifestyle. When God calls you to follow or obey him, do you do it with as much abandon as Matthew did? Sometimes the decision to follow Christ requires difficult or painful choices. Like Matthew, we must decide to leave behind those things that would keep us from following Christ. (Bruce Barton - Life Application Commentary)

This call recalls the previous call of four other disciples in Mt 4:18-22+ who "Immediately left their nets and followed Him!" It is worth noting that that Jesus' call of Levi was slightly different than that of Peter, James and John in Luke 5:10-11+ for here in Matthew Jesus makes no mention of a promise as He did to the other disciples "**Do not fear, from now on you will be catching men.**" Matthew was willing give up everything and go even without this promise! One is reminded of Jesus' words in Mark 8:34-38-

And He summoned the crowd with His disciples, and said to them, "If anyone wishes to come after Me, he must deny himself (MATTHEW CERTAINLY DID AS DID PETER, ANDREW, JAMES AND JOHN), and take up his cross and **follow** (*akoloutheo*) Me. 35 "**For** (TERM OF EXPLANATION) whoever wishes to save his life will lose it, but whoever loses his life for My sake and the gospel's will save it. 36 "**For** (TERM OF EXPLANATION) what does it profit a man to gain the whole world, and forfeit his soul? 37 "**For** (TERM OF EXPLANATION) what will a man give in exchange for his soul? 38 "**For** (TERM OF EXPLANATION) whoever is ashamed of Me and My words in this adulterous and sinful generation, the Son of Man will also be ashamed of him when He comes in the glory of His Father with the holy angels."

**Follow** (NLT paraphrases it "Follow me and be my disciple")([190](#))**(*akoloutheo*** from **a** = expresses union with, likeness + **keleuthos** = a road, way) means to **walk the same road** (Ponder that simple definition dear believer - **Am I willing to walk the same road as Jesus?**) Literally to follow (like the crowds followed Jesus **BUT** they were not truly committed to him. E.g., see Jn 6:66) and in a figurative sense to follow Jesus as a disciple. **Akoloutheo** in Matthew - Matt. 4:20; Matt. 4:22; Matt. 4:25; Matt. 8:1; Matt. 8:10; Matt. 8:19; Matt. 8:22; Matt. 8:23; Matt. 9:9; Matt. 9:19; Matt. 9:27; Matt. 10:38; Matt. 12:15; Matt. 14:13; Matt. 16:24; Matt. 19:2; Matt. 19:21; Matt. 19:27; Matt. 19:28; Matt. 20:29; Matt. 20:34; Matt. 21:9; Matt. 26:58; Matt. 27:55

## MATTHEW FOLLOWED JESUS

**And he got up and followed Him-** Edersheim that Matthew, "said not a word, for his soul was in the speechless surprise of unexpected grace." None of the synoptic accounts record even a suggestion of hesitation or things like "I will pray about that Jesus." While we should always bathe our life decisions (big and small) in prayer, there are times when the will of God is so clear that there

is little question about how we should respond. Whether Jesus and Matthew had previous personal contact is not clear, but undoubtedly Matthew was not ignorant of this miracle Worker Who had made Capernaum His home base.

**Barclay** has an interesting note that "He left his tax-collector's table; but took from it one thing—his pen ... this man, whose trade had taught him to use a pen, used that skill to compose the first handbook of the teaching of Jesus.

**Amy Carmichael** wrote,

I hear Him call, "Come, follow";  
That was all!  
My gold grew dim.  
My heart went after Him.  
I rose and followed,  
That was all.  
Would you not follow,  
If you heard Him call?

**MacArthur** adds "Because of his position as an agent of Rome, he knew that once he forsook his post he would never be able to return to it. He knew the cost and willingly paid it. Of all the disciples, Matthew doubtlessly made the greatest sacrifice of material possessions; yet he himself makes no mention of it. He felt with Paul that "whatever things were gain to me, those things I have counted as loss for the sake of Christ" (Phil. 3:7). When a person is truly converted, he cannot leave his old life fast enough. His old habits, standards, and practices no longer appeal to him and he gladly longs to leave them behind." (Ibid)

**Guzik** points out that "In one way this was more of a sacrifice than some of the other disciples made. Peter, James, and John could more easily go back to their fishing business, but it would be hard for Levi to go back to tax collecting. There is archaeological evidence that fish taken from the Sea of Galilee were taxed. So Jesus took as His disciple the taxman that may have taken money from Peter, James, and John and the other fishermen among the disciples. This might have made for some awkward introductions." ([Matthew 9 Commentary](#))

**Spurgeon** - Two words sufficed for his conversion and obedience: **'Follow me.'** They are very full and pregnant words. Like the palsied man, he did precisely what he was told to do: "He arose, and followed him." Matthew describes his own conduct from personal knowledge, but he does not use a superfluous word. He acted with great decision and promptness. No doubt he saw his accounts settled; or, it may be, he had just sent them in, and he could leave at once without causing confusion in the custom-house. At any rate, he did there and then follow Jesus as a sheep follows its shepherd. Lord, let my obedience towards thee be as the echo to the voice.(see [Matthew 9 Commentary](#))

**THOUGHT** - The challenge of Jesus was sudden and sharp, but Levi (Matthew) was ready to respond at once. He had heard of Jesus and quickly decided. Great decisions are often made on a moment's notice. Levi is a fine object lesson for business men who put off service to Christ to carry on their business. Play Chris Tomlin's son "[I will follow you, Jesus!](#)"

Where you go, I'll go  
Where you stay, I'll stay  
When you move, I'll move  
I will follow...

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### Jesus' Team

He . . . saw a tax collector named Levi . . . . And He said to him, "Follow Me." —Luke 5:27 (cf Lk 5:27-32, Mk 2:13-17, Mt 9:9-13)

In 2002 the Oakland Athletics built a winning baseball team in an unorthodox way. They had lost three top players after 2001, and the team didn't have money to sign any stars. So Oakland's general manager, Billy Beane, used some often-neglected statistics to assemble a group of lesser-known players either "past their prime" or seen by other teams as not skilled enough. That ragtag team ran off a 20-game winning streak on the way to winning their division and 103 games.

This reminds me a little of the way Jesus put together His "team" of disciples. He included rough Galilean fishermen, a zealot, and even a despised tax collector named Levi (Matthew). This reminds me that "God has chosen the weak things of the world to put to shame the things which are mighty" (1 Cor. 1:27). God used those dedicated men (minus Judas) to ignite a movement that affected the world so dramatically it has never been the same.

There's a lesson here for us. Sometimes we seek out the familiar, the influential, and the rich. And we tend to ignore people with less status or those with physical limitations.

Jesus put some of society's less desirable people on His team—treating everyone the same. With the Spirit's power and guidance, we too can honor all people equally. By David Egner ([Our Daily Bread, Copyright RBC Ministries, Grand Rapids, MI. — Reprinted by permission. All rights reserved](#))

In Jesus Christ we all are equal,  
For God's Spirit makes us one;  
As we give each other honor,  
We give glory to His Son.  
—Fitzhugh

There are no unimportant people in the body of Christ.

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### Follow Me

It is not the healthy who need a doctor, but the sick. Mark 2:17

Today's Scripture & Insight: Mark 2:13-17 (cf Lk 5:27-32, Mk 2:13-17, Mt 9:9-13)

Health clubs offer many different programs for those who want to lose weight and stay healthy. One fitness center caters only to those who want to lose at least 50 pounds and develop a healthy lifestyle. One member says that she quit her previous fitness club because she felt the slim and fit people were staring at her and judging her out-of-shape body. She now works out 5 days a week and is achieving healthy weight loss in a positive and welcoming environment.

Two thousand years ago, Jesus came to call the spiritually unfit to follow Him. Levi was one such person. Jesus saw him sitting in his tax collector's booth and said, "Follow me" (Mark 2:14). His words captured Levi's heart, and he followed Jesus. Tax collectors were often greedy and dishonest in their dealings and were considered religiously unclean. When the religious leaders saw Jesus having dinner at Levi's house with other tax collectors, they asked, "Why does he eat with tax collectors and sinners?" (Mk 2:16). Jesus replied, "I have not come to call the righteous, but sinners" (Mk 2:17).

Jesus came to save sinners, which includes all of us. He loves us, welcomes us into His presence, and calls us to follow Him. As we walk with Him, we grow more and more spiritually fit. By: Marvin Williams ([Our Daily Bread, Copyright RBC Ministries, Grand Rapids, MI. — Reprinted by permission. All rights reserved](#))

### Reflect & Pray

Read Acts 9:10-19 and see how one man obeyed God and welcomed someone who was considered spiritually unfit. What were the results? How can you reach out to those who need the Savior? How can you help your church become a more welcoming place for the spiritually unfit?

Jesus' arms of welcome are always open.

(ED: WERE HIS ARMS NOT OPENED WIDE EVEN AS HE DIED?)

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### Leader Or Follower?

[Jesus] said to him, "Follow Me." —Luke 5:27 (cf Lk 5:27-32, Mk 2:13-17, Mt 9:9-13)

A close friend asked Gandhi, "If you admire Christ so much, why don't you become a Christian?" It is said that he replied, "When I meet a Christian who is a follower of Christ, I may consider it."

But isn't that what a Christian is supposed to be—a follower of Christ? Joe Stowell, former president of Moody Bible Institute, wrote in *Following Christ*: "Many of us live out our faith as though [Christ] exists to follow us. We come to believe that Christ exists to satisfy our demands. . . . This disguised form of self-serving religion sets Christ up as just one more commodity in life that will enhance and empower our dreams."

When Jesus called His disciples to follow Him, He meant that He would do the leading and directing; they would do the following (Luke 5:27). Like the disciples, we must give up our will, obey Him, and choose to "lose" our lives for Him (17:33).

Without too much thought, this might sound simple. But in reality, it is impossible to do on our own. Only by choosing each day to let go of our own plans and by trusting the Holy Spirit's leading can we cooperate with His work in us.

Because Christ is the One who holds  
The key to all our needs,  
We can release what we hold dear  
To follow where He leads.

—Sper

To lead others to Jesus, you must first learn to follow Him.

**Matthew 9:10 Then it happened that as Jesus was reclining at the table in the house, behold, many tax collectors and sinners came and were dining with Jesus and His disciples**

Hendriksen - In the house, as Jesus was reclining at table, what happens? Many tax collectors and (other) people of low reputation came and reclined at table with him and his disciples.

NET Matthew 9:10 As Jesus was having a meal in Matthew's house, many tax collectors and sinners came and ate with Jesus and his disciples.

GNT Matthew 9:10 Καὶ γένετο αὐτὸν νακεῖμνον εἰς τὸ οἶκον, καὶ δοῦλοι πολλοὶ τελεῖν καὶ μαρτυρῶν λαθεῖν συναντοῦσιν τὸν Ιησοῦν καὶ τοὺς μαθητὰς αὐτοῦ.

NLT Matthew 9:10 Later, Matthew invited Jesus and his disciples to his home as dinner guests, along with many tax collectors and other disreputable sinners.

KJV Matthew 9:10 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.

ESV Matthew 9:10 And as Jesus reclined at table in the house, behold, many tax collectors and sinners came and were reclining with Jesus and his disciples.

NIV Matthew 9:10 While Jesus was having dinner at Matthew's house, many tax collectors and "sinners" came and ate with him and his disciples.

ASV Matthew 9:10 And it came to pass, as he sat at meat in the house, behold, many publicans and sinners came and sat down with Jesus and his disciples.

CSB Matthew 9:10 While He was reclining at the table in the house, many tax collectors and sinners came as guests to eat with Jesus and His disciples.

NKJ Matthew 9:10 Now it happened, as Jesus sat at the table in the house, that behold, many tax collectors and sinners came and sat down with Him and His disciples.

NRS Matthew 9:10 And as he sat at dinner in the house, many tax collectors and sinners came and were sitting with him and his disciples.

YLT Matthew 9:10 And it came to pass, he reclining (at meat) in the house, that lo, many tax-gatherers and sinners having come, were lying (at meat) with Jesus and his disciples,

- **as** - Mk 2:15,16,17 Lu 5:29-32
- **many** - Mt 5:46,47 Joh 9:31 1Ti 1:13-16

## Parallel Passages

Mark 2:15+ And it \*happened that He was reclining at the table in his house, and many tax collectors and sinners were dining with Jesus and His disciples; for there were many of them, and they were following Him. 16 When the scribes of the Pharisees saw that He was eating with the sinners and tax collectors, they said to His disciples, "Why is He eating and drinking with tax collectors and sinners?" 17 And hearing this, Jesus \*said to them, "It is not those who are healthy who need a physician, but those who are sick; I did not come to call the righteous, but sinners."

Luke 5:29+ And Levi gave a big reception for Him in his house; and there was a great crowd of tax collectors

and other people who were reclining at the table with them. 30 The Pharisees and their scribes began grumbling at His disciples, saying, "Why do you eat and drink with the tax collectors and sinners?" 31 And Jesus answered and said to them, "It is not those who are well who need a physician, but those who are sick. 32 "I have not come to call the righteous but sinners to repentance."



Click to enlarge

## RIGHTEOUS ONE RECLINES WITH RIFF-RAFF

**Riff-raff** refers to disreputable or undesirable people. This was quite a scene which "made a scene" with the religious leaders as the subsequent passages show!

**Robertson** points out that "It was a strange medley at Levi's feast (Jesus and the four fisher disciples, Nathanael and Philip; Matthew Levi and his former companions, publicans and sinners; Pharisees with their scribes or students as on-lookers; disciples of John the Baptist who were fasting at the very time that Jesus was feasting and with such a group)." ([Matthew 9 Commentary](#))

**Then it happened that as Jesus was reclining at the table in the house-** Lk 5:29+ tells us that "Levi gave a big reception for Him (JESUS) in his house" (which he also apparently eventually left behind - Lk 5:28+) "At Matthew's house there gathered a crowd that Jesus could not reach in the synagogues. The tax collectors had been excommunicated." (Barton) It is notable that another tax collector names Zaccheus also threw a big banquet after he was saved (Lk 19:1-10, 5, 9+). Jesus and the guests would most likely have reclined on their left elbow around a low horseshoe-shaped table such as that shown below with their feet behind them. Apparently only in Egypt did people sit at a table to eat. It follows that the picture of the banquet is probably not an accurate representation of the actual scene.

**Reclining** ([2621](#)) (**katakeimai**) from **katá** = down + **keímai** = lie outstretched) means to lie down and in this context to recline on a couch at a dinner table and thus to dine or eat a meal (Mk 2:15; 14:3; Lk 5:29; Lk 7:37; 1 Cor 8:10).

Click picture to enlarge  
[Click here for further explanation](#)

**Behold** - Why would Matthew use the attention grabbing word **'behold'** (see discussion of [idou](#)) here? Obviously the tax collector wants to draw our attention to the fact that this not just any dinner but is in essence a "dinner of the despised," the despised **tax collectors** and other assorted **sinners**. (Lk 5:29+ has "other people" instead of sinners).

**Hendriksen** comments "This may be considered a kind of farewell banquet, arranged by Matthew and at his house, in honor of Jesus, bidding farewell to the old life, ringing in the new, and beckoning all to become spiritual followers of the Lord." (BNTC)

**Many tax collectors and sinners came** - Luke says "there was a great crowd of tax collectors and other people." (Luke 5:29+) Note the description of "great crowd" or **many tax collectors**, (how many we do not know but one commentator says possibly 100's which seems a bit high) which is not surprising that they flocked together because everyone else avoided them like the plague. So filled with deep, inner delight was Matthew that he immediately arranged a feast in honor of the One whom he considered his Benefactor! (cf joy and celebration in Luke 15:6, 9+, Lk 15:23+). Levi apparently sensed the evangelistic nature of his calling (in spite of not hearing Jesus' promise to Peter in Lk 5:10), and responded by inviting his friends (other tax collectors were probably the only friends he had) to a banquet in order to introduce them to Jesus. His desire was that **outsiders** should be invited to become **insiders** in regard to the Gospel. This methodology remains an excellent evangelistic approach. [A B Bruce](#) says "Jesus aims at a mission among the reprobate classes, and His first step is the call of Matthew to discipleship, and His second the gathering together through him, of a large number of these classes to a social entertainment."

**THOUGHT** - I remember when I was first born again 40 years ago at age 39. I was so excited about Jesus that I told all my relatives about Him. Some became so irritated that they told me if I continued to speak of Jesus they did not want me to come see them again. There is a point of application here -- Levi a tax collector

exposed despised tax collectors to Jesus. Each of us as followers of Jesus has our own unique sphere of influence and for many in that sphere we may be their only significant contact with Jesus! Are you willing to be salty salt (Mt 5:13<sup>±</sup>, cf Col 4:3-6<sup>±</sup>)? Are you letting your light shine (Mt 5:14-15<sup>±</sup>, Mt 5:16<sup>±</sup>)? Have you opened your home like Matthew to the outcasts of society in order that you might introduce them to Jesus? Or at least are you opening your home to your circle of friends so that you can introduce them to your best Friend?

**Jon Courson** - There were three places Jesus consistently frequented: **open places**, where He preached to the masses; **quiet places**, where He prayed to His Father; and **festive places**, where He would celebrate with the people. When you read the Gospels, you cannot help but see that Jesus loved to go to parties. Whether it was in the home of a religious leader like Simon the Pharisee or in that of Matthew, a tax collector with the riffraff of society, Jesus was often in attendance at feasts or festivals. This shouldn't surprise us, considering that the first public miracle He ever did was turning water into wine—not for the purpose of serving Communion, but simply in order that a wedding celebration could continue. Jesus had the ability to attract people to Himself constantly and to enjoy being with others immensely. (Jon Courson's Application Commentary)

Luke records a number of dinners which Jesus attended, always for the purpose of teaching and revealing Himself - Luke 7:36; 9:12; 10:38; 11:37; 14:1; 19:7; 22:14; 24:30; 24:41.

**And were dining with Jesus and His disciples** ([mathetes](#)) - In the Ancient Near East sharing a meal was a time of communion and an expression of friendship and acceptance. We don't know for certain how many disciples were present at this time, but presumably those called in Matthew 4:18-22+ and Matthew himself.

**Matthew 9:11 When the Pharisees saw this, they said to His disciples, "Why is your Teacher eating with the tax collectors and sinners?"**

NET Matthew 9:11 When the Pharisees saw this they said to his disciples, "Why does your teacher eat with tax collectors and sinners?"

GNT Matthew 9:11 καὶ διτεῖς οἱ Φαρισαῖοι λεγοντος τοῖς μαθηταῖς αὐτοῦ, Διὰ τοῦ μετὰ τῶν τελῶν καὶ μαρτωλῶν σθεῖς διδοῦσι σκαλοῦς μνήσθε;

NLT Matthew 9:11 But when the Pharisees saw this, they asked his disciples, "Why does your teacher eat with such scum?"

KJV Matthew 9:11 And when the Pharisees saw it, they said unto his disciples, Why eateth your Master with publicans and sinners?

ESV Matthew 9:11 And when the Pharisees saw this, they said to his disciples, "Why does your teacher eat with tax collectors and sinners?"

NIV Matthew 9:11 When the Pharisees saw this, they asked his disciples, "Why does your teacher eat with tax collectors and 'sinners'?"

ASV Matthew 9:11 And when the Pharisees saw it, they said unto his disciples, Why eateth your Teacher with the publicans and sinners?

CSB Matthew 9:11 When the Pharisees saw this, they asked His disciples, "Why does your Teacher eat with tax collectors and sinners?"

NKJ Matthew 9:11 And when the Pharisees saw it, they said to His disciples, "Why does your Teacher eat with tax collectors and sinners?"

NRS Matthew 9:11 When the Pharisees saw this, they said to his disciples, "Why does your teacher eat with tax collectors and sinners?"

YLT Matthew 9:11 and the Pharisees having seen, said to his disciples, 'Wherefore with the tax-gatherers and sinners doth your teacher eat?'

■ **they said** - Mk 2:16 9:14-16

■ **Why** - Mt 11:19 Isa 65:5 Lu 5:30 15:1,2 19:7 1Co 5:9-11 Ga 2:15 Heb 5:2 2Jn 1:10

## Parallel Passages

Mark 2:16+ When the scribes of the Pharisees saw that He was eating with the sinners and tax collectors, they said to His disciples, "Why is He eating and drinking with tax collectors and sinners?"

Luke 5:30+ The Pharisees and their scribes began grumbling at His disciples, saying, "Why do you eat and drink with the tax collectors and sinners?"

**When the Pharisees saw this, they said to His disciples** - The **Pharisees** are in essence outraged at Jesus' actions. Matthew does not mention the **scribes** (*grammateus*) which are mentioned by Mark and Luke. Note that they were not themselves dining with these notorious sinners but were standing around (as was not unusual in the ancient world) where they could participate in conversation, but not actually eat with them as official guests. **Robertson** ([Matthew 9 Commentary](#)) comments that "It was probably in the long hall of the house where the scribes stood and ridiculed Jesus and the disciples, unless they stood outside, feeling too pious to go into the house of a publican. It was an offence for a Jew to eat with Gentiles as even many of the early Jewish Christians felt (Acts 11:3) and publicans and sinners were regarded like Gentiles (1 Cor. 5:11)." Only Lk 5:30+ says that they **began grumbling** (*gogguzo*) which is in the vivid [imperfect tense](#), which pictures them as doing this over and over and over - grumble, grumble, grumble! You never grumble like that do you? And notice that they direct their attack not at Jesus but as His disciples.

**Pharisees** ([5330](#)) see discussion of [pharisaios](#). **MacArthur** comments that "Their "ministry" was not to help but to judge, not to restore but to condemn. They wanted no part of a Man who, contrarily, condemned their self-righteousness and offered forgiveness to obvious sinners."

**Disciples** ([3101](#)) (**mathetes**) from [manthano](#) = to learn which Vine says is "from a root *math*, indicating thought accompanied by endeavor". English = "mathematics"; cf [matheteuo - make disciples](#)) describes a person who learns from another by instruction, whether formal or informal. Discipleship includes the idea of one who intentionally learns by inquiry and observation (cf [inductive Bible study](#)) and thus **mathetes** is more than a mere pupil. A **mathetes** describes an adherent of a teacher. As **followers** of Jesus we are to be, first of all, **learners**. We are to learn from Him by listening to Him, learn the truth that will set us free (John 8:32) and keep us from error. But we are also to learn from Him by looking at Him- learn how to live a life of beauty and blessing.

**Matthew's uses of disciple** - Matt. 5:1; Matt. 8:21; Matt. 8:23; Matt. 9:10; Matt. 9:11; Matt. 9:14; Matt. 9:19; Matt. 9:37; Matt. 10:1; Matt. 10:24; Matt. 10:25; Matt. 10:42; Matt. 11:1; Matt. 11:2; Matt. 12:1; Matt. 12:2; Matt. 12:49; Matt. 13:10; Matt. 13:36; Matt. 14:12; Matt. 14:15; Matt. 14:19; Matt. 14:22; Matt. 14:26; Matt. 15:2; Matt. 15:12; Matt. 15:23; Matt. 15:32; Matt. 15:33; Matt. 15:36; Matt. 16:5; Matt. 16:13; Matt. 16:20; Matt. 16:21; Matt. 16:24; Matt. 17:6; Matt. 17:10; Matt. 17:13; Matt. 17:16; Matt. 17:19; Matt. 18:1; Matt. 19:10; Matt. 19:13; Matt. 19:23; Matt. 19:25; Matt. 21:1; Matt. 21:6; Matt. 21:20; Matt. 22:16; Matt. 23:1; Matt. 24:1; Matt. 24:3; Matt. 26:1; Matt. 26:8; Matt. 26:17; Matt. 26:18; Matt. 26:19; Matt. 26:20; Matt. 26:26; Matt. 26:35; Matt. 26:36; Matt. 26:40; Matt. 26:45; Matt. 26:56; Matt. 27:64; Matt. 28:7; Matt. 28:8; Matt. 28:13; Matt. 28:16

**Why is your Teacher eating with the tax collectors and sinners?** - Here is the crux of the criticism - Jesus is the friend of sinners! **NLT** is quite vivid paraphrasing it as "Why does your teacher eat with such [scum](#)?" **Eating** in the [present tense](#) by which they are implying this was Jesus regular routine (and in fact it was). Utley quips "I think many "church people" would ask this same question today, which shows how easy it is to forget the purpose of Jesus' coming." Paul gave the perfect answer to their question stating that "God demonstrates His own love toward us, in that while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us." (Ro 5:8±). The Pharisees had their own (false) definition of **sinners** as those who did not obey their legalistic Pharisaic interpretations of the law. **David Turner** notes that "Fellowship around a table was taken seriously in Jesus' time, as being an act that implies deeper unity than is currently attributed to it in the West....His participation in table fellowship probably should be viewed as a foretaste of eschatological festivities (Mt 8:11; Mt 22:1–14; Mt 25:1–13; Mt 26:29)." (Cornerstone Bible Commentary) Notice that the disciples do not answer the question of the religious leaders but leave that for Jesus to address. The rabbis had established the (non-Biblical) rule that "The disciples of the learned shall not recline at table in the company of the 'am hā—āreç" (translated = "the people of the soil," aka "the rabble that does not know the law.")

The word **sinners** was used in Jesus' day of people who had no concern/respect for the Law or the Jewish traditions and thus were considered vile, wretched and worthless. And yet Jesus condescends to dine with them! An interesting question, not answered by any of the synoptic accounts is how did **the tax collectors and sinners** respond to Jesus? We simply do not know. The only tax collector in this chapter that is a certainty is Matthew.

Jesus would later allude to this and similar events declaring ""The Son of Man came eating and drinking, and they (THE CRITICS OF JESUS) say, 'Behold, a gluttonous (phagos - habitually eating and drinking in excess) man and a drunkard, a friend of tax

collectors and sinners!" Yet wisdom is vindicated by her deeds." (Mt 11:19, cf Lk 15:2+) **MacArthur** explains the last phrase **wisdom is vindicated by her deeds** noting that "Corrupt human wisdom produces corrupt human deeds, such as the false accusations against John and Jesus. On the other hand, the righteous, divinely empowered wisdom of John and Jesus produced righteous deeds that resulted in repentance, forgiven sin, and redeemed lives." (Ibid)

**Teacher** (1320)([didaskalos](#) from [didasko](#)) = teach to shape will of one being taught by content of what is taught <> cp [didaskalía](#)) is one who provides instruction or systematically imparts truth. The **teacher** teaches in such a way as to shape will of one being taught by content of what is taught. Someone has said that "The great teacher is the one who turns our ears into eyes so that we can see the truth." Henry Brooks added that "A (Bible) teacher affects eternity; he can never tell where his influence stops." **Richards** observes that "Jesus' teaching focused on shaping the hearers' perception of God and God's kingdom, and thus it dealt with the implications of a personal relationship with God. In John's Gospel, much of Jesus' public instruction focused on himself and his own place as Son of God."

**Tax collectors (publicans)** (5057)([telones](#) from [telos](#) = tax + [onéomai](#) = to buy) means a reaper of the taxes or customs, tax-collector, one who pays to the government a certain sum for the privilege of collecting the taxes and customs of a district. The public revenues of the Greeks and Romans were usually farmed out. Among the latter, the purchasers were chiefly of the equestrian order and were distinguished as being of a higher class because they rode horses, or they were at least persons of wealth and rank like Zacchaeus who is called the chief tax collector ([architelones](#) in Lu 19:2). These farmers also had subcontractors or employed agents who collected the taxes and customs at the gates of cities, in seaports, on public ways and bridges. These, too, were called [telomnai](#) (pl.), publicans, or [eklégontes](#) (n.f.), (ek = out of, + légo = in its original sense meaning to collect), those who collected out of the people. Such publicans in countries subject to the Roman Empire were the objects of hatred and detestation so that none but persons of worthless character were likely to be found in this employment. "The publicani were tax-gatherers, and were so called because they dealt with public money and with public funds." (Barclay)

**John Trapp** - "A faithful publican was so rare that Rome itself, that one Sabinus, for his honest managing of that office, in an honourable remembrance thereof, had certain images erected with this superscription, For the honest publican."

**Sinners** (268)([hamartolos](#) from [hamartáno](#) = deviate, miss the mark which some lexicons say is from **a** = negative + **meiromai** = attain -- not to attain, not to arrive at the goal) is an adjective (e.g., "that through the commandment sin might become utterly **sinful**" - see Ro 7:13<sup>+</sup>) that is often used as a noun (as in this verse and Ro 5:19<sup>+</sup>) to describe those who are continually erring from the way, constantly missing God's mark, living in opposition to His good and acceptable and perfect will, missing His holy purpose for their lives. **Hodge** adds that the "word **sinners** expresses the idea of moral wickedness and consequent exposure to divine displeasure." ([Commentary on Romans](#))

### **Jesus Friend of Sinners**

by Casting Crowns

Jesus, friend of sinners, we have strayed so far away  
We cut down people in your name but the sword was never ours to swing  
Jesus, friend of sinners, the truth's become so hard to see  
The world is on their way to You but they're tripping over me  
Always looking around but never looking up I'm so double minded  
A plank eyed saint with dirty hands and a heart divided

Oh Jesus, friend of sinners  
Open our eyes to the world at the end of our pointing fingers  
Let our hearts be led by mercy  
Help us reach with open hearts and open doors  
Oh Jesus, friend of sinners, break our hearts for what breaks yours

Yeah

Jesus, friend of sinners, the one who's writing in the sand  
Make the righteous turn away and the stones fall from their hands  
Help us to remember we are all the least of thieves  
Let the memory of Your mercy bring Your people to their knees

No one knows what we're for only against when we judge the wounded  
What if we put down our signs crossed over the lines and loved like You did

Oh Jesus, friend of sinners  
Open our eyes to world at the end of our pointing fingers  
Let our hearts be led by mercy  
Help us reach with open hearts and open doors  
Oh Jesus, friend of sinners, break our hearts for what breaks yours

You love every lost cause; you reach for the outcast  
For the leper and the lame; they're the reason that You came  
Lord I was that lost cause and I was the outcast  
But you died for sinners just like me, a grateful leper at Your feet

'Cause You are good, You are good and Your love endures forever  
You are good, You are good and Your love endures forever  
You are good, You are good and Your love endures forever  
You are good, You are good and Your love endures forever

Oh Jesus, friend of sinners  
Open our eyes to world at the end of our pointing fingers  
Let our hearts be led by mercy  
Help us reach with open hearts and open doors  
Oh Jesus, friend of sinners, break our hearts for what breaks Yours  
  
And I was the lost 'cause and I was the outcast  
Yeah  
You died for sinners just like me, a grateful leper at Your feet

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## SEPARATISM

The Pharisees were noted for their separatism. Today, separatism promotes the idea that Christians should show the world the value of the gospel by being “separate” from the world—that is, don’t mix, don’t adopt the world’s bad habits (smoking, drinking, playing cards, going to movies, and dancing have all been on various churches’ lists of no-no’s). Some churches have expanded the idea of separatism to include keeping apart from anyone (including other Christians) who are not as “separate” as they should be. (For example, in the 1950s some white Protestant churches refused to associate with Billy Graham when Catholic and black church leaders first appeared on the evangelist’s podium.) This story teaches us to be very careful of separatism. True, Christian disciples are called to a different lifestyle. But it’s wrong to think that we witness to Jesus’ gospel when we refuse to associate with people who don’t believe, or believe in ways not quite to our preferences. In fact, the disciple who sits in a tavern with a friend, or goes to the office party, would appear to be more like Jesus than the one who righteously stays away. Don’t be afraid to reach out to people who sin; God’s message can change anyone. (Bruce Barton)

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## Cross The Divide

As [Jesus] was dining in Levi’s house, . . . many tax collectors and sinners also sat together with Jesus. —  
Mark 2:15

Today's Scripture: Mark 2:13-17 (cf Lk 5:27-32, Mk 2:13-17, Mt 9:9-13)

Two young men with mischief on their minds approached a missionary’s outreach bus parked in a downtown area of a German city.

The missionaries were there to offer refreshments as a way to open up conversations about Christ. The two visitors, wearing skull-and-crossbones bandannas, were there to offer trouble.

But the missionaries didn’t respond to the ruffians as they expected. The Christians welcomed them warmly and engaged them in discussion. Surprised, the guys hung around long enough to hear the gospel. One trusted Jesus that day. The other, the next day.

Those two young men and the missionaries who reached them were light-years apart culturally. The guys were German; the missionaries, American. The guys were involved in a culture of darkness and death; the missionaries were shining the light. The cultural divide was crossed with cookies and nonjudgmental love.

Look at the people around you. How can you show those on the other side of the cultural fence unconditional, unquestioning love? How can you cross the divide and help them see that Jesus' love knows no boundaries? By: Dave Branen ([Our Daily Bread](#), [Copyright RBC Ministries, Grand Rapids, MI. — Reprinted by permission. All rights reserved](#))

Cross the divide.  
Take Christ to the culture—  
even if it doesn't look anything like yours.

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## Making Friends

Many tax collectors and sinners also sat together with Jesus and His disciples. —Mark 2:15

Today's Scripture:Mark 2:13-17 (cf Lk 5:27-32, Mk 2:13-17, Mt 9:9-13)

A letter from a friend described the adjustments that his son and daughter-in-law were facing as young missionaries in a country long resistant to the gospel of Christ. "After some rough early going," he wrote, "they are getting used to not having modern conveniences and are falling in love with the people."

A photo showed the couple's 2-year-old-son Wesley and a waiter in a restaurant, both grinning widely as they shared a moment of friendship. My friend commented, "Ever smiling, Wesley makes friends wherever he goes." That got me to thinking. Making friends and loving people is the key to sharing the gospel wherever we are, because that's what Jesus did.

Some religious leaders were surprised when Jesus openly associated with people they considered undesirable. They said to His disciples, "How is it that He eats and drinks with tax collectors and sinners?" (Mark 2:16). Yet Jesus was known as the friend of sinners. He said, "I did not come to call the righteous, but sinners, to repentance" (Mk 2:17).

A loving heart and a friendly smile go a long way to communicate the love of Christ to the people we meet each day. May they say of us, as they did of little Wesley, "Ever smiling, he makes friends wherever he goes." By: David C. McCasland ([Our Daily Bread](#), [Copyright RBC Ministries, Grand Rapids, MI. — Reprinted by permission. All rights reserved](#))

## Reflect & Pray

To the lost is where Christ went,  
Revealing grace from God above;  
To lost sinners we've been sent  
To be their friends, to share God's love.  
—Fitzhugh

Loving the lost is the first step in leading them to Christ.

---

**Gene Brooks** applies this verse to our lives: Many Christians have been criticized for the very thing Jesus was attacked for: associating with the wrong kind of people. The problem is that while we are to separate from evil, we are also to call sinners to repentance. Jesus' way of doing this was not to shout at sinners from a distance, but spend time with them. Because we cannot tell what another person's motives are, we must not criticize fellow believers just for associating with them. Another myth we believe is that "I will be criticized or embarrassed if people do not respond." BUT – Levi was so happy about being a follower of Jesus that he had a party and invited everyone, especially those who needed Jesus. AND – He was criticized BUT . . .Jesus was the focus of the party. Sinners confessed their sins and received forgiveness. New believers met others followers of Jesus and were established in their faith. Matthew grew spiritually. The critics were silenced.

Is God calling you to do what Levi did, to introduce those with whom you have a relationship to Jesus? Here's how you can do what Levi did, and invite people to your home:

- i. Look around and identify your friends, co-workers, neighbors, fellow students, and family who do not know Jesus Christ as Lord. Write their names down.
- ii. Look up and pray every day for each person you have listed.
- iii. Look out for opportunities to build your relationship with these people.
- iv. Look forward to your Party. Invite every person on your list. Prepare your own 3 minute story of how you came to know Jesus as Lord. Have your Party and invite them to follow Jesus!
- v. Look after those who gave their lives to Jesus Christ. Help them grow in their faith. Invite them to church.

**Matthew 9:12 But when Jesus heard this, He said, "It is not those who are healthy who need a physician, but those who are sick**

NET Matthew 9:12 When Jesus heard this he said, "Those who are healthy don't need a physician, but those who are sick do.

GNT Matthew 9:12 δοκοσαςεπεν, οχρεων χουσιν οσχοντες ατρολλοκακσχοντες.

NLT Matthew 9:12 When Jesus heard this, he said, "Healthy people don't need a doctor-- sick people do."

KJV 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.

ESV Matthew 9:12 But when he heard it, he said, "Those who are well have no need of a physician, but those who are sick.

NIV Matthew 9:12 On hearing this, Jesus said, "It is not the healthy who need a doctor, but the sick.

ASV Matthew 9:12 But when he heard it, he said, They that are whole have no need of a physician, but they that are sick.

CSB Matthew 9:12 But when He heard this, He said, "Those who are well don't need a doctor, but the sick do.

NKJ Matthew 9:12 When Jesus heard that, He said to them, "Those who are well have no need of a physician, but those who are sick.

NRS Matthew 9:12 But when he heard this, he said, "Those who are well have no need of a physician, but those who are sick.

YLT Matthew 9:12 And Jesus having heard, said to them, 'They who are whole have no need of a physician, but they who are ill;

NAB Matthew 9:12 He heard this and said, "Those who are well do not need a physician, but the sick do.

NJB Matthew 9:12 When he heard this he replied, 'It is not the healthy who need the doctor, but the sick.

GWN Matthew 9:12 When Jesus heard that, he said, "Healthy people don't need a doctor; those who are sick do.

BBE Matthew 9:12 But on hearing this he said, Those who are well have no need of a medical man, but those who are ill.

- **those who are healthy** - Ps 6:2 Ps 41:4 147:3 Jer 17:14 30:17 33:6 Ho 14:4 Mk 2:17 Lu 5:31 Lu 8:43 Lk 9:11 Lk 18:11-13 Ro 7:9-24 Rev 3:17,18

### Parallel Passages

Mark 2:17+ And hearing this, Jesus \*said to them, "It is not those who are healthy who need a physician, but those who are sick; I did not come to call the righteous, but sinners."

Luke 5:31+ And Jesus answered and said to them, "It is not those who are well who need a physician, but those who are sick. 32 "I have not come to call the righteous but sinners to repentance."

## JESUS THE GREAT PHYSICIAN

**But when Jesus heard this, He said** - Now remember the question was addressed to Jesus' disciples, but now Jesus takes over, probably to the chagrin and unease of the Pharisees! So Jesus now made aware of their question arose to confront the hypocrites and their self-righteousness with His righteous indignation. On this occasion Jesus did not read their minds for they had spoken out loud. Now even though He did not have to read their minds to hear their question, there is little doubt that he did read their minds (cf Mt 9:4<sub>±</sub>) for the motives behind their question which was to entrap this radical and increasingly popular "upstart" Jewish teacher. Jesus' answer is fascinating, for he addresses the very ones who had knowledge of the Law and should have been taking

that knowledge to the "sinners." They simply did not understand the basic principle Jesus now expounds. Sadly they were like physicians who tried to avoid contact with the sick! They wanted to avoid "contamination" at all costs!

**It is not those who are healthy who need a physician, but those who are sick-** As Jesus often did here He "turns the tables" and asks the questioners a question. Those who are well do not seek out a physician; the physician's waiting room is filled with those who are sick. But the real meaning would make no sense to the Pharisees who did not have spiritual ears to hear and understand. Only the Holy Spirit can "illuminate" the true meaning of Jesus' statements. Unsaved (deceived and foolish) minds hear this utterly profound truth as if it were utter foolishness! They hear it literally but miss it spiritually. Of course in a literal sense a sick person knows they are sick. Jesus as He often does, uses common experiences to speak spiritual truths. And so the soul who recognizes he or she is spiritually sick (with a 100% deadly virus called "sin") will manifest a humble, open, honest heart, a heart that is willing and ready to repent and rest by grace through faith in the Great Physician, Jesus, our Jehovah Rapha. Jesus' diagnosis of our infection with the "sin virus" is always correct. His cure is the only one for this otherwise fatal "virus". His cure results in complete remission ("forgiveness" Lk 24:47KJV+) and when one accepts His "cure," (salvation) they find that their bill has been "paid in full!" Quite a contrast to modern medicine! The Pharisees did not see themselves as sick, so they would never have sought out the Lord (the Physician). They totally missed the true meaning of Jehovah's declaration in Exodus 15:26 "I, the LORD, am your Healer (rapha/rophe)."<sup>1</sup> Matthew 5:3+ is another way Jesus described those who are "sick" writing "Blessed are the **poor in spirit**, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven." Those who were proud in spirit saw no need for spiritual healing by Jesus. Or as John MacArthur says "Those who claimed to be well proved themselves to be sickest of all!"

**Wiersbe** observes that "Sin is like a disease: it starts in a small and hidden way; it grows secretly; it saps our strength; and if it is not cured, it kills. It is tragic when sickness kills the body, but it is even more tragic when sin condemns the soul to hell. The scribes and Pharisees were quick to diagnose the needs of others, but they were blind to their own needs, for they were sinners like everyone else. They appeared righteous on the outside but were corrupt within (Matt. 23:25–28)." ([Bible Exposition Commentary](#))

**Spurgeon** "His reasoning was overwhelming, and his justification ample. Where should a physician be but among the sick? Who should come to a doctor's house but those who are diseased? Thus our Lord was more than justified in being the centre to which the morally sick should gather for their spiritual healing. Lord, grant that if ever I am found in the company of sinners, it may be with the design of healing them, and may I never become myself infected with their disease!" (see [Matthew 9 Commentary](#))

**Stuart Weber** explains it this way - Jesus portrayed Himself here, in the context of so many healing miracles, as a Doctor for the human spirit. He defended His lack of association with the Pharisees (the healthy) by alluding to the fact that they saw no need for spiritual healing in themselves. He was not implying that the Pharisees were righteous, but only that they saw themselves that way, and so were not open to receiving His healing (forgiveness). (HNTC-Mt)

**THOUGHT** - Have you come to that place in your life where you knew you were desperately sin sick and in need of soul cleansing that can only be found in Jesus the Great Physician? Jesus is ever calling as in Mt 11:28-30+

**Come** to Me, all who are weary (OF YOUR SIN) and heavy-laden (WITH THE CONSEQUENCES OF YOUR SIN), and I will give you rest. 29 **Take** My yoke upon you and learn from Me, for I am gentle and humble in heart, and YOU WILL FIND REST FOR YOUR SOULS. 30 "For (TERM OF EXPLANATION) My yoke is easy and My burden is light."

**Healthy** (present tense)(2480)(ischuo) speaks as being in possession of one's physical powers and thus to be in good health or be healthy.

**Need** (5532)(chreia) from **chraomai** = to use, make use of or **chreos** = a debt) means a necessity, what is needed or the occasion of need.

### **Jesus! What a Friend for Sinners**

by J. Wilbur Chapman (1910)

[Play beautiful version from Matthew Smith](#)

Jesus! What a Friend for sinners! Jesus! Lover of my soul!  
Friends may fail me, foes assail me, He, my Savior, makes me whole.

Jesus! What a Strength in weakness! Let me hide myself in Him;  
Tempted, tried, and sometimes failing, He, my Strength, my vict'ry wins.

Jesus! What a Help in sorrow! While the billows o'er me roll,  
Even when my heart is breaking, He, my Comfort, helps my soul.

Jesus! What a Guide and Keeper! While the tempest still is high,  
Storms about me, night o'ertakes me, He, my Pilot, hears my cry.

Jesus! I do now receive Him, More than all in Him I find,  
He hath granted me forgiveness, I am His, and He is mine.

#### Refrain

Hallelujah! What a Savior! Hallelujah! What a Friend!  
Saving, helping, keeping, loving, He is with me to the end.

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As **David Guzik** ([Matthew 9 Commentary](#)) said - Jesus is the perfect doctor to heal us of our sin.

- He is always available.
- He always makes a perfect diagnosis.
- He provides a complete cure.
- He even pays the bill.

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#### A Fresh Start

Read: Luke 5:17-26

Those who are well have no need of a physician, but those who are sick. —Luke 5:31+

In many countries, health laws prohibit reselling or reusing old mattresses. Only landfills will take them. Tim Keenan tackled the problem and today his business employs a dozen people to extract the individual components of metal, fabric, and foam in old mattresses for recycling. But that's only part of the story. Journalist Bill Vogrin wrote, "Of all the items Keenan recycles . . . it's the people that may be his biggest success" (The Gazette, Colorado Springs). Keenan hires men from halfway houses and homeless shelters, giving them a job and a second chance. He says, "We take guys nobody else wants."

Luke 5:17-26 tells how Jesus healed the body and the soul of a paralyzed man. Following that miraculous event, Levi answered Jesus' call to follow Him and then invited his fellow tax collectors and friends to a banquet in honor of the Lord (Lk 5:27-29+). When some people accused Jesus of associating with undesirables (Lk 5:30), He reminded them that healthy people don't need a doctor —adding, "I have not come to call the righteous, but sinners, to repentance" (Lk 5:32).

To everyone who feels like a "throwaway" headed for the landfill of life, Jesus opens His arms of love and offers a fresh beginning. That's why He came! By David McCasland ([Our Daily Bread, Copyright RBC Ministries, Grand Rapids, MI. — Reprinted by permission. All rights reserved](#))

The power of God can turn a heart  
From evil and the power of sin;  
The love of God can change a life  
And make it new and cleansed within.  
—Fasick

Salvation is receiving a new life.  
(Christ our life! Col 3:4<sup>+</sup>)

**INSIGHT:** The religious leaders accused Jesus of blasphemy for claiming divine attributes for Himself (Luke 5:21+). Blasphemy is showing contempt or a lack of reverence for God or something sacred (v.20). A violation of the third commandment, it was punishable by death (Lev. 24:15-16<sup>+</sup>).

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**ILLUSTRATION** - A businessman well known for his ruthlessness once announced to writer Mark Twain, "Before I die I mean to make a pilgrimage to the Holy Land. I will climb Mount Sinai and read the 10 Commandments aloud at the top." "I have a better idea," replied Twain. "You could stay in Boston and keep them." Twain was rebuking this man's hypocrisy and self-righteousness and stressed his need to start "walking" the truth instead of just "talking" about it. The attitude of self-righteousness was not the case with some of the tax collectors who realized they were sinners and needed to be saved from their sins. Christ was calling sinners to repentance and continues to do so today. If you want to march to the drum beat of the Lord, you will need to change your attitude about the Lord, about yourself, and the needs of others. God wants us to implement into our lives His way of living. (Mattoon )

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Yes **Jesus is the Great Physician**, but He is so much more!

To the artist, He's altogether lovely. (Song of Solomon 5:16)  
To the architect, He's the Chief Cornerstone. (Ephesians 2:20)  
To the baker, He's the Living Bread. (John 6:51)  
To the banker, He's the Hidden Treasure. (Matthew 13:44)  
To the biologist, He is the Life. (John 11:25; 14:6)  
To the builder, He's the Sure Foundation. (Isaiah 28:16)  
To the doctor, He is the Great Physician. (Matthew 9:12-13)  
To the educator, He is the Great Teacher. (John 3:2)  
To the farmer, Jesus is the Lord of the harvest. (Luke 10:2)  
To the florist, He's the Rose of Sharon. (Song of Solomon 2:1)  
To the geologist, He's the Rock of ages. (1 Corinthians 10:4)  
To the jurist, He is the Righteous Judge. (2 Timothy 4:8)  
To the jeweler, He is the Pearl of great price. (Matthew 13:46)  
To the lawyer, He is my Advocate. (1 John 2:1)  
To the publisher, He is good tidings of great joy. (Luke 2:10)  
To the philosopher, He is the wisdom of God. (Luke 11:49)  
To the preacher, He is the Word of God. (John 1:1, 14)  
To the sculptor, He is the Living Stone. (1 Peter 2:4)  
To the statesman, He is the desire of all nations. (Haggai 2:7)  
To the theologian, He is the Author and Finisher of our faith. (Hebrews 12:2)  
To the traveler, He is a new and living way. (Hebrews 10:20)  
To the sinner, He is the Lamb of God, which taketh away the sin of the world. (John 1:29)  
And to all believers, He is the Everlasting Father, the Mighty God, the Prince of Peace. "His name shall be called Wonderful." (Isaiah 9:6)

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### **Diagnosis And Cure**

Read: Matthew 9:1-13

Those who are well have no need of a physician, but those who are sick. —Matthew 9:12

One of my favorite stories concerns the old country doctor who gave his patient a thorough examination, scratched his head in bewilderment, and asked, "Have you had this before?" When the patient answered, "Yes," the doctor wrinkled his brow and said, "Well, you've got it again."

There's nothing quite so frustrating as a problem that defies diagnosis. What a relief it is to find a skilled practitioner who can say with confidence, "This is your problem and this treatment will help."

Jesus Christ always correctly identified the condition of anyone who came to Him for help. From physically blind Bartimaeus (Mk. 10:46-52) to spiritually blind Nicodemus (Jn. 3:1-21+), Jesus put His finger on the person's true need and offered an opportunity to trust Him for the solution.

Nineteenth-century hymn writer Oscar Clute celebrated this truth in a very personal way as he wrote:

#### **Come and rejoice with me.**

I, once so sick at heart,  
Have met with One who knows my case,  
And knows the healing art.

Jesus Christ is the Great Physician. Whatever our need or difficulty, He invites us to seek Him, believe His diagnosis, accept His prescription, and place ourselves in His wise and loving care. Will you do that with your life today? By David C. McCasland ([Our Daily Bread, Copyright RBC Ministries, Grand Rapids, MI. — Reprinted by permission. All rights reserved](#))

#### **Come and rejoice with me.,**

I, once so sick at heart,  
Have met with One who knows my case,  
And knows the healing art.

Jesus is the master of diagnosis and cure.

**Matthew 9:13 "But go and learn what this means: 'I DESIRE COMPASSION, AND NOT SACRIFICE,' for I did not come to call the righteous, but sinners.**

NET Matthew 9:13 Go and learn what this saying means: 'I want mercy and not sacrifice.' For I did not come to call the righteous, but sinners."

GNT Matthew 9:13 πορευθ ντες δ μ θετε τ στιν, λεος θ λω κα ο θυσ αν· ο γ ρ λθον καλ σαι δικα ους λλ μαρτωλο ζ.

NLT Matthew 9:13 Then he added, "Now go and learn the meaning of this Scripture: 'I want you to show mercy, not offer sacrifices.' For I have come to call not those who think they are righteous, but those who know they are sinners."

KJV 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.

ESV Matthew 9:13 Go and learn what this means, 'I desire mercy, and not sacrifice.' For I came not to call the righteous, but sinners."

NIV Matthew 9:13 But go and learn what this means: 'I desire mercy, not sacrifice.' For I have not come to call the righteous, but sinners."

ASV Matthew 9:13 But go ye and learn what this meaneth, I desire mercy, and not sacrifice, for I came not to call the righteous, but sinners.

CSB Matthew 9:13 Go and learn what this means: I desire mercy and not sacrifice. For I didn't come to call the righteous, but sinners."

NKJ Matthew 9:13 "But go and learn what this means: 'I desire mercy and not sacrifice.' For I did not come to call the righteous, but sinners, to repentance."

NRS Matthew 9:13 Go and learn what this means, 'I desire mercy, not sacrifice.' For I have come to call not the righteous but sinners."

YLT Matthew 9:13 but having gone, learn ye what is, Kindness I will, and not sacrifice, for I did not come to call righteous men, but sinners, to reformation.'

NAB Matthew 9:13 Go and learn the meaning of the words, 'I desire mercy, not sacrifice.' I did not come to call the righteous but sinners."

NJB Matthew 9:13 Go and learn the meaning of the words: Mercy is what pleases me, not sacrifice. And indeed I came to call not the upright, but sinners.'

GWN Matthew 9:13 Learn what this means: 'I want mercy, not sacrifices.' I've come to call sinners, not people who think they have God's approval."

- **go** - Mt 12:3,5,7 19:4 21:42 22:31,32 Mk 12:26 Lu 10:26 Joh 10:34
- **I desire** - Pr 21:3 Ho 6:6 Mic 6:6-8
- **to call** - Mt 18:11-13 Mk 2:17 Lu 5:32 15:3-10 19:10 Ro 3:10-24 1Co 6:9-11 1Ti 1:13-16
- **but** - Mt 3:2,8 4:17 11:20,21 21:28-32 Isa 55:6,7 Lu 15:7 24:47 Ac 2:38 3:19 5:31 11:18 17:30,31 20:21 26:18-20 Ro 2:4-6 1Ti 1:15 2Ti 2:25,26 2Pe 3:9

### Parallel Passages

Mark 2:17+ And hearing this, Jesus \*said to them, "It is not those who are healthy who need a physician, but those who are sick; I did not come to call the righteous, but sinners."

Luke 5:32+ "I have not come to call the righteous but sinners to repentance."

### **GOD DESIRES RIGHT HEARTS NOT RITUALISTIC SACRIFICES**

Samuel addressing rebellious King Saul (whose rebellion cost him his kingdom) said "Has the LORD as much delight in burnt offerings and sacrifices As in obeying the voice of the LORD? Behold, to obey is better than sacrifice, And to heed than the fat of

rams." (1 Sa 15:22) God is more concerned with a heart of compassion than a calloused, hard, hypocritical heart that seeks only to observe of external rituals and regulations (Pr. 21:3; Isa 1:11–17; Amos 5:21–24; Mic. 6:8). Legalism may look holy to other, but not to God Who says "I the LORD (Jehovah) search the heart. I test the mind, even to give to each man according to his ways, according to the results of his deeds." (Jer 17:10) That's a passage we all need to keep at the front of our minds!

**But go and learn what this means - Go and learn** was an idiom that the rabbis used to tell their students to study a particular issue and served as a rebuke to those who did not know what they should have known! Jesus' words would have been a frontal assault directly from the Word of God to these prideful men who thought they knew everything already! They must have thought something like "Us learn? Does this Man not know how much we know?" In fact He did know and He knew they did not know the spirit of God's law. And so "He pinned the Pharisees to the wall with their own Scripture." (MacArthur) It would have come as a shock to the religious leaders who supposedly were the keepers of the Law and were supposed to know the Old Testament! Now Jesus issues a command to **learn** what the Old Testament passages meant and He selects a specific passage from Hosea.

**Learn** ([aorist imperative](#) = do this now! don't delay!)([3129](#))(**manthano** related to the noun **mathetes** = disciple, literally a learner! The shut mind is the end of discipleship!) has the basic meaning of directing one's mind to something and producing an external effect. **Manthano** means to genuinely understand and accept a teaching, to accept it as true and to apply it in one's life. This is something the Pharisees were unable to do for their pride had blinded them to their desperate need for the forgiveness only found in Messiah.

**Craig Evans - Go and learn** is a rabbinic idiom (e.g., Num. Rab. 8.4 [on Num. 5:6] "Go and learn from Joshua, your master" [and then Josh. 10:6 is quoted]; b. Hullin 50a; b. Ketubot 64b; b. Menahot 44a; b. Qiddushin 37a; b. Sanhedrin 86a; b. Shabbat 31a "Hillel said to him, 'What is hateful to you, do not do to your neighbor. That is the whole Torah; the rest is commentary. Go and learn it.'"). (BKBC-Mt-Lk)

**I DESIRE COMPASSION, AND NOT SACRIFICE** - This is what Jesus wanted them to learn - that to have mercy upon sinners is a work far more pleasing to God than offering pretentious sacrifices (cf Lk 21:1-4+). This passage is a direct rebuke of the empty ritual of the Pharisees which neglected the true intent of God's law. In a word, they practiced **ceremony** without **compassion**! They utterly neglected the spirit of God's holy law. Jesus is quoting Hosea 6:6 "For I (JEHOVAH IS SPEAKING) delight in loyalty (Hebrew = [hesed/chesed/heced](#); Lxx = [eleos](#)) rather than sacrifice, And in the knowledge of God rather than burnt offerings." (This is Matthew's second quote from Hosea - see Mt 2:15+) In Hosea's day the Jews brought their sacrifices, but they were predominantly empty ritual devoid of compassion and mercy. Earlier Hosea alluded to why this had come to past writing " Listen to the word of the LORD, O sons of Israel, For the LORD has a case against the inhabitants of the land, Because there is no faithfulness or kindness Or knowledge of God in the land." (Hos 4:1) And then in Hos 4:6 he wrote "My people are destroyed for lack of knowledge. Because you have rejected knowledge, I also will reject you from being My priest. Since you have forgotten the law of your God, I also will forget your children." Surely this must have pricked the Pharisees who knew that Hosea was about Gomer's unfaithfulness to her husband Hosea, which served as a living metaphor of Israel's rebellion, harlotry and unfaithfulness to God, her "Husband." (Isa 54:5, Jer 31:32, Hos 2:19). "Religion" without compassion is a worthless sham! (cf Mt 23:23-26).

**H A Ironside** said "Mere outward correctness and attention to forms and ceremonies will not do. God must have reality."

God's call to men to be compassionate and merciful, a call which resounds throughout both the Old and New Testaments, and ultimately **Mercy** is a most God-like attribute

Micah 6:8+ He has told you, O man, what is good; And what does the LORD require of you But to do justice, to love kindness, And to walk humbly with your God?

Luke 6:36+ "**Be** ([present imperative](#)) merciful, just as your Father is merciful.

Comment: [See discussion of the Need for the Holy Spirit to obey NT commands](#)

Matthew 5:7<sub>+</sub> "Blessed are the merciful, for they shall receive mercy.

James 2:13+ For judgment will be merciless to one who has shown no mercy; mercy triumphs over judgment.

**MacArthur** comments "Without **compassion**, all the rituals, ceremonies, and sacrifices of the Pharisees were unacceptable to God. Without **compassion** they proved themselves to be more ungodly even than the despised tax-gatherers and sinners, who made no pretense of godliness....God had divinely instituted the sacrificial system, and when the prescribed offerings were made to Him in a spirit of humility, penitence, and reverence, they were pleasing to Him. But when offered insincerely and in a spirit of self-righteousness and self-satisfaction, they became instead an abomination. The rituals and ceremonies were only as valid as the contriteness of the worshiper. And the person who sacrificed to God in genuine reverence would serve his fellow man in genuine compassion. Conversely, the person who is cold toward other people proves he is also cold toward God, no matter how orthodox his theology and how impeccable his external moral standards. The person who sees obvious sinners as those only to be condemned proves himself to be a greater sinner than they. Those who are furthest from giving mercy are furthest from receiving it (see Matt.

6:15; 18:23–35). God is never pleased with religious routine and activity that does not come from sincere love of Him and of other people. Ritual separated from righteousness is a sham and an affront to God." (Ibid)

**I desire** (Want, Will, Wish) ([2309](#)) (**thelo**) is a very common NT verb which primarily refers to exercising of one's will with the underlying sense of doing so from a motive of desire.

**Compassion** ([1656](#)) (**eleos**) is the outward manifestation of pity and assumes **need** on the part of those who are recipients of the mercy and sufficient **resources** to meet the need on the part of those who show it (which the Pharisees did not do!) The idea of **mercy** is to show kindness or concern for someone in serious need, to give help to the wretched, to relieve the miserable. The essential thought is that mercy gives attention to those in misery. **Wuest** writes that **eleos** is "God's "kindness and goodwill toward the miserable and afflicted, joined with a desire to relieve them" (Vincent). Grace meets man's need in respect to his guilt and lost condition; mercy, with reference to his suffering as a result of that sin." **Larry Richards** adds that "Originally (**eleos**) expressed only the emotion that was aroused by contact with a person who was suffering. By NT times, however, the concept incorporated compassionate response. A person who felt for and with a sufferer would be moved to help. This concept of mercy--as a concern for the afflicted that prompts giving help--is prominent in both the Gospels and the Epistles."

**Weber** says "Compassion or mercy is an attitude toward a need that is compelled to take action to meet that need. A compassionate and merciful heart finds it impossible to remain neutral when it sees a need of any kind. Jesus was not blind to the faults of the sinners with whom he dined, but his mercy caused him to withhold judgment. (cf Jn 3:17+)" (HNTC-Mt)

**Eleos** - 26v - compassion(2), mercy(25). - Matt. 9:13; Matt. 12:7; Matt. 23:23; Lk. 1:50; Lk. 1:54; Lk. 1:58; Lk. 1:72; Lk. 1:78; Lk. 10:37; Rom. 9:23; Rom. 11:31; Rom. 15:9; Gal. 6:16; Eph. 2:4; 1 Tim. 1:2; 2 Tim. 1:2; 2 Tim. 1:16; 2 Tim. 1:18; Tit. 3:5; Heb. 4:16; Jas. 2:13; Jas. 3:17; 1 Pet. 1:3; 2 Jn. 1:3; Jude 1:2; Jude 1:21

## MESSIAH'S MISSION STATEMENT!

**For** - Term of explanation. As Hendriksen explains "The "for" may be called "explanatory" or "continuative." In the present context it means something like: "In line with this fact that as a physician I came to answer need and to show mercy, the kind of mercy which you, Pharisees, should also show, is the fact that I did not come to call righteous people but sinners." (BNTC-Mt)

**I did not come to call the righteous, but sinners-** As **Spurgeon** said Jesus "came not to be served by the good, but to save the evil." Jesus adds this phrase to the Hosea quotation. Luke 5:32+ adds "**to repentance.**" This statement is almost like a "parable in a sentence," for to an unspiritual mind it simply does not make sense. Of course what Jesus is saying is that the **righteous** are those who THINK they are **righteous** (and He did not come to call them for they see no need for a Savior), but sadly they are deceived and blinded by their pride (note middle letter of "pride" which is the same as in sin!) and unable to understand their need for the righteousness of Christ found only in His Gospel which is only received in humble hearts, hearts broken by their sin against God, and willing to receive the Gospel by grace through faith. All three Gospels record that Jesus is dining with **sinners** (Mt 9:10, 11, Mk 2:15, 16, Lk 5:29), a fact that angered the self-righteous Pharisees who assiduously avoided "**sinners!**" Later in Luke Jesus declared

"I tell you, this man (TAX COLLECTOR CRYING FOR MERCY - Lk 18:13+) went to his house justified rather than the other (Lk 18:11,12+); for everyone who exalts himself will be humbled, but he who humbles himself will be exalted." (Lk 18:14+)

**Spurgeon** - Our Saviour King has come to save real sinners. He deals not with our merits, but with our demerits. There would be no need to save us if we were not lost: the Son of God does no unnecessary work; but to those who need repentance he has come to bring it. Lord, I am one who needs thy call; for surely if anyone hath need to repent, I am that one. Call me with thine effectual call. "Turn thou me, and I shall be turned."

**MacArthur** - The person who is sinful but thinks he is **righteous** shuts himself out from God's mercy, because he refuses to acknowledge his need of it. He rejects Jesus' call to salvation because he rejects the idea of his lostness....Jesus did not come to call the self-righteous to salvation for the same reason He did not call the Pharisees to recline with Him at the dinner in Matthew's house. They were too good in their own eyes to condescend to such humiliation. And because they would not identify themselves with fellow sinners, they could not be identified with Christ, who offers salvation only to sinners who willingly acknowledge they are sinners....The scribes and Pharisees had badly misunderstood God's purpose in giving the law. He did not give the law as a means of achieving self-righteousness, but to provoke self-condemnation, awareness of sin, conviction, repentance, and pleading to God

for mercy (Read 1 Ti 1:9,10). (Ibid)

**Call** (invite, name, summon) ([2564](#)) ([kaleo](#)) from root **kal-**, whence English “call” and “clamour”) literally means to speak to another in order to attract their attention or to them bring nearer, either physically or in a personal relationship. **Kaleo** was often used of inviting a guest to one’s home for food and lodging. In this context the **call** is not given to those who consider themselves worthy but to those who recognize they are in desperate need, to them the invitation to salvation is extended.

**Righteous** ([1342](#)) ([dikaios](#) from **dike** = right, just) defines that which is in accordance with high standards of rectitude. It is that which is in right relation to another and so in reference to persons defines the one who is morally and ethically righteous, upright or just. In this context Jesus uses it to refer to self-righteous and thus falling short of God’s demand for perfect righteousness found only by believing in the Righteous One, Jesus Christ.

**Sinners** ([268](#)) see above on [hamartolos](#)

**MacArthur** gives an excellent summary of this section...The kingdom of God is for

- the spiritually sick who want to be healed,
- the spiritually corrupt who want to be cleansed,
- the spiritually poor who want to be rich,
- the spiritually hungry who want to be fed,
- the spiritually dead who want to be made alive.
- It is for ungodly outcasts who long to become God’s own beloved children.

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#### **QUESTION - [What is the meaning of “I desire mercy and not sacrifice” \(Hosea 6:6; Matthew 9:13\)? GOTQUESTIONS.ORG](#)**

**ANSWER** - When Jesus called Matthew to become a disciple (Matthew 9:9–13), the Pharisees were scandalized. Matthew, an unscrupulous [tax collector](#), had been part of the corrupt Roman system that cheated and oppressed its citizens. The Jews passionately hated tax collectors, classifying them among the worst of sinners. When the [Pharisees](#) saw Jesus having dinner with a band of these notorious crooks at Matthew’s house, they asked, “Why does your teacher eat with tax collectors and sinners?” (Matthew 9:11, ESV). Jesus responded unapologetically: “Those who are well have no need of a physician, but those who are sick. Go and learn what this means: ‘I desire mercy, and not sacrifice.’ For I came not to call the righteous, but sinners” (Matthew 9:12–13, ESV).

Jesus was quoting from Hosea 6:6, in which God rebuked Israel for focusing on the letter of the law while ignoring its spirit. God desires faithfulness, love, and mercy from His people more than their procedural observance of the law. The word *sacrifice* in Matthew 9:13 and Hosea 6:6 represents all the obligations and rituals that religious people perform but are void of meaning. Jesus charged the Pharisees with being just like the ancient Israelites. They were faultless in their adherence to religious tradition and ritual sacrifice but had no compassion for needy sinners.

Later, in Matthew 12:1–8, Jesus cites Hosea 6:6 again to the Pharisees. They had scolded Jesus because His hungry disciples plucked some heads of grain and ate them as they passed through the fields. The disciples had done nothing wrong (see Deuteronomy 23:25), but because they had picked grain on the [Sabbath](#), the Pharisees accused them of breaking the law of the Sabbath (Exodus 20:8; Jeremiah 17:22). These religious hypocrites had turned the Scriptures into an oppressive list of rules and regulations instead of understanding what the law meant and why it had been given. Jesus reminds them of Hosea in Matthew 12:7: “If you had known what these words mean, ‘I desire mercy, not sacrifice,’ you would not have condemned the innocent.” Jesus, the Master Teacher, had given the Pharisees “homework” in Matthew 9; they had not completed the assignment and so had not learned their lesson in Matthew 12.

God intended for the Sabbath to be a day for worship and rest, not a legalistic burden. The Old Testament laws, including the Sabbath laws, were all given to lead Israel into a loving, devoted relationship with God. The disciples had not broken God’s law. Instead, they had transgressed the hypocritical regulations laid down by the Pharisees. Jesus is the authority and can override any human tradition: “The Son of Man is [Lord of the Sabbath](#)” (Matthew 12:8).

God’s true righteousness flows from our fellowship with Him in Jesus Christ and involves demonstrating mercy to outcasts and sinners. The Lord won’t tolerate cold-heartedness from His people. James informs, “Pure and genuine religion in the sight of God the Father means caring for orphans and widows in their distress” (James 1:27, NLT).

Some Christians tend to be judgmental toward sinners and take pride in their own perceived goodness instead of remembering and replicating the mercy Christ offers. But Jesus taught us to forgive as we have been forgiven and show the same kind of mercy that

was shown to us by God (Matthew 6:12; 18:33). Jesus spent time in the company of sinners and welcomed those who repented and followed Him, and so must we.

The self-righteousness of the Pharisees prevented them from seeing their spiritually sickened condition and their need for God and His mercy. Without an intimate relationship with the Lord, all the sacrifices in this world won't change our hearts so that we are moved with compassion for the lost, broken, and dying people around us. But if we have been transformed through God's forgiveness and healing and filled with His love and mercy for people in need, our righteous deeds—our sacrifices—are no longer empty gestures but authentic spiritual offerings (Matthew 6:1–18). Our lives become "a living and holy sacrifice—the kind he will find acceptable. This is truly the way to worship him" (Romans 12:1, NLT).

When God says, "I desire mercy and not sacrifice," He is calling us to an inner circumcision of the heart that "is not merely obeying the letter of the law; rather, it is a change of heart produced by the Spirit" (Romans 2:29, NLT). If God does not have our hearts, He does not have us at all.

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**QUESTION - [Why did Jesus say, "I have not come to call the righteous but sinners to repentance" \(Matthew 9:13\)?](#)**  
[GOTQUESTIONS.ORG](#)

**ANSWER** - When the [Pharisees](#) saw Jesus eating and socializing easily with tax collectors and sinners in [Matthew's](#) home, they were scandalized. They questioned why Jesus would hang out with the most despised "lowlifes" of society. According to their self-righteous standards, no truly godly teacher would fellowship so intimately with the world's "scumbags." Unashamedly, Jesus responded to their hypocrisy by saying, "Those who are well have no need of a physician, but those who are sick. But go and learn what this means: 'I desire mercy and not sacrifice.' For I did not come to call the righteous, but sinners, to repentance" (Matthew 9:12–13, NKJV).

Jesus presents Himself as a doctor and healer of those who are spiritually sick (the unrighteous sinners of the world). God loves sinners (Romans 5:8) and sent His Son into this world to save them (1 Timothy 1:15). Repentance is the treatment plan, and forgiveness is the cure Jesus offers. "Those who are well" or "the healthy" (NIV) don't need a doctor. Jesus' critics thought they were healthy and saw no need for a doctor, but, in reality, they were deceived. Jesus is not implying that the Pharisees were righteous. Removing all sarcasm and irony from Christ's statement, the verse might read, "I haven't come to call on those who think they're righteous, but to treat those who know they're sinners."

Jesus quotes Hosea 6:6—"I desire mercy and not sacrifice"—as an indictment against the Pharisees. They do not understand the verse's true meaning and therefore do not perceive their own spiritually reprobate condition. The Pharisees observe the letter of the law perfectly. They are flawless in their execution of religious rituals and sacrifices. But, if they were truly righteous, they would appreciate the spirit of the law by demonstrating God's kindness, compassion, and mercy toward the outcasts of society.

When doctors call on sick people, they must get up close and personal with them to have any hope of helping and healing them. So, too, Jesus calls sinners to Himself. His love for the lost compels Him to come down to where they are and get mud on His feet with them (Hebrews 2:9; Philippians 2:7; 1 John 3:16). "The Pharisees prove their religion by keeping clean. Jesus proves his love by getting dirty" (Knowles, A., *The Bible Guide*, Augsburg, 2001, p. 419).

Jesus came "to seek and to save the lost" (Luke 19:10). He did not leave heaven to pat self-satisfied religious people on the back and ignore everyone else who fails to measure up to the Pharisees' meticulous standards. Jesus came to call "all who are far off" (Acts 2:39) and bring them near by His blood shed on the cross (Ephesians 2:13).

Tax collectors and sinners know they are spiritually sick. They long for God's healing forgiveness. They are "the poor in spirit," "the meek," and "those who hunger and thirst for righteousness" (Matthew 5:3, 5–6). On the other hand, the Pharisees are blind to their own neediness. They think they are healthy but are instead "blind fools" (Matthew 23:16–17, 23–24; see also Luke 6:41).

Jesus said, "I have not come to call the righteous but sinners to repentance." The "righteous" are respectable people in the eyes of the world and those who are righteous in their own eyes. "Sinners" are the outcasts of the world. If we are to follow in Christ's footsteps and not be like the Pharisees, we will get our hands dirty, too. We will reach out to the rejected, the homeless, addicts, prostitutes, criminals, afflicted, diseased, abused, and marginalized in our society. We'll love the unlovable, dine with the undesirable, and befriend the forsaken of the world. Like Jesus, we'll have compassion for the single parent, the widow, the divorcees, and the elderly (Matthew 9:36)—compassion that moves us to act on their behalf (Matthew 15:32; Luke 7:11–17). Like the [Good Samaritan](#) (Luke 10:25–37), we'll show mercy with deeds of kindness by walking "in the way of love, just as Christ loved us" (Ephesians 5:2).

Read: Luke 5:27-32

I have not come to call the righteous, but sinners, to repentance. —Luke 5:32 (cf Lk 5:27-32, Mk 2:13-17, Mt 9:9-13)

There's a story about an artist who wanted to paint a picture of the prodigal son (described by Jesus in Luke 15:11-32). He saw an unkempt beggar on the street and asked him to come to his studio and pose.

The man showed up the next day, but he was neatly shaven and clean. When the artist saw him, he exclaimed, "Oh no, I can't use you as you are now!"

God asks us to come to Him just as we are, admitting that we are sinners who deserve nothing but judgment. This is humbling, but it is the only way we can receive the forgiveness Christ paid for on the cross and be accepted and used by God.

The scribes and Pharisees were scrupulous lawkeepers. They thought God was pleased with them because they were all "cleaned up." So when they saw Jesus eating with people who had bad reputations, they complained. But Jesus said, "I have not come to call the righteous, but sinners, to repentance" (Lk. 5:32). This was a rebuke to their self-righteous attitude. They needed to admit their sin. Then Jesus could receive them too.

If you need to be saved or to be restored to fellowship, repent and come to Jesus just as you are! He will forgive your sin and make you righteous. By Dennis J. De Haan ([Our Daily Bread, Copyright RBC Ministries, Grand Rapids, MI. — Reprinted by permission. All rights reserved](#))

Sinners are the only people who can be saved.

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### **An Eye-Opener**

Read: Matthew 9:9-13

Go and learn what this means: "I desire mercy and not sacrifice.. —Matthew 9:13

A man left his house for church one Sunday just as his neighbor was loading his golf clubs into his car. "Henry," the neighbor called, "come play golf with me today." Henry answered firmly, "I always go to church on the Lord's Day."

After a pause the golfer said, "You know, Henry, I've often wondered about your church and I really admire your faithfulness. But I've invited you to play golf with me seven or eight times, and you've never once invited me to go to church with you."

What an eye-opener! To all the "Henrys" in today's church, Jesus gives the same challenge He gave to the Pharisees: "I desire mercy and not sacrifice" (Mt. 9:13). In other words, He wants us to show mercy and love to those who need salvation, not just go through the motions of our own religious beliefs. Jesus further explained His mercy by saying, "I did not come to call the righteous, but sinners, to repentance" (v.13).

Consider the destiny of people without Christ. Let this stir you to a compassion greater than your comfortable routine or your fear of rejection. Pray for several people or families near you and ask God to love them through you. And, without nagging, invite them to church. By Joanie Yoder ([Our Daily Bread, Copyright RBC Ministries, Grand Rapids, MI. — Reprinted by permission. All rights reserved](#))

We need to see through Jesus' eyes  
Our neighbors who are lost;  
For then we will reach out to them,  
Regardless of the cost.  
—Sper

We are to be channels of God's truth, not reservoirs.

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### **What Does God Require?**

Go and learn what this means: "I desire mercy and not sacrifice.. —Matthew 9:13

Today's Scripture: Isaiah 1:13-17

The mother of four growing children went to a counselor because she felt that she was a failure. She had trained for ministry and had hoped to serve the Lord as a missionary overseas. But instead, she fell in love and married a widower with four children. Barely

able to keep her household functioning, she was not able to engage in any formal ministry. She wrongly concluded that God was subjecting her to well-deserved chastisement.

A Christian counselor pointed her to Micah 6:8, which asks, "What does the Lord require of you?" Immediately that question is answered, "To do justly, to love mercy, and to walk humbly with your God." Those requirements she could meet without going to a foreign mission field. And meet them she did!

Her experience calls to mind Martin Luther's advice to people who believed they could please God by journeying to a sacred shrine: "Let anyone go on a pilgrimage who feels compelled to do so; but let him remember that God can be served a thousand times better at home by giving the money the journey would cost to his own wife and children and bearing his cross with patience."

Remember, God requires justice, mercy, and humility—no matter where we live. By: Vernon Grounds ([Our Daily Bread, Copyright RBC Ministries, Grand Rapids, MI. — Reprinted by permission. All rights reserved](#))

Reflect & Pray

O Master, let me walk with Thee  
In lowly paths of service free;  
Tell me Thy secret, help me bear  
The strain of toil, the fret of care.  
—Gladden

What God requires, God provides.

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### Eyes Of Mercy

I desire mercy and not sacrifice. —Hosea 6:6

Today's Scripture: Matthew 9:9-13

A new member often came late to an adult Sunday school class. She was not well-dressed. She seemed tense and unfriendly, and each week she left as soon as the teacher began the closing prayer. It wasn't long before the teacher began hearing others make judgmental remarks about her.

One Sunday the teacher had someone else close the class in prayer so that he could talk with the newcomer as she walked out. He found out that her physically abusive husband had abandoned her and their two children. He had left an enormous debt and no forwarding address. She was desperate, and she was searching for God.

The teacher began to see her through new eyes, eyes of mercy, and he alerted the class to her plight. Some of them opened their hearts to her in personal and practical ways. In time she began to relax and become friendlier. She soon turned to Jesus, the One she needed most.

Let's ask God to help us see others as He does. When we look at people through our own eyes, we can be insensitive, prejudiced, and harshly judgmental. We need to ask God for a heart of mercy and compassion—the kind of heart God has for each of us. When we do, we will see people through His eyes of mercy. By: David C. Egner ([Our Daily Bread, Copyright RBC Ministries, Grand Rapids, MI. — Reprinted by permission. All rights reserved](#))

Reflect & Pray

Looking, Lord, through eyes of mercy,  
I see those who need Your care;  
May Your Spirit work through me, Lord,  
Binding up the wounds they bear.  
—Fasick

We can stop showing mercy to others when Christ stops showing mercy to us.

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**Matthew 9:14 Then the disciples of John came to Him, asking, "Why do we and the Pharisees fast, but Your disciples do not fast?"**

NET Matthew 9:14 Then John's disciples came to Jesus and asked, "Why do we and the Pharisees fast often,

but your disciples don't fast?"

GNT Matthew 9:14 Τε προσ ρχονται α τ ο μαθητα ω ννου λ γοντες, Δι τ με ζ κα ο Φορισα οι νηστε ομεν [πολλ ], ο δ μαθητα σου ο νηστε ουσιν;

NLT Matthew 9:14 One day the disciples of John the Baptist came to Jesus and asked him, "Why don't your disciples fast like we do and the Pharisees do?"

KJV 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?

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

NIV Matthew 9:14 Then John's disciples came and asked him, "How is it that we and the Pharisees fast, but your disciples do not fast?"

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

CSB Matthew 9:14 Then John's disciples came to Him, saying, "Why do we and the Pharisees fast often, but Your disciples do not fast?"

NKJ Matthew 9:14 Then the disciples of John came to Him, saying, "Why do we and the Pharisees fast often, but Your disciples do not fast?"

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

YLT Matthew 9:14 Then come to him do the disciples of John, saying, 'Wherefore do we and the Pharisees fast much, and thy disciples fast not?'

NAB Matthew 9:14 Then the disciples of John approached him and said, "Why do we and the Pharisees fast (much), but your disciples do not fast?"

NJB Matthew 9:14 Then John's disciples came to him and said, 'Why is it that we and the Pharisees fast, but your disciples do not?'

GWN Matthew 9:14 Then John's disciples came to Jesus. They said, "Why do we and the Pharisees fast often but your disciples never do?"

BBE Matthew 9:14 Then the disciples of John came to him, saying, Why do we and the Pharisees frequently go without food, but your disciples do not?

- **the disciples** - Mt 11:2 Joh 3:25 4:1
- **Why** - Mt 6:16 11:18,19 Pr 20:6 Mk 2:18-22 Lu 5:33-39 18:9-12

#### Parallel Passages Mt. 9:14–17; Mk 2:18–22; Lk 5:33–39

Mk 2:18+ John's disciples and the Pharisees were fasting; and they came and said to Him, "Why do John's disciples and the disciples of the Pharisees fast, but Your disciples do not fast?"

Luke 5:33+ And they said to Him, "The disciples of John often fast and offer prayers, the disciples of the Pharisees also do the same, but Yours eat and drink."

Another way to look at Matthew 9:14-17 is three illustrations using pairs of things that do not mix, all pointing out that the old way of Judaism does not mix with the new way of the Gospel.

1. First Illustration -- Feasting and Fasting (Mt 9:14-15)
2. Second Illustration -- New patch on Old garment (Mt 9:16)
3. Third Illustration -- New/old Wine in new/old wineskins (Mt 9:17)

**FIRST YOU PARTY WITH SINNERS  
NOW YOU DON'T FAST**

**Blomberg** quips "The flip side of the objection to Jesus' partying with the disreputable is the complaint that he does not fast." (NAC)

**Then** - When is "Then?" While we cannot be dogmatic, this event would seem to logically follow the preceding description of the banquet at Matthew's house, where the disciples of Jesus were eating and clearly not fasting. This context would be a perfect segue leading to the question of why Jesus' disciples not fast? Luke's parallel version also suggests that their question follows the banquet. In other words, immediately after Jesus' declaration in Lk 5:32+ "I have not come to call the righteous but sinners to repentance" Luke writes "**And they said to Him**, "The disciples of John often fast and offer prayers, the disciples of the Pharisees also do the same, but Yours eat and drink." (Lk 5:33+). In addition, some writers have proposed that the banquet at Matthew's house occurred on one of the weekly fast days which were usually the second and fifth days of the week for the stricter Jews. If that is the case, it helps explain why they immediately question Jesus about why His disciples were not fasting.

**The disciples of John came to Him - The disciples of John** refers to those men who followed John the Baptist.

**Disciples** (3101) see note above on mathetes

**Asking, "Why do we and the Pharisees fast, but Your disciples do not fast? -Fast** is in present tense depicting their fasting as a habitual practice which fits with Luke's phrase that they "often (occurring at frequent intervals, frequently) **fast** and offer prayers" (Lk 5:33+). Only Luke mentions "offer prayers." In fact, zealous Jews (like John's ascetic disciples and the rigid ritualistic disciples of the Pharisees) fasted twice a week, usually on Monday and Thursday.

All three synoptic accounts include the fact that **the Pharisees were fasting**, which is very important in interpreting this section. As we have seen, the **Pharisees** were practicing a religion of ritual, a religion of externals, a religion based on law, a religion of works aimed at promoting self-righteousness, all of which was in diametric contrast to the "religion" which Jesus brought, which was one of relationship (with God), of internals (heart change), of grace (not law), and of faith in Jesus (not works) trusting in imputation of His righteousness. The Pharisees ceremonial practice was "bad news," while Jesus had come to introduce a "religion" of "good news." One is reminded of the statement in Hebrews 8:13<sup>±</sup> "When He said, "A new covenant," He has made the first obsolete. But whatever is becoming obsolete and growing old is ready to disappear." The ritualistic practices of the Pharisees were about to disappear!

It might seem surprising to see **the disciples of John** on the same side as **the Pharisees** in criticizing Jesus. Why do I say that? Clearly John was no favorite of the Pharisees, for he had sternly castigated the Pharisees calling them a "brood of vipers" (Mt 3:7+), commanding them to "bear fruit in keeping with repentance," (M 3:8+) and not to think they were safe from hell because they had Abraham as their physical father (Mt 3:9+)! And yet here we see these two somewhat discordant groups of disciples seem to be "strange bed-fellows" so to speak! Even though John's ministry was preparatory for Jesus' ministry, it was still different from that of Jesus, as Jesus Himself alludes to declaring that "John **came neither eating nor drinking**, and they say, 'He has a demon!' 19 'The Son of Man **came eating and drinking**, and they say, 'Behold, a gluttonous man and a drunkard, a friend of tax collectors and sinners!' Yet wisdom is vindicated by her deeds." (Mt 11:18-19) **Craig Blomberg** explains this difference between John and Jesus this way noting that "Preparation for the Messiah's coming required repentance and a certain austerity, but now the time for joy has arrived. Neither the Pharisees nor John's disciples were wrong in fasting as a prelude to the reception of spiritual blessings, but now those blessings are present. Jesus' inauguration of the kingdom stimulates celebration and rejoicing, as at wedding festivities." (NAC)

**A T Robertson** adds an interesting thought on why John's disciples were colluding with those of the Pharisees - "John was languishing in prison and they perhaps were blaming Jesus for doing nothing about it. At any rate John would not have gone to Levi's feast on one of the Jewish fast-days. "The strict asceticism of the Baptist (Mt 11:18) and of the Pharisaeic rabbis (Luke 18:12) was imitated by their disciples" (McNeile)." ([Matthew 9 Commentary](#))

**NET Note** on the practice of fasting in Jesus' day - John's disciples and the Pharisees followed typical practices with regard to fasting and prayer. Many Jews fasted regularly (Lev 16:29–34; 23:26–32; Nu 29:7–11). The zealous fasted twice a week on Monday and Thursday.

**Fast** (3522)(nesteuo from **ne-** = not + **esthío** = to eat) means to abstain from food (and sometimes drink) for a certain length of time and in the NT most often done for religious reasons. One idea is that fasting was done to express dependence on God and submission to His will. Others say fasting was done as a mark of religious commitment and devotion or as an expression of repentance for sins. Fasting was also connected with mourning or grieving (Septuagint of 2 Sa 12:16). Some see fasting as a "weakening" of the body in order to "strengthen" the spirit, which sounds good but can easily evolve into a fleshly, self-centered "work" (see Mt 6:18<sup>±</sup>) rather than an act of genuine self-less devotion. Clearly, we can strengthen our spirit in other ways, most importantly by regular, daily intake of God Word of truth (Mt 4:4, cf Heb 13:9)! In Jesus' day zealous Jews fasted twice a week on Monday and Thursday (cf Lk 18:12+). Jesus discussed fasting in Mt 6:16-18<sup>±</sup> but

He did not command fasting. Jews sometimes fasted as a result of personal loss, sometimes as an expression of repentance, sometimes as preparation for prayer, and sometimes merely as a meritorious act. The only biblically prescribed fast was on the Day of Atonement (Lev 16:29, 31, cf Lev 23:26–32; Nu 29:7–11), although other fasts grew up late in the OT period (Zech 7:5; Zech 8:19). So important was fasting for ancient Jews that an entire tractate of the Mishna, Taanith, was devoted to it. Today fasting is a matter of Christian freedom, not obligation. Therefore Didache 8.1 (early second century) is wrong in insisting that Christians fast on Wednesdays and Fridays instead of Mondays and Thursdays (like the Jews). Note that the OT does mention several non-required fasts and these were generally spontaneous and associated with grief, mourning, and/or humbly seeking God. So over time fasts multiplied and varied as to the length of the fast. And so we see **fasts** -- From sunrise to sunset (Jdg. 20:26; 1 Sa 14:24; 2 Sa 1:12; 2 Sa 3:35); for seven days (1 Sa 31:13); for three weeks (Da 10:3); for forty days (Ex 34:2, 28; Dt. 9:9, 18; 1 Ki 19:8); in the fifth and seventh month (Zech 7:3–5); in the fourth, fifth, seventh, and tenth month (Zech 8:19), and by the time of Jesus being observed “twice a week,” as boasted by the Pharisee in Luke 18:12. This twice a week fast was practiced by the more zealous (and more legalistic) Jews on Monday and Thursday.

**Evans** adds that "**Fasting** is usually observed at times of repentance (Jdg. 20:26; 1 Sam. 7:6; 1 Ki 21:27; Ezra 8:21, 23; Neh. 9:1; Jonah 3:5) or in times of mourning (1 Sa 31:13; 2 Sa 1:12; Neh. 1:4), in times of great distress (2 Sa 12:16, 21–23; Esth. 4:3; 4 Ezra 5:20 “I fasted seven days, mourning and weeping”), or in preparation for a time of trial or special mission (Esth. 4:16; Da 9:3; Mt. 17:21; Acts 13:2–3; 14:23; 27:33). It was self-effacing and self-humiliating, the antithesis to pride and presumption (or at least it was supposed to be).” (BKBC)

**MacArthur** - A fast is always meaningless if it is performed from habit and does not result from deep concern and mourning over some spiritual need. Going to church on Sunday is hypocritical if it is done apart from a genuine desire to worship and glorify God. Singing a hymn is only a pretense of worship if it does not come from a heart that seeks to praise the Lord.

#### Related Resources:

- Baker Evangelical Dictionary [Fast, Fasting](#) - recommended article by Eugene Merrill
- Torrey Topical Textbook [Fasting](#)
- [Christian fasting - what does the Bible say? | GotQuestions.org](#)
- McClintock and Strong's Bible Encyclopedia [Fast](#)
- American Tract Society [Fasting](#)
- Bridgeway Bible Dictionary [Fasting](#)
- Easton's Bible Dictionary [Fast](#)
- Fausset Bible Dictionary [Fasting](#)
- Holman Bible Dictionary [Fasting](#)
- Hastings' Dictionary of the Bible [Fasting](#)
- Hastings' Dictionary of the NT [Fasting \(2\) Fasting](#)
- Hawker's Poor Man's Dictionary [Fasting Fast](#)
- Smith Bible Dictionary [Fasts](#)
- Vines' Expository Dictionary [Fast, Fasting Fast](#)
- Wilson's Bible Types [Fast](#)
- Webster Dictionary [Fasting](#)
- Watson's Theological Dictionary [Fasting](#)
- [Fasting](#) - Article by Archibald Alexander
- 1911 Encyclopedia Britannica [Fasting](#)
- International Standard Bible Encyclopedia [Fasts and Feasts Fast; Fasting Feasts, and Fasts](#)
- Kitto Biblical Encyclopedia [Fasts](#)
- The Jewish Encyclopedia [Fasting and Fast-Days](#)
- [How to fast—what does the Bible say? | GotQuestions.org](#)
- [Why don't Christians fast the same as Muslims? | GotQuestions.org](#)
- [Why did Jesus fast? | GotQuestions.org](#)
- [What are the different types of fasting? | GotQuestions.org](#)
- [What is Ramadan? | GotQuestions.org](#)
- [What is Tisha B'Av?](#)

Warren Wiersbe sees four pictures of Jesus' ministry described in all three synoptic Gospels -

- (1) As the **Physician**, He came to bring spiritual health to sick sinners. (Mt 9:12-13+, Mk 2:17+, Lk 5:31-32+)
- (2) As the **Bridegroom**, He came to give spiritual joy. The Christian life is a feast, not a funeral. (Mt 9:14-15+, Mk 2:18-20+, Lk 5:33-35+)
- (3) The illustration of the **cloth** reminds us that He came to bring spiritual wholeness; He did not come to "patch us up" and then let us fall apart. (Mt 9:16+, Mk 2:21+, Lk 5:36+)
- (4) The image of the **wineskins** teaches that He gives spiritual fullness. Jewish religion was a worn-out wineskin that would burst if filled with the new wine of the Gospel. Jesus did not come to renovate Moses or even mix Law and grace. He came with new life! (Mt 9:17+, Mk 2:22+, Lk 5:37-39+) ([Bible Exposition Commentary](#))

**Matthew 9:15 And Jesus said to them, "The attendants of the bridegroom cannot mourn as long as the bridegroom is with them, can they? But the days will come when the bridegroom is taken away from them, and then they will fast**

NET Matthew 9:15 Jesus said to them, "The wedding guests cannot mourn while the bridegroom is with them, can they? But the days are coming when the bridegroom will be taken from them, and then they will fast.

GNT Matthew 9:15 καὶ πεντακοτός οὗτος, Μέντονται οὐαὶ τοῖς νυμφοῖς πενθεῖς φέροντες αὐτοὺς οὐαὶ τοῖς παρθένοις, καὶ τέτενηστε σουσιν.

NLT Matthew 9:15 Jesus replied, "Do wedding guests mourn while celebrating with the groom? Of course not. But someday the groom will be taken away from them, and then they will fast.

KJV 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.

ESV Matthew 9:15 And Jesus said to them, "Can the wedding guests mourn as long as the bridegroom is with them? The days will come when the bridegroom is taken away from them, and then they will fast.

NIV Matthew 9:15 Jesus answered, "How can the guests of the bridegroom mourn while he is with them? The time will come when the bridegroom will be taken from them; then they will fast.

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

CSB Matthew 9:15 Jesus 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.

NKJ Matthew 9:15 And Jesus said to them, "Can the friends of the bridegroom mourn as long as the bridegroom is with them? But the days will come when the bridegroom will be taken away from them, and then they will fast.

NRS Matthew 9:15 And Jesus said to them, "The wedding guests cannot mourn as long as the bridegroom is with them, can they? The days will come when the bridegroom is taken away from them, and then they will fast.

YLT Matthew 9:15 And Jesus said to them, 'Can the sons of the bride-chamber mourn, so long as the bridegroom is with them? but days shall come when the bridegroom may be taken from them, and then they shall fast.

- **Can** - Mt 25:1-10 Judges 14:11-20 Ps 45:14,15 Joh 3:29 Rev 19:9 21:2
- **when** - Lu 24:13-21 Joh 16:6,18-22 Ac 1:9,10
- **and then** - Isa 22:12 Ac 13:1-3 14:23 1Co 7:5 2Co 11:27

**Parallel Passages** Mt. 9:14-17; Mk 2:18-22; Lk 5:33-39

Mk 2:19+ And Jesus said to them, "While the bridegroom is with them, the attendants of the bridegroom

cannot fast, can they? So long as they have the bridegroom with them, they cannot fast. 20 "But the days will come when the bridegroom is taken away from them, and then they will fast in that day.

Luke 5:34-35+ And Jesus said to them, "You cannot make the attendants of the bridegroom fast while the bridegroom is with them, can you? 35 "But the days will come; and when the bridegroom is taken away from them, then they will fast in those days."

## MOURNING WHEN HE IS TAKEN AWAY

**And Jesus said to them, "The attendants of the bridegroom cannot mourn as long as the bridegroom is with them, can they?** - This is rhetorical. Of course not. That would be absurd. It would be ludicrous to think that Jesus' disciples ought to fast and mourn while the Messiah was in their midst! A wedding was a time of great joy (then and today)! Literally they are not even "able" ([dunamai](#)) to mourn. The **attendants of the bridegroom** are distinct from the groomsmen but are the guests invited to the wedding. The scene is in Galilee, where groomsmen were not customary, as in Judaea and thus there is no mention of them in the account of the marriage at Cana.

**Louis Barbieri** - Jesus answered that the kingdom is like a great feast (cf. Matt. 22:2; Isa. 25:6), in this case a wedding banquet. Since the King was now present, it was inappropriate for Him or His disciples to fast. (BKC)

**A T Robertson** on **attendants of the bridegroom** (KJV = "the sons of the bridechamber") - Not merely the groomsmen, but the guests also, the paranumphs (paranumphoi of the old Greek). Jesus here adopts the Baptist's own metaphor ([John 3:29](#)), changing the **friend of the bridegroom** (ho philos tou numphiou) to **sons of the bridechamber**....Mourning does not suit the wedding feast. Mark, Matthew, and Luke all give the three parables (bridegroom, unfulled cloth, new wineskins) illustrating and defending the conduct of Jesus in feasting with Levi on a Jewish fast-day. Luke 5:36 calls these **parables**. Jesus here seems [iconoclastic](#) to the [ecclesiastics](#) and revolutionary in emphasis on the spiritual instead of the ritualistic and ceremonial....(in another note) Hebrew idiom for the wedding guests, "the friends of the bridegroom and all the sons of the bride-chamber" (Tos. Berak. ii. 10) ([Matthew 9 Commentary](#))

**Marvin Vincent** adds that "In Judea there were two groomsmen, one for the bridegroom, the other for his bride. Before marriage they acted as intermediaries between the couple; at the wedding they offered gifts, waited upon the the bride and bridegroom, and attended them to the bridal chamber. It was the duty of the friend of the bridegroom to present him to his bride, after marriage to maintain proper terms between the parties, and especially to defend the bride's good fame. The Rabbinical writings speak of Moses as the friend of the bridegroom who leads out the bride to meet Jehovah at Sinai ([Ex 19:17](#)); and describe Michael and Gabriel as acting as the friends of the bridegroom to our first parents, when the Almighty himself took the cup of blessing and spoke the benediction. John the Baptist represents himself as standing in the same relation to Jesus." ([Matthew 9 Commentary](#))

**Bridegroom** (in phrase "attendants of the bridegroom")([3567](#))(**numphon**) is a wedding hall, the place where the wedding ceremonies are held (Mt 22:10) or a bridal chamber, as the place where the marriage is consummated, the chamber containing the bridal bed. The bridal chamber in which the marriage bed was prepared, usually in the house of the bridegroom where the bride was brought in procession (See [Jewish Wedding Analogy](#)). In the present passage it refers to the friends of the bridegroom whose duty it was to provide and care for whatever pertained to the bridal chamber, i. e. whatever was needed for the due celebration of the nuptials in the bridal chamber. Found only 4x in NT - bridegroom(3), wedding hall(1). - Matt. 9:15; Matt. 22:10; Mk. 2:19; Lk. 5:34. No uses in the Septuagint.

**The bridegroom** (the actual individual)(([3566](#))(**numphios**)) is distinct from "the sons of the bride-chamber" and here is the actual spouse, the one newly married. In classical Greek numphios carries the meaning of "bridegroom," "betrothed," and "young husband." In Homer's Iliad it refers to "one lately married" (cf. *Liddell-Scott*). In addition to the singular form the plural numphiois is used to signify the "bridal pair" (e.g., Euripides [Fifth Century B.C.]). Also, numphios is used adjectively with the meaning "bridal."

**Numphios** - 12x - Matt. 9:15; Matt. 25:1; Matt. 25:5; Matt. 25:6; Matt. 25:10; Mk. 2:19; Mk. 2:20; Lk. 5:34; Lk. 5:35; Jn. 2:9; Jn. 3:29; Rev. 18:23

**Numphios** in Septuagint - Jdg. 15:6; Jdg. 19:5; Neh. 13:28; Ps. 19:5; Isa. 61:10; Isa. 62:5; Jer. 7:34; Jer. 16:9; Jer. 25:10; Jer. 33:11; Joel 2:16;

**Gilbrant** - In the Septuagint numphios is translated as "bridegroom" and is used both literally and figuratively. Literally, Jeremiah spoke of the coming conditions of Israel and how, along with other occurrences, the voice of the "bridegroom" would be heard no more ([Jeremiah 7:34; 16:9; 25:10](#)). Later,

when speaking of the return and restoration of Israel from her captivity, the picture is used of the voice of the "bridegroom" again being heard in the land. Symbolically, the implication is that of the loss and eventual regaining of joy by a people who had disobeyed God, who had repented, and who then were restored. Figuratively, numphios is used with regard to the relationship between God and the nation of Israel. Isaiah 61:10 and Isa 62:5 picture God as a numphios, "bridegroom." In this relationship Israel is God's bride. A prominent theme throughout these passages is that of the joy which is present in the relationship. (Complete Biblical Library Greek-English Dictionary)

**Gilbrant** on NT - In the New Testament the various referents found in the classical writings (e.g., "young husband") and the Septuagint (e.g., "son-in-law") are absent. Only "bridegroom" is carried into the New Testament. However, this usage is primarily a reflection of the Jewish customs and concepts. The use of numphios in the New Testament is relatively rare, being found primarily in the Gospels and once in Revelation. In the New Testament numphios is used both literally and figuratively. In John 2:9 and Revelation 18:23 numphios literally denotes "bridegroom." In John 3:29 the "bridegroom" is called aside by the master of the banquet in order to comment on the quality of the wine. In Revelation 18:23—at the fall of Babylon—the voice of the "bridegroom" will be heard no more in the city. Figuratively, the two numphios usages (Matthew 9:15 with parallel passages and Matthew 25:1-13) offer a fulfillment of an Old Testament concept in the New Testament. However, the Old Testament references of the bride and bridegroom are to Israel and God (Isaiah 62:5), whereas the New Testament uses this imagery in referring to the community of believers and Christ. This use of "bridegroom" as it relates to the Messiah is unique to the New Testament. Surrounding the imagery of the "bridegroom" are other important aspects that further study brings into focus. In John 3:29 reference is made to *ho philos tou numphiou*, "the friend of the bridegroom," who played a key role in the marriage picture. Further imagery of this concept of Christ as the "bridegroom" and the Church as the "bride" is found in the writings of Paul in 2 Corinthians 11:2 and Ephesians 5:22-32. Although numphios is not specifically found in these passages the picture is clearly one of the marriage relationship. (Complete Biblical Library Greek-English Dictionary).

Only Matthew uses the verb **mourn** here, Mark and Luke using the verb **fast**, so clearly Jesus links this fasting to mourning.

**Mourn** ([3996](#)) (**pentheo** from **pénthos** = mourning) means to mourn for, lament. **Pentheo** denotes loud mourning such as the lament for the dead or for a severe, painful loss. It is grief and sorrow caused by profound loss, especially death. Mourning can reflect an outward expression of sorrow. It is to experience sadness or grief as the result of depressing circumstances or the condition of persons and so to be sad, to grieve, to bewail or to lament. Grieving over a personal hope (relationship) that *dies*. **Pentheō** ("mourn over a death") refers to "manifested grief" severe enough to *take possession* of a person and hence cannot be hid. This is the same meaning of *penthéō* throughout antiquity. **Pentheo** in NT - Mt. 5:4; Mt. 9:15; Mk. 16:10; Lk. 6:25; 1 Co. 5:2; 2 Co. 12:21; Jas. 4:9; Rev. 18:11; Rev. 18:15; Rev. 18:19.

**But** - Term of contrast. Joy will turn to mourning and fasting, when the bridegroom was taken away, when Jesus was crucified as discussed below.

**The days will come when the bridegroom is taken away from them, and then they will fast-** In His answer to the critics regarding His disciples not fasting and mourning, Jesus gives a veiled prophecy which most commentators interpret as a reference to His crucifixion, when Jesus was abruptly and violently taken away from His followers, His faithful **attendants**. That will be the time for mourning, and then **they will fast**. It certainly could also have reference to Jesus Ascension. After Jesus' ascension into heaven, His disciples did **fast**, but only as a voluntary act of humble dependence on God (Acts 13:2-3; Acts 14:23). Why would Jesus, the bridegroom, be **taken away**? In a word, Jesus threatened the very core of their religious system! The same thing happens when we speak with someone about Jesus -- it is not long before we can discern whether the Name Jesus threatens their beliefs or whether they are open to hearing of His perfect cure!

When Jesus was crucified, the disciples went away beating their breasts which in a sense looks back to the mourning of the Jews over their sins on the **Day of atonement (Yom Kippur)** (Lev 16:1-34+) an OT shadow of Jesus' crucifixion. But not only do Jesus' words look backward, they also look forward (they have an **eschatological** fulfillment) when He returns John writing '**BEHOLD, HE IS COMING WITH THE CLOUDS**, and every eye will see Him, **even those who pierced Him** (WHO IS THIS? SURELY A REFERENCE TO ISRAEL, THE JEWS - cf FOLLOWING QUOTE FROM ZECHARIAH); and all the tribes of the earth will mourn over Him. So it is to be. Amen." (Revelation 1:7<sup>+</sup>). At that unique time in world history and the history of Israel, God will "pour out on the house of David and on the inhabitants of Jerusalem, the Spirit of grace and of supplication, so that they will look on Me (MESSIAH) **Whom they have pierced**; and **they will mourn for Him**, as one mourns for an only son, and **they will weep bitterly over Him** like the bitter weeping over a firstborn. (Zech 12:10-14+).

**Zodhiates on taken away** - The "bridegroom" had come in the incarnation of the Word (John 1:1, Jn 1:14), and this was a time of rejoicing (Mt. 25:1). However, the time would come when this bridegroom would be "taken away," the aorist tense more likely specifying the event of Christ's ascension (Acts 1:9-11+) rather than His physical death (ED: I THINK IT IS BOTH - THEY MOURNED WHEN HE DIED! SEE USE OF THE ROOT **airo** IN Jn 19:15 THE JEWS CLEARLY CALLING FOR HIS CRUCIFIXION). It's true that the disciples grieved for Jesus after His death, but the resurrection three days later was a time of great, overcompensating joy. The separation of the Lord from His people following His ascension into heaven, however, has been much longer, and we find several references to the early church fasting and mourning for His presence (see Acts 14:23+; 1 Cor. 7:5). How we, too, long for the return of the Lord—"Come, Lord Jesus" (Rev. 22:20<sup>+</sup>)! The Lord's presence in the Spirit converts unbelievers (Acts 4:29-37+). To not see this happen for a time is grievous. Yet even though the bridegroom would ascend to His Father in heaven, He promised His disciples (His bride) that He would not leave them as orphans (bereaved, parentless, comfortless; John 14:18), but He would be with them until the consummation of the age in the Person of the Holy Spirit (Mt. 28:20; Jn 14:16-18: note the change in subject from the third person Holy Spirit, "Him," to the first person, "I will come to you"). When the present age is consummated, the bridegroom will return to wed His bride (Rev. 19:7<sup>+</sup>; Rev 21:2<sup>+</sup>).

**Taken away** (522)(**apairo** from from **apo** = from + **airo** = to take away, used in Jn 19:15 = "Away with") means to lift off, carry off, take away, to remove from, snatched away. **Apairo** conveys the idea of a sudden, violent removal. Ellis says the verb means "to take away, implying rejection and violent death." Only uses are in Jesus' description of the Bridegroom taken away! - Matt. 9:15; Mk. 2:20; Lk. 5:35. This verb was prophetic of the Crucifixion and Ascension.

**Apairo in the Septuagint**- Gen. 12:9; 13:11; 26:21-22; 33:12,17; 35:16; 37:17; 46:1; Exod. 12:37; 16:1; 17:1; Num. 9:17-18,20-23; 14:25; 20:22; 21:4,10,12-13; 22:1; 33:3,5ff,41ff; Deut. 1:7,19; 2:1,13,24; 10:6-7,11; Jos. 3:1,3,14; 9:17; Jdg. 5:4; 18:11; 1 Ki. 20:9; 2 Ki. 3:27; 19:8,36; Ps. 78:26,52; Ezek. 10:4; Nah. 3:18

Jesus told His disciples in the Upper Room

"Truly, truly, I say to you, that **you will weep and lament**, (WHEN HE IS CRUCIFIED) but the world will rejoice; **you will grieve**, but your grief will be turned into joy (WHEN HE IS RESURRECTED). 21 "Whenever a woman is in labor she has pain, because her hour has come; but when she gives birth to the child, she no longer remembers the anguish because of the joy that a child has been born into the world. 22 "Therefore you too have grief now; but I will see you again, and your heart will rejoice, and no one will take your joy away from you. (John 16:20-22)

**Matthew 9:16 "But no one puts a patch of unshrunk cloth on an old garment; for the patch pulls away from the garment, and a worse tear results**

NET Matthew 9:16 No one sews a patch of unshrunk cloth on an old garment, because the patch will pull away from the garment and the tear will be worse.

GNt Matthew 9:16 ο δε ο δ πιβ λλει π βλημα κους γν φου π ματ παλαι · αρει γρ τ πλ ρωμα ατο π το ματ ου κα χε πον σχ σμα γ νεται.

NLT Matthew 9:16 "Besides, who would patch old clothing with new cloth? For the new patch would shrink and rip away from the old cloth, leaving an even bigger tear than before.

KJV 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.

ESV Matthew 9:16 No one puts a piece of unshrunk cloth on an old garment, for the patch tears away from the garment, and a worse tear is made.

NIV Matthew 9:16 "No one sews a patch of unshrunk cloth on an old garment, for the patch will pull away from the garment, making the tear worse.

ASV Matthew 9:16 And no man putteth a piece of undressed cloth upon an old garment; for that which should fill it up taketh from the garment, and a worse rent is made.

CSB Matthew 9:16 No one patches an old garment with unshrunk cloth, because the patch pulls away from the garment and makes the tear worse.

NKJ Matthew 9:16 "No one puts a piece of unshrunk cloth on an old garment; for the patch pulls away from the garment, and the tear is made worse.

NRS Matthew 9:16 No one sews a piece of unshrunk cloth on an old cloak, for the patch pulls away from the cloak, and a worse tear is made.

YLT Matthew 9:16 'And no one doth put a patch of undressed cloth on an old garment, for its filling up doth take from the garment, and a worse rent is made.

- **for** - Ge 33:14 Ps 125:3 Isa 40:11 Joh 16:12 1Co 3:1,2 13:13

#### Parallel Passages Mt. 9:14–17; Mk 2:18–22; Lk 5:33–39

Mk 2:21+ "No one sews a patch of unshrunk cloth on an old garment; otherwise the patch pulls away from it, the new from the old, and a worse tear results.

Luke 5:36+ And He was also telling them a parable: "No one tears a piece of cloth from a new garment and puts it on an old garment; otherwise he will both tear the new, and the piece from the new will not match the old.

## PARABLE OF THE PATCH

Only Luke 5:36+ says that Jesus "was also telling them a **parable** (see [parable](#))." Also Luke 5:36+ is slightly different than Matthew and Mark's version for Luke speaks of damage to two garments, new and old writing "No one tears a piece of cloth from a **new garment** and puts it on an **old garment**; otherwise he will both **tear the new**, and the piece from the **new will not match the old**"

As **Vincent** says "In Matthew and Mark there is only a single damage, that, namely, to the **old** garment, the rent in which is enlarged. In Luke the damage is twofold; first, in injuring the **new** garment by cutting out a piece; and second, in making the **old** garment appear patched, instead of widening the rent, as in Matthew and Mark." ([Matthew 9 Commentary](#))

**James Brooks** sums up the last two parables in Mt 9:16 and Mt 9:17 - The twin parables here teach the incompatibility of the old (scribal Judaism) and the new (Christianity). Judaism is the old garment and the old wineskin. Christianity is the new garment (implied), the new wineskin, and the new wine (on the last cf. John 2:1–11, especially v. 10). The point is not that the "old" is wrong or evil but that its time has passed. As Acts shows, the Twelve were slow to learn this truth (cf Acts 10:1-2ff+). (See [Mark: An Exegetical and Theological Exposition](#))

**But no one** (*oudeis* - absolutely no one) **puts** (*epiballo*) **a patch** (*epiblema*) **of unshrunk cloth on an old** (*palaios*) **garment** (*himation*) - Luke's version is slightly different reading "No one tears a piece of cloth from a new garment and puts it on an old garment." (Lk 5:36+) This was common sense truth which everyone understood. The Greek word for **old** (*palaios*) means not only old but worn out by use. Jesus is saying, "I didn't come to patch up the **old** religious system. I came to do something entirely **new**." (Courson) Jesus did not come to improve the **old** system of Judaism but to renounce and radically replace it. His **new** way had nothing to do with the **old** way, and the **old** way had nothing to do with His **new** way. He was not bringing a "better version" of Pharisaism or rabbinicalism but was bringing "good news" of a completely **new** way of believing, thinking, and living.

**MacArthur** - "The **old garment** is the legalistic system of rabbinic tradition that had obscured the law of God (cf. Mt. 15:3-6). Jesus was not interested in mending the religion of the Pharisees. The good news of salvation by grace through faith in Him could not be combined with the works-righteousness of Judaism." (Ibid)

**For** (*gar*) is a term of explanation. This use is clear as Jesus explains how *inane* it would be to put a new patch of material on old material. One might say Judaism was "worn out" (*palaios*) and in need of something brand new (*kainos*), the Gospel.

**The patch** (*epiblema*) **pulls away** (*airo*) **from the garment** (*himation*), **and a worse** (*cheiron*) **tear** (*schisma*) **results** - Ancient cloth was usually wool or linen, both of which shrank when washed. New material patching up old material would result in a **tear** because the **patch** would shrink when the **garment** was washed. And Jesus says that the result is a **worse tear** where **tear** is the Greek word ***schisma*** which gives us our English schism. The **patch** does more harm than good.

The question is what do the **patch** and **old garment** symbolize? The **old garment** represents Judaism with all the rules and regulations that were to be kept to achieve (self) righteousness. The **patch of unshrunk cloth** represents the new way to approach

God and the new (only) way to achieve righteousness. Jesus' coming resulted in formation of a new institution, the church, that brought Jew and Gentile together into a completely new body that did not exist in the OT (Ephesians 2:16<sup>±</sup>). Jesus explained that He did not come to repair or reform the old institutions of Judaism, but to institute/inaugurate a brand new covenant altogether. Jesus came to introduce something new, not to patch up something old. In salvation with the forgiveness of sins which faith in Jesus brings, He does not destroy the Law, but He actually fulfills it. Think of the illustration of an acorn whose purpose is fulfilled when it grows into an oak tree. There is a sense in which the acorn (THE LAW) is gone, but its purpose has been fulfilled (cf PURPOSE OF THE LAW = Gal 3:19-24+). And so the Law is now fulfilled in the work of Christ on the Cross. Jesus Himself declared "Do not think that I came to abolish the Law or the Prophets; I did not come to abolish, but to fulfill." (Mt 5:17<sup>±</sup>, see parallel truth in Ro 10:4<sup>±</sup>). In addition, in the New Covenant not only is the Law not abolished, but in (Jer 31:33+) God actually says ""I will put My law within them and on their heart I will write it." And then God enables us to keep His Law by giving us His Spirit, a gift He promised in Ezekiel 36:27+ "I will put My Spirit within you and **cause** (SPIRIT GIVES US THE DESIRE AND THE POWER TO OBEY) you to walk in My statutes, and **you will be careful to observe** (OUR RESPONSIBILITY TO OBEY) My ordinances."

**MacArthur** - Repairing an old tunic with a piece of new, unshrunk fabric would be ill-advised. Not only would the new cloth not match the faded color of the old (cf. Luke 5:36), it would shrink when washed and pull the garment, causing it to tear. Our Lord's point was that His gospel of repentance and forgiveness from sin could not be patched into the legalistic traditionalism of Pharisaic Judaism. The true gospel cannot be successfully attached to the tattered garment of superficial religion worn so proudly by the scribes and Pharisees. Apostate Judaism's rituals and ceremonies were like filthy rags (Isa. 64:6); they were beyond repair. Jesus did not come with a message to patch up their old system. He came to totally replace it. **It is important to note that the old garment to which Jesus alludes is neither the Mosaic law nor the Old Testament as a whole.** Jesus did not come to destroy the law but to fulfill it (Mt. 5:17-19<sup>±</sup>). Moreover, the apostle Paul explains that the law of God is righteous and good (Ro 7:12,16<sup>±</sup>). The Jewish leaders had added their own rabbinic stipulations and traditions to God's law to the degree that Judaism had more to do with keeping extra-biblical prescriptions than with honoring divine requirements. (See [Mark Commentary](#))

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**Patch** (1915) (epiblema from [epiballo](#) = to throw over) refers literally to that which is put over or on something else, as a piece of cloth used to repair a hole in clothing. Liddell-Scott - that which is thrown over, tapestry, hangings.

**Ancient Garment Repair** - Cloth was woven from wool, linen, sometimes cotton. New cloth shrinks significantly after first wash. Sewing an unshrunk patch onto a weathered, fragile garment guarantees tearing once it shrinks. Thus the epiblēma intensifies—not fixes—the problem. The epiblēma symbolizes something externally applied to temporarily cover a deeper mismatch which actually makes the situation worse. Something applied on the surface (Gospel mixed with Law), is not addressing the underlying issue.

When Pharisees question why Jesus' disciples do not fast Jesus responded with two parables - Unshrunk patch (epiblēma) on old garment and New wine in old wineskins. Both illustrate this key principle: The new (Jesus' kingdom, New Covenant) cannot be grafted onto the old (Pharisaic traditions, Old Covenant). Christ did not come to sew a piece of new cloth on the old garment of Judaism; he came to bring a new garment altogether. Jesus' use of the metaphor of a **patch** underscores that the Pharisaic system (old garment) is unrepairable and only a new "garment" of grace suffices.

**EPIBLEMA - 3V** - Matt. 9:16; Mk. 2:21; Lk. 5:36

**Old** (3820) (**palaios** from **pámai** = in the past, long ago) antique, not recent, not new, obsolete, old in the sense of worn out and decrepit. (see discussion of [old self = old man](#) -- "old self" in Ro 6:6<sup>±</sup>, Eph. 4:22<sup>±</sup> and Col. 3:9<sup>±</sup>) **Palaios** means in existence for a long time, and in a number of contexts conveys the sense of being obsolete, antiquated or outworn. Worn out from use is the idea in the synoptic parallel parables - Old Garment, Old Wineskins — Matthew 9:16–17; Mark 2:21–22; Luke 5:36–39. These represent the old religious system—Judaism under the Old Covenant, especially the rigid man made traditions of the Pharisees. [Palaios](#) is used in 2 Cor 3:14 to describe the "Old covenant." Paul calls the Mosaic covenant "old"—not evil, but superseded by the new covenant in Christ. The old covenant prepared the way; the new covenant fulfills it, so that now we can keep the Law (enabled by grace and the Spirit). The related verb [palaioo](#) is used in Hebrews 8:13 to describe the Old Covenant "becoming obsolete (palaioo)."

The "Old Man" in Romans 6:6; Ephesians 4:22; Colossians 3:9. Romans 6:6 "our old man" refers to the believer's old identity in Adam, the person enslaved to sin before union with Christ. Ephesians 4:22 "put off your old self" refers to the old way of life—corrupt through deceitful desires—which is incompatible with new life in Christ. Colossians 3:9 "you have put off the old man" signifies the believer has been decisively stripped of the "old garment" of sin nature. In short, our Old obsolete identity, has been crucified with Christ (Ro 6:6) and is no longer master over the believer. The old man can't be repaired; he must be crucified. **Palaios** reminds us that God's grace is not a patch on our old life—it replaces it with something gloriously new.

*Grace doesn't patch the old life*

—it replaces it.

In classical Greek παλαιός described ancient traditions, long-standing customs, old structures, and things worn by time. Often implied “no longer suitable” for present needs. This helps interpret Jesus’ teaching: Judaism as a παλαιός garment could not withstand the shrinking, stretching, transforming power of the gospel.

**PALAIOS - 15V** - Matt. 9:16; Matt. 9:17; Matt. 13:52; Mk. 2:21; Mk. 2:22; Lk. 5:36; Lk. 5:37; Lk. 5:39; Rom. 6:6; 1 Co. 5:7; 1 Co. 5:8; 2 Co. 3:14; Eph. 4:22; Col. 3:9; 1 Jn. 2:7

**Garment** (2440) (**himation**) describes a garment of any sort, but especially an outer garment. The **himation** was something thrown over the inner tunic (chiton) and in secular Greek was sometimes used for the Roman toga. In the present context, while Jesus is referring to a literal **garment**, He is using the **garment** as an illustration of a spiritual truth. That truth is that the **old garment** of Judaism had become corrupted (“moth-eaten,” so to speak) by numerous non-biblical interpretations and traditions of men (cf Lk 15:6+, Mt 23:4, 23, Lk 11:46+, Acts 15:10+) and was worn out, “spiritually threadbare,” so to speak! In other words, a “*gospel patch*” was neither compatible with the **old garment**, nor would it be able to repair the **old garment** of hackneyed Judaism. Jesus did not come to reform ritualistic Judaism but to replace it and clothe men with “*garments of salvation*”, representing not their self-righteous works (as in Judaism) but His righteousness (Isa 61:10+; Ro 3:22<sub>±</sub>), for as Paul wrote “all of you who were baptized into Christ **have clothed yourselves with Christ**.” (Gal 3:27+).

**Pulls away** (142) (**airo**) literally means to lift up something (Mt 17:27) and to carry it (Lxx - Ge 44:1, Ex 25:28 = the Ark). In the first Septuagint use of **airo** in Ge 35:2 Jacob told his household **Put away** (**airo**) the foreign gods.” As an aside this is the same verb used by John the Baptist when he made the famous declaration - “The next day he saw Jesus coming to him and said, “**Behold**, the Lamb of God who takes away (**airo**) the sin of the world!” (John 1:29+) Matthew used this same verb in its literal sense in the story of the paralytic who Jesus healed physically and spiritually (Mt 9:6). Jesus uses **airo** in His famous invitation “**Take** my yoke...” (Mt 11:29<sub>±</sub>). Luke uses a different verb **schizo** (split, rend, divide) in his version of this parable (Lk 5:36+). Matthew uses **schizo** in Mt 27:51 when he records “behold, the veil of the temple was **torn** in two from top to bottom.”

**Worse** (5501) (**cheiron** irregular comparative of **kakós** =bad) is an adjective used to compare degrees of evil, such as worsening spiritual or physical condition. It means inferior to another in quality or condition or desirability. Less satisfactory than something else. **Cheiron** means worse, inferior in rank, dignity, goodness, excellence, or condition (Matt. 9:16; 12:45; 27:64; Mark 2:21; 5:26; Luke 11:26; 1 Tim. 5:8; 2 Tim. 3:13; 2 Pet. 2:20). More grievous, more severe as spoken of punishment and so in Hebrews 10:29 cheiron illustrates the severity of punishment for those who continue to sin deliberately after having accepted Christ.

**Cheiron** - severer(1), worse(10). Matt. 9:16; Matt. 12:45; Matt. 27:64; Mk. 2:21; Mk. 5:26; Lk. 11:26; Jn. 5:14; 1 Tim. 5:8; 2 Tim. 3:13; Heb. 10:29; 2 Pet. 2:20. Used over 400x in the Septuagint (uses only from the Pentateuch) - Gen. 19:19; Gen. 24:50; Gen. 26:29; Gen. 44:34; Gen. 48:16; Gen. 50:15; Exod. 5:19; Num. 14:23; Num. 32:11; Num. 32:23; Deut. 1:39; Deut. 29:21; Deut. 30:15; Deut. 31:17; Deut. 31:29; Deut.

**Tear** (4978) (**schisma** from **schizo** = to cleave, split) literally a split, a rift, and in a garment a tear or rent. Figuratively, of doctrinal differences and divided loyalties within a group schism, division of opinion, discord (Jn 7:43; 1Co 12.25)

**Schisma** in NT - division(4), divisions(2), tear(2). Mt. 9:16; Mk. 2:21; Jn. 7:43; Jn. 9:16; Jn. 10:19; 1 Co. 1:10; 1 Co. 11:18; 1 Co. 12:25. No uses in the Septuagint.

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**SUMMARY** - In Matthew 9:16, Jesus uses the metaphor of sewing an unshrunk cloth onto an old garment to illustrate the incompatibility between the old religious system of Judaism and the new life and teachings He brings through the gospel. Just as a new patch would shrink and tear away from an old garment, causing more damage, so too would trying to fit the transformative message of Christ into the rigid framework of the Old Covenant result in spiritual ruin. Jesus was not offering a reform of Judaism but inaugurating a completely new covenant based on grace, not law—one that required a renewed heart and faith, not mere adherence to rituals like fasting. This parable warns against superficial fixes to deep spiritual needs and calls believers to fully embrace the new life found in Christ, leaving behind the old forms that cannot contain the power and freedom of the gospel

**QUESTION** - [What is the significance of the unshrunk cloth on an old garment \(Matthew 9:16\)? GOTQUESTIONS.ORG](http://www.gotquestions.org)

**ANSWER** - On one occasion, the disciples of [John the Baptist](#) approached Jesus with a question: “Why do we and the Pharisees fast, but your disciples do not fast?” (Matthew 9:14, ESV). The Lord responded with this short parable: “No one sews a patch of unshrunk cloth on an old garment, for the patch will pull away from the garment, making the tear worse” (Matthew 9:16).

At first, Christ’s mention of a sewing technique may seem out of place and unrelated to the original question. Even more perplexing,

Jesus follows the comment about an unshrunk cloth on an old garment with this statement: “Neither do people pour new wine into old wineskins. If they do, the skins will burst; the wine will run out and the wineskins will be ruined. No, they pour new wine into new wineskins, and both are preserved” (Matthew 9:17).

The significance of both the “unshrunk cloth on an old garment” and the “[new wine](#) into old wineskins” lies in the incompatibility of the pairings. With His metaphor, Christ says that His teachings are radically different and cannot be simply superimposed on the old ways of religious ritual and observance. The Old Covenant and the New Covenant are incompatible.

In ancient times, most garments were made of natural fibers such as wool or linen. An unshrunk cloth is a new piece of fabric that has not been pre-washed and, therefore, is prone to shrinkage after exposure to water, heat, and drying. Sewing such a patch onto an old, well-worn garment creates an inherent problem: once the new cloth shrinks, it strains and pulls at the older material, creating a tear.

The “old garment” symbolizes the old established religious system of Judaism, particularly the [Mosaic Law](#) and the traditions upheld by the Pharisees. The “unshrunk cloth” represents the teachings and the transformative grace brought by Jesus. John’s disciples were Jews who still adhered to the rules of Judaism and lived by the obligations of the Old Covenant, including ceremonial rituals such as fasting (see Leviticus 16:29–31; 23:32; Luke 18:12).

Christ was ushering in an altogether new era, inaugurating a new covenant relationship between God and His people. The message of salvation in Jesus was too fresh and vital to be slapped over the old system of Judaism. The gospel was never intended to be a mere patch on the existing framework but a revolutionary shift requiring complete renewal of faith, heart, and practice. Attempting to embrace Christ’s teachings while clinging to outdated traditions would only create friction and spiritual disaster.

The new life in Christ cannot be contained within the old, empty forms of religion (see Matthew 15:8–9; 23:23–28). The Jewish followers of John would need to broaden their understanding of God’s mercy and grace to include Christ’s sacrifice for the forgiveness of sins, not just for Israel but for the entire world (Matthew 26:28; John 1:29; Hebrews 9:23–26; 10:14; 1 Corinthians 11:25). They would need to understand that salvation is God’s gift through faith (John 3:16–18; Ephesians 2:5, 8–9), that temple sacrifices were no longer needed (Hebrews 7:26–27; 10:1–18), and that all believers were united through the Holy Spirit into God’s temple (1 Corinthians 3:16; 6:19). This new reality was difficult for the Jews to grasp—including those who became Christians after the death and resurrection of Jesus (see Acts 10:1—11:18).

The metaphor of the unshrunk cloth on an old garment warns against superficial attempts to remedy a profound spiritual problem. True transformation cannot happen through adherence to the religious rules of our past. John’s disciples fasted to demonstrate their devotion to God, which was appropriate under the old, legalistic system but was no longer necessary under the new covenant of grace (Romans 3:20–24; 5:20; John 1:16–17; Galatians 2:16; 5:4). Jesus brought the good news of the gospel—the New Covenant—which is the message of salvation by grace through faith, and not works, obtained for us by the blood of Christ (Jeremiah 31:31–34; Luke 22:20; Hebrews 10:29).

The principle of not sewing an unshrunk cloth onto an old garment remains relevant for Bible readers today. It challenges us to avoid rigid adherence to outdated traditions when confronted with the transformative power of Christ’s grace and truth. Instead of trying to patch up our “old garment” with an “unshrunk cloth,” we should wholly embrace our new [identity in Jesus Christ](#): “The old life is gone; a new life has begun!” (2 Corinthians 5:17, NLT).

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**The Broken Jeans Illustration** - A man tried to fix his favorite old jeans with a bright new denim patch. After the first wash, the new fabric shrank and tore an even bigger hole than before. He realized—you can’t fix old, worn-out fabric with something new that isn’t made to fit it. In the same way, Jesus didn’t come to “patch up” our old life—He came to give us a completely new one.

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**The Cracked Wall Illustration** - A homeowner kept painting over a long crack in his wall. Each time, the crack reappeared—bigger than before. A contractor finally said, “Paint isn’t your problem. You need a new foundation.” Religion can paint over the cracks of our spiritual life, but only Christ gives a new heart and a new foundation.

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**The Old Habit Notebook** - A woman kept a journal promising she’d “try harder” to be better—pray more, sin less, obey more. But every page looked the same: “Failed again.” She realized she wasn’t meant to sew Christ onto her old self-effort. Jesus didn’t come to improve us but to transform us from the inside out. Galatians 3:3+ says “Are you so foolish? Having begun by the Spirit, are you now being perfected by the flesh?”

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**The Sourdough Starter Story** - A baker tried adding fresh, new starter to a batch of old dough that had already soured. The whole batch spoiled. She learned the hard way: New life can’t thrive inside old corruption. Likewise, Christ’s new life can’t be mixed with

our old attitudes and sinful patterns.

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**The Outdated Operating System** - A man kept trying to install new software on a very old computer. (Boy have we all likely tried this one!!) Each attempt made the system crash and the software did not work! He finally realized the old operating system simply wasn't designed for the new program. The gospel isn't an upgrade to our old religious system—it requires a new heart, a new Spirit, and a new way of living. (See Ezekiel 36:26-27+)

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**The Broken Vase Repair** - A precious vase broke, and the owner tried gluing a pristine new ceramic piece onto the shattered area. The tension from the new piece cracked the vase further. God doesn't glue grace onto our brokenness; He remakes us entirely (2Co 5:17+).

Stress Buildup: Ceramics are rigid and brittle. When different materials (or even different ceramic types with slightly different compositions or firing histories) are bonded, changes in temperature or humidity can cause them to expand or contract at different rates.

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**The Old Self vs. New Identity** -- Trying to add Christ to an unchanged life is like sewing new cloth onto old fabric. The strain only exposes the weakness of the old. Jesus doesn't stitch righteousness onto us—He clothes us in a new robe of righteousness entirely (Isaiah 61:10).

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**SUMMARY** - Jesus used the images of a new patch on an old garment and new wine in old wineskins to explain why His disciples did not follow the traditional fasting practices of Judaism. His coming introduced something entirely new—the New Covenant—not a mere extension or repair of the Old Covenant system of laws, rituals, and ceremonies. Just as an old wineskin cannot contain the expanding new wine, the rigid framework of the law cannot contain the transforming grace of the gospel. Jesus, the Bridegroom, had arrived, ushering in a time of joy, forgiveness, and spiritual renewal. Salvation would now come by grace through faith, not by works (it never came by works!), and this new reality required a new structure of understanding and practice. Mixing the old system with the new would destroy both; therefore, Jesus declared that the old must give way to the new life He brings.

**QUESTION** - [Why does no one put new wine in old wineskins \(Matthew 9:17\)? GOTQUESTIONS.ORG](#)

**ANSWER** - One day, the disciples of [John the Baptist](#) asked Jesus, "Why don't your disciples fast like we do and the Pharisees do?" (Matthew 9:14, NLT). The Lord's response included this parable: "No one puts new wine into old wineskins. For the old skins would burst from the pressure, spilling the wine and ruining the skins. New wine is stored in new wineskins so that both are preserved" (Matthew 9:17, NLT).

Jesus often taught with [parables](#), using illustrations from everyday life to reveal spiritual truths. He did this so people could hear the truth without rejecting it, even if they couldn't yet grasp the parables' deeper meaning (see Mark 4:11-12; Luke 8:9-10). Before He introduced the concept of putting new wine in old wineskins, Jesus made a similar point using another familiar analogy: "Who would patch old clothing with new cloth? For the new patch would shrink and rip away from the old cloth, leaving an even bigger tear than before" (Matthew 9:16, NLT).

The problem with patching an old, pre-shrunk garment with a new, unshrunk cloth is something most of us can relate to even today. New fabrics that have never been washed or run through a dryer tend to shrink. Mending old clothing with an unshrunk piece of material would cause the new patch to pull away from the old in the wash, ruining the garment. The problem with putting new wine in old wineskins is similar.

As wine ages, it ferments, releasing gases that pressurize an airtight container. In Jesus' day, wineskins were leather pouches used for storing and fermenting wine. A new wineskin's fresh, supple leather could expand and stretch as the wine fermented. But old leather from a previously used wineskin would have already been stretched to its capacity. Putting new wine into old wineskins would cause the leather to crack, burst, and be ruined.

The parables reveal this truth: if we fail to understand that something new is needed, two valuable items—clothing and wineskins—risk ruin. But what does this have to do with the original question about [fasting](#)? What deeper message was Jesus conveying through these illustrations?

Through the parables, Jesus emphasized that He was doing something new—inaugurating a new covenant relationship between God and His people. John's disciples were Jews. They were still following the rules of Judaism and living under the obligations of the Old Covenant, with its ceremonial rituals and religious regulations, including fasting on certain days (see Leviticus 16:29–

31; 23:32; Luke 18:12).

Jesus asked John's disciples, "Do wedding guests mourn while celebrating with the groom? Of course not. But someday the groom will be taken away from them, and then they will fast" (Matthew 9:15, NLT). Jesus had come to establish a new era. Now was a time for joy in the presence of the bridegroom. The disciples of Jesus would mourn and fast later. But while He was here among them, they would celebrate the forgiveness, fellowship, freedom, and new direction that His coming had ushered in. In other words, Jesus' parables said, "Out with the old way of thinking and doing things, and in with the new." If the Jews did not adjust their rigid religious mindset, they would experience a loss much like that of the ruined garments and wineskins.

The problem with putting new wine in old wineskins is that the old skins of the law cannot contain the new wine of the gospel. The Jewish followers of John would have to expand their view of God's provision of mercy and grace to include Christ's sacrifice for the forgiveness of sin, not just for Israel but for the whole world (Matthew 26:28; John 1:29; Hebrews 9:23–26; 10:14; 1 Corinthians 11:25). They would need to understand that salvation comes by grace through faith and not works (John 3:16–18; Ephesians 2:5, 8–9); that the need for temple sacrifices had ended (Hebrews 7:26–27; 10:1–18); and that, through the coming of the Holy Spirit, all believers of all races on earth are God's temple (1 Corinthians 3:16; 6:19) and His own beloved children (John 1:12; 1 John 3:1). This new reality was tough for the Jews to accept—including those who became Christians after the death and resurrection of Jesus (see Acts 10:1–11:18).

Though strict and inflexible as an old wineskin, the Old Covenant of the law was solid, familiar and comforting to the Jews who resisted embracing the New Covenant. But Jesus had no intention of putting a patch on the old garment of Judaism. By ushering in a totally new covenant, Jesus didn't try to fix up or even throw out the law, but rather to fulfill all of it (Matthew 5:17–18). No mere human can keep the law perfectly as God requires (Matthew 5:20, 48; Exodus 32:33; James 2:10). Only Jesus Christ, the spotless Lamb of God could (and did) perfectly fulfill the law's requirements (John 8:46; Hebrews 4:15; 10:12). So as comforting as having the law was for Jews, it was a heavy burden that no one could bear (Acts 15:10).

The gospel of Jesus—the good news—represents the New Covenant of salvation by grace through faith, not works, obtained for us by the blood of Christ (Jeremiah 31:31–34; Luke 22:20; Hebrews 10:29). John's disciples were fasting as an act of religious piety. Such actions may have been appropriate under a legalistic, works-based system, but they are no longer needed under the covenant of grace (Romans 3:20–24; 5:20; John 1:16–17; Galatians 2:16; 5:4).

*Just as we can't put new wine in old wineskins or patch up old garments with new, unshrunk cloth, we can't mix the law with grace.*

Just as we can't put new wine in old wineskins or patch up old garments with new, unshrunk cloth, we can't mix the law with grace. The old, lifeless religious rituals are done, and we have a new life of freedom in Jesus. Our faith is ruined if it's based on dead works instead of on the saving grace of Jesus Christ (Hebrews 9:11–28).

**Matthew 9:17 "Nor do people put new wine into old wineskins; otherwise the wineskins burst, and the wine pours out and the wineskins are ruined; but they put new wine into fresh wineskins, and both are preserved."**

NET Matthew 9:17 And no one pours new wine into old wineskins; otherwise the skins burst and the wine is spilled out and the skins are destroyed. Instead they put new wine into new wineskins and both are preserved."

GNT Matthew 9:17 ο δ βλλουσιν ο νον ν ον ες σκος παλαιος· ε δ μ γε, γνυνται ο σκο κα ο νος κχεται κα ο σκο π λλυνται· λλ βλλουσιν ο νον ν ον ες σκος καινος, κα μφ τεροι συντηρο νται.

NLT Matthew 9:17 "And no one puts new wine into old wineskins. For the old skins would burst from the pressure, spilling the wine and ruining the skins. New wine is stored in new wineskins so that both are preserved."

KJV 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.

ESV Matthew 9:17 Neither is new wine put into old wineskins. If it is, the skins burst and the wine is spilled and the skins are destroyed. But new wine is put into fresh wineskins, and so both are preserved."

NIV Matthew 9:17 Neither do men pour new wine into old wineskins. If they do, the skins will burst, the wine will run out and the wineskins will be ruined. No, they pour new wine into new wineskins, and both are preserved."

ASV Matthew 9:17 Neither do men put new wine into old wine-skins: else the skins burst, and the wine is

spilled, and the skins perish: but they put new wine into fresh wine-skins, and both are preserved.

CSB Matthew 9:17 And no one puts new wine into old wineskins. Otherwise, the skins burst, the wine spills out, and the skins are ruined. But they put new wine into fresh wineskins, and both are preserved."

NKJ Matthew 9:17 "Nor do they put new wine into old wineskins, or else the wineskins break, the wine is spilled, and the wineskins are ruined. But they put new wine into new wineskins, and both are preserved."

NRS Matthew 9:17 Neither is new wine put into old wineskins; otherwise, the skins burst, and the wine is spilled, and the skins are destroyed; but new wine is put into fresh wineskins, and so both are preserved."

YLT Matthew 9:17 'Nor do they put new wine into old skins, and if not -- the skins burst, and the wine doth run out, and the skins are destroyed, but they put new wine into new skins, and both are preserved together.'

- **old** - Jos 9:4 Job 32:19 Ps 119:83

#### Parallel Passages Mt. 9:14–17; Mk 2:18–22; Lk 5:33–39

Mk 2:22+ "No one puts new wine into old wineskins; otherwise the wine will burst the skins, and the wine is lost and the skins as well; but one puts new wine into fresh wineskins."

Luke 5:37+ "And no one puts new wine into old wineskins; otherwise the new wine will burst the skins and it will be spilled out, and the skins will be ruined. 38 "But new wine must be put into fresh wineskins. 39 "And no one, after drinking old wine wishes for new; for he says, 'The old is good enough.'"

**Nor do people put new (*neos*) wine into old wineskins** - The question is what do new wine and old wineskins symbolize. The old wineskins are Judaism including all the added rules and regulations over the centuries. The new wine represents in essence Christianity, the new way to approach God. Jesus was saying that the old wineskins of ritualistic, legalistic Judaism could not contain His new wine of the Gospel of grace (Acts 20:24+). Legalism does not mix beneficially with grace, and only results in ruin. Jesus "wine" would result in formation of a new entity, the church, which would bring Jew and Gentile together in one new body (Ephesians 2:16+).

**New (3501)(*neos*)** signifies new in respect to time (contrast ***kainos*** = new in respect to quality) and describes that which has recently come into existence but for a relatively short time. **Neos** means recent in time, and ***kainos*** means a new kind. The Messianic kingdom would be new both in time and in kind.

**Wine (3631)(*oinos*)** - for more discussion of wine see ***oinos*** means wine and is translated that way in all 32 uses in the NT with most having the literal meaning of wine for drink. **Oinos** describes recently pressed grape juice, either ready for fermentation or just having begun to ferment. The mention of the bursting of the wineskins (Mt 9:17; Mk 2:22; Lk 5:37), implies **fermentation** (see **bubbling of fermentation**). **Distillation** had not yet been developed, so wine could only achieve a certain level of alcoholic content, and it was always consumed with meals watered-down. The alcoholic content was a necessary **antiseptic** in the water of that day which was not always **potable** like modern treated drinking water. In a very clear spiritual analogy Paul compares being drunk with wine with being filled with (controlled by, "drunk with") the Holy Spirit (Eph 5:18+).

**Old (3820)(*palaios*)** from **páλαι** = in the past, long ago) antique, not recent, not new, old in the sense of worn out and decrepit. (see discussion of **old self = old man** -- "old self" in Ro 6:6+, Eph. 4:22+ and Col. 3:9+) **Palaios** means in existence for a long time, and in a number of contexts conveys the sense of being obsolete, antiquated or outworn. Worn out from use is the idea in the synoptic parallel parables in Mt 9:16, 17 Mk 2:21, Lk 5:36. **Palaios** is used in 2 Cor 3:14 to describe the "Old covenant." The related verb **palaioo** is used in Hebrews 8:13 to describe the Old Covenant 'becoming obsolete (palaioo)." However Jesus did not come to destroy the Law but to fulfill it (Mt. 5:17-19+). Moreover, the apostle Paul explains that the law of God is righteous and good (Ro 7:12,16+).

**Wineskins (779)(*akso*)** refers to an animal skin that forms a bag, usually for holding and dispensing wine or other liquids. Akso gives us the word ascidium, botanical term for pitcher-shaped plants or leaves. Wineskins were dehaired skins of small animals, such as goats, which were sewn together to hold water (Gen 21:15), milk (Judg 4:19), and wine (Josh 9:4, 13). **See picture and description** of ancient "skin bottle." See also **ancient bottles**. In the NT akso is used only in Jesus illustrations of new and old wine in Matt. 9:17; Mk. 2:22; Lk. 5:37; Lk. 5:38

**Otherwise the wineskins burst, and the wine pours out and the wineskins are ruined**- Luke's version adds "the new wine will burst the skins and it will be spilled out, and the skins will be ruined." (Luke 5:37+)

**Burst** ([4486](#)) (**rhegnumi**) means to cause to separate abruptly and in this context meaning to burst from internal fermentation, usually suddenly and with force.

**Ruined** ([622](#)) (**apollumi**) from **apo** = away from or wholly + **olethros** = state of utter ruin) basically describes that which is no longer usable for its intended purpose. Sadly this word describes every soul who rejects salvation by grace through faith in Christ (cf Mt 10:28 = **destroy**; Mt 16:25 = **will lose**; etc). They will **NOT** be annihilated (contrary to what even some "evangelical" teachers say)! The will exist forever and forever be unable to fulfill the purpose for which they were created which is to glorify God and enjoy Him forever!

**But they put new** ([neos](#)) **wine into fresh wineskins, and both are preserved** - Luke's version adds a phrase not found in either Matthew or Mark's account - "And no one, after drinking old wine wishes for new; for he says, 'The old is good enough.'"(Lk 5:39+) **NET Note** explains "The meaning of the saying **new wine** into **new wineskins** is that the presence and teaching of Jesus was something new and signaled the passing of the old. It could not be confined within the old religion of Judaism, but involved the inauguration and consummation of the kingdom of God."

**Wiersbe** - The **new** life of the Spirit could not be forced into the old wineskins of Judaism. Jesus was revealing that the ancient Jewish religion was getting old and would soon be replaced (see Heb. 8:13). Most of the Jews preferred the old and refused the new. It was not until A.D. 70, when the Romans destroyed Jerusalem and the temple, and scattered the people, that the Jewish religion as described in the Law came to an end. Today, the Jews do not have a priesthood, a temple, or an altar; so they cannot practice their religion as their ancestors did (see Hosea 3:4). The things in the ceremonial Law were fulfilled by Jesus Christ, so there is no need today for sacrifices, priests, temples, and ceremonies. All of God's people are priests who bring spiritual sacrifices to the Lord (1 Peter 2:5, 9<sup>+</sup>). The tables of Law have been replaced by the tables of the human heart, where God's Spirit is writing the Word and making us like Jesus Christ (2 Cor 3:1–3, 18). Jesus Christ still offers "all things new" (Rev. 21:5). As the **Physician**, He offers sinners new life and spiritual health. As the **Bridegroom**, He brings new love and joy. He gives us the robe of righteousness and the wine of the Spirit (Eph. 5:18; also see Acts 2:13). Life is a feast, not a famine or a funeral; and Jesus Christ is the only one who can make that kind of a difference in our lives. ([Bible Exposition Commentary](#))

**New** ([3501](#)) (**neos**) signifies new in respect to time (contrast **kainos** = new i

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n respect to quality) and describes that which has recently come into existence but for a relatively short time. For discussion of the distinction of **kainos** and **neos** see New - Trench's Synonyms of the New Testament. **Neos** means recent in time, and **kainos** means a new kind. The Messianic kingdom would be **new** both in **time** and in **kind**.

**Fresh** ([2537](#)) (**kainos**) refers to that which is new kind (unprecedented, novel, uncommon, unheard of). It relates to being not previously present. **Vine** adds that **kainos** "denotes "new," of that which is unaccustomed or unused, not "new" in time, recent (Greek = "[neos](#)"), but "new" as to form or quality, of different nature from what is contrasted as old.

**Are preserved** ([4933](#)) (**suntereo** from **sun/syn** = with + **tereo** = guard, keep) means literally to keep closely together and in this context to preserve. Luke uses this same verb in another interesting context describing Mary reflecting deeply and carefully on the words of the shepherds, keeping them in her mind, safely storing them up (so to speak), where suntereo in the Imperfect tense pictures her bringing these thoughts to mind again and again (Lk 2:19+).

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#### QUESTION: [Why does no one put new wine in old wineskins \(Matthew 9:17\)? GOTQUESTIONS.ORG](#)

**ANSWER:** One day, the disciples of [John the Baptist](#) asked Jesus, "Why don't your disciples fast like we do and the Pharisees do?" (Matthew 9:14, NLT). The Lord's response included this parable: "No one puts new wine into old wineskins. For the old skins would burst from the pressure, spilling the wine and ruining the skins. New wine is stored in new wineskins so that both are preserved" (Matthew 9:17, NLT).

Jesus often taught with **parables**, using illustrations from everyday life to reveal spiritual truths. He did this so people could hear the truth without rejecting it, even if they couldn't yet grasp the parables' deeper meaning (see Mark 4:11–12; Luke 8:9–10). Before He introduced the concept of putting new wine in old wineskins, Jesus made a similar point using another familiar analogy: "Who would patch old clothing with new cloth? For the new patch would shrink and rip away from the old cloth, leaving an even bigger tear than before" (Matthew 9:16, NLT).

The problem with patching an old, pre-shrunk garment with a new, unshrunk cloth is something most of us can relate to even today. New fabrics that have never been washed or run through a dryer tend to shrink. Mending old clothing with an unshrunk piece of material would cause the new patch to pull away from the old in the wash, ruining the garment. The problem with putting new wine in old wineskins is similar.

As wine ages, it ferments, releasing gases that pressurize an airtight container. In Jesus' day, wineskins were leather pouches used for storing and fermenting wine. A new wineskin's fresh, supple leather could expand and stretch as the wine fermented. But old leather from a previously used wineskin would have already been stretched to its capacity. Putting new wine into old wineskins would cause the leather to crack, burst, and be ruined.

The parables reveal this truth: if we fail to understand that something new is needed, two valuable items—clothing and wineskins—risk ruin. But what does this have to do with the original question about [fasting](#)? What deeper message was Jesus conveying through these illustrations?

Through the parables, Jesus emphasized that He was doing something new—inaugurating a new covenant relationship between God and His people. John's disciples were Jews. They were still following the rules of Judaism and living under the obligations of the Old Covenant, with its ceremonial rituals and religious regulations, including fasting on certain days (see Leviticus 16:29–31; 23:32; Luke 18:12).

Jesus asked John's disciples, "Do wedding guests mourn while celebrating with the groom? Of course not. But someday the groom will be taken away from them, and then they will fast" (Matthew 9:15, NLT). Jesus had come to establish a new era. Now was a time for joy in the presence of the bridegroom. The disciples of Jesus would mourn and fast later. But while He was here among them, they would celebrate the forgiveness, fellowship, freedom, and new direction that His coming had ushered in. In other words, Jesus' parables said, "Out with the old way of thinking and doing things, and in with the new." If the Jews did not adjust their rigid religious mindset, they would experience a loss much like that of the ruined garments and wineskins.

The problem with putting new wine in old wineskins is that the old skins of the law cannot contain the new wine of the gospel. The Jewish followers of John would have to expand their view of God's provision of mercy and grace to include Christ's sacrifice for the forgiveness of sin, not just for Israel but for the whole world (Matthew 26:28; John 1:29; Hebrews 9:23–26; 10:14; 1 Corinthians 11:25). They would need to understand that salvation comes by grace through faith and not works (John 3:16–18; Ephesians 2:5, 8–9); that the need for temple sacrifices had ended (Hebrews 7:26–27; 10:1–18); and that, through the coming of the Holy Spirit, all believers of all races on earth are God's temple (1 Corinthians 3:16; 6:19) and His own beloved children (John 1:12; 1 John 3:1). This new reality was tough for the Jews to accept—including those who became Christians after the death and resurrection of Jesus (see Acts 10:1–11:18).

Though strict and inflexible as an old wineskin, the Old Covenant of the law was solid, familiar and comforting to the Jews who resisted embracing the New Covenant. But Jesus had no intention of putting a patch on the old garment of Judaism. By ushering in a totally new covenant, Jesus didn't try to fix up or even throw out the law, but rather to fulfill all of it (Matthew 5:17–18). No mere human can keep the law perfectly as God requires (Matthew 5:20, 48; Exodus 32:33; James 2:10). Only Jesus Christ, the spotless Lamb of God could (and did) perfectly fulfill the law's requirements (John 8:46; Hebrews 4:15; 10:12). So as comforting as having the law was for Jews, it was a heavy burden that no one could bear (Acts 15:10).

The gospel of Jesus—the good news—represents the New Covenant of salvation by grace through faith, not works, obtained for us by the blood of Christ (Jeremiah 31:31–34; Luke 22:20; Hebrews 10:29). John's disciples were fasting as an act of religious piety. Such actions may have been appropriate under a legalistic, works-based system, but they are no longer needed under the covenant of grace (Romans 3:20–24; 5:20; John 1:16–17; Galatians 2:16; 5:4).

Just as we can't put new wine in old wineskins or patch up old garments with new, unshrunk cloth, we can't mix the law with grace. The old, lifeless religious rituals are done, and we have a new life of freedom in Jesus. Our faith is ruined if it's based on dead works instead of on the saving grace of Jesus Christ (Hebrews 9:11–28).

**Matthew 9:18** While He was saying these things to them, a synagogue official came and bowed down before Him, and said, "My daughter has just died; but come and lay Your hand on her, and she will live."

**NET** Matthew 9:18 As he was saying these things, a ruler came, bowed low before him, and said, "My daughter has just died, but come and lay your hand on her and she will live."

**GNT** Matthew 9:18 Τα τα α το λαλο ντος α το ζ δο ρχων ε σ λθ ν προσεκ νει α τ λ γων τι θυγ τηρ μου ρτι τελε τησεν· λλ λθ ν π θες τ ν χε ρ σου π α τ ν, κα ζ σεται.

**NLT** Matthew 9:18 As Jesus was saying this, the leader of a synagogue came and knelt before him. "My daughter has just died," he said, "but you can bring her back to life again if you just come and lay your hand on her."

KJV 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.

ESV Matthew 9:18 While he was saying these things to them, behold, a ruler came in and knelt before him, saying, "My daughter has just died, but come and lay your hand on her, and she will live."

NIV Matthew 9:18 While he was saying this, a ruler came and knelt before him and said, "My daughter has just died. But come and put your hand on her, and she will live."

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

CSB Matthew 9:18 As He was telling them these things, suddenly one of the leaders came and knelt down before Him, saying, "My daughter is near death, but come and lay Your hand on her, and she will live."

NKJ Matthew 9:18 While He spoke these things to them, behold, a ruler came and worshiped Him, saying, "My daughter has just died, but come and lay Your hand on her and she will live."

NRS Matthew 9:18 While he was saying these things to them, suddenly a leader of the synagogue came in and knelt before him, saying, "My daughter has just died; but come and lay your hand on her, and she will live."

YLT Matthew 9:18 While he is speaking these things to them, lo, a ruler having come, was bowing to him, saying that 'My daughter just now died, but, having come, lay thy hand upon her, and she shall live.'

- **behold** (Not in NAS but in the Greek) - Mk 5:22-43 Lu 8:41-56
- **synagogue official**- Lu 8:49 13:14 18:18 Ac 13:15
- **bowed down** (worshipped) - Mt 8:2 14:33 15:25 17:14 20:20 28:17 Mk 5:22 Lu 17:15,16 Ac 10:25,26
- **My daughter** - Mt 9:24 Mk 5:23 Lu 7:2 8:42,49 Joh 4:47-49
- **come** - Mt 8:8,9 2Ki 5:11 Joh 11:21,22,25,32

#### Parallel Passages:

Mk 5:21+ When Jesus had crossed over again in the boat to the other side, a large crowd gathered around Him; and so He stayed by the seashore. 22 One of the synagogue officials named Jairus \*came up, and on seeing Him, \*fell at His feet 23 and implored Him earnestly, saying, "My little daughter is at the point of death; please come and lay Your hands on her, so that she will get well and live." 24 And He went off with him; and a large crowd was following Him and pressing in on Him. 25 A woman who had had a hemorrhage for twelve years, 26 and had endured much at the hands of many physicians, and had spent all that she had and was not helped at all, but rather had grown worse— 27 after hearing about Jesus, she came up in the crowd behind Him and touched His cloak. 28 For she thought, "If I just touch His garments, I will get well." 29 Immediately the flow of her blood was dried up; and she felt in her body that she was healed of her affliction. 30 Immediately Jesus, perceiving in Himself that the power proceeding from Him had gone forth, turned around in the crowd and said, "Who touched My garments?" 31 And His disciples said to Him, "You see the crowd pressing in on You, and You say, 'Who touched Me?'" 32 And He looked around to see the woman who had done this. 33 But the woman fearing and trembling, aware of what had happened to her, came and fell down before Him and told Him the whole truth. 34 And He said to her, "Daughter, your faith has made you well; go in peace and be healed of your affliction." 26 and had endured much at the hands of many physicians, and had spent all that she had and was not helped at all, but rather had grown worse— 27 after hearing about Jesus, she came up in the crowd behind Him and touched His cloak. 28 For she thought, "If I just touch His garments, I will get well." 29 Immediately the flow of her blood was dried up; and she felt in her body that she was healed of her affliction. 30 Immediately Jesus, perceiving in Himself that the power proceeding from Him had gone forth, turned around in the crowd and said, "Who touched My garments?" 31 And His disciples said to Him, "You see the crowd pressing in on You, and You say, 'Who touched Me?'" 32 And He looked around to see the woman who had done this. 33 But the woman fearing and trembling, aware of what had happened to her, came and fell down before Him and told Him the whole truth. 34 And He said to her, "Daughter, your faith has made you well; go in peace and be healed of your affliction." 35 While He was still speaking, they \*came from the house of the synagogue official, saying, "Your daughter has died; why trouble the Teacher anymore?" 36 But Jesus, overhearing what was being spoken, \*said to the synagogue official, "Do not be afraid any longer, only believe." 37 And He allowed no one to accompany Him, except Peter and James and John the brother of James. 38 They came to the house of the synagogue official; and He \*saw a commotion, and people loudly

weeping and wailing. 39 And entering in, He said to them, "Why make a commotion and weep? The child has not died, but is asleep." 40 They began laughing at Him. But putting them all out, He took along the child's father and mother and His own companions, and \*entered the room where the child was. 41 Taking the child by the hand, He \*said to her, "Talitha kum!" (which translated means, "Little girl, I say to you, get up!"). 42 Immediately the girl got up and began to walk, for she was twelve years old. And immediately they were completely astounded. 43 And He gave them strict orders that no one should know about this, and He said that something should be given her to eat.

Luke 8:40+ And as Jesus returned, the people welcomed Him, for they had all been waiting for Him. 41 And there came a man named Jairus, and he was an official of the synagogue; and he fell at Jesus' feet, and began to implore Him to come to his house; 42 for he had an only daughter, about twelve years old, and she was dying. But as He went, the crowds were pressing against Him. 43 And a woman who had a hemorrhage for twelve years, and could not be healed by anyone, 44 came up behind Him and touched the fringe of His cloak, and immediately her hemorrhage stopped. 45 And Jesus said, "Who is the one who touched Me?" And while they were all denying it, Peter said, "Master, the people are crowding and pressing in on You." 46 But Jesus said, "Someone did touch Me, for I was aware that power had gone out of Me." 47 When the woman saw that she had not escaped notice, she came trembling and fell down before Him, and declared in the presence of all the people the reason why she had touched Him, and how she had been immediately healed. 48 And He said to her, "Daughter, your faith has made you well; go in peace." 49 While He was still speaking, someone \*came from the house of the synagogue official, saying, "Your daughter has died; do not trouble the Teacher anymore." 50 But when Jesus heard this, He answered him, "Do not be afraid any longer; only believe, and she will be made well." 51 When He came to the house, He did not allow anyone to enter with Him, except Peter and John and James, and the girl's father and mother. 52 Now they were all weeping and lamenting for her; but He said, "Stop weeping, for she has not died, but is asleep." 53 And they began laughing at Him, knowing that she had died. 54 He, however, took her by the hand and called, saying, "Child, arise!" 55 And her spirit returned, and she got up immediately; and He gave orders for something to be given her to eat. 56 Her parents were amazed; but He instructed them to tell no one what had happened.

**PLEASE GO AWAY!  
BECOMES  
PLEASE COME!**

The townspeople in the previous story ask Jesus to "Go" but here a synagogue leader asks Jesus to "Come." (contrast Mk 5:17+ and Mk 5:23+) They both had needs, but only the latter recognized and admitted his need, willingly humbling himself before the only One Who could meet that need. James says "GOD IS OPPOSED TO THE PROUD, BUT GIVES GRACE TO THE HUMBLE." (James 4:6+) Jairus had placed himself in the perfect position to receive plentiful grace! How about you dear reader? Have you come and bowed down before Jesus?

**Hiebert** points out that "Mark and Luke placed these miracles immediately after the cure of the Gerasene demoniac, but Matthew placed several occurrences between them and expressly connected these two miracles with Jesus' teaching concerning fasting (Mt 9:18). Mark placed all of Matthew's intervening events earlier. It is another clear instance of the fact that the Gospel writers did not record all of their material in strict chronological sequence."

**William Hendriksen** gives a good summary of the synoptic accounts - The reports of the present double miracle vary: Matthew's is very brief, nine verses; Luke's covers seventeen verses; Mark's twenty-three. Matthew omits the ruler's request (see Mark and Luke) that Jesus heal the very sick child. In fact, **Matthew** in his very brief summary leaves out several items mentioned by one or both of the other synoptists. However, it is he alone who relates that the ruler asks Jesus to lay his hand upon the dead girl, adding "and she will live" (Mt 9:18). Also, he alone mentions the flute-players in the house of mourning (Mt 9:23). Several items are common to **Mark and Luke**, though not found in Matthew. Thus we are told that the name of the ruler was Jairus (Mark 5:22+; Luke 8:41), that Jairus made his first request before the child had died (Mark 5:23; Luke 8:42+), that she was about twelve years of age (Mark 5:42+; Luke 8:42+), that Peter, James, and John, and also the child's parents were with Jesus when he performed the miracle (Mark 5:37, 40+; Luke 8:51+), and that Jesus did not want the news of this miracle to spread (Mark 5:43; Luke 8:56+). It is **Luke alone** who reports that the daughter was an only child (Lk 8:42+), and that Jesus did indeed hear the remark to which he paid no attention (Lk 8:50). In all the three accounts the story of the bringing back to life of the daughter of Jairus is interrupted by that of the healing of the woman who touched Christ's garment. (BNTC-Lk)

**While He was saying these things to them** - What things? (Mt 9:11-17) In context the 3 preceding illustrations about the truth that he had come not to reform Judaism, which had become bad news of works righteousness, but to replace it with the good news of righteousness by grace through faith. As Spurgeon says "Our Lord had better work to do than to be talking about meats and drinks, feastings and fastings: he is soon clear of that debate. The battle of life and death was raging, and he was needed in the fray. Sorrow comes even to the families of the excellent of the earth. A ruler of the synagogue and a believer in Jesus has such sickness befallen his daughter that she is at death's door, and is probably by this time actually dead. But the father has a grand faith. Even if she be dead, Jesus can restore her with a touch. Oh, that he would but come! He worships the Lord, and pleads with him: "Come and lay thy hand upon her, and she shall live." Have we such faith as this? After centuries of manifestation, is Jesus as well trusted as in the days of his flesh? Have we not those among us who have not yet learned the happy blend which we see in the ruler's conduct? He came to Jesus, he worshipped him, he prayed to him, he trusted in him."(see [Matthew 9 Commentary](#))

Matthew omits Mark's description of Jesus' arrival where a **large crowd gathered around Him** (Mk 5:21+), Luke that **the people welcomed** (apodechomai from [dechomai](#) = put out the welcome mat") **Him for they had all been waiting for Him.**" (Luke 8:40+) Why did such a **large crowd** gather to welcome and wait for Jesus? One can only surmise that His miraculous healings had gripped their attention. We know that they were amazed also at His teaching but their major focus as subsequent events proved was on His miraculous power, for sadly very few came to believe in His proclamation of the Gospel.

**A synagogue official came - Behold** ([idou](#)) is once again omitted by the NAS (NET, ESV, NIV, NLT) but is present in the Greek and is accurately rendered by the KJV " **behold, there came a certain ruler.**" This neglect of the literal Greek text is surprising as every word of the Bible "is inspired by God and profitable for teaching" (2 Ti 3:16±). Here Matthew uses **behold** to draw the reader's attention to the notable fact that a Jewish leader is coming to beg Jesus for help! (See MacArthur's comment on "**behold**") Here was an **official** or ruler of the Jewish **synagogue**, humbling himself before his fellow Jews in an act of [homage](#) and [reverence](#). Jairus' boldness is a striking contrast "a man of the Pharisees, named [Nicodemus](#), a ruler of the Jews," (Jn 3:1+) who came to Jesus by night (Jn 3:2+)! [Jairus](#) came openly, Nicodemus covertly

Matthew does not name the official but from Mark 5:22+ and Luke 8:41+ we learn that the man who came up to Jesus was named **Jairus** and that he not only was an [archon](#) but was the chief official of the synagogue, the [archisunagōgos](#) (or in Hebrews the "rosh hakeneseth"). This man therefore was probably the highest ranking Jewish man in Capernaum with total control over the running of the Jewish synagogue, including teaching, mediating disputes, and other leadership duties. Some think that Jairus may himself have been a Pharisee, but we cannot be dogmatic. In any event it is fascinating that Jairus comes before Jesus, even bowing before Him, in light of the clear conflict that was beginning to unfold between Jesus and the religious hierarchy! But then this man had a need and it was his need which overruled any hesitation he might have had that it would anger the Pharisees. Jairus was not even like Nicodemus who sought to come in the anonymity of nighttime so that he would not be seen (Jn 3:1-2+)! Whatever thoughts Jairus may have had about the reaction of his fellow religious leaders, he knew that Jesus was the only Source of help in this dire strait of death!

**THOUGHT** - All of us have come to Jesus because we had a need, a great need, for we too were spiritually like Jairus' daughter was physically -- we were dead in our trespasses and sins (Eph 2:1). But a man or woman will not come to Jesus until they recognize their need, until they see they are sinners in danger of eternal separation from a Holy God should they die. That is every man's desperate need and yet so few humble themselves by falling at the feet of Jesus and acknowledging their sins and their need for His healing as their Savior (cf Mt 7:13-14 = "the gate is small and the way is narrow that leads to life, and there are **FEW** who find it.").

**Official** ([758](#))[\(archon\)](#) refers to one who has administrative authority, including Jewish leaders (Acts 23:5+ = reference to the high priest, Lk 8:41 = "an official of the synagogue;" Mt 9:18, 23 = ruler over a synagogue), members of the Sanhedrin (Lk 18:18, 23:13, 35, 24:20), of Gentile officials (Acts 16:19).

**And bowed down before Him** - NIV and ESV = "knelt before Him." ASV, KJV = "worshipped Him." Luke 8:41+ says "**He fell** ([pipto](#)) **at Jesus' feet.**" This man bows in adoration and respect of Jesus, whereas the demon possessed man bowed in submission to the authority Jesus exercised over him (i.e., over the supernatural realm).

**THOUGHT** - Notice that the verb bowed down clearly implies that Jairus the ruler of the synagogue was worshiping Jesus. And just as important to note is that Jesus received this act of worship. Contrast the reaction of the angel addressing the apostle John who wrote "Then I (JOHN) fell at his feet to worship him. But he said to me, "**Do not do** ([present imperative with a negative](#)) that; I am a fellow servant of yours and your brethren who hold the testimony of Jesus; **worship** ([proskuneo](#) in the [aorist imperative](#)) **God.** For the testimony of Jesus is the spirit of prophecy." (Rev 19:10±) Again John writes "I, John, am the one who heard and saw these things. And when I heard and saw, **I fell down to worship** at the feet of the angel who showed

me these things. But he \*said to me, "Do not do that. I am a fellow servant of yours and of your brethren the prophets and of those who heed the words of this book. **Worship** ([proskuneo](#) in the [aorist imperative](#)) God." (Rev 22:8-9+) So not only are angels not to be worshiped but men are not to be worshiped Luke recording that "When Peter entered, Cornelius met him, and **fell** ([pipto](#)) at his feet and **worshiped** ([proskuneo](#)) him. But Peter raised him up, saying, "**Stand up** ([aorist imperative](#)); I too am just a man." (Acts 10:25-26+). So what is the clear conclusion of Jairus' act/action in Mt 9:18? Jesus is not a mere man, but is the God-Man, the only Man Who is worthy to be bowed down to and worshiped! How many times do we hear skeptics declare "Jesus never claimed to be God." Clearly, in this passage Jesus' action of receiving the worship of Jairus is tantamount to His declaration that He is in fact God!

**Bowed down** ([4352](#)) ([proskuneo](#)) from **pros** = before + **kuneo** = kiss or adore) means to prostrate oneself in homage before another in the full sense of worship, not mere reverence or courtesy. When Jesus Christ was born into this world, He was attended and worshipped by angels. (Lu 2:13f+). **Proskuneo** represents the most common Near Eastern act of adoration and reverence and also carries the idea of profound awe and respect. Some believe that the root word **kuneo** may be related to **kuon** which is the Greek word for dog and which then could be picturing a dog licking his master's hand. The word [proskuneo](#) literally means to kiss toward someone, to throw a kiss in token of respect or homage, to prostrate oneself in homage, to do reverence to, to adore and so to worship and show respect. In the ancient Oriental (especially Persia) the mode of salutation between persons of equal rank was to kiss each other on the lips. When the difference of rank was slight, they kissed each other on the cheek. When one was much inferior, he fell upon his knees touched his forehead to the ground or prostrated himself, and as he was bowing down he would be throwing kisses toward the superior. It is this latter mode of salutation that is intended by the Greek writers in the use of the verb [proskuneo](#). Proskuneo occurs 61x in 54v in the NT and 50 are translated as **worship** (worshiped, etc) Uses in Matthew - Matt. 2:2; Matt. 2:8; Matt. 2:11; Matt. 4:9; Matt. 4:10; Matt. 8:2; Matt. 9:18; Matt. 14:33; Matt. 15:25; Matt. 18:26; Matt. 20:20; Matt. 28:9;

**ADDITIONAL DETAILS** - The other synoptic writers state specifically that **Jairus** implored Jesus. Mark 5:23+ records he "implored Him earnestly." Luke 8:41+ says Jairus "Began to implore ([imperfect tense](#) = again and again) **Him to come to his house**." **Implored** in Mark is in the [present tense](#) indicating **Jairus** was continually imploring Jesus, which recalls Jesus' words in the Sermon on the Mount in which He gave the Jews three commands - "Ask ([present imperative](#) calling for the asking, seeking and knocking to be continual), and it will be given to you; seek, and you will find; knock, and it will be opened to you." (Mt 7:7+) The idea of **implored** pictures **Jairus** appealing to Jesus in supplication, beseeching and begging Him with a deep sense of urgency. **Earnestly** in Mark 5:23+ is the adjective **pollus** which means many, numerous, of great magnitude, plentiful, all descriptions which would aptly describe Jairus' "large petitions." Jairus' "large petitions" reminds me of the words of John Newton's great hymn [Come, My Soul, Thy Suit Prepare](#) ([listen to this vocal and be blessed!](#))

Come, my soul, thy suit prepare:  
Jesus loves to answer prayer;  
He Himself has bid thee pray,  
Therefore will not say thee nay;  
Therefore will not say thee nay.

**Thou art coming to a King,**  
**Large petitions with thee bring;**  
**For His grace and power are such,**  
**None can ever ask too much;**  
**None can ever ask too much.**

With my burden I begin:  
Lord, remove this load of sin;  
Let Thy blood, for sinners spilt,  
Set my conscience free from guilt;  
Set my conscience free from guilt.

Lord, I come to Thee for rest,  
Take possession of my breast;  
There Thy blood bought right maintain,

And without a rival reign;  
And without a rival reign.

While I am a pilgrim here,  
Let Thy love my spirit cheer;  
As my Guide, my Guard, my Friend,  
Lead me to my journey's end;  
Lead me to my journey's end.

Show me what I have to do,  
Every hour my strength renew:  
Let me live a life of faith,  
Let me die Thy people's death;  
Let me die Thy people's death.

**And said, "My daughter has just died** - Matthew evidently condensed the story to present at the outset what was really true before Jesus reached his house. When we compare the more detailed accounts of Mark and Luke we learn that when Jairus first came to Jesus, his daughter was not yet dead but was "**at the point of death**" (Mark 5:23+) and **was dying** (Luke 8:42+). It was not long however before messengers came, Mark recording "While He was still speaking, they came from the house of the synagogue official, saying, "**Your daughter has died; why trouble the Teacher anymore?**" (Mk 5:35+).

**THOUGHT** - Beloved, when I was in active medical practice, I worked closely with a Jewish gastroenterologist, who was always such a joy to be around. Then one day, his only precious daughter was immediately killed in a tragic car accident. This man's countenance and demeanor were never, ever the same in all the following years that we interacted professionally. When he was in my office, I would always sense his ongoing grief and indeed I grieved with him for this unspeakable tragedy. Please pray for this man Tom L to meet his Messiah before he passes on. Perhaps this personal story will give you some sense of how dramatic and desperate was the scene on that fateful day in Capernaum.

**MacArthur** adds that "The daughter was twelve years old (**ED: ONLY IN** Luke 8:42+), in the first year of her womanhood according to Jewish custom. The day after his thirteenth birthday a Jewish boy was recognized as a man, and a day after her twelfth birthday a Jewish girl was recognized as a woman." (MNTC-Mt)

**But come and lay Your hand on her, and she will live** - What does this statement describe? Clearly this influential Jewish leader was humbling himself to the point of simple but sincere belief that Jesus had the power to resurrect his dead daughter. What is interesting is that there is no record of Jesus having previously given life to a dead person, which if true, makes Jairus' faith all the more remarkable. Jairus knew no human remedy would suffice to meet his desperate need.

**THOUGHT** - O, how all men born in Adam, all born with the deadly "sin virus" (Ro 5:12<sup>+</sup>) need to come the same realization, that there is no human solution (including no man made religion, for all religion is man-made and based on works righteousness - cf **self-righteousness**) to raise them from the "walking dead" (Eph 2:1<sup>+</sup>)! So Jairus demonstrates very simply the way to come to Jesus - first recognize your need and second come in faith, believing that Jesus Alone has the resources (His precious blood - 1 Pe 1:19<sup>+</sup>), to meet your need (sin - Ro 3:23<sup>+</sup>, Ro 6:23<sup>+</sup>, Ro 5:8<sup>+</sup>, Ro 10:9-10<sup>+</sup>). Notice Jairus comes to Jesus without hesitation or qualification, and dear reader if you are still a member of the "walking dead," you are in grave danger of eternal death and must come immediately to Jesus for salvation by grace through faith.

**Guzik** - This ruler did the right thing in coming to Jesus, but his faith is small in comparison to the centurion of Matthew 8. The ruler thought it is essential that Jesus personally come touch the little girl, while the centurion understood Jesus had the authority to heal with a word, even at a great distance. ([Matthew 9 Commentary](#))

**MacArthur** - Jesus marveled at the faith of the centurion who believed that He could heal the man's servant by simply saying the word. "Truly I say to you," Jesus said, "I have not found such great faith with anyone in Israel" (Mt. 8:9-10+). But Jairus even believed that a touch of Jesus' hand could raise his daughter from the dead. His faith also surpassed that of Martha, who believed Jesus could have kept her brother Lazarus from dying but gave up hope once he was dead (John 11:21). Even when Jesus said, "Your brother shall rise again," she thought the promise could only be fulfilled in "the resurrection on the last day" (Jn 11:23-24). With such great faith in Jesus' power to restore life, it is hard to believe that Jairus did not also trust that Jesus was as able to forgive his sins and raise him to spiritual life as He was able to raise his daughter to physical life. (MNTC-Mt)

**ILLUSTRATION** - The Canadian scientist G. B. Hardy one time said, "When I looked at religion I said, I have two questions. One, has anybody ever conquered death, and two, if they have, did they make a way for me to conquer death? I checked the tomb of

Buddha, and it was occupied, and I checked the tomb of Confucius and it was occupied, and I checked the tomb of Mohammed and it was occupied, and I came to the tomb of Jesus and it was empty. And I said, There is one who conquered death. And I asked the second question, Did He make a way for me to do it? And I opened the Bible and discovered that He said, 'Because I live ye shall live also.'

#### Matthew 9:19 Jesus got up and began to follow him, and so did His disciples.

NET Matthew 9:19 Jesus and his disciples got up and followed him.

GNT Matthew 9:19 καὶ γερθεὶς ἦσαν καὶ θησεν αὐτῷ καὶ οἱ μαθηταὶ αὐτοῦ.

NLT Matthew 9:19 So Jesus and his disciples got up and went with him.

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

ESV Matthew 9:19 And Jesus rose and followed him, with his disciples.

NIV Matthew 9:19 Jesus got up and went with him, and so did his disciples.

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

CSB Matthew 9:19 So Jesus and His disciples got up and followed him.

NKJ Matthew 9:19 So Jesus arose and followed him, and so did His disciples.

NRS Matthew 9:19 And Jesus got up and followed him, with his disciples.

YLT Matthew 9:19 And Jesus having risen, did follow him, also his disciples,

■ Mt 8:7 Joh 4:34 Ac 10:38 Ga 6:9,10

**Jesus got up and began to follow him, and so did His disciples-** Note that in this section we see not just a miracle but also a beautiful picture of Jesus' responding to people in need and beloved as Hebrews says "Jesus Christ is the same yesterday and today and forever." (Heb 13:8) Joining Jesus in the short trip to Jairus' house were **His disciples**, along with **a large crowd** (Mark 5:24).

**Began to follow** ([190](#)) (**akoloutheo**) is the same word Jesus commanded to Levi "Follow Me" (Mt 9:9). Here is a point to keep in mind. Clearly **akoloutheo** does not imply discipleship as it did in the case of Levi. This usage serves to illustrate a very important point in doing Greek word studies. One must always carefully examine the surrounding [context](#) to determine the true meaning of the Greek word, and not simply insert or substitute meanings from a Greek lexicon which can lead to a marked misinterpretation!

**MacArthur** - We see the dual portrayal of His power and His sensitivity, His authority and His gentleness, His sovereignty and His openness, His majesty and His lovingkindness. We see in particular that Jesus was accessible, touchable, and impartial as well as powerful.

**Spurgeon** - Our King, in whom is vested the power of life and death, yields at once to the petition of faith, and sets out for the ruler's house. The Lord follows believers, for believers follow their Lord: such is the order of verse 19. Jesus does as we pray, and we follow as he leads. The Preacher steps down from his pulpit, and becomes a visiting Surgeon, taking his rounds. From discussing Church questions our great Rabbi very readily turns aside to go and see a sick, nay, a dead girl. He is more at home in doing good than in anything else. (see [Matthew 9 Commentary](#))

#### Matthew 9:20 And a woman who had been suffering from a hemorrhage for twelve years, came up behind Him and touched the fringe of His cloak;

NET Matthew 9:20 But a woman who had been suffering from a hemorrhage for twelve years came up behind him and touched the edge of his cloak.

GNT Matthew 9:20 Καὶ δούλη γυναικὸς μόρροος ἀπὸ δύεκα της προσελθόντη πισθεντὸς ψάτο τὸ κραστὶ δουτοῦ.

NLT Matthew 9:20 Just then a woman who had suffered for twelve years with constant bleeding came up

behind him. She touched the fringe of his robe,

KJV And, **behold**, a woman, which was diseased with an issue of blood twelve years, came behind him, and touched the hem of his garment:

ESV Matthew 9:20 And **behold**, a woman who had suffered from a discharge of blood for twelve years came up behind him and touched the fringe of his garment,

NIV Matthew 9:20 Just then a woman who had been subject to bleeding for twelve years came up behind him and touched the edge of his cloak.

ASV Matthew 9:20 And **behold**, a woman, who had an issue of blood twelve years, came behind him, and touched the border of his garment:

CSB Matthew 9:20 Just then, a woman who had suffered from bleeding for 12 years approached from behind and touched the tassel on His robe,

NKJ Matthew 9:20 And suddenly, a woman who had a flow of blood for twelve years came from behind and touched the hem of His garment.

NRS Matthew 9:20 Then suddenly a woman who had been suffering from hemorrhages for twelve years came up behind him and touched the fringe of his cloak,

YLT Matthew 9:20 and lo, a woman having an issue of blood twelve years, having come to him behind, did touch the fringe of his garments,

- **behold** (Not in NAS but in the Greek) - Mk 5:25-43 Lu 8:43-56
- **suffering from a hemorrhage** - Lev 15:25-33
- **touched** - Mt 14:36 Mk 5:28 6:56 8:22 Ac 5:15 19:12
- **hem** - Mt 23:5 Nu 15:38,39 De 22:12 Lu 8:44

**Parallel Passages** (both give much more detail than Matthew's version)

Mark 5:21–43+

Luke 8:43–48+

Leviticus 15:25-27+ (CEREMONIALLY UNCLEAN) 'Now if a woman has a discharge of her blood many days, not at the period of her menstrual impurity, or if she has a discharge beyond that period, all the days of her impure discharge she shall continue as though in her menstrual impurity; she is unclean. 26 'Any bed on which she lies all the days of her discharge shall be to her like her bed at menstruation; and every thing on which she sits shall be unclean, like her uncleanness at that time. 27 'Likewise, whoever touches them shall be unclean and shall wash his clothes and bathe in water and be unclean until evening.

## HERE COMES A MIRACLE

It is sad that many modern translations (NAS, NET, NIV, CSB, et al ESV is a notable exception) omit the word **Behold**, for this is surely given by the Spirit (idou - δο in the Greek text) to draw our close attention to this miracle! As **Spurgeon** commented on this passage "Note the word **“behold.”** Here we have a notable circumstance."

**Behold** (2400)(idou) is the second person singular aorist middle imperative of eidon which means to see, perceive, look at. In the NT idou is used as a demonstrative particle that draws attention to what follows. Idou in the middle voice means "you yourself look, see, perceive!" The aorist imperative is a command emphasizing "Do it now! Don't delay!" **Spurgeon** reminds us that "**Behold** is a word of wonder; it is intended to excite admiration. Wherever you see it hung out in Scripture, it is like an ancient sign-board, signifying that there are rich wares within, or like the hands which solid readers have observed in the margin of the older Puritanic books, drawing attention to something particularly worthy of observation." I would add, **behold** is like a divine highlighter, a divine underlining of an especially striking or important text. It says in effect "Listen up, all ye who would be wise in the ways of Jehovah!" **Zodhiates** writes that idou is a "demonstrative particle. "Lo and behold!", serving to call attention to something external or exterior to oneself; usually used at the beginning of a clause or only with kai (and), before it, but sometimes in the mid. of a clause before words which are to be particularly noted."

**Spurgeon** - This is an incident on the road, a wonder by the way. While the Lord is moving towards the chamber of the ruler's dying daughter, he works a miracle without a word. He was intent on his design to raise a girl; but without designing it he cures an older woman. The very spillings and overflowings of Christ's power are precious. (see [Matthew 9 Commentary](#))

**And a woman who had been suffering from a hemorrhage for twelve years** - **Twelve years** she had experienced, while another woman had experienced happiness for twelve years (Jairus' daughter's death was at age 12 - Mk 5:42). Jairus enjoyed 12 years of delight, while this nameless woman suffered 12 years of despair. (See [Contrasts in Table](#)) As a physician that has dealt extensively with hemorrhagic diathesis (bleeding disorders), while none of the 3 synoptic accounts are specific, there is little doubt in my mind from my previous medical experiences, that this woman had what we would call [dysfunctional uterine bleeding](#), which at the very least least to chronic iron deficiency and consequent anemia which would have made this woman chronically fatigued for 12 years! Not only would she have been tired all the time but would have been rejected all the time because bleeding rendered a Jewish person ritually unclean, including exclusion from the synagogue and the Temple in Jerusalem. She would have kept away from other people and not touched them since by doing so she made them unclean. This background helps us understand her considerable motivation to push her way through the large crowd that was "pressing in on Him" (Mk 5:24+), so that she might touch Jesus! She may have seen or heard that just a touch from the Man Jesus had brought healing and she believed He could accomplish the same miracle for her! Mark adds "A woman who had had a hemorrhage for twelve years, and had endured much at the hands of many physicians, and had spent all that she had and was not helped at all, but rather had grown worse." (Mk 5:25-26+)

**MacArthur** - The stigma and humiliation of such a hemorrhage were perhaps second only to those of leprosy (Read Lev 15:25-29). Such affliction was not uncommon, and the Jewish Talmud prescribed eleven different cures for it. Among the remedies, most of them superstitious, was that of carrying the ashes of an ostrich egg in a linen bag in the summer and in a cotton bag in the winter. Another involved carrying around a barleycorn kernel that had been found in the dung of a white female donkey. (MNTC-Mt)

#### A TASSEL ([tzitzit](#))

**Came up behind Him and touched ([haptomai](#)) the fringe of His cloak** - Some feel the **fringe** she touched was one of the four tassels that the Jews wore on the four corners of their cloaks to remind them to obey God's commands (Nu 15:37-41; Dt. 22:12; cf. Mt. 23:5). The fact that Jesus wore a cloak with a fringe shows us that He dressed like other people of His time and felt no need to distinguish Himself by the clothes He wore. Regarding her touching Jesus' garment, it is very possible the woman believed this in a somewhat superstitious way. In either event, she believed Jesus had the power to heal her!

As **Guzik** says "her faith was in Jesus; and the object of faith is much more important than the quality or even quantity of faith." ([Matthew 9 Commentary](#))

**NET Note** - The *edge of his cloak* refers to the *kraspedon*, the blue tassel on the garment that symbolized a Jewish man's obedience to the law (cf. Num 15:37-41). The woman thus touched the very part of Jesus' clothing that indicated his ritual purity.

**Spurgeon** - "She was ignorant enough to think that healing went from him unconsciously; yet her faith lived despite her ignorance, and triumphed despite her bashfulness." (see [Matthew 9 Commentary](#))

**Robertson on the fringe** - The hem or **fringe** of a garment, a tassel or tuft hanging from the edge of the outer garment according to Numbers 15:38. It was made of twisted wool. Jesus wore the dress of other people with these fringes at the four corners of the outer garment. The Jews actually counted the words Jehovah One from the numbers of the twisted white threads, a refinement that Jesus had no concern for. This poor woman had an element of superstition in her faith as many people have, but Jesus honours her faith and cures her. ([Matthew 9 Commentary](#))

**MacArthur on fringe** - According to biblical requirements, Jewish men were to "make for themselves tassels on the corners of their garments" and "put on the tassel of each corner a cord of blue" (Num. 15:38; cf. Deut. 22:12). The threads of the tassels and cords were woven in a pattern that represented faithfulness and loyalty to the Word of God and holiness to the Lord. Wherever a Jew went, those tassels reminded him and testified before the world that he belonged to the people of God. Consistent with their typical hypocrisy and pretension, the Pharisees lengthened "the tassels of their garments" in order to call attention to their religious devotion (Matt. 23:5). In much later times, persecuted Jews in Europe wore the tassels on their undergarments for the very opposite reason—to avoid identification and possible arrest. Modified forms of the tassel are still sewn on the prayer shawls of orthodox Jews today.

**Barclay on fringe** - "These fringes were four tassels of hyacinth blue worn by a Jew on the corners of his outer garment ... It was meant to identify a Jew as a Jew, and as member of the chosen people, no matter where he was; and it was meant to remind a Jew every time he put on and took off his clothes that he belonged to God."

**Fringe** (the tassel)([2899](#))(**kraspedon**) is the outer limit of something and thus means the edge, border, hem of a garment (Mt 9:20; 14:36; Mk 6:56; Lk 8:44, cf Lxx of Zech 8:23). **Kraspedon** also means tassel

(Hebrew *tsitsit*) or fringe on the four corners of the outer garment ([see picture](#), [another picture](#)), worn as a reminder to observe the commandments (Mt 23:5, cf. Nu 15:38, 39; Dt 22:12).

**Gilbrant** - By the time of Jesus the original purpose of the **kraspedon** had been lost. Jesus wore the kraspedon on His garment, so one hung in the middle of His back (Matthew 9:20; 14:36; Mark 6:56; Luke 8:44), but He condemned the Pharisees for their departure from the original meaning (Matthew 23:5). Instead of allowing the tassels to remind them of God and His Word, they made them larger than necessary to remind God of their goodness! The woman with the issue of blood touched the hem or tassel of Jesus' garment (Mt 9:20; Lk 8:44). Why she touched the **kraspedon** rather than His shoulder, feet, or hair cannot be determined. But she was not concerned about the superstition of the Pharisees concerning the tassel. She was putting her faith in Jesus.

The **tzitzit** refers to the fringes on the borders of the robes. They were meant to hang from the corners of the upper garment ( Dt 22:12), which was worn on top of the clothing. The tassel was probably made by twisting the overhanging threads of the garment into a knot that would hang down. This was a reminder of the covenant. The tassels were retained down through history, and today more elaborate prayer shawls with tassels are worn during prayer.

#### Related Resources on tassel, fringe:

- Wikipedia - [Tassel](#)
- International Standard Bible Encyclopedia [Fringes](#)
- McClintock and Strong's Bible Encyclopedia [Fringe](#)
- The Jewish Encyclopedia [Fringes](#)
- Fausset Bible Dictionary [Fringes](#)
- Hastings' Dictionary of the Bible [Fringes](#)
- Hastings' Dictionary of the NT [Fringes](#)

**Spurgeon** - This afflicted woman had suffered from a weakening hemorrhage for "twelve years", and had found no cure; but now she beheld the great Miracle-worker, and with a timid courage she pushed into the crowd, and touched the hem of his garment.

<b>TWO MIRACLES</b>	
<b>TWO CONTRASTING PERSONALITIES</b>	
<b>TWO THINGS IN COMMON</b>	
<b>A DESPERATE NEED &amp; FAITH IN JESUS</b>	
<b>A Man</b>	<b>A Woman</b>
<b>Wealthy</b>	<b>Poor</b>
<b>Respected</b>	<b>Rejected</b>
<b>Synagogue Ruler</b>	<b>Anonymous "Nobody"</b>
<b>Honored</b>	<b>Ashamed</b>
<b>Leader of synagogue</b>	<b>Shut out of the synagogue</b>
<b>Wealthy</b>	<b>Bankrupt</b>
<b>Came to Jesus submissively</b>	<b>Came to Jesus secretly</b>
<b>One with 12yo child</b>	<b>One with 12 yr hemorrhage</b>
<b>12 years of Delight</b>	<b>12 years of Despair</b>
<b>All His Needs Met</b>	<b>All Her Needs Met</b>
<b>At the Feet of Jesus</b>	<b>At the Feet of Jesus</b>
<b>DEAR READER:</b>	
<b>ALL YOUR NEEDS MET</b>	
<b>AT THE FEET OF JESUS!</b>	

Matthew 9:21 for she was saying to herself, "If I only touch His garment, I will get well."

NET Matthew 9:21 For she kept saying to herself, "If only I touch his cloak, I will be healed."

GNT Matthew 9:21 λεγεν γραπε αυτ, νημον ψωμαι το ματου ατο σωθ σομαι.

NLT Matthew 9:21 for she thought, "If I can just touch his robe, I will be healed."

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

ESV Matthew 9:21 for she said to herself, "If I only touch his garment, I will be made well."

NIV Matthew 9:21 She said to herself, "If I only touch his cloak, I will be healed."

ASV Matthew 9:21 for she said within herself, If I do but touch his garment, I shall be made whole.

CSB Matthew 9:21 for she said to herself, "If I can just touch His robe, I'll be made well!"

NKJ Matthew 9:21 For she said to herself, "If only I may touch His garment, I shall be made well."

NRS Matthew 9:21 for she said to herself, "If I only touch his cloak, I will be made well."

YLT Matthew 9:21 for she said within herself, 'If only I may touch his garment, I shall be saved.'

■ If - Mk 5:26-33 Lu 8:45-47 Ac 19:12

#### Related Passages:

Mark 5:27+ after hearing about Jesus, she came up in the crowd behind Him and touched His cloak. 28 For she thought, "If I just touch His garments, I will get well."

In the [Catacombs of Marcellinus and Peter](#)

## TOUCHED BY THE UNTOUCHABLE

**For** - Term of explanation, explains her great motivation and her great faith for a great result.

**She was saying to herself, "If I only touch(haptomai) His garment (himation), I will get well(sozo)** - She reminds us of the **four men** in (Mk 2:3+) who thought that if they could only get the paralytic to Jesus, he would be healed (see Mark 2:1-12+). **Saying** is in the [imperfect tense](#) so more accurately "She kept saying to herself," conveying the picture of her [mulling](#) this over and over in her mind. She gave this some thought and considered that any adverse consequences she might suffer were worth the risk. Twelve years of suffering is a strong motivation for anyone! She could not get this thought out of her mind!

**David Guzik** - Because this woman's condition was embarrassing, and because she was ceremonially unclean and would be condemned for touching Jesus or even being in a pressing crowd, she wanted to do this secretly. She would not openly ask Jesus to be healed, but she thought "If only I may touch His garment, I shall be made well." ([Matthew 9 Commentary](#))

*Great fear kept her from facing Him: great faith led her to believe  
that a touch of his robe behind him would cure her.*

**C H Spurgeon** - Great fear kept her from facing Him: great faith led her to believe that a touch of his robe behind him would cure her. She was ignorant enough to think that healing went from him unconsciously; but **yet her faith lived despite her ignorance, and triumphed despite her bashfulness**. It was her own idea to make a dash for it, and steal a cure: **She said within herself.** It was her wisdom that at once she carried out her resolve. Poor soul! it was her only chance, and she would not lose it. It happened that our Lord's dress was drawn backward by the throng, and she was able with her finger to reach its hem. She believed that this would be enough, and so it proved. **Oh, that we were as eager to be saved as she was to be healed** Oh, that we had such confidence in Jesus as to be sure that if we come into contact with Him, even by the least promise, and the smallest faith, He can and will save us! My soul, when thou art in urgent need, be brave to come nigh unto thy Lord; for if a touch of His garment will heal, what virtue must lie in His own self! Amen (see [Matthew 9 Commentary-C H Spurgeon](#))

**THOUGHT** - Perhaps, dear reader, you need to touch the hem of His garment today. Don't delay!....Listen to the words of this hymn

### [She only touched the hem of His garment,](#)

As to His side she stole,  
Amid the crowd that gathered around Him;

And straightway she was whole.

Oh, touch the hem of His garment,

And thou, too, shalt be free!

His healing pow'r this very hour

Shall give new life to thee!

She came in fear and trembling before Him,

She knew her Lord had come,

She felt that from Him virtue had healed her,

The mighty deed was done.

He turned with "Daughter, be of good comfort,

Thy faith hath made thee whole";

And peace that passeth all understanding

With gladness filled her soul.

-- G F Root

**ILLUSTRATION** - When the godly **Sir James Simpson** lay dying, a friend said to him, "Well, James, soon you will be able to rest on the bosom of Jesus." In typical humility he replied, "I don't know that I can quite do that, but I do think I can take hold of His garment."

**Touch** ([681](#)) (**hapto/haptomai**) means to grasp, to lay hold of with the basic meaning of touching for the purpose of manipulating. Hapto is frequently used in the Septuagint. The first use of hapto in Ge 3:3+ is by Eve who misquoted God's command saying "You shall not eat from it or **touch** it (GOD SAID NOTHING ABOUT TOUCHING IT IN Ge 2:17), lest you die." God touched the socket of Jacob's thigh resulting in dislocation while they wrestled! **Hapto** is used in Leviticus numerous times of touching something with a negative impact (the majority of uses especially to touching something unclean e.g., Lev 5:2). The negative uses in Leviticus (of which the woman likely would have been aware), made this woman's touching of Jesus all the more remarkable!

**Get well** ([4982](#)) (**sozo**) has the basic meaning of rescuing one from great peril. Additional nuances include to protect, keep alive, preserve life, deliver, heal, be made whole. Sozo is sometimes used of physical deliverance from danger of perishing (see Mt 8:25; Mt 14:30; Lk 23:35; Acts 27:20, 27:31), physical healing from sickness (Mt 9:21, 22; Mk 5:23, Acts 4:9), and deliverance from demonic possession (Lk 8:36). More often sozo refers to salvation in a spiritual sense.

**SOZO IN MATTHEW** - Matt. 1:21; Matt. 8:25; Matt. 9:21; Matt. 9:22; Matt. 10:22; Matt. 14:30; Matt. 16:25; Matt. 18:11; Matt. 19:25; Matt. 24:13; Matt. 24:22; Matt. 27:40; Matt. 27:42; Matt. 27:49

## SUMMARY OF USES OF SOZO IN MATTHEW

In Matthew, **sozo** ( $\sigma \zeta \omega$ ) carries a double dimension:

1. Physical deliverance (healing, rescue, preservation)
2. Spiritual deliverance (salvation from sin and judgment through Jesus)

Matthew uses the verb to show that Jesus alone is the Savior promised in the OT—He heals bodies and saves souls.

### I. BASIC SENSE OF SÖZÖ

$\sigma \zeta \omega$  (sōzō) = to save, deliver, rescue, heal, make whole

The context determines whether the deliverance is:

- Physical (from disease, danger, death)
- Spiritual (from sin, judgment, wrath)

Matthew is intentional to show both aspects, preparing the reader for Jesus' identity as Savior-King.

### II. KEY THEMES OF SÖZÖ IN MATTHEW

## 1. Jesus saves from sin (the heart of Matthew's theology)

Matthew 1:21 – “You shall call His name Jesus, for He will **save** (sōsei) His people from their sins.”

This verse sets the theological agenda for the entire Gospel:

- Jesus is the promised Deliverer
- Salvation is from sin, not Rome
- Messiah's mission is fundamentally spiritual rescue

Everything else Matthew shows about salvation flows from Mt 1:21.

## 2. Jesus saves through faith

Repeatedly, healing and deliverance occur in response to faith:

- Mt 9:21-22+ – Woman with the hemorrhage “Your faith has saved you” (made you well)
- Mt 9:28–29+ – Blind men (**Note:** It is possible that they were spiritually saved, but text does not state this explicitly)
- Mt 15:28+ – Canaanite woman: “Your faith is great” - most writers feel her faith was not only in His miracle working power, but in Jesus as Messiah and thus her soul was saved (but the text does not explicitly state this).

Though physical, these healings point to the greater salvation Jesus brings.

## 3. Jesus saves the perishing (rescue from danger)

- σ ζω is used for rescue in crisis:

- Mt 8:25+ – “Lord, save us, we are perishing!”
- Mt 14:30+ – Peter: “Lord, save me!”

Here, sōzō means rescue, foreshadowing Jesus' saving work on a spiritual level.

Cannot we also like the disciples including Peter cry out today "Lord save us" when we are in a difficult situation?

## 4. Salvation is linked to following Jesus.

Matthew connects sōzō with discipleship, especially in paradox statements:

- Mt 10:22+ – “The one who endures to the end will be saved.”
- Mt 16:25+ – “Whoever wishes to save his life will lose it; whoever loses his life for My sake will find it.”

Salvation is not earned, but perseverance demonstrates true saving faith.

## 5. Salvation is eschatological.

Matthew presents salvation not only as a present reality, but a future deliverance:

- Endurance in persecution (Mt 10:22+; Mt 24:13+)
- Final redemption at the King's return (Mt 24–25)

Salvation culminates when the King judges the nations (Mt 25:31–46+).

## 6. Healing as a sign of the Messiah's saving mission.

Matthew quotes Isaiah to connect healing with the Messiah's role as Savior:

- Mt 8:17+ – “He Himself took our infirmities and carried away our diseases”

Jesus restores bodies as a foretaste of the full salvation He will bring in His kingdom.

## III. KEY USES OF SŌZŌ IN MATTHEW (Grouped)

### A. Salvation From Sin

- Mt 1:21 – Jesus “will save His people from their sins.”

### B. Physical Healing

- Mt 9:21–22+ – Woman healed: “Your faith has saved you.”

- Mt 9:27–31+ – Blind men healed according to faith
- Mt 14:36+ – Touching the fringe of His cloak “saved” (healed) many

#### C. Rescue from Danger / Death

- Mt 8:25+ – “Lord, save us!”
- Mt 14:30+ – “Lord, save me!”

#### D. Eschatological Salvation

- Mt 10:22 – Endurance leads to salvation
- Mt 24:13 – “He who endures will be saved.”

#### E. Paradox of Losing and Saving

- Mt 16:25+ – Losing life = saving it

### IV. THEOLOGICAL EMPHASIS OF MATTHEW'S USE OF SŌZŌ

#### 1. Jesus is the True and Final Savior

- Matthew 1:21+ anchors the Gospel: Jesus is the Messianic Deliverer.

#### 2. Salvation is holistic: body + soul

- Physical healing illustrates spiritual rescue.

#### 3. Salvation requires faith

- Faith is the instrument by which both healing and ultimate salvation are received.

#### 4. Salvation demands a response of discipleship

- True salvation produces endurance, obedience, and allegiance to Jesus.
- Note that **all believers are disciples** contrary to the teaching that there are “regular” believers and another group that attains to “disciples.” Disciples of course will vary in their degree of maturity in Christ but they are still disciples of Christ.

#### 5. Salvation leads to kingdom inheritance

- Matthew repeatedly connects salvation with entering the kingdom (Mt 19:25+; Mt 25:34+).

**Matthew 9:22** But Jesus turning and seeing her said, "Daughter, **take courage**; your faith has made you well." At once the woman was made well.

NET But when Jesus turned and saw her he said, "Have courage, daughter! Your faith has made you well." And the woman was healed from that hour.

GNT δέ ησος στραφες καὶ δεντρόν επεν, Θροσει, θρασερ· πτοις σου σωκόν σε. καὶ σθηγεν πτέρας κενης.

NLT Jesus turned around, and when he saw her he said, "Daughter, be encouraged! Your faith has made you well." And the woman was healed at that moment.

KJV 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.

ESV Jesus turned, and seeing her he said, "Take heart, daughter; your faith has made you well." And instantly the woman was made well.

NIV Jesus turned and saw her. "Take heart, daughter," he said, "your faith has healed you." And the woman was healed from that moment.

ASV But Jesus turning and seeing her said, Daughter, be of good cheer; thy faith hath made thee whole. And the woman was made whole from that hour.

CSB But Jesus turned and saw her. "Have courage, daughter," He said. "Your faith has made you well." And the woman was made well from that moment.

NKJ But Jesus turned around, and when He saw her He said, "Be of good cheer, daughter; your faith has made you well." And the woman was made well from that hour.

NRS Jesus turned, and seeing her he said, "Take heart, daughter; your faith has made you well." And instantly the woman was made well.

YLT And Jesus having turned about, and having seen her, said, 'Be of good courage, daughter, thy faith hath saved thee,' and the woman was saved from that hour.

- **Daughter** - Mt 9:2 Mk 5:34 Lu 8:48
- **your faith has made you well** - Mt 9:29 Mk 10:52 Lu 7:50 17:19 18:42 Ac 14:9 Heb 4:2
- **At once the woman was made well.** - Mt 17:18 Joh 4:53 Ac 16:18

#### Related Passages:

Mark 5:34+ And He said to her, "Daughter, your faith has made you well; go in peace and be healed of your affliction."

Luke 8:48+ And He said to her, "Daughter, your faith has made you well; go in peace."

## JESUS HEALS THE WOMAN

But Jesus turning ([strepho](#)) and seeing ([horao](#)) her said, "Daughter ([thugater](#)) , **take courage** ([tharseo](#)); **your faith** ([pistis](#)) **has made you well** ([sozo](#))" - This story reminds us of the four friends in Mt 9:2+ (cf Mk 2:3+) and in Mk 2:5+ where Mark records "Seeing their faith." Jesus' response to the woman is deeply personal and full of grace. He turns to her, sees her, and speaks directly to her heart calling her **Daughter**, a term of endearment and inclusion which strongly suggests she is not an outcast to Him. By calling her **daughter**, Jesus restores her dignity, affirms her worth, and most likely welcomes her into the family of faith. It is notable that this is the only time in the Gospels (includes the 2 parallel uses in Mk 5:34+ and Lk 8:48+) where Jesus directly addresses a woman as **daughter**, highlighting the tenderness and spiritual adoption implied in the term. The irony is that she shouldn't have touched Him by Levitical law, but instead of defiling Jesus, she is cleansed by Jesus. In one word—'Daughter'—the outcast became family.

The command **take courage** ([tharseo](#)) dispels her fear and affirms her dignity. Her trust (**your faith**) in Jesus was the means through which His healing power was applied. This moment reveals the heart of Christ Who is not only powerful to heal but also tender to the broken (See Mighty to Save). He honors faith—even when it trembles, hides, or barely dares to reach out. His grace flows wherever genuine faith makes its appeal. The woman who had been ceremonially unclean and socially cut off for twelve long years (Lev 15:25–27+) is now publicly affirmed, lovingly addressed, and fully restored. What shame had silenced, Jesus restored with dignity; what isolation had stolen, He returned with compassion. Her timid touch becomes a testimony of His tender mercy. He honors **faith**, even when it is expressed quietly and fearfully. His grace flows when faith reaches out.

*A trembling touch can reach  
an omnipotent Savior.*

**At once** ([ekeinos](#)) **the woman was made well** ([sozo](#) - perfect tense) - This important time phrase **at once** parallel's Luke's description which notes that the woman was healed **immediately** (Lk 8:47+) when she touched His fringe. Jesus even perceived the power going out from Him before He publicly affirmed, "Your faith has made you well" (Lk 8:46+). Mark adds the vivid detail that "**Immediately** the flow of her blood was dried up; and she felt in her body that she was healed of her affliction." (Mk 5:29+) When Jesus healed, the transformation was instantaneous and complete, unlike the staged, manipulative displays of many modern 'faith healers,' whose counterfeit theatrics bear no resemblance to the genuine, sovereign power of Christ.

**THOUGHT** - Remember that this woman hemorrhaging was like a leper covered with scales and to touch her would bring ceremonial uncleanness. But once again we see that Jesus brings a new way of approaching God

for He did not care that her touching made Him ceremonially unclean in the eyes of His fellow Jews. Jesus was touchable even by the most untouchable! Perhaps dear reader you need to hear that because you think of your past sins and feel you are unredeemable! Take courage and touch Him for that is exactly why He died! If you feel like an outcast, like your presence or touch would even defile others, then run to Jesus and touch Him and be healed forever! As long as you have the breath of life it is never too late to run and touch Jesus! But it is best not to put it off for we do not know the number of our days and it could be that "**Behold**, now is "THE ACCEPTABLE TIME," **behold**, now is "THE DAY OF SALVATION." (2 Cor 6:2+).

**John MacArthur** writes "Throughout His earthly ministry thousands of people came in contact with Jesus, and many hundreds of them talked with Him and touched Him; but many of them were not touched by Him. Throughout the history of the church, countless others—such as Mahatma Gandhi, mentioned above—have also come in close contact with Jesus; and many of them, too, have remained untouched by Him. He knows the difference between the person who approaches Him out of mere religious curiosity or a sense of adventure and the one who comes to Him in desperation and genuine faith." (See [Matthew Commentary - Page 81](#))

**COMMENT ON COMING IN CLOSE CONTACT WITH JESUS** - Perhaps no man in modern times has seemed before the eyes of the world to have been more at peace with himself and others than **Mahatma Gandhi**. He was the image of a tranquil soul who possessed perfect inner harmony. Fifteen years before he died, he wrote, "I must tell you in all humility that Hinduism as I know it entirely satisfies my soul. It fills my whole being and I find a solace in the Bhagavad and Upanishad that I miss even in the Sermon on the Mount." But just before his death he wrote, "My days are numbered. I am not likely to live very long, perhaps a year or a little more. For the first time in fifty years I find myself in the [slew of despond](#)." (ED: THE VERY PHRASE USED BY JOHN BUNYAN IN PILGRIM'S PROGRESS. GANDHI'S USE IS NOT ACCIDENT! HE KNEW WHAT THESE WORDS MEANT AND THAT HINDUISM COULD NEVER DELIVER HIM FROM THE "SLEW OF DESPOND!" HOW TRAGIC! HOW CLOSE GANDHI CAME TO TOUCHING JESUS!) Even the tranquil Gandhi had to face the reality of death and the inability of his man-made religion to give him answers or comfort in face of it. (SEE [Who was Gandhi?](#))

Some commentators feel that the context indicates that Jesus was talking about the woman's faith resulting in her physical deliverance, but was not an expression of soul salvation (Constable, NET Notes). I would respectfully disagree as do most other writers including John MacArthur, Warren Wiersbe, D Edmond Hiebert, Spurgeon, Matthew Henry, Albert Barnes, R C H Lenski, David Guzik, et al. The language Jesus uses, the grammar Matthew records, and the parallel accounts in Mark 5:34+ and Luke 8:48+ affirm **saving faith**, not merely miraculous trust.

Here is **John MacArthur's** note on the parallel phrase (**your faith has made you well**) found in Luke 8:48+:

The phrase **made you well** translates a form of the verb **sozo**, which is the common New Testament word for salvation. This same phrase in the Greek text appears in Luke 7:50+, where it clearly refers to salvation from sin. It is also used in Luke 17:19+ to describe one of the ten lepers who returned to worship Jesus. While all ten were healed, he alone was saved. Further, the Lord's calling her **daughter** indicates that He received her as a child of His kingdom (John 1:12+). She was restored, physically, socially, and spiritually through the grace and personal power of the Lord Jesus Christ. (See [Luke Commentary - Page 24](#))

In a related comment, **MacArthur** writes 'When the blind beggar Bartimaeus asked Jesus to restore his sight, Jesus replied, "**Go your way; your faith has made you well**" (Mark 10:52). Here **sōzō** ("has made you well") is also used in connection with the healed person's faith. Bartimaeus had repeatedly called Jesus the "Son of David" (Mk 10:47–48), a common messianic title. **It therefore seems probable that his being made well, like that of the woman with the hemorrhage, included spiritual salvation as well as physical healing.** After Jesus forgave the sins of the prostitute who washed His feet with her tears and wiped them with her hair, He spoke to her exactly the same words (hē pistis sou sesōken se) that He spoke to the woman with the hemorrhage and to Bartimaeus, although the English translations of that phrase are not always the same. In Luke 7:50+ it is rendered, "**Your faith has saved you**," clearly indicating that the restoration was entirely spiritual (because no physical healing was involved) and that it resulted from the forgiveness of sins based on trust in the Lord (Lk 7:48+). In his account of the ten lepers who pleaded with Jesus to cure them, Luke reports that all ten "were cleansed" (from *katharizō*; Luke 17:14+) but that it was only to the one man who glorified God and returned to give thanks that Jesus said, "Your faith has made you well" (hē pistis sou sesōken se; Lk 17:19+). Ten men were cleansed, but only one was saved. It is unfortunate that most English translations do not make clear that all of the renderings of "made well" and "saved" just mentioned—which in each case the Lord Himself specifically said resulted from the person's faith—come from the same Greek verb (**sozo**). That fact strongly implies that a redemptive aspect was involved in each of those incidents.

In the gospel accounts we read of multitudes of people being healed completely apart from any faith on their part or the part of another person. Jesus performed His miracles of healing by His sovereign will, often in response to faith, but not conditioned by it. The centurion's servant was healed without having any contact with Jesus and perhaps even without being aware that he might be healed. Jairus' dead daughter obviously could not have had faith. **But no one is ever saved apart from faith, and there seems reason to believe that the woman who touched Jesus' garment that day trusted Him for spiritual as well as physical healing.**" (See [Matthew Commentary - Page 82](#))

Heaven will be a most interesting place primarily because of Jesus but also because we could be surprised (if such an emotion exists in Heaven) by who we see there and also (sadly) surprised (shocked if such an emotion can exist in Heaven) by who we do not see there!

**Spurgeon** - We have not all the story here in Mt 9:22. It will be well to read it in Mark 5. and Luke 8. Jesus knew all that was going on behind Him. If His back be towards us now, it need not always be; for He "turned Him about." Even when fear would hide from Jesus, He spies out the trembler. His eye found her speedily, for He knew where to look. "He saw her." His voice cheered her with joyful tones of acceptance. He did not chide the blundering of her ignorance, but He commended the bravery of her faith, and consoled her trembling heart. **A piece of fringe and a finger sufficed to form a contact between a believing sufferer and an Almighty Saviour. Along that line faith sent its message, and love returned the answer.** She "was made whole", and she knew it; but she feared when she was found out lest she should lose the blessing and earn a curse. This fear soon vanished: Jesus called her "daughter." **He fathered her because he had created faith in her. He gave her "good comfort" because she had good faith.** It was his garment which she touched, but it was her faith which had touched it; therefore our Lord said, "Thy faith hath made thee whole"; and thus he put the crown upon the head of her faith, because her faith had already set the crown on his head. The moment we touch Jesus we are made whole; yea, "from that hour." May we touch him now, and may this hour be as memorable to us as that hour was to her! (see [Matthew 9 Commentary](#))

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**Daughter** (2364) [thugater](#) is a female in relation of child to parent, daughter. A female descendant (Luke 1:5; 13:16; Sept.: Ge 36:2; Ex. 2:1) **Thugater** is placed in front of the names of places - thus we have daughters of Jerusalem (Lk 23:28; Sept.: Isa 3:16, 17; 4:4) which simply means the female inhabitants born and living in Jerusalem. **Thugater** in the singular as daughter of Zion (Mt. 21:5 quoting Zech 9:9), means the inhabitants of Zion or Jerusalem. Metaphorically expressing a relation of kindness and tenderness 2Co 6:18 [Jer 31:1, 9]

**THUGATER - 27V** - Matt. 9:18; Matt. 9:22; Matt. 10:35; Matt. 10:37; Matt. 14:6; Matt. 15:22; Matt. 15:28; Matt. 21:5; Mk. 5:34; Mk. 5:35; Mk. 6:22; Mk. 7:26; Mk. 7:29; Lk. 1:5; Lk. 2:36; Lk. 8:42; Lk. 8:48; Lk. 8:49; Lk. 12:53; Lk. 13:16; Lk. 23:28; Jn. 12:15; Acts 2:17; Acts 7:21; Acts 21:9; 2 Co. 6:18; Heb. 11:24

**W E Vine** - "a daughter," (etymologically, Eng., "daughter" is connected), is used of (a) the natural relationship (frequent in the Gospels); (b) spiritual relationship to God, 2 Cor. 6:18, in the sense of the practical realization of acceptance with, and the approval of, God (cp. Isa. 43:6), the only place in the NT where it applies to spiritual relationship; (c) the inhabitants of a city or region, Matt. 21:5; John 12:15 ("of Zion"); cp. Isa. 37:22; Zeph. 3:14 (Sept.); (d) the women who followed Christ to Calvary, Luke 23:28; (e) women of Aaron's posterity, Luke 1:5; (f) a female descendant of Abraham, Luke 13:16. ([Vine's Expository Dictionary of Old Testament and New Testament Words](#))

**Take courage** (be encouraged, take heart, be of good cheer) [present imperative](#) (2293) (**tharseo** from **tharsos** = boldness, courage) means to have courage. Be of good courage, be of good cheer or be unafraid. The idea is that the recipient of this command is to have confidence and firmness of purpose in the face of danger or testing. **BDAG** = "to be firm or resolute in the face of danger or adverse circumstances, be enheartened." All 7 NT uses are in the [imperative mood](#) as a command for the distressed to be encouraged.

**THARSEO - 7V - take courage** (7). Matt. 9:2; Matt. 9:22; Matt. 14:27; Mk. 6:50; Mk. 10:49; Jn. 16:33; Acts 23:11

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**Steven Cole** gives us 5 principles of what it means to lay hold of Jesus by faith: (click here for discussion of each of the following principles)

- A. Faith is active, not passive.
- B. Faith works best when human solutions fail.
- C. Faith accepts the simplicity of the gospel.

D. Faith need not be perfect to be effective.

E. Faith must be confessed.

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**ILLUSTRATION** - A Turkish watchmaker decided to build a special grave for himself that had an eight-inch window on top, an electric light, and a button beside the window connected to an outside alarm. In case he was accidentally buried alive and managed to revive, he could press the button to summon help. He instructed his friends to leave the light burning for seven days after his death and to turn it off only if they were sure he was actually dead. Cemeteries have been a companion of man throughout history, a constant reminder that he is mortal. And as the earth's population grows, grave space is becoming extremely scarce in some places, and more and more people are turning to cremation. We live in a dying world, where before all of us looms the inevitability of death. We are deteriorating human beings in a deteriorating world that is marked by tragedy, sorrow, pain, and death. Since the Fall, there has been a curse on the earth, and that curse has sent the earth and all of its inhabitants careening and spiraling into disasters, tears, sickness, and the grave. (MacArthur)

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**The Fragile Thread That Stopped God** - A tiny spider's thread can stretch farther than you think. Scientists discovered that a single silk strand, almost invisible, can lift objects many times its weight when woven into a web. This woman's faith was just a thin, trembling strand—but she stretched it toward Jesus. And that fragile thread of trust was strong enough to stop the Son of God in His tracks. Even the smallest faith, when stretched toward Christ, becomes strong enough to bring His healing touch.

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**The Power in the Touch, Not the Crowd** - Years ago, a preacher described a massive electrical tower. Thousands of birds perched on it, but none of them received power from it. How? They weren't connected. The woman in Matthew 9:22 was surrounded by a crowd beyond number, yet she alone touched the power of Christ by the "thin wire" of faith. Being near Jesus is not the same as touching Him in faith.

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**The Interrupted Miracle** - Jesus was on His way to raise a dying girl when this woman interrupted Him. But He stopped anyway. It shows us something important: Your need is never an interruption to Jesus. He treats trembling souls as if they are the only person in the world.

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**Adrian Rogers** on **faith** in his comments on The Sowing of the Mustard Seed - And think, not only of the source of that seed, but, friend, think of the sowing of that seed. What is a seed for? A seed is not a museum piece. What is your faith for? You plant it. You see, the seed has life. And when you take that little bit of faith that God has given you and you plant it, God will give you more. Now, in another gospel, that little boy's father—it's another description of this same episode—that little boy's father said to Jesus, "Lord, if you can do something for my son, please do it." And Jesus said to him, "If you can believe, all things are possible to him that believes." (Mark 9:22–23) Now, he said, "Lord, if you can." Jesus said, "No, if you can—if you can believe." Do you know what that father said? Something I've said to the Lord many times this week: "Lord, I believe; help [my] unbelief." (Mark 9:24) Have you ever said that to the Lord? You know, you don't have to have perfect faith. This father didn't have perfect faith. His faith was so small it was like a grain of mustard seed. And it was a very fragile faith. But he said, "O God, I believe." And then, all the doubts rush in on him. He says, "God, help my unbelief." You know, a weak faith is still a wonderful thing—not that I want you to have a weak faith; but friend, a weak faith can lay hold of a mighty God. Do you believe that? It did here. This man said, "Lord, I believe; help [my] unbelief." (Mark 9:24) Jesus was going through the city one time, and the crowd was all around Him; and there was a woman who was sick, and she'd tried so many doctors and couldn't get any relief or release. And she saw Jesus, and she said, "If I can just touch the hem of His garment, I will be healed." (Matthew 9:21) And I want to tell you, friend, that was a superstitious faith. That's really not Bible faith. And yet, it was Bible faith. There were a lot of things she didn't understand. That was superstition. It's a wonder we haven't gotten several denominations, some called the Hemites, and others called the Touchites, and so forth. "If I can just touch the hem of His garment, I'll be healed." She touched the hem of His garment, and immediately she was healed. Jesus said, "Virtue went out of me." (Mark 5:30; Luke 8:46) And Jesus said to her, "Blessed is your faith." (Matthew 9:22; Mark 5:34; Luke 8:48) Now, I want to tell you, she had a weak faith, but she had faith. You start with the faith you have. If your faith is like a grain of mustard seed, plant it. Use it. Say, "God, I'm like that man. I believe; help my unbelief"—because in one mustard seed there are thousands and millions of mustard seeds, if they're planted. So, you think of the size of the seed; you think of the secret of the seed; you think of the source of the seed; you think of the sowing of the seed. God put that faith in your heart for you to serve Him. (For full sermon [See page 1303 in Matthew Sermons](#))

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**David Guzik** ([Matthew 9 Commentary](#)) - This woman hoped to receive something from Jesus without drawing any attention to herself or her embarrassing problem. Jesus insisted on making public notice of her, and He did this for good reasons.

- He did it so she would know that she was healed, having heard an official declaration of it from Jesus.

- He did it so others would know she was healed, because her ailment was private in nature.
- He did it so she would know why she was healed, that it was by her faith and not because of a superstitious touch in and of itself.
- He did it so that she would not think she had stolen a blessing from Jesus, and so she would never feel that she needed to hide from Him.
- He did it so that the ruler of the synagogue would see the power of Jesus at work and therefore have more faith himself for his ill daughter.
- He did it so that He could bless her in a special way, giving her an honored title that we never see Jesus give to any other: daughter.

**SUMMARY** - When Jesus said, "Your faith has made you well," He was highlighting the role of **faith as the means through which His healing power was received**, NOT **the source of the power itself**. The Greek word often used in these instances is *sozo*, which can mean physical healing, rescue, or spiritual salvation, depending on the context. In passages like Matthew 9:22 and Mark 5:34, Jesus healed individuals who demonstrated personal trust in Him, and **He affirmed their faith as the channel through which His grace was applied**. However, Scripture also shows that Jesus sometimes healed people who had no faith at all, such as the man at the pool of Bethesda (John 5:1–13) and the man born blind (John 9), emphasizing that **healing ultimately depends on His sovereign will and mercy**. **Faith** is the **INSTRUMENT** by which people receive healing or salvation, but the power always belongs to Christ Alone. Thus, the value of faith lies not in the one who believes, but in the One in whom that faith is placed—Jesus Christ, the true Healer and Savior

**QUESTION** - [What did Jesus mean when He told people, "Your faith has made you well"? GOTQUESTIONS.ORG](http://www.gotquestions.org)

**ANSWER** - The first recorded instance of Jesus saying, "Your faith has made you well" is found in Matthew 9:22 (ESV) where Jesus heals the woman with the issue of blood. The KJV translates Jesus' words as "Thy faith hath made thee whole," and the NIV says, "Your faith has healed you." The same incident is also recorded in Mark 5:34, where Jesus says, "Daughter, your faith has made you well; go in peace, and be healed of your disease" (ESV).

Jesus also says, "Your faith has made you well," to a leper He had healed (Luke 17:19) and a blind beggar (Luke 18:42). Other times Jesus links faith and healing without using the exact words, "Your faith has made you well," such as in Matthew 8:13 and 15:28.

The healing that these people experienced is expressed, in Greek, by a form of the word *sozo*, which means "to preserve, rescue, save from death, or keep alive." Sometimes, *sozo* refers to spiritual salvation, which is also linked to a person's **faith**. For example, when the penitent prostitute washed Jesus' feet with her tears, He told her much the same thing: "Your faith has saved you" (Luke 7:50; for other examples, see Mark 10:52 and Luke 17:19). When Jesus spoke of the faith of the woman with the issue of blood in Matthew 9, His healing was very likely more than physical; it was a spiritual healing as well, as she is told to "go in peace" (Mark 5:34).

When Jesus said to certain people, "Your faith has made you well," He was saying that their faith (their confidence in Him) had been the means of their restoration. The power of Christ was what effected the cure, but His power was applied in connection with their faith. Just as the faith of some enabled them to receive healing, so healing was sometimes stymied by a lack of faith (see Matthew 13:58). In the same way, salvation comes to a sinner through faith. Everyone who is saved must believe, but it is the power of Christ that saves, not the power of faith. Faith is only the instrument, not the power itself.

In other words, the value of one's faith does not come from the one who expresses it but from the object in which it rests (Mark 10:52; 11:22). Ultimately, healing is not contingent upon the quality of one's faith, but upon the Healer. It was through Christ that the woman in Matthew 9 was able to receive a bodily peace as well as a spiritual peace.

We must recognize that Jesus did not indiscriminately heal all the people all of the time. For example, in the scene of the disabled man at the [pool of Bethesda](#) where multitudes gathered to be healed, Jesus chose only one man to heal (John 5:1–11), and his is an interesting case. Jesus asked the man if he wanted to be made well. His answer was steeped in superstition: there was no one to carry him to the pool, and he wasn't fast enough to get into the water at the right time. This confused and needy man was healed by God's grace. He had no faith in Jesus; he didn't even know it was Jesus who had healed him until later (John 5:12–13).

Another example of someone who was healed *before* faith is the man born blind in John 9. He did not ask to be healed, but from many others, he was chosen to be healed—another example of God's grace. In the case of the man born blind and in the case of the man at the pool, Jesus dealt with their physical problems separately from dealing with their spiritual need—the man in John 9 later comes to a full realization of who Jesus is and exercises faith in Him (verse 38). Jesus' healing of these men was not about

their faith as much as it was about His will.

Everyone whom Jesus willed to be healed was healed. Sometimes He healed those who expressed their faith in Him, and He made a point of emphasizing the condition of their heart: "Your faith has made you well." Other times, in His great mercy, He healed those who had no faith and later drew them to Himself.

#### **Matthew 9:23 When Jesus came into the official's house, and saw the flute-players and the crowd in noisy disorder,**

NET Matthew 9:23 When Jesus entered the ruler's house and saw the flute players and the disorderly crowd,

GNT Matthew 9:23 Καὶ λθεντὸς εἰς τὸν οἰκονότος καὶ δινότος αλητὸς καὶ τὸν χλωρὸν μενον

NLT Matthew 9:23 When Jesus arrived at the official's home, he saw the noisy crowd and heard the funeral music.

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

ESV Matthew 9:23 And when Jesus came to the ruler's house and saw the flute players and the crowd making a commotion,

NIV Matthew 9:23 When Jesus entered the ruler's house and saw the flute players and the noisy crowd,

ASV Matthew 9:23 And when Jesus came into the ruler's house, and saw the flute-players, and the crowd making a tumult,

CSB Matthew 9:23 When Jesus came to the leader's house, He saw the flute players and a crowd lamenting loudly.

NKJ Matthew 9:23 When Jesus came into the ruler's house, and saw the flute players and the noisy crowd wailing,

NRS Matthew 9:23 When Jesus came to the leader's house and saw the flute players and the crowd making a commotion,

YLT Matthew 9:23 And Jesus having come to the house of the ruler, and having seen the minstrels and the multitude making tumult,

■ **into** - Mt 9:18,19 Mk 5:35-38 Lu 8:49-51

■ **the flute-players** - Mt 11:17 2Ch 35:25 Jer 9:17-20 Mk 5:38-40 Lu 7:32 Ac 9:39

## **THE LORD OF LIFE CALMS THE CHAOS OF DEATH**

**When Jesus came into the official's house, and saw the flute-players and the crowd in noisy disorder([thorubeo](#))** - When Jesus enters the ruler's home, He walks into a scene typical of first-century Jewish funerals—high emotion, loud lamentation, and organized mourning. The presence of flute-players is significant. According to Jewish custom, even the poorest families were expected to hire at least two flute-players and one wailing woman to accompany expressions of grief. These musicians played piercing, dissonant melodies intended to provoke and amplify sorrow. The louder the noise, the greater the perceived honor shown to the deceased. What Jesus encountered, then, was not quiet sadness but public, ritualized lamentation, marked by cacophony, confusion, and emotionally charged noise. This funeral gathering was not reverent grief but chaotic disturbance, an atmosphere of hopelessness and emotional turbulence.

**Robertson (Matthew 9 Commentary)** explains that "The girl was just dead, but already a crowd "making a tumult" (*thoruboumenon*) with wild wailing and screaming had gathered in the outer court, "brought together by various motives, sympathy, money, desire to share in the meat and drink going at such a time" (Bruce). Besides the several flute-players (voluntary or hired) there were probably "some hired mourning women (Jer. 9:17) *praefiae*, whose duty it was to sing *naenia* in praise of the dead" ([A.B. Bruce](#))."

Jesus has a long history of interrupting funerals: Nain's widow, Jairus' daughter, Lazarus, His own. Every

funeral Jesus attends becomes a resurrection rehearsal.

**France** writes "Professional mourners were hired even by the poorest families (Mishnah Ketuboth 4:4 specifies 'not less than two flutes and one wailing woman')." (NICNT-Mt)

**Robertson (Matthew 9 Commentary)** on **flute players** - The girl was just dead, but already a crowd "making a tumult" (thoruboumenon) with wild wailing and screaming had gathered in the outer court, "brought together by various motives, sympathy, money, desire to share in the meat and drink going at such a time" (Bruce). Besides the several flute-players (voluntary or hired) there were probably "some hired mourning women (Jeremiah 9:17) *praeficae*, whose duty it was to sing *naenia* in praise of the dead" (A B Bruce). These when put out by Jesus, "laughed him to scorn" (katagelao), in a sort of loud and repeated (imperfect) guffaw of scorn. Jesus overcame all this repellent environment.

**A B Bruce** - "Mourning, like everything else, had been reduced to a system, two flutes and one mourning woman at the burial of a wife incumbent on the poorest man."

**John MacArthur** - In great contrast to those in the western world of our day, funerals in most ancient cultures, including that of Israel in the time of Christ, were not occasions for quiet whispers and soothing music. They were instead characterized by the loud wailing of voices and the harsh dissonance of musical instruments such as those of the hired flute-players on this occasion. The result, not unintended, was great noisy disorder. (See [Matthew Commentary - Page 84](#))

*The end result was*

*a cacophony of confusion.*

-- John MacArthur

**Charles Spurgeon** - The funeral wailing had already begun: "the minstrels" had commenced their hideous discords. Mistrustful friends are eager to bury us before the due time; and we are ourselves too apt to fall into the same error about others. Unbelief calls in the undertakers and the hired mourners to bury those who will yet live for years. We give over to hopelessness those whom Jesus will save; or we begin "making a noise" where a gracious, silent work would be far better. (see [Matthew 9 Commentary](#))

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**Noisy disorder** (Mk 5:39 renders the same verb "Make a commotion") (2350) **thorubeo** from **thorubos** = noise of a tumult) means to throw into disorder, be thrown into confusion, to disturb, set in an uproar, start a riot (Acts 17:5+). **Thorubeō** is used in classical Greek especially of crowds who "make noise."

**THORUBEBO - 4V - make a commotion(1), noisy disorder(1), set(1), troubled(1), uproar(1).** Matt. 9:23; Mk. 5:39; Acts 17:5; Acts 20:10

**Matthew 9:24 He said, "Leave; for the girl has not died, but is asleep." And they began laughing at Him.**

NET Matthew 9:24 he said, "Go away, for the girl is not dead but asleep." And they began making fun of him.

GNP Matthew 9:24 λεγεν, νοχωρε τε, ο γρ π θανεν τ κορ σιον λλ καθε δει. κα κατεγ λων α το .

NLT Matthew 9:24 "Get out!" he told them. "The girl isn't dead; she's only asleep." But the crowd laughed at him.

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

ESV Matthew 9:24 he said, "Go away, for the girl is not dead but sleeping." And they laughed at him.

NIV Matthew 9:24 he said, "Go away. The girl is not dead but asleep." But they laughed at him.

ASV Matthew 9:24 he said, Give place: for the damsel is not dead, but sleepeth. And they laughed him to scorn.

CSB Matthew 9:24 "Leave," He said, "because the girl isn't dead, but sleeping." And they started laughing at Him.

NKJ Matthew 9:24 He said to them, "Make room, for the girl is not dead, but sleeping." And they ridiculed Him.

NRS Matthew 9:24 he said, "Go away; for the girl is not dead but sleeping." And they laughed at him.

YLT Matthew 9:24 he saith to them, 'Withdraw, for the damsel did not die, but doth sleep,' and they were deriding him;

- **Leave** - 1Ki 17:18-24 Ac 9:40 20:10
- **not** - Joh 11:4,11-13
- **And they began laughing** - Mt 27:39-43 Ps 22:6,7 Isa 49:7 53:3

#### Related Passages:

John 11:11+ This He said, and after that He \*said to them, "Our friend Lazarus **has fallen asleep**; but I go, so that I may awaken him out of sleep."

### LAUGHING AT JESUS BUT HE GETS THE "LAST LAUGH!"

**To get the last laugh** means to succeed when others thought you would not: To ultimately achieve success after encountering adversity or doubt from others. These weepers for hire became laughers who scorned. They won't be laughing at Jesus when they see Him sitting on the [Great White Throne](#) and sends them to everlasting torment!

He said, "**Leave** ([anachoreo](#) - withdraw, go away) **for the girl has not (ou) died** ([apothnesko](#)), **but is asleep (katheudo)** - **Leave** is a command in [present imperative](#) (cf Peter's words when Tabitha had died - "Peter sent them all out" Acts 9:40+). Jesus asserts His authority over the unbelieving mourners (the flute-players and noisy crowd). Jesus was once again disturbing long established traditions that had actually been prescribed by the rabbis and were to be assiduously followed when someone died. **Not died** ([apothnesko](#)) uses **ou** which indicates absolute negation. Yes, she was lifeless, but this was absolutely not to be her final state because the Giver of Life had arrived.

**THOUGHT** - Physical death does not have the final word, but Jesus as Judge of all mankind has the final word! Listen to His Word and believe while you are still alive, or you will be forced to listen to His final verdict when you die and face Him at the **Great White Throne Judgment** (Rev 20:11-15+, cf Jn 5:22+). Heed the Savior's call which still echoes down through the ages sounding the alarm "The time is fulfilled, and the kingdom of God is at hand; **repent** ([present imperative](#) see [the Holy Spirit's role in obedience](#)) and **believe** ([present imperative](#) see [the Holy Spirit's role in obedience](#)) in the Gospel." (Mark 1:15+)

In essence Jesus redefined death as a temporary state, just as natural sleep is temporary. Jesus' point was that death is not permanent (see Mt. 27:52; Acts 7:60; 1 Cor. 15:6, 20, 51; 1 Thess. 4:13–15; 5:10; 2 Peter 3:4). Everyone will be alive somewhere for all eternity, either in Heaven or in Hell! There are no exception clauses! The same terminology was used by Him in connection with Lazarus's death...

This He said, and after that He \*said to them, "Our friend Lazarus **has fallen asleep**; but I go, so that I may **awaken him out of sleep**." 12 The disciples then said to Him, "Lord, **if he has fallen asleep, he will recover**."

13 Now Jesus had spoken of his **death**, but they thought that He was speaking of **literal sleep**. 14 So Jesus then said to them plainly, "**Lazarus is dead**, 15 and I am glad for your sakes that I was not there, so that you may believe; but let us go to him." (John 11:11–15).

**And they began laughing** ([katagelao](#)) **at Him - Began laughing** is in the [imperfect tense](#) picturing them doing this over and over, an ongoing ridiculing of Jesus! Woe! I would hate to be them at the judgment! The NET expresses the sense well rendering it "they began making fun of Him." "Can you imagine—laughing, pointing to Jesus, laughing Him to scorn? More of that is happening in the world today. Jesus is the One who is derided. He is the One who is spoken against. Have you ever thought about how this world hates Jesus Christ?" (Adrian Rogers)

**A T Robertson** adds "These when put out by Jesus, "laughed him to scorn" ([kategelōn](#)], in a sort of loud and repeated (imperfect) guffaw of scorn. Jesus overcame all this repellent environment." ([Matthew 9 Commentary](#))

**John MacArthur** makes an insightful comment "That their weeping could so quickly turn to laughter, even mocking laughter, betrayed the fact that their mourning was a paid act and did not reflect genuine sorrow. It also betrayed their complete lack of faith in Jesus' power to raise the girl from the dead." (See [Matthew Commentary - Page 85](#))

**Spurgeon** -Jesus will have the death-music quieted; for it is premature, and even false in its significance. He says to the minstrels, "**Give place**."(Mt 9:24KJV) (Leave, go away) Many things have to **give place** when Jesus comes on the scene; and he takes care that they shall **give place**; for he puts them out of the room. To him the maid is asleep rather than dead; for he is about to call her

back to life. He sees the future as well as the present; and to Him in that light "the maid is not dead, but sleepeth." The Lord Jesus wants not pipers, flute-players, and wailers; His own still voice is more fit for work in the death-chamber with a young girl. Jesus is going to do wonders, and the hired performances of those who mimic woe are not in tune therewith. When Jesus tells the hired performers that there will be no need to proceed with the funeral, for the girl will live, they answer with scoffs, for they are sure that she is dead. It is a shameful thing to laugh at Christ. Yet "He endured such contradiction of sinners against himself" (Heb 12:3KJV<sub>±</sub>), and was not angry. We need not be dismayed when we are ridiculed; for "they laughed HIM to scorn." (cf Mt 5:11-12<sub>±</sub>) Nor may we stop our working because of derision; for Jesus went on with His resurrection work despite the mockers. (See Spurgeon's Commentary)

**Adrian Rogers** applies the fact that they laughed at Jesus to those times when Christians are laughed at by the world declaring "there's going to be personal insult. They're going to revile you. If you're a child of God, you're going to be a butt of jokes. You're going to be openly ridiculed. I've been ridiculed since I was in high school for standing up for the Lord Jesus Christ. I've been ridiculed by football players that I've played football with. I've been ridiculed by classmates. I don't say that feeling sorry for myself. **The fleas come with the dog.** I mean, you're going to be ridiculed; they're going to revile you. And, you know, some people can stand almost anything except to be laughed at. Do you know that? Does it bother you to be laughed at? The Bible says of the Lord Jesus Christ that "they laughed him to scorn." (Matthew 9:24; Mark 5:40; Luke 8:53) Can you imagine anybody getting a belly laugh at the Lord Jesus Christ? They did. "They laughed him to scorn." (Matthew 9:24; Mark 5:40; Luke 8:53) They were even mocking Him when He was on the cross dying in agony and blood." (See page 177 for his full sermon [When Christians Are Persecuted](#))

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**Leave** (left, departed, go away, give place)[\(402\)](#)**anachoreo** from **ana** = back again or emphatic + **choreo** = depart, make room) means to depart from a location. **Anachoreō** is used several times in Matthew to describe a strategic withdrawal in the face of danger (Mt 2:12–14, 22; 4:12; 12:15; 14:13; 15:21) but Jesus going to Galilee was not out of fear of Herod, for Jesus feared no man! **Anachoreo** describes the magi who after being warned by God "left for their own country by another way." (Mt 2:12). Joseph was also warned and "left for Egypt" (Mt 2:14) and then later "left for the regions of Galilee." (Mt 2:22) In Mt 12:15 Jesus withdrew, retreating to a secluded place (cf Jn 6:15).

**ANACHOREO - 14V** - departed(1), gone(1), gone aside(1), leave(1), left(3), stepping aside(1), withdrew(6).  
Matt. 2:12; Matt. 2:13; Matt. 2:14; Matt. 2:22; Matt. 4:12; Matt. 9:24; Matt. 12:15; Matt. 14:13; Matt. 15:21;  
Matt. 27:5; Mk. 3:7; Jn. 6:15; Acts 23:19; Acts 26:31

**Died** [\(599\)](#) **apothnesko** from **apo** = marker of dissociation implying a rupture from a former association, separation, departure, cessation + **thnesko** = die) literally means to die off (that is, to die and thus be *away from* this earthly realm). **Apothnesko** speaks of literal physical death (Ro 6:9<sub>±</sub>) but figuratively (metaphorically) of a believer's death to **sin** (Ro 6:2<sub>±</sub>, Ro 6:7<sub>±</sub>, Ro 6:8<sub>±</sub>, Col 3:3<sub>±</sub>), **self, Satan, the law** (Ro 7:6<sub>±</sub>, Gal 2:19) and **the world** (Col 2:20<sub>±</sub>, cp Gal 6:14<sub>±</sub> - *crucified* used instead of *died*) which was effected when Christ was crucified and when by faith we believed in Him and in God's reckoning (albeit a "mysterious" teaching) were crucified with Him (Ro 6:6<sub>±</sub>).

It is notable that as life was never meant to be merely existence, death which is the antonym of life does not mean non-existence. The important point is that to die does not mean one is annihilated as some would falsely teach. Everyone who has ever been born will continue to exist, either in the presence of God or to experience conscious existence in separation from God (see 2Th 1:9+).

**APOTHNESKO IN MATTHEW** - Matt. 8:32; Matt. 9:24; Matt. 22:24; Matt. 22:27; Matt. 26:35; (cf Mk 5:39+; Lk 8:52+ Lxx = Da 12:2+).

**Asleep** [\(2518\)](#) **katheudo** from **katá** = an intensive + **heúdō** = to sleep) means literally to sleep, fall asleep or be fast asleep (Matt. 8:24; 13:25; 25:5; 26:40, 43, 45; Mark 13:36; 14:37, 40, 41; Luke 22:46; 1 Thess. 5:7; Sept.: Gen. 28:13; 1 Sam. 3:2, 3, 5; 2 Sam. 12:3) and figuratively (as here) to die or be dead (Matt. 9:24; Mark 5:39; Luke 8:52 cf. John 11:11-14; 1 Th. 5:10; Da 12:2). Another figurative sense speaks of an attitude of spiritual laziness or indifference, to be spiritually indolent, to be indifferent. The idea is to be "asleep" in your sin, secure and unconcerned in sin, or indolent and careless in the performance of duty (Eph 5:14, 1 Th 5:6, cf. parallel thought but not using katheudo in Ro 13:11-13; 1 Cor. 15:34).

**KATHEUDO - 7/20V IN MATTHEW - MOST USES ARE IN GOSPELS** - Matt. 8:24; Matt. 9:24; Matt. 13:25; Matt. 25:5; Matt. 26:40; Matt. 26:43; Matt. 26:45; Mk. 4:27; Mk. 4:38; Mk. 5:39; Mk. 13:36; Mk. 14:37; Mk. 14:40; Mk. 14:41; Lk. 8:52; Lk. 22:46; Eph. 5:14; 1 Thess. 5:6; 1 Thess. 5:7; 1 Thess. 5:10

#### Related Resources:

- [What does the Bible say about soul sleep?](#)
- [What happens after death?](#)

- [Is the human soul mortal or immortal?](#)
- [Are there different levels of Heaven?](#)
- [What does it mean to be absent from the body?](#)
- [Will we sleep in heaven?](#)
- [Why is sleep/sleeping necessary? Why did God create us with the need to sleep?](#)

**Began laughing** (2606)(**katagelao** from **kata** = down, against + **gelo** = to laugh) means to laugh at, deride, scorn, ridicule, scornfully mock. Three uses in NT - Matt. 9:24; Mk. 5:40; Lk. 8:53 all three in context refer to the reaction of the mourner to Jesus at the death and resurrection of Jairus' daughter. It is used 16 times in the Septuagint and most often refers to derisive laughter - e.g., Pr 17:5 "He who **mocks** (Lxx - katagelao in present tense = continually laughs at) the poor taunts his Maker."

**KATAGELAO IN SEPTUAGINT** - Ge 38:23; 2 Chr. 30:10; Est. 4:17; Job 5:22; Job 9:23; Job 21:3; Job 30:1; Job 39:7; Job 39:18; Job 39:22; Job 41:29; Ps. 25:2; Pr 17:5; Pr 29:9; Pr 30:17; Mic 3:7;

#### Matthew 9:25 But when the crowd had been sent out, He entered and took her by the hand, and the girl got up.

NET Matthew 9:25 But when the crowd had been put outside, he went in and gently took her by the hand, and the girl got up.

GNP Matthew 9:25 τε δέ ξεβλήθη καὶ χλοεὶς σελθεὶς κρητησεν τὴν χειρας αὐτῆς, καὶ γέρθη τὴν κορην σιον.

NLT Matthew 9:25 After the crowd was put outside, however, Jesus went in and took the girl by the hand, and she stood up!

KJV Matthew 9:25 But when the people were put forth, he went in, and took her by the hand, and the maid arose.

ESV Matthew 9:25 But when the crowd had been put outside, he went in and took her by the hand, and the girl arose.

NIV Matthew 9:25 After the crowd had been put outside, he went in and took the girl by the hand, and she got up.

ASV Matthew 9:25 But when the crowd was put forth, he entered in, and took her by the hand; and the damsel arose.

CSB Matthew 9:25 But when the crowd had been put outside, He went in and took her by the hand, and the girl got up.

NKJ Matthew 9:25 But when the crowd was put outside, He went in and took her by the hand, and the girl arose.

NRS Matthew 9:25 But when the crowd had been put outside, he went in and took her by the hand, and the girl got up.

YLT Matthew 9:25 but, when the multitude was put forth, having gone in, he took hold of her hand, and the damsel arose,

- **the crowd** - 2Ki 4:32-36 Ac 9:40,41
- **and took** - Mk 1:31 Mk 5:41 8:23 9:27 Lu 8:54

#### Parallel Passages:

Mark 5:41+ Taking the child by the hand, He \*said to her, "[Talitha kum!](#)" (which translated means, "Little girl, I say to you, get up!").

Luke 8:54+ He, however, took her by the hand and called, saying, "Child, arise!"

## JESUS' MIRACULOUS RESTORATION OF LIFE

**But when the crowd had been sent out - The crowd** surprisingly obeyed Jesus and left. Mark 5:37+ informs us that Jesus allowed

only Peter, James, John and the girl's parents to go into the room with Him, Mark recording "They began laughing at Him. But putting them all out, He took along the child's father and mother and His own companions, and \*entered the room where the child was." (Mark 5:40+)

**He entered and took her by the hand, and the girl got up-** Mark adds some detail "Taking the child by the hand, He \*said to her, "[talitha cumi!](#)" (which translated means, "Little girl, I say to you, get up!" (Mark 5:41+). Luke says "And her spirit returned, and she got up immediately; and He gave orders for something to be given her to eat." (Lk 8:55+) So in the case of the woman with hemorrhage for 12 years, she reached out to touch Him. Now with this young girl who had died after 12 years, He reaches out and touches her. He could have raised her by speaking words or even by saying nothing, but the fact that He took her by the hand and spoke to her (Lk 8:55+), reflected His great compassion and tenderness.

**Spurgeon** - It was not meet that a ribald throng should behold the majestic mystery of resurrection; they must be "put forth." Moreover, the hideous noise of the funeral wailers was not a fit accompaniment of the Saviour's word of power. The people were turned out, and then the Lord "went in" to work his miracle. He loves to work in quiet. There are directions in modern church life in which noise and popular excitement will have to come to an end before much is done by the Lord. When we read, "He took her by the hand", it reminds us of his touching Peter's wife's mother. He shows a sacred familiarity with those whom he saves. He is not said in this gospel to have spoken, and thus the contrast between empty noise and his mighty silence, is brought out clearly. Life was gone from the maiden; but the result was the same as in the case of Peter's relative who was still alive: she arose. How much had taken place before a dead girl could rise! This is the first case of resurrection by our Lord: it was that of one who had but just died, and it is typical of the giving of spiritual life to persons who have not yet come to the stage of corruption which necessitates carrying them out, like the widow's son; or of actual decay, which has led to burial, as in the case of Lazarus. In each case the miracle was the same; but the surroundings greatly differed, so that the instruction varied. Lord, take our dear young children by the hand, and raise them up to everlasting life while they are children! (see [Matthew 9 Commentary](#))

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**Don Francisco** tells the story of Jairus' daughter in his powerful song [Gotta Tell Somebody](#)

She kept on getting weaker as day dragged into day  
The doctors gave no hope for her; she seemed to fade away  
My hours were filled with constant dread; time became a knife  
That slowly and relentlessly cut the cord of life

There was a teacher in the region then some of us had heard  
That He'd healed the paralytic by the power of just His Word  
So with hope again rekindled I went at once to see  
If I could find a man named Jesus from a town in Galilee

I began to search the city and soon I saw the crowd  
They were pressing in to touch Him and they called His Name out loud  
But with the strength of desperation I pushed them all aside  
I through myself before Him and from my knees I cried

"Lord, come and heal my daughter, even now she's close to death  
Her fever's uncontrollable, she fights for every breath  
But God's given You the power; life is Yours to give  
If you'll just lay Your hands on her I know that she will live"  
(She will live, she will live)

Well, He'd just begun to go with me when a face I saw with fear  
Came towards me with the news I knew I didn't want to hear  
And although I tried to steel myself I trembled when he said  
"Why bother the Teacher anymore, your little girl is dead."

Then Jesus touched my shoulder and He told me not to grieve"  
The trembling stopped when He looked at me and said, "Only believe"  
Then He sent the crowds away except His closest men  
And they followed right behind us as we started off again

But we were still a long ways down the road when I heard the sounds and cries  
Of the mourners and musicians as they strove to dramatize  
My grief they had no business with beneath their loud disguise

My wife just sat there silently and stared through empty eyes

Then Jesus asked the mourners, "Why is it that you weep?

She isn't dead as you suppose, the child is just asleep."

It only took a moment for their wails to turn to jeers

"Who does this man think he is? Get him out of here!"

With authority I've never heard in the lips of any man

He spoke and every sound rolled out with the thunder of command

And in the sudden silence they all hurried for the door

Wondering what the reasons were they'd ever come there for

Then He called his three disciples that were with Him on the way

He led them and my wife and me to where our daughter lay

He took her by the hand; He told her "Child, arise"

And the words were barely spoken when she opened up her eyes

She rose and walked across the room and stood there at our sides

My wife knelt down and held her close and at last she really cried

And then Jesus told us both to see that our daughter had some food

But as to how her life was saved, not to speak a word...

Not to speak a word...

I got to tell somebody

I got to tell somebody, got to tell somebody, what Jesus did for me

I got to tell somebody, got to tell somebody, what Jesus did for me

I got to tell somebody, got to tell somebody, what Jesus did for me

I got to tell somebody, got to tell somebody, what Jesus did for me

**THOUGHT** - Does this song's ending not make you want to go and tell somebody what Jesus did for you? It should! So go and tell somebody what Jesus did for you!

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#### QUESTION - [What is the meaning of talitha cumi? | GotQuestions.org](#)

**ANSWER** - *Talitha cumi* or *talitha koum* is a transcription of an Aramaic phrase found in Mark 5:41. Jesus spoke this when He raised [Jairus's](#) daughter from the dead (Mark 5:21–43). Aramaic was the common, everyday language in Israel at that time. Mark interprets the sentence for us: "Little girl, I say to you, get up!" The account of the healing is also found in Matthew 9 and Luke 8, but only Mark records the Aramaic words that Jesus spoke, *talitha cumi*.

*Talitha* is a term of endearment. It is etymologically related to a word that can also mean "lamb." Jesus' use of this term, coupled with His taking the little girl by the hand, provides an image of a compassion and gentleness. The [Good Shepherd](#) is lovingly gathering the lambs in His arms (see Isaiah 40:11): "My little lamb," He says to her as He restores her life, "it's time to get up."

Jesus saying, "Talitha cumi," comes in the context of a larger story. In Capernaum, Jesus was surrounded by a crowd when Jairus, a synagogue ruler, fell at Jesus' feet. Jairus "pleaded earnestly with Him" because his 12-year-old daughter was dying and he wanted Jesus to heal her (Mark 5:22–23). The crowds following Jesus were not unusual, but a synagogue leader recognizing Jesus' authority and requesting His help was.

On the way to Jairus's house, Jesus was met by a [woman who had been bleeding for twelve years](#). The woman had been to doctors, spent all she had, and had only grown worse. She came up behind Jesus, unnoticed by the crowd, and reached out to touch Jesus' garment, trusting that if she just touched His clothes she would be healed. She was healed, and Jesus felt power go out from Him. He stopped the procession to Jairus's house and asked who had touched Him. The woman came forward and "trembling with fear, told him the whole truth" (Mark 5:33). Jesus responded with compassion, calling the woman "Daughter," and told her to go in peace and be free from suffering.

The way the accounts of Jairus's daughter and the woman with the issue of blood are juxtaposed is an interesting framing device. In both stories, Jesus' compassion toward the woman with the issue of blood and the young girl seems to be highlighted. We

understand that Jesus cares for all people—rulers of the synagogue, children, and women who are ceremonially unclean. In the midst of the crowd, He sees the needs of the one and is willing to respond.

Faith also becomes an interesting theme in this passage. The woman with the issue of blood believed she only needed to touch Jesus' clothing to receive healing. As Jesus was affirming the woman's healing, some people from Jairus's house came to tell him that it was too late—Jairus's daughter had died. Overhearing them, Jesus told Jairus, "Don't be afraid; just believe" (Mark 5:36). At that point, Jairus had to decide if he would believe his friends or Jesus. In this situation, when it seemed death had the final say and all hope was lost, Jairus continued to lead Jesus to his home. Both Jairus and the woman with the issue of blood showed bold faith and disregarded the pressures of the crowd in favor of looking to Jesus.

At Jairus's house, Jesus was met by people weeping and wailing loudly because the young girl had died. Jesus responded by telling everyone that she was not dead but sleeping. The mourners laughed at Him, but Jesus took Jairus, Jairus's wife, and three of His disciples with Him to the room where the little girl's body lay. Then He took the little girl by the hand and said to her, "*Talitha, cumi*," and Mark translates: "Little girl, I say to you, arise" (Mark 5:41, NKJV). Immediately, the little girl arose and walked around.

Both Jairus and the woman with the bleeding found the answers to their needs by coming to Jesus (Mark 5:22, 33). He responded to their faith and revealed that He is Lord over disease and death. That does not mean that God always heals or rescues people from danger (2 Corinthians 12:1–10), but it does mean that He holds the ultimate authority over death.

By Jesus' word, *talitha cumi*, the girl arose. This same Jesus is the one we look to today—our Savior is both gentle and strong. He is loving and absolutely powerful—loving enough to be our Good Shepherd and powerful enough to raise us from the dead. Faith in Him takes away all fear, even the fear of death (Hebrews 2:14–15).

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#### Matthew 9:26 This news spread throughout all that land.

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NET Matthew 9:26 And the news of this spread throughout that region.

GNT Matthew 9:26 καὶ λαθεντὸς φημι αὐτῇ εἰς τὴν γῆν καὶ νησίαν.

NLT Matthew 9:26 The report of this miracle swept through the entire countryside.

KJV Matthew 9:26 And the fame hereof went abroad into all that land.

ESV Matthew 9:26 And the report of this went through all that district.

NIV Matthew 9:26 News of this spread through all that region.

ASV Matthew 9:26 And the fame hereof went forth into all that land.

CSB Matthew 9:26 And this news spread throughout that whole area.

NKJ Matthew 9:26 And the report of this went out into all that land.

NRS Matthew 9:26 And the report of this spread throughout that district.

YLT Matthew 9:26 and the fame of this went forth to all the land.

- **This news spread**, Mt 4:24 14:1,2 Mk 1:45 6:14 Ac 26:26

#### ANCIENT VERSION OF "SOCIAL MEDIA"!

**This news spread throughout all that land** - What news? The news that Jesus not only had power to heal disease, cast out demons, and forgive sins, but even had power even to raise the dead! If this was not enough to convince the Jews of the land that this Man was not merely a man but was the long expected Messiah, then nothing would convince them. In fact even Jesus' Himself resurrecting from the dead was not sufficient "evidence." (cf Lk 16:30,31+) When one's neck is stiff and their heart is hard (cf Acts 7:51+), no amount of truth, clear Biblical argumentation or Biblical apologetics can soften their heart. Of course that is where the Holy Spirit must take over and convict them of sin, righteousness and the judgment to come (Jn 16:8) and sweep in like the wind and cause them to be born again (Jn 3:3-8+). Salvation is up to God, not us! But we will be held responsible for speaking the truth of the Gospel even to the most stiff-necked and hard-hearted souls! When they reject us, remember they are really rejecting God not us!

**Spurgeon** - The news of the raising of the dead was sure to spread, especially as it was the daughter of the ruler of the synagogue. Where new life is bestowed, there will be no fear of its being unobserved. Jesus will have fame if we have life, and we should take

care that it is so. (see [Matthew 9 Commentary](#))

**MacArthur** - When as a young man D. L. Moody was called upon to preach a funeral sermon, he began to search the gospels to find one of Jesus' funeral messages—only to discover that He never preached one. He found instead that Jesus broke up every funeral He attended by raising the dead person back to life. When the dead heard His voice, they immediately came to life. Arthur Brisbane has pictured the funeral of a Christian as a crowd of grieving caterpillars, all wearing black suits. As they crawl along mourning their dead brother and carrying his cocoon to its final resting place, above them flutters an incredibly beautiful butterfly, looking down on them in utter disbelief. Death can strike God's saints in unexpected, painful, and seemingly senseless ways. Yet He does not promise to give explanations for such tragedies. Instead He gives the wondrous assurance that "he who believes in Me shall live even if he dies" (John 11:25).

#### Matthew 9:27 As Jesus went on from there, two blind men followed Him, crying out, "Have mercy on us, Son of David!"

NET Matthew 9:27 As Jesus went on from there, two blind men followed him, shouting, "Have mercy on us, Son of David!"

GNT Matthew 9:27 Καὶ πάρα γοντὶ κε θεν τὸ ησοῦς κολοθησαν [αὐτὸν] διοτυφλοὶ κρίζοντες καὶ λαγοντες, λαγοντος μὲν αὐτοῦ Δασοῦ δια.

NLT Matthew 9:27 After Jesus left the girl's home, two blind men followed along behind him, shouting, "Son of David, have mercy on us!"

KJV Matthew 9:27 And when Jesus departed thence, two blind men followed him, crying, and saying, Thou Son of David, have mercy on us.

ESV Matthew 9:27 And as Jesus passed on from there, two blind men followed him, crying aloud, "Have mercy on us, Son of David."

NIV Matthew 9:27 As Jesus went on from there, two blind men followed him, calling out, "Have mercy on us, Son of David!"

ASV Matthew 9:27 And as Jesus passed by from thence, two blind men followed him, crying out, and saying, Have mercy on us, thou son of David.

CSB Matthew 9:27 As Jesus went on from there, two blind men followed Him, shouting, "Have mercy on us, Son of David!"

NKJ Matthew 9:27 When Jesus departed from there, two blind men followed Him, crying out and saying, "Son of David, have mercy on us!"

NRS Matthew 9:27 As Jesus went on from there, two blind men followed him, crying loudly, "Have mercy on us, Son of David!"

YLT Matthew 9:27 And Jesus passing on thence, two blind men followed him, calling and saying, 'Deal kindly with us, Son of David.'

- **two** - Mt 11:5 12:22 20:30 Mk 8:22,23 10:46 Lu 7:21 Joh 9:1-12
- **Son of David!** - Mt 12:23 15:22 20:30,31 21:9,15 22:41-45 Mk 10:47,48 11:10 Mk 12:35-37 Lu 18:38-39 20:41 Joh 7:42 Ro 1:3 9:5
- **have** - Mt 17:15 Mk 9:22 Lu 17:13

#### Related Passages:

Isaiah 35:5-6+ Then (WHEN IS "THEN?" CONTEXT STRONGLY SUGGEST THIS IS THE GLORIOUS MESSIANIC KINGDOM) the eyes of the blind will be opened And the ears of the deaf will be unstopped. 6 Then the lame will leap like a deer, And the tongue of the mute will shout for joy. For waters will break forth in the wilderness And streams in the Arabah.

Luke 4:18-19+ (JESUS PREACHES IN NAZARETH FULFILLING Isa 61:1-2a+) "THE SPIRIT OF THE LORD IS UPON ME, BECAUSE HE ANOINTED ME TO PREACH THE GOSPEL TO THE POOR. HE HAS SENT ME TO PROCLAIM RELEASE TO THE CAPTIVES, AND RECOVERY OF SIGHT TO THE BLIND, TO SET FREE THOSE WHO ARE OPPRESSED, 19 TO PROCLAIM THE FAVORABLE YEAR OF THE LORD."

Luke 18:38-39+ And he called out, saying, "Jesus, Son of David, **have mercy** ([aorist imperative](#) - command) on me!" 39 Those who led the way were sternly telling him to be quiet; but he kept crying out all the more, "Son of David, have mercy on me!" ([See discussion below](#) on men giving commands to God!)

Luke 18:13+ "But the tax collector, standing some distance away, was even unwilling to lift up his eyes to heaven, but was beating his breast, saying, 'God, **be merciful** (NIV = Have mercy on me" - a command) to me, the sinner!'

Psalm 51:1+ For the choir director. A Psalm of David, when Nathan the prophet came to him, after he had gone in to Bathsheba. **Have mercy** (command) on me, O God, because of your loyal love! Because of your great compassion, wipe away my rebellious acts! (Ps 51:1NET)

## SEEING WITH THE HEART: THE VISION OF THE BLIND

**As Jesus** ([Jesus](#)) **went on from** ([parago](#)) **there** - Jesus had just raised Jairus' daughter (Mt 9:25) and He moves on wasting none of the valuable time He had left on earth.

**THOUGHT** - Jesus is never idle! Jesus' continuous movement is a great example for all His disciples to follow, realizing that "the time has been shortened" (1Cor 7:29+) and "you do not know what your life will be like tomorrow. You are just a vapor that appears for a little while and then vanishes away." (Jas 4:14+) We need to be intentional and **redeem the time** for the days are evil (Eph 5:16+)(Have you seen the news in 2025 where they call "evil good and good evil" and "substitute darkness for light and light for darkness" - Isaiah 5:20+ ? Rhetorical!)

**Two blind** ([tuphos](#)) **men followed** ([akoloutheo](#)) **Him, crying out** ([krazo](#) - present tense - continually), "**Have mercy** ([eleeo](#)) **on us, Son** ([huios](#)) **of David!** ([note](#))" - For background, it is worth noting that eye problems were common in Christ's and some have estimated that one out of every five adults was afflicted with some kind of eye disease! Note the paradox that the **blind men followed** Jesus! How could they do this since they could not see? The text does not make it clear, but one thing is clear and that the presence of Jesus (within earshot) deeply motivated these two blind men. It is certainly an illustration of walking by faith not sight! (2Co 5:7+) Blind people often have excellent hearing and surely they had heard about this Man named Jesus Who had healed many diseases, including blindness. These **blind men** saw with the "eyes of their heart" what the religious leaders, the Pharisees, could not see with physical vision!

**THOUGHT** - If you are spiritually blind (a non-believer) or a believer and your "lamp is flickering low," are you watchful and ready when Jesus passes by? (cf. Lk 19:1-4+)

**Note the intensity of their prayer.** First it was continuous for [krazo](#) is in present tense. Second, their prayer was passionate, for [krazo](#) means to cry out loudly, even screaming or shouting! Can't you hear them crying out? Finally, their prayer was in the form of a command. **Have mercy** is an [aorist imperative](#), a command signifying "Do it now!" "Do not delay!" While commands are found in many prayers to God (e.g., Mt 6:11+), it is important to note that these commands (as in the present passage) do not mean to imply the creature has authority of His Creator, but instead convey a sense of dependence on God. Thus these are better seen as pleas, not demands, expressing urgency, intensity or desperation (depending on the context). It is also important to understand that God welcomes bold, fervent prayers (cf Lk 11:9+, Heb 4:16+), like children crying to their Father (Ro 8:15+). Such prayers show that the person takes God at His Word and trusts His promises. Commands are often a way of fervently pleading God's Word back to Him, expressing that person's faith in Him. This phrase became a foundational prayer of the early church (Kyrie eleison) "Lord, have mercy" which acknowledges our helplessness and our hope in one cry! This is a good way to begin our prayers each morning "Lord, have mercy on me!"

**THOUGHT** - Do I pray like these two blind men? True faith is not silent. These men did not whisper a request but shouted! Are you willing to cry out to God in desperation and dependence? Psalm 34:6+ says the "poor man cried, and the LORD heard him And saved him out of all his troubles." Take a moment and listen to the passionate cry for mercy sung by Ryan Ellis...

### [O Son of David, have mercy on me](#)

*My soul is broken, and my eyes can't see  
Can You hear me callin', callin' out Your name?  
O Son of David, have mercy on me  
Have mercy on me*

*I'm blinded and I can't see  
And I'm broken without Your peace  
God, I need You  
To come and set me free, yeah*

Note also their cry **Son of David** implies they thought He was the Messiah, as this title was recognized at that time as Messianic (cf 2Sa 7:12–13+). In a Messianic passage in the OT, the coming of the Messiah was associated with restoring sight to the blind, Isaiah 35:5+ recording "Then the eyes of the blind will be opened And the ears of the deaf will be unstopped."

[Gotquestions.org](http://www.gotquestions.org) adds "Jesus was addressed as "**Lord, thou son of David**" several times by people who, by faith, were seeking mercy or healing. The woman whose daughter was being tormented by a demon (Matthew 15:22) and the two blind men by the wayside (Matthew 20:30) all cried out to the Son of David for help. The titles of honor they gave Him declared their faith in Him. Calling Him "Lord" expressed their sense of His deity, dominion, and power, and calling Him "Son of David," expressed their faith that He was the Messiah."

**Jamieson-Fausset-Brown** agree writing that "The title which they here give him, shows that they believed him to be the Messiah; for, at this time, it was not only universally understood that the Messiah would be a descendant of David, but 'Son of David' was one of the names then ascribed to him by the Jews."

**SON OF DAVID** - Matt. 1:1; Matt. 1:20; Matt. 9:27; Matt. 12:23; Matt. 15:22; Matt. 20:30; Matt. 20:31; Matt. 21:9; Matt. 21:15; Matt. 22:42; Mk. 10:47; Mk. 10:48; Mk. 12:35; Lk. 3:31; Lk. 18:38; Lk. 18:39

*They were of one mind in reference to Jesus, and therefore  
they went one way, and used one prayer, to one and the same person.*

**Spurgeon** - No sooner does Jesus move than fresh candidates for his bounty appear: the blind seek sight from him. Two sightless men had become companions in affliction; they may have been father and son. They were in downright earnest, for they "followed him, crying, and saying, Have mercy on us." Persevering, vehement, yet intelligent was their appeal. They were of one mind in reference to Jesus, and therefore they went one way, and used one prayer, to one and the same person. Our Lord is here called by his royal name: "**Thou Son of David.**" Even the blind could see that he was a king's son. As **Son of David**, He is entreated to show mercy, and act according to His royal nature. It is mercy which gives us our faculties, and mercy alone can restore them. (see [Matthew 9 Commentary](#))

**THOUGHT** - "This prayer suits us when we perceive our own darkness of mind. When we cannot see our way into truth, let us appeal to the Lord for gracious instruction; ever remembering that we have no claim except that which originates in his mercy." (Spurgeon)

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**Blind** (5185) **tuphlos** from **tuphlóo** = envelop with smoke, be unable to see clearly) can refer to literal blindness (Mt 9:27, 28; 11:5; 12:22; Lk 7:21, 22; Jn 9:1, 2, 3.; Acts 13:11 Lv 19:14; Job 29:15) but more often is used to describe spiritual blindness. Figuratively then **tuphlos** picture one's mind as blind, ignorant, stupid, slow of understanding, being unable to understand, incapable of comprehending (see Mt 15:14; 23:16, 17, 19, 24, 26; Lk 4:18; Jn 9:39,40,41; Ro 2:19; 2Pe 1:9; Rev 3:17; Isa 42:16,18,19; 43:8) This sense speaks of both mental and spiritual blindness, often the result of self-deception so that one is unable to understand (spiritual truth). The Greek writers used **tuphlos** to describe those who were "mentally blind".

**NIDNTT - see page 218 - Classic** - **typhlos** (Homer onwards) means blind. It is used lit. of men and animals, and fig. of the other senses and the mind. It may even be applied to dark, obscure things, and also to rivers and harbours choked with mud. The barbaric custom of blinding for revenge or punishment is well attested.

**TUPHLOS - 7V** - Matt. 9:2; Matt. 9:22; Matt. 14:27; Mk. 6:50; Mk. 10:49; Jn. 16:33; Acts 23:11

**Followed** (190) **akoloutheo** from **a** = expresses union with, likeness + **keleuthos** = a road, way) means to walk the same road (Ponder that simple definition dear believer - Am I willing to walk the same road as Jesus?) Literally to follow (like the crowds followed Jesus) and in a figurative sense to follow Jesus as a disciple. To follow (closely) and was used of soldiers, servants and pupils. To go after someone or something (not as a true disciple however as we see with the crowds who physically followed Jesus, following however without a willingness to commit wholly to Him! cf John 6:60-65, 66) Early in the history of the Greek language **akoloutheo** came to mean to imitate or follow someone's example. This dual meaning colored the New Testament use of our word **akoloutheo**.

[Click here for an in depth discussion of akoloutheo in the New International Dictionary of the New Testament](#)

**Friberg** summary - (1) literally follow, go along behind, come after (Mk 10:52); of a crowd go along with, accompany (Mt 21:9); figuratively, of discipleship and self-commitment follow, go after, obey (Mt 9:9); "to join

one as a disciple, become his disciple, conform wholly to another's example." (2) generally, of observance of laws and customs obey, follow. (BORROW [Analytical Lexicon of the Greek New Testament](#))

**AKOLOUTHEO IN MATTHEW** - Matt. 4:20; Matt. 4:22; Matt. 4:25; Matt. 8:1; Matt. 8:10; Matt. 8:19; Matt. 8:22; Matt. 8:23; Matt. 9:9; Matt. 9:19; Matt. 9:27; Matt. 10:38; Matt. 12:15; Matt. 14:13; Matt. 16:24; Matt. 19:2; Matt. 19:21; Matt. 19:27; Matt. 19:28; Matt. 20:29; Matt. 20:34; Matt. 21:9; Matt. 26:58; Matt. 27:55

**Crying** (2896) **krazo** refers to a loud cry or vociferation, and is a strong word expressing deep emotion. **Krazo** is one of those **onomatopoeic** words, the very pronunciation of which imitates the hoarse cry of the raven ([listen](#)), and can be an inarticulate and brutish sound or an exclamation of fear or pain. Abbott-Smith says "generally used of inarticulate cries, *to scream, cry out* (Aesch., etc.)" It is used of the cry of an animal, the barking of a dog and two men in a quarrel, trying to bawl each other down (so Aristophanes, Knights, 1017)" 'The prophet in awful earnestness, and as with a scream of anguish, cries over Israel' (Morison)" **Krazō** was also a technical, rabbinic term to refer to the loud summons of a prophet, needing to be heard. In Lk 18:39<sup>±</sup> the blind beggar cried "to cry clamorously; to scream or shriek." (You can almost hear hid shrieking! He is motivated because he is blind and thinks this Man might help him see!)

**KRAZO IN MATTHEW** - Matt. 8:29; Matt. 9:27; Matt. 14:26; Matt. 14:30; Matt. 15:22; Matt. 15:23; Matt. 20:30; Matt. 20:31; Matt. 21:9; Matt. 21:15; Matt. 27:23; Matt. 27:50

**Have mercy** (1653) **eleeo** (from **eleos**) means "to feel sympathy with the misery of another, especially such sympathy which manifests itself in action, less frequently in word." Describes the general sense of one who has compassion or person on someone in need. It indicates being moved to pity and compassion by tragedy and includes the fear that this could happen to me. To see someone in dire need (including one who may not deserve the misfortune), to have compassion on them, and to give help to remove the need. In the [active voice](#) **eleeo** means to show mercy and so to be greatly concerned for someone in need and/or to help someone because of pity.

**NIDNTT** ([click for 4 page article on eleos/eleeo](#)) writes of the root word **eleos** that in classical Greek -- It is "the emotion roused by contact with an affliction which comes undeservedly on someone else" (R. Bultmann, TDNT II 477), viz. compassion, pity, mercy. These feelings are the reverse of envy at another's good fortune. There is also an element of fear that one might have to suffer in the same way. Aristotle in his Poetics stated that tragedy aroused pity and terror and these caused katharsis, purging. From Plutarch onwards we find the expressions *eleon echo*, to find mercy, and *kat' eleon*, out of compassion. **eleos** was used as a technical term for the end of the speech for the defence, in which the accused tried to awaken the compassion of the judges.

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**Blind, Blindness** - See online [Dictionary of Biblical Imagery, see page 370](#) - Some of the most vivid pictures of the Bible center on blindness, including the Sodomites' groping about Lot's house, the dim-eyed Isaac tricked by his son, Samson's eyes gouged out, a troupe of blinded Syrian warriors being led from their intended destination to Samaria, the drama of the man born blind healed by Jesus to the consternation of the Pharisees, the blind beggars who cried out pathetically to Jesus as he passed by and the temporary blindness of Paul at his conversion. The characters in the Bible who are physically blind are a moving spectacle of human misfortune. However, in a spiritual sense, blindness is congenital for all humans, who inherit the tendency simply by virtue of belonging to the human race. In both physical and spiritual instances, blindness is an image of terror, helplessness and despair unless reversed by God's miraculous intervention.

The physical blindness referred to in the Bible is either congenital (Jn 9:1) or acquired. In a region of dust and bright sunlight, ophthalmic diseases were common, as attested by the frequency with which blindness is referred to in Scripture (Lev 19:14; Job 29:15; Mt 9:27; Lk 14:13). Blindness is one of the several disabilities that prevented someone born into a priestly family from exercising his ministry (Lev 21:18); and although blind people deserve special consideration according to the law (Lev 19:14), blindness could be a synonym for weakness and helplessness (2 Sam 5:6; Is 59:10; Lam 4:14).

Blinding is a punishment for wrongdoing in neighboring nations (2 Kings 25:7), but never in Israel. On occasion, in order to promote his own purposes, God temporarily blinds individuals or groups of people, either totally or in regard to something they attempt to see (Gen 19:11; 2 Kings 6:18; Acts 9:9; 13:11). Physical blindness is regarded by some of Jesus' contemporaries as evidence of divine punishment, something Jesus strongly denies (Jn 9:1-3).

Figuratively, blindness refers to an inability to recognize the truth, usually a culpable condition. As such, it describes judges whose judgment is perverted because of bribes (Ex 23:8; Deut 16:19; Job 9:24), idolaters whose worship is illogical as well as wrong (Is 44:9-10) and people who simply do not want to know (Is 43:8). Such blindness to the truth and mental confusion could actually be the result of God's judgment on those who did not want to admit the truth and who therefore forfeit the ability to perceive it at their cost (Deut 28:28-29; Is 6:9-10; 29:9-10). This is true of the Israelites, both leaders (Is 56:10) and followers (Is 42:18-19). Only God in his mercy can reverse this condition (Is 29:18; 35:5; 42:16). Paul describes gradual blindness when he writes of those whose

"foolish hearts were darkened" (Rom 1:21). In another vein he talks of seeing poorly now in contrast to seeing perfectly in the life to come (1 Cor 13:12).

The imagery of sight and blindness is especially prominent in the account of Jesus' earthly ministry. The high incidence of physical blindness in the world of the Gospels is attested by the frequency with which Jesus performed miracles of giving sight to the blind. It is, in fact, one of the most vivid signs of Jesus' supernatural power. Spiritual blindness is no less prominent in the Gospels. Jesus described the religious leaders and teachers of his own generation in terms of blindness (Mt 15:14; 23:16–17, 19, 24, 26). The irony of their situation is that in their spiritual ignorance they assumed that they understand perfectly. Jesus remedied spiritual as well as physical blindness (Mt 13:17; Jn 9:39). Those who rejected Jesus' words came under a judgment similar to that of Israel—a state of permanent blindness (Jn 12:40; cf. Rom 11:7–10).

Although metaphorically blindness may describe mere ignorance (Rom 2:19), it usually carries the overtones of an unwillingness to face up to the truth (Jas 1:23–24); and in the case of those who do not believe in Christ, this is the work of Satan (2 Cor 4:4). As such it requires a miracle in order to become aware of the significance of Christ. Similarly, Christian believers who revert to their pre-Christian ways are described as blind, not perceiving the contradiction expressed in their behavior (2 Pet 1:9; 1 Jn 2:11). Blindness describes the fact that they are unaware of the gravity of their condition (Rev 3:17).

See also DEAF, DEAFNESS; DISEASE AND HEALING; MAIMED, HALT AND BLIND.

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#### QUESTION - [What does it mean that Jesus is the son of David? | GotQuestions.org](#) [WATCH VIDEO](#)

**ANSWER** - Seventeen verses in the New Testament describe Jesus as the "son of David." But the question arises, how could Jesus be the son of David if David lived approximately 1,000 years before Jesus? The answer is that Christ (the Messiah) was the fulfillment of the prophecy of the seed of David (2 Samuel 7:12–16). Jesus is the promised Messiah, which means He had to be of the lineage of David. Matthew 1 gives the genealogical proof that Jesus, in His humanity, was a direct descendant of Abraham and David through Joseph, Jesus' legal father. The genealogy in Luke 3 traces Jesus' lineage through His mother, Mary. Jesus is a descendant of David by adoption through Joseph and by blood through Mary. "As to his earthly life [Christ Jesus] was a descendant of David" (Romans 1:3).

Primarily, the title "**Son of David**" is more than a statement of physical genealogy. It is a**Messianic title**. When people referred to Jesus as the **Son of David**, they meant that He was the long-awaited Deliverer, the fulfillment of the Old Testament prophecies.

Jesus was addressed as "**Lord, thou son of David**" several times by people who, by faith, were seeking mercy or healing. The woman whose daughter was being tormented by a demon (Matthew 15:22) and the two blind men by the wayside (Matthew 20:30) all cried out to the Son of David for help. The titles of honor they gave Him declared their faith in Him. Calling Him "Lord" expressed their sense of His deity, dominion, and power, and calling Him "Son of David," expressed their faith that He was the Messiah.

The Pharisees understood exactly what the people meant when they called Jesus "Son of David." But, unlike those who cried out in faith, the Pharisees were so blinded by their own pride that they couldn't see what the blind beggars could see—that here was the Messiah they had supposedly been waiting for all their lives. They hated Jesus because He wouldn't give them the honor they thought they deserved, so when they heard the people hailing Jesus as the Savior, they became enraged (Matthew 21:15) and plotted to destroy Him (Luke 19:47).

Jesus further confounded the scribes and Pharisees by asking them to explain the meaning of this very title: how could it be that the Messiah is the son of David when David himself refers to Him as "my Lord" (Mark 12:35–37; cf. Psalm 110:1)? The teachers of the Law couldn't answer the question. Jesus thereby exposed the Jewish leaders' ineptitude as teachers and their ignorance of what the Old Testament taught as to the true nature of the Messiah, further alienating them from Him.

Jesus' point in asking the question of Mark 12:35 was that the Messiah is *more* than the physical son of David. If He is David's Lord, He must be greater than David. As Jesus says in Revelation 22:16, "I am the Root and the Offspring of David." That is, He is both the Creator of David and the Descendant of David. Only the Son of God made flesh could say that.

#### Related Resources:

- [What does it mean that Jesus is the Son of God? | GotQuestions.org?](#)
- [What does it mean that Jesus is the Son of Man? | GotQuestions.org?](#)

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**Matthew 9:28** When He entered the house, the blind men came up to Him, and Jesus said to them, "Do you believe that I am able to do this?" They said to Him, "Yes, Lord."

NET Matthew 9:28 When he went into the house, the blind men came to him. Jesus said to them, "Do you believe that I am able to do this?" They said to him, "Yes, Lord."

GNT Matthew 9:28 λθ ντι δ ες τν οκ αν προσ λθον ατ ο τυφλο, κα λ γει ατος ησος, Πιστε ετε τι δ ναμαι το το ποι σαι; λ γουσιν ατ, Να κ ριε.

NLT Matthew 9:28 They went right into the house where he was staying, and Jesus asked them, "Do you believe I can make you see?" "Yes, Lord," they told him, "we do."

KJV Matthew 9:28 And when he was come into the house, the blind men came to him: and Jesus saith unto them, Believe ye that I am able to do this? They said unto him, Yea, Lord.

ESV Matthew 9:28 When he entered the house, the blind men came to him, and Jesus said to them, "Do you believe that I am able to do this?" They said to him, "Yes, Lord."

NIV Matthew 9:28 When he had gone indoors, the blind men came to him, and he asked them, "Do you believe that I am able to do this?" "Yes, Lord," they replied.

ASV Matthew 9:28 And when he was come into the house, the blind men came to him: and Jesus saith unto them, Believe ye that I am able to do this? They say unto him, Yea, Lord.

CSB Matthew 9:28 When He entered the house, the blind men approached Him, and Jesus said to them, "Do you believe that I can do this?" "Yes, Lord," they answered Him.

NKJ Matthew 9:28 And when He had come into the house, the blind men came to Him. And Jesus said to them, "Do you believe that I am able to do this?" They said to Him, "Yes, Lord."

NRS Matthew 9:28 When he entered the house, the blind men came to him; and Jesus said to them, "Do you believe that I am able to do this?" They said to him, "Yes, Lord."

YLT Matthew 9:28 And he having come to the house, the blind men came to him, and Jesus saith to them, 'Believe ye that I am able to do this?' They say to him, 'Yes, sir.'

- **the blind men came up to Him-** Mt 8:14 Mt 13:36
- **Believe** - Mt 9:22 Mt 8:2 Mt 13:58 Mk 9:23-24 Joh 4:48-50 11:26,40

#### Related Passages:

Mark 9:23-24+ And Jesus said to him, “ ‘If You can?’ All things are possible to him who believes.” 24 Immediately the boy’s father cried out and said, “**I do believe; help my unbelief.**”

Matthew 13:58+ And He did not do many miracles there **because of their unbelief.**

Luke 5:20+ Seeing their faith, He said, “Friend, your sins are forgiven you.”

John 11:26+ and everyone who lives and believes in Me will never die. **Do you believe this?**”

## THE BLIND MEN SAW WITH EYES OF FAITH

When He entered the house, the blind men came up to ([proserchomai](#)) Him, and Jesus ([Iesous](#)) said to them, "Do you believe ([pisteuo](#)) that I am able ([dunamai](#)) to do ([poieo](#) - accomplish) **this?**" They said to Him, "Yes, Lord ([kurios](#))."- Jesus went into the house, but clearly the blind men followed and approached Him. Jesus asks not just if they want healing, but if they believe in His ability. He draws out personal, active trust.

They do not cry for mercy this time. The Lord has heard them and now asks them if they believe He has the power to make blind men see? They answer with **Yes**, a strong affirmation, responding in faith with recognition that He is **Lord ([kurios](#))**.

**Spurgeon** - “He waited until they had followed Him indoors. Faith must be tested and proved before its reward is given. But when it is real, He answers it with His power.”

**“Only believe, only believe,**

All things are possible, only believe.”

– Paul Rader

**Spurgeon** - They were most eager for the boon. They gave him no leisure: they pressed into the house where he had sought

privacy and rest: they came to him, even to Jesus himself. The Lord would have them express their faith, and so he makes inquiry of them as to what they believe about himself. Jesus makes no inquiry about their eyes, but only about their faith: this is ever the vital point. They could not see, but they could believe; and they did so. They had a specific faith as to the matter about which they prayed; for our Lord put it plainly, "Believe ye that I am able to do THIS?" They had also a clear view of the character of him to whom they applied; for they had already styled him "Son of David", and now they called him "Lord." (see [Matthew 9 Commentary](#))

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**Came up** (4334) **proserchomai** from **prós** = facing + **erchomai** = come) means to come facing toward. To approach, come near, visit, figuratively to worship, draw near, go near to. Followed by the dat. of thing, to assent to, embrace (1 Tim. 6:3). Elsewhere in the NT this verb always describes the movement of a body to a place. But in later Greek it came to be used for the assent or consent of the mind. Generally, the literal idea of "approach" prevails in the New Testament, where proserchomai often occurs in Matthew's Gospel. For example, Jesus approached individuals to minister to them (Mark 1:31; Luke 7:14), and they approached Him for ministry (e.g., Matthew 9:20). Because of Christ's finished work on the Cross and His present mediation as our High Priest, believers can boldly approach God's presence!

**Friberg** - (1) literally come or go to, approach (Mt 4.3); come to visit, associate with (Acts 10.28); (2) figuratively; (a) in a cultic sense, as approaching a deity come before, come to (Heb 10.1); (b) in the sense of being occupied with a matter turn to, devote oneself to; mentally accede to, agree with (1Ti 6.3) (Borrow [Analytical Lexicon of the Greek New Testament](#))

**PROSERCHOMAI USES IN MATTHEW** - Matt. 4:3; Matt. 4:11; Matt. 5:1; Matt. 8:2; Matt. 8:5; Matt. 8:19; Matt. 8:25; Matt. 9:14; Matt. 9:18; Matt. 9:20; Matt. 9:28; Matt. 13:10; Matt. 13:27; Matt. 13:36; Matt. 14:12; Matt. 14:15; Matt. 15:1; Matt. 15:12; Matt. 15:23; Matt. 15:30; Matt. 16:1; Matt. 17:7; Matt. 17:14; Matt. 17:19; Matt. 17:24; Matt. 18:1; Matt. 18:21; Matt. 19:3; Matt. 19:16; Matt. 20:20; Matt. 21:14; Matt. 21:23; Matt. 21:28; Matt. 21:30; Matt. 22:23; Matt. 24:1; Matt. 24:3; Matt. 25:20; Matt. 25:22; Matt. 25:24; Matt. 26:7; Matt. 26:17; Matt. 26:49; Matt. 26:50; Matt. 26:60; Matt. 26:69; Matt. 26:73; Matt. 27:58; Matt. 28:2; Matt. 28:9; Matt. 28:18;

**Believe** (4100) **pisteuo** (see [lengthy discussion of this important verb](#)) means to consider something to be true and therefore worthy of one's trust. To accept as true, genuine, or real. To have a firm conviction as to the goodness, efficacy, or ability of something or someone. To consider to be true. To accept the word or evidence of.

The respected Greek lexicon author **W E Vine** defines belief as consisting of

- (1) a firm conviction which produces full acknowledgment of God's revelation of Truth - (2Th 2:14 - "in order that they all may be judged who did not **believe** [pisteuo] the truth, but took pleasure in wickedness.")
- (2) a personal surrender to the Truth (Jn 1:12 "But as many as received Him, to them He gave the right to become children of God, even to those who **believe** [pisteuo] in His name") and
- (3) a conduct inspired by and consistent with that surrender.

**PISTEUO IN MATTHEW** - Matt. 8:13; Matt. 9:28; Matt. 18:6; Matt. 21:22; Matt. 21:25; Matt. 21:32; Matt. 24:23; Matt. 24:26; Matt. 27:42

**Able** (can, could) (1410) **dunamai** conveys the basic meaning of that which has the inherent ability to do something or accomplish some end. Thus **dunamai** means to be able to, to be capable of, to be strong enough to do or to have power to do something. It is usually translated **able** (50x), **can** (61x and **cannot** 58x) or **could**. The derivative word **dunamis** (from **dunamai**) refers to intrinsic power or inherent ability, the power or ability to carry out some function, the potential for functioning in some way, the power residing in a thing by virtue of its nature. The word group (dunamai, dunamis, dunatos, etc) gives us our English word **dynamic**, (synonyms = energetic, functioning, live, operative, working) which describes that which is marked by usually continuous and productive activity or change. That which is dynamic is characterized by energy or forces that produce motion, as opposed to that which is static.

**DUNAMAI IN MATTHEW** - Matt. 3:9; Matt. 5:14; Matt. 5:36; Matt. 6:24; Matt. 6:27; Matt. 7:18; Matt. 8:2; Matt. 9:15; Matt. 9:28; Matt. 10:28; Matt. 12:29; Matt. 12:34; Matt. 16:3; Matt. 17:16; Matt. 17:19; Matt. 19:12; Matt. 19:25; Matt. 20:22; Matt. 22:46; Matt. 26:9; Matt. 26:42; Matt. 26:53; Matt. 26:61; Matt. 27:42

**Lord** (master, owner) (2962) **kurios** from **kuros** = might or power, related to **kuroo** = to give authority) primarily means the possessor, owner, master, the supreme one, one who is sovereign (e.g., Roman emperors - Acts 25:26+) and possesses absolute authority, absolute ownership rights and uncontested power. Kurios is used of the one to whom a person or thing belonged, over which he has the power of deciding, the one who is the master or disposer of a thing (Mk 7:28)

**W E Vine summarizes Kurios** - Noun Masculine — kurios — koo'-ree-os ) properly an

adjective, signifying "having power" (kuros) or "authority," is used as a noun, variously translated in the NT, "Lord," 'master,' 'Master,' 'owner,' 'Sir,' a title of wide significance, occurring in each book of the NT save Titus and the Epistles of John. It is used

- (a) of an owner, as in Luke 19:33, cp. Matthew 20:8; Acts 16:16; Galatians 4:1; or of one who has the disposal of anything, as the Sabbath, Matthew 12:8;
- (b) of a master, i.e., one to whom service is due on any ground, Matthew 6:24; 24:50; Ephesians 6:5;
- (c) of an Emperor or King, Acts 25:26; Revelation 17:14;
- (d) of idols, ironically, 1 Corinthians 8:5, cp. Isaiah 26:13;
- (e) as a title of respect addressed to a father, Matthew 21:30, a husband, 1 Peter 3:6, a master, Matthew 13:27; Luke 13:8, a ruler, Matthew 27:63, an angel, Acts 10:4; Revelation 7:14;
- (f) as a title of courtesy addressed to a stranger, John 12:21; 20:15; Acts 16:30; from the outset of His ministry this was a common form of address to the Lord Jesus, alike by the people, Matthew 8:2; John 4:11, and by His disciples, Matthew 8:25; Luke 5:8; John 6:68;
- (g) kurios is the Sept. and NT representative of Heb. Jehovah ('Lord' in Eng. versions), see Matthew 4:7; James 5:11, e.g., of adon, Lord, Matthew 22:44, and of Adonay, Lord, Matthew 1:22; it also occurs for Elohim, God, 1 Peter 1:25. ([Vine's Expository Dictionary](#))

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#### **Blind People Swarm in Oriental Cities** C. H. Spurgeon. Matthew 9:29

In our own streets we meet here and there with a blind beggar, but they swarm in Eastern cities. Ophthalmia is the scourge of Egypt and Syria, and Volney declares that in Cairo, out of a hundred persons whom he met, twenty were quite blind, ten wanted one eye, and twenty others were more or less afflicted in that organ. At the present day every one is struck with the immense number of the blind in Oriental lands, and things were probably worse in our Saviour's time.

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#### **C H Spurgeon - [Our Lord's question to the blind men \(sermon\)](#)** Matthew 9:27-30

When a soul says to Jesus, 'I know thou canst save me, my Lord: therefore in thee do I trust,' he cannot shake him off and cannot wish to do so, for he has said, 'him that cometh to me I will in no wise cast out.' I sometimes tell a story to illustrate this; it is a simple tale, but it shows how faith wins everywhere. Many years ago my garden happened to be surrounded by a hedge, which looked green, but was a poor protection. A neighbour's dog was very fond of visiting my garden, and, as he never improved my flowers, I never gave him a cordial welcome. Walking along quietly one evening, I saw him doing mischief. I threw a stick at him and advised him to go home; but how did the good creature reply to me? He turned round, wagged his tail, and in the merriest manner picked up my stick, brought it to me and laid it at my feet. Did I strike him? No, I am not a monster. I should have been ashamed of myself if I had not patted him on the back and told him to come there whenever he liked. He and I were friends directly, because he trusted me and conquered me. Now, simple as the story is, that is just the philosophy of a sinner's faith in Christ. As the dog mastered the man by confiding in him, so a poor guilty sinner does, in effect, master the Lord himself by trusting him, when he says, 'Lord, I am a poor dog of a sinner, and thou mightest drive me away, but I believe thee to be too good for that. I believe thou canst save me and I trust myself with thee.' You will never be lost if you thus trust.

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#### **C H Spurgeon - [The plain man's pathway to peace \(sermon\)](#)** Matthew 9:27-30

There are all the essentials of salvation in the simple, pleasant, happy way of coming to Jesus just as you are; what are they? The first is repentance; these dear souls, though they feel no remorse, yet hate the sin they once loved. Though they know no dread of hell, yet they feel a dread of sin, which is a great deal better. Though they have never stood shivering under the gallows, yet the crime is more dreadful to them than the doom. They have been taught by God's Spirit to love righteousness and seek after holiness; and this is the very essence of repentance. Those who thus come to Christ have certainly obtained true faith. They have no experience to trust in, but are all the more fully driven to rest in what Christ has felt and done. They rest not in their own tears, but in Christ's blood, not in their own emotions, but in Christ's pangs, not in their consciousness of ruin, but in the certainty that Christ has come to save all that trust him. They have faith of the purest kind. See, too, how certainly they have love. 'Faith worketh by love', and they show it. They often seem to have more love at first than those who come so dreadfully burdened and tempest-tossed, for,

in the calm quiet of their minds, they get a fairer view of the beauties of the Saviour, burn with love to him and commence to serve him, while others are having their wounds healed, and are trying to make their broken bones rejoice. I do not wish to depreciate a painful experience, but I only want to show that simply coming to Christ, as the blind men came, simply believing that he could give them sight, is not inferior to the other, and has in it all the essentials of salvation.

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#### **J J Knapp - Yea, Lord! Mt. 9:28**

Two blind men called upon the Lord in public for compassion; pleading upon the one ground that has any influence upon the Lord; and they experienced that such a pleading shall never remain unanswered, because they received back the light in their dull eyes. However, it was inside that Jesus granted them this benefit. Also presently He usually does His great works of grace in secret, as if under four eyes. If a spiritually blind one comes to Him there, asking Him to cure him of his blindness, then He coaxes still first a confession of faithful trust from him, asking: "Believe ye that I am able to do this?" upon which our answer be: "Yea, Lord!"

Yea, Lord!—behold a very compact, but at the same time a most ardent confession of faith. Two short words. It is really only one, because if we leave the address of respect that is contained in the word "Lord", nothing is left but a single "yea", a "yea" as answer upon the question of the Lord's grace, faithfulness and power. This "yea" came directly from their souls. It was not a purely rational assent to what Christ had said, but it was a well meant, deeply experienced "yea" of the heart, a voluntary and obedient bowing under the Saviour's word, a glad and certain trusting upon what He told them, even if it sounded most wonderful.

Yea, Lord!—behold in one word what faith really is in its deepest essence. It is a saying 'yea' with our whole soul upon all God's promises. A saying 'yea' with our whole heart upon all God's words that have been preserved for us in the Holy Scriptures. Above all, a saying 'yea' upon the message of peace that is proclaimed to us in the Gospel. However, it is also a saying 'yea' upon those words of God that discover us in our guilt to ourselves and that make us stand before Him with a heart full of shame.

Behold, the Saviour stands in the Gospel also before us, as He did before those blind men, to ask us: "Believe ye that I am able to do this?" Believest thou, that the Son of God came into the flesh to seek and save that which was lost?—"Yea, Lord!" Believest thou, that spiritual light can be obtained in Him for a blind sinner, eye salve by which ye can be made to see?—"Yea, Lord!" Believest thou, that no sin is too great and no iniquity too horrible, or you may desire forgiveness for it for His sake?—"Yea, Lord!" Blessed are we, if this "yea" may be ours. Our natural, despairing heart cries against it with its "no", even against the most glorious demonstrations of redemption and peace. Let that voice of unbelief be silenced, and our heart say believably "yea" upon all God's promises, that are yea and amen in Christ!

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**Streams in the Desert (Online)** - "Believe ye that I am able to do this?" (Matt. 9:28.)

GOD deals with impossibilities. It is never too late for Him to do so, when the impossible is brought to Him, in full faith, by the one in whose life and circumstances the impossible must be accomplished if God is to be glorified. If in our own life there have been rebellion, unbelief, sin, and disaster, it is never too late for God to deal triumphantly with these tragic facts if brought to Him in full surrender and trust. It has often been said, and with truth, that Christianity is the only religion that can deal with man's past. God can "restore ... the years that the locust hath eaten" (Joel 2:25); and He will do this when we put the whole situation and ourselves unreservedly and believably into His hands. Not because of what we are but because of what He is. God forgives and heals and restores. He is "the God of all grace." Let us praise Him and trust Him.—Sunday School Times.

"Nothing is too hard for Jesus  
No man can work like Him."

"We have a God who delights in impossibilities." Nothing too hard for Me.—Andrew Murray.

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**Matthew 9:29 Then He touched their eyes, saying, "It shall be done to you according to your faith."**

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NET Matthew 9:29 Then he touched their eyes saying, "Let it be done for you according to your faith."

GNT Matthew 9:29 τ τε ψωτο τ ν φθαλ μ ν α τ ν λ γων, Κατ τ ν π στιν μ ν γενηθ τω μ ν.

NLT Matthew 9:29 Then he touched their eyes and said, "Because of your faith, it will happen."

KJV Matthew 9:29 Then he touched their eyes, saying, According to your faith be it unto you.

ESV Matthew 9:29 Then he touched their eyes, saying, "According to your faith be it done to you."

NIV Matthew 9:29 Then he touched their eyes and said, "According to your faith will it be done to you";

ASV Matthew 9:29 Then touched he their eyes, saying, According to your faith be it done unto you.

CSB Matthew 9:29 Then He touched their eyes, saying, "Let it be done for you according to your faith!"

NKJ Matthew 9:29 Then He touched their eyes, saying, "According to your faith let it be to you."

NRS Matthew 9:29 Then he touched their eyes and said, "According to your faith let it be done to you."

YLT Matthew 9:29 Then touched he their eyes, saying, 'According to your faith let it be to you,'

▪ **touched** - Mt 20:34 Joh 9:6,7

▪ **According** - Mt 8:6,7,13 15:28 Mk 10:52

## JUST ONE TOUCH OF THE MASTER'S HAND

**Then** ([tote](#)) is an adverb of time that marks sequence, logical progression, or result. Think of ΤΤΕ as a spotlight that moves the narrative forward — whether chronologically, logically, or climactically. So be alert to this small word which indicates the next event in time — the next step in the story or action. ([See also five functions of "THEN" ΤΤΕ](#))

He touched ([haptō/haptomai](#)) their eyes ([ophthalmos](#)), saying, "It shall be done () to you according to your faith () ."

He touched <681> their eyes <3788>, saying <3004>, "It shall be done <1096> to you according <2596> to your faith <4102>." (Mat 9:29 NAU)

*Faith never goes home  
with an empty basket.*

--Elijah P Brown

**Alexander Maclaren** - So it ever is. Christ's mercy, like water in a vase, takes the shape of the vessel that holds it. On the one hand, His grace is infinite and "is given to every one of us according to the measure of the gift of Christ," with no limitation but His own unlimited fullness; on the other hand, the amount we practically receive from that inexhaustible store is determined by the measure and the purity and the intensity of our faith. On His part there is no limit but infinity; on our side the limit is our capacity, and our capacity is settled by our desire. His word to us ever is, "Open thy mouth wide and I will fill it" "Be it unto thee even as thou wilt."

**Spurgeon** - Again he arouses their faith; and this time he throws the whole responsibility upon their confidence in him. "According to your faith be it unto you." He touched them with his hand; but they must also touch him with their faith. The word of power in the last sentence is one upon which he acts so continually, that we may call it, as to many blessings, a rule of the kingdom. We have the measuring of our own mercies; our faith obtains less or more according to its own capacity to receive. Had these men been mere pretenders to faith they would have remained blind. If we will not in very truth trust our Lord, we shall die in our sins. (see [Matthew 9 Commentary](#))

### Jesus Heals

"Yes, He heals the blind and lame,  
And His pow'r is just the same  
As when first to earth He came,  
Jesus heals, Jesus heals."

-- John E. Roberts:

**Adrian Rogers** - Now, when we greet one another around the church, we frequently say, "Say, how are you feeling?" But, I think the more important question is, "How are you faithing?" For it's not according to your feeling, but "according to your faith be it unto you" (Matthew 9:29)—not according to your friends, but "according to your faith be it unto you" (Matthew 9:29); not according to your fame, but "according to your faith be it unto you" (Matthew 9:29); not according to your fortune, but "according unto your faith be it unto you" (Matthew 9:29). Without faith it is impossible to please God....Now, people, let me tell you something. The measure of your success or your failure as a Christian is your faith. For the Bible clearly and plainly says, "According to your faith be it unto you." (Matthew 9:29) Now we meet one another, and we say, "How are you feeling?" We ought to say, "How are you faithing?" right? Because how you faith is a lot more important than how you feel. It is not according to how you feel; it is not according to your fame; it is not according to your fortune; it is not according to your fate; not according to your friends; but "according to your faith be it unto you."....It is faith that is the medium of exchange in the kingdom of heaven. That's the reason the Lord Jesus Christ said, "Be it unto

you according to your faith" (Matthew 9:29)—according to your faith. That is the measure. Your faith is the measure of your victory, your success; all of the things that grace provides, they come to us by faith. So it is so very, very, very—I'll say it one more time—very important that you learn what faith is....again, the measure of God's blessing to you is your faith. "According to your faith be it unto you" (Matthew 9:29)—not your fame, your feeling, your figures, your finances, but your faith be it unto you....(See [page 610 for his sermon Faith for the Family Hebrews 11:23](#))

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**Faith** (4102) **pistis** is synonymous with trust or belief and is the conviction of the truth of anything, but in Scripture usually speaks of belief respecting man's relationship to God and divine things, generally with the included idea of trust and holy fervor born of faith and joined with it. Note that this discussion of **pistis** is only an overview and not a detailed treatise of this vitally important subject. Those interested are directed to respected, conservative books on systematic theology for more in depth discussion (eg, Dr Wayne Grudem's book (See [page 616 in Systematic Theology](#)) is an excellent, uncompromising, imminently readable resource for the lay person. See especially Chapter 35 which addresses the question "What is saving faith?" in an easy to understand manner.) Much of this "definition" deals with the general word group for faith (**pistis** = noun, **pistos** = adjective, **pisteuo** = verb)

**PISTIS IN MATTHEW** - Matt. 8:10; Matt. 9:2; Matt. 9:22; Matt. 9:29; Matt. 15:28; Matt. 17:20; Matt. 21:21; Matt. 23:23

In Matthew, faith is directed toward the person of Jesus, rooted in His authority, His compassion, and His power.

1. Aspects emphasized in Matthew:
2. Trust in Jesus' healing power
3. Confidence in Jesus' authority (over sin, demons, nature, disease, death)
4. Dependence on God rather than self
5. Perseverance despite obstacles
6. Faith that leads to action (coming to Jesus, calling on Him, obeying Him)

### **1. Faith as the condition of healing**

1. Mt 8:10 – The centurion's great faith
2. Mt 9:2 – Seeing their faith, Jesus forgave and healed
3. Mt 9:22 – Woman with the flow of blood: "Your faith has made you well."
4. Mt 9:29 – Two blind men: "Be it done to you according to your faith."
5. Mt 15:28 – Syrophoenician woman: "Your faith is great."

Matthew highlights faith as the means of drawing on Jesus' power, not as an achievement but as a humble appeal to Him.

### **2. Faith contrasted with "little faith" ( λιγοπιστία)**

1. Mt 6:30 – Worry shows little faith
2. Mt 8:26 – Fear in the storm = little faith
3. Mt 14:31 – Peter sinking = little faith
4. Mt 16:8 – Misunderstanding = little faith

Matthew uses "little faith" to expose doubting disciples, not unbelievers. It is faith mixed with fear.

### **3. Faith and forgiveness / salvation**

1. Mt 9:2 – Jesus forgives because of their faith
2. Mt 21:21–22 – Faith can "move mountains"
3. Mt 17:20 – Faith the size of a mustard seed

Here faith relates to prayer, divine enablement, and God's response.

### **4. Faith and eschatology / perseverance**

1. Mt 24:10–13 – Faithfulness tested in tribulation
2. Mt 24:45–51 – The faithful and wise servant

Faith is expressed as faithfulness (πιστός)—persistent obedience until the end.

### III. MAJOR THEMES OF FAITH IN MATTHEW

#### 1. True faith recognizes Jesus' identity

Faith begins with seeing Jesus rightly:

1. He is Lord (Mt 8:2)
2. Son of David (Mt 9:27)
3. Son of God (Mt 14:33)
4. Messiah (Mt 16:16)

#### 2. Faith expresses itself by coming to Jesus.

In Matthew, faith is active:

1. People come, kneel, plead, cry out, cling, touch.
2. Faith is movement toward Christ.

#### 3. Faith is often strongest in outsiders.

Matthew stresses surprising “great faith” among Gentiles:

1. The centurion (Mt 8:10)
2. The Canaanite woman (Mt 15:28)
3. In contrast, Israel often displays little faith or unbelief.

#### 4. Faith is frequently weakened by fear

-Fear is the chief enemy of faith in Matthew:

1. Storm (Mt 8:26)
2. Walking on water (Mt 14:30–31)
3. Anxiety (Mt 6:30)

Faith must overcome fear, worry, and doubt.

#### 5. Faith is connected to prayer

1. Mt 21:22 – “All things you ask in prayer, believing...”
2. Mt 17:20 – Prayer + faith = divine intervention

Prayer is the voice of faith.

#### 6. Faith is rewarded by Jesus

Every instance of faith in Matthew receives mercy, healing, deliverance, or commendation.

#### 7. Faith is tied to discipleship.

True disciples:

1. Listen to Jesus
2. Obey His words (Mt 7:24–27)
3. Endure to the end (Mt 24:13)

Obedience is the fruit of faith. (See more discussion of this important topic in commentary on Romans 1:5)

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Adrian Rogers in his sermon [Having Strong Faith John 4:46–54](#) (see page 331) he said

*Not only do we need to possess faith; what we need is for faith to possess us.*

*We need a mighty faith because we have a mighty God.*

Doubt sees the obstacles.

Faith sees the way.

Doubt sees the darkest night.

Faith sees the day.

Doubt dreads to take a step.

Faith soars on high.

Doubt questions “Who believes?”

Faith answers "I."

—AUTHOR UNKNOWN

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**Steven Cole** gives us 5 principles of what it means to lay hold of Jesus by faith: [click here for discussion of each of the following principles](#))

- A. Faith is active, not passive.
- B. Faith works best when human solutions fail.
- C. Faith accepts the simplicity of the gospel.
- D. Faith need not be perfect to be effective.
- E. Faith must be confessed.

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### Our Lord's question to the blind men C. H. Spurgeon

Matthew 9:29 Then touched he their eyes, saying, According to your faith be it to you.

#### I. THE SEEKERS. — the two blind men.

- 1. They were in downright earnest.
- 2. They were thoroughly persevering.
- 3. They had a definite object in their prayers.
- 4. They honoured Christ in their prayers.
- 5. They confessed their unworthiness.

#### II. THE QUESTION WHICH WAS PUT TO THEM.

- 1. It concerned their faith.
- 2. It concerned their faith in Jesus — "Believe ye that I am able to do this?"
- 3. Believe ye that I am able to do this? Some think their hearts too hard.

#### III. THAT QUESTION WAS A VERY REASONABLE ONE. Else why do you pray?

#### IV. THE ANSWER.

- 1. It was distinct.
- 2. It was immediate.

#### V. OUR LORD'S RESPONSE TO THEIR ANSWER.

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### Expository Outlines Matthew 9:29

#### 1. A SIMPLE PRAYER. Their prayer was

- (1) united. Union is strength.
- (2) Earnest.
- (3) Persevering.

#### II. AN IMPORTANT INQUIRY. "Believe, ye," etc.

- 1. What it involves. The dignity of Christ.
- 2. On account of the principle it sets forth. He required no personal worthiness in those He cured; faith only.
- 3. Because of its spiritual application. Faith stands in same relation to healing of the soul.

#### III. A GRACIOUS ACT.

- 1. When He did so — as soon as they professed faith.
- 2. The words with which the act was accompanied.
- 3. The result that ensued.

#### IV. AN EXPRESS INJUNCTION. "See that no man know it." The reasons: —

- 1. The malice of His enemies.

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2. The misguided zeal of the multitude.
3. The manner in which it was regarded.

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### **The Opened Eye H. R. Reynolds, B. A. Matthew 9:29**

The power, glory, rewards of faith form the theme of this chapter.

I. The faith described in the text was THE FIRST OUTGROWTH AND EXPRESSION OF A DEEP AND LIVELY SENSE OF WRETCHEDNESS AND DARKNESS. Faith often springs out of such convictions; it Also amounts to a conviction that light is possible.

II. The faith in this instance was INTELLIGENT. They had settled it in their minds that Jesus was the Son of David, that He had come to open the eyes of the blind. Their faith conceived the grandeur of His mission. Faith is not merely an emotion; it is a conviction of the understanding.

III. This faith of the blind men was EAGER AND IMPORTUNATE. They followed Jesus. It was not crushed by having to wait for mercy.

IV. The faith of these individuals was A PERSONAL EXPERIENCE.

V. The faith here referred to APPRECIATED CHRIST'S POWER TO SAVE.

VI. The faith here mentioned APPROPRIATES and applies the Divine Power to its own case.

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### **QUESTION - What does “according to your faith” mean in Matthew 9:29? GOTQUESTIONS**

**ANSWER** - Matthew chapters 8—9 showcase the healing ministry of Jesus. From the outcast leper (Matthew 8:1–4) to the Gentile servant (Matthew 8:5–13) and the perpetually unclean woman (Matthew 9:20–22), Jesus disregarded social and religious conventions to demonstrate compassion and minister healing to those who placed their faith in Him. When two blind beggars approached Jesus, crying out for mercy, He asked them, “Do you believe that I can do this?” They answered, “Yes, Lord” (Matthew 9:28, HCSB). Jesus touched their eyes and said, “Let it be done for you according to your faith!” (Matthew 9:29, HCSB). Immediately, their eyes were opened, and the two men could see.

Jesus often noted a person’s faith as the impetus for healing (see Matthew 8:13; 15:28). When a woman who had been bleeding for twelve years touched the hem of His garment, believing it was all she needed to do to be healed, Jesus said, “Daughter, be encouraged! Your faith has made you well” (Matthew 9:22, NLT). At that moment, she was healed. This same event is recorded in Mark 5:24–34 and Luke 8:43–48. When Jesus cleansed a leper in Luke 17:19, He said to the man, “Stand up and go. Your faith has healed you” (NLT). To the blind man in Mark 10:52, Jesus said, “Go your way; your faith has made you well” (ESV; see also Luke 18:42).

According to your faith does not refer to the quantity, quality, or degree of a person’s faith; instead, it indicates the presence of genuine faith

*According to your faith* does not refer to the quantity, quality, or degree of a person’s faith; instead, it indicates the presence of genuine faith. Having faith in Jesus, having confidence in His ability to heal, was often the key to activating His healing power. Our faith is not the power behind the healing. Faith is merely the channel or conduit for God’s healing.

When Jesus said, “Let it be done according to your faith,” He meant that a person’s faith—the fact that the person believed and had confidence in Him—had moved Him to pour out His healing touch. Jesus is the Healer, the One with the power to perform the cure, and He looks for our faith.

Christ’s power rarely operates in a climate of disbelief. Just as faith enabled some people to receive healing, a lack of faith sometimes hindered or prevented Jesus from healing (see Matthew 13:53–58; 17:19–20). In Matthew 9, many people in the crowd pressed up against Jesus, but only the woman who reached out in faith and touched the edge of His robe received healing. When the professional mourners who had gathered around the dead girl laughed at Jesus, He sent them away before He raised the child to life (Matthew 9:24–25). Many people saw the incredible miracles Jesus performed, but many still did not believe in Him.

Just as healing comes “according to your faith,” salvation comes to sinners through faith: “If you openly declare that Jesus is Lord and believe in your heart that God raised him from the dead, you will be saved. For it is by believing in your heart that you are made

right with God, and it is by openly declaring your faith that you are saved" (Romans 10:9–10, NLT; see also Acts 16:31). To the sinful woman who anointed Jesus' feet with her expensive flask of ointment, Jesus said, "Your faith has saved you; go in peace" (Luke 7:50, NLT). Everyone who believes in Jesus is saved, but Christ's power accomplishes the saving, not the believer's faith. The sole value of our faith rests in the object of our faith—the Lord Jesus Christ—and not in ourselves or our faith (John 14:1; 1 Peter 1:21; Romans 4:19–21).

God responds graciously, compassionately, and generously according to our faith because faith pleases Him. The author of Hebrews informs, "And it is impossible to please God without faith. Anyone who wants to come to him must believe that God exists and that he rewards those who sincerely seek him" (Hebrews 11:6, NLT).

#### **Matthew 9:30 And their eyes were opened. And Jesus sternly warned them: "See that no one knows about this!"**

NET Matthew 9:30 And their eyes were opened. Then Jesus sternly warned them, "See that no one knows about this."

GNT Matthew 9:30 καὶ οὐ χθησαν αὐτὸν φθαλμό. καὶ νεβριμ θη αὐτοῖς ησούς λγων, ρτε μηδες γινωσκ τω.

NLT Matthew 9:30 Then their eyes were opened, and they could see! Jesus sternly warned them, "Don't tell anyone about this."

KJV Matthew 9:30 And their eyes were opened; and Jesus straitly charged them, saying, See that no man know it.

ESV Matthew 9:30 And their eyes were opened. And Jesus sternly warned them, "See that no one knows about it."

NIV Matthew 9:30 and their sight was restored. Jesus warned them sternly, "See that no one knows about this."

ASV Matthew 9:30 And their eyes were opened. And Jesus strictly charged them, saying, See that no man know it.

CSB Matthew 9:30 And their eyes were opened. Then Jesus warned them sternly, "Be sure that no one finds out!"

NKJ Matthew 9:30 And their eyes were opened. And Jesus sternly warned them, saying, "See that no one knows it."

NRS Matthew 9:30 And their eyes were opened. Then Jesus sternly ordered them, "See that no one knows of this."

YLT Matthew 9:30 and their eyes were opened, and Jesus strictly charged them, saying, 'See, let no one know;'

- **their eyes were opened**- Ps 146:8 Isa 35:5 42:7 52:13 Joh 9:7-26
- **sternly warned**- Mt 8:4 12:16 17:9 Mk 5:43 Lu 5:14 8:56

#### **And their eyes were opened. And Jesus sternly warned them: "**

**See that no one knows about this!"** - "Why? He was saying, "This is not a publicity stunt." Jesus knew the kind of fellowship that came from the miracle mongers." (Adrian Rogers)

**Spurgeon** - They both saw: the double miracle was wrought at the same moment. Comrades in the dark, they are now companions in the light. Singular that for two souls there should thus be one destiny! It was a singular double fact, and deserved to be made widely known; but our Lord had wise reasons for requiring silence. He "straitly charged them." He left them no option: he demanded complete silence. He that opened their eyes closed their mouths. Jesus did not desire fame; he wanted less crowding; he wished to avoid excitement; and therefore he was express and peremptory in his order: "See that no man know it." (see [Matthew 9 Commentary](#))

#### **Matthew 9:31 But they went out and spread the news about Him throughout all that land.**

NET Matthew 9:31 But they went out and spread the news about him throughout that entire region.

GNT Matthew 9:31 ο δ ξελθ ντες διεφ μισαν ατν ν λ τ γ κεν.

NLT Matthew 9:31 But instead, they went out and spread his fame all over the region.

KJV Matthew 9:31 But they, when they were departed, spread abroad his fame in all that country.

ESV Matthew 9:31 But they went away and spread his fame through all that district.

NIV Matthew 9:31 But they went out and spread the news about him all over that region.

ASV Matthew 9:31 But they went forth, and spread abroad his fame in all that land.

CSB Matthew 9:31 But they went out and spread the news about Him throughout that whole area.

NKJ Matthew 9:31 But when they had departed, they spread the news about Him in all that country.

NRS Matthew 9:31 But they went away and spread the news about him throughout that district.

YLT Matthew 9:31 but they, having gone forth, did spread his fame in all that land.

▪ **spread** - Mk 1:44,45 7:36

**But they went out and spread the news about Him throughout all that land.**

**Spurgeon** - They most industriously published what they were bidden to conceal, till "all that country" rang with the news. In this they erred greatly, and probably caused the Saviour so much inconvenience by the pressure of the crowd, that he had to remove from the town. We may not hope that we are doing right if we disobey our Lord. However natural disobedience may appear to be, it is disobedience, and must not be excused. Even if the results turned out to be advantageous, it would not make it right to break the command of our Lord. Silence is more than golden when our King commands it. He doth not seek applause, nor cause his voice to be heard in the streets that he may be known to be doing a great work. His followers do well to copy his example.

We do not wonder that our Lord's name became famous when there were such persons to advertise it. How earnestly and eloquently would the two formerly blind men tell the story of how he opened their eyes! We are not forbidden, but exhorted to make known the wonders of his grace. Let us not fail in this natural, this necessary, this useful duty. More and more let us "spread abroad his fame." (see [Matthew 9 Commentary](#))

**Matthew 9:32 As they were going out, a mute, demon-possessed man was brought to Him.**

NET Matthew 9:32 As they were going away, a man who could not talk and was demon-possessed was brought to him.

GNT Matthew 9:32 Ατν δ ξερχομ νων δο προσ νεγκαν ατ νθρωπον κωφ ν δαιμονιζ μενον.

NLT Matthew 9:32 When they left, a demon-possessed man who couldn't speak was brought to Jesus.

KJV Matthew 9:32 As they went out, behold, they brought to him a dumb man possessed with a devil.

ESV Matthew 9:32 As they were going away, behold, a demon-possessed man who was mute was brought to him.

NIV Matthew 9:32 While they were going out, a man who was demon-possessed and could not talk was brought to Jesus.

ASV Matthew 9:32 And as they went forth, behold, there was brought to him a dumb man possessed with a demon.

CSB Matthew 9:32 Just as they were going out, a demon-possessed man who was unable to speak was brought to Him.

NKJ Matthew 9:32 As they went out, behold, they brought to Him a man, mute and demon-possessed.

NRS Matthew 9:32 After they had gone away, a demoniac who was mute was brought to him.

YLT Matthew 9:32 And as they are coming forth, lo, they brought to him a man dumb, a demoniac,

- **mute, demon-possessed man** - Mt 12:22,23 Mk 9:17-27 Lu 11:14

**As they were going out, a mute, demon-possessed man was brought to Him.**

**Spurgeon** - As a pair of patients leave the surgery, another poor creature comes in. Note the "behold." The case is striking. He comes not freely, or of his own accord: "they brought" him: thus should we bring men to Jesus. He does not cry for help, for he is "a dumb man." Let us open our mouths for the dumb. He is not himself, but he is "possessed with a devil." Poor creature! will anything be done for him? (see [Matthew 9 Commentary](#))

**Matthew 9:33 After the demon was cast out, the mute man spoke; and the crowds were amazed, and were saying, "Nothing like this has ever been seen in Israel."**

NET Matthew 9:33 After the demon was cast out, the man who had been mute spoke. The crowds were amazed and said, "Never has anything like this been seen in Israel!"

GNT Matthew 9:33 καὶ κβληθ ντος το δαιμον ου λ λησεν κωφ ἡ. καὶ θα μασαν ο χλοι λ γοντες, Ο δ πιτε φ νη ο τως ν τ σρα λ.

NLT Matthew 9:33 So Jesus cast out the demon, and then the man began to speak. The crowds were amazed. "Nothing like this has ever happened in Israel!" they exclaimed.

KJV Matthew 9:33 And when the devil was cast out, the dumb spake: and the multitudes marvelled, saying, It was never so seen in Israel.

ESV Matthew 9:33 And when the demon had been cast out, the mute man spoke. And the crowds marveled, saying, "Never was anything like this seen in Israel."

NIV Matthew 9:33 And when the demon was driven out, the man who had been mute spoke. The crowd was amazed and said, "Nothing like this has ever been seen in Israel."

ASV Matthew 9:33 And when the demon was cast out, the dumb man spake: and the multitudes marvelled, saying, It was never so seen in Israel.

CSB Matthew 9:33 When the demon had been driven out, the man spoke. And the crowds were amazed, saying, "Nothing like this has ever been seen in Israel!"

NKJ Matthew 9:33 And when the demon was cast out, the mute spoke. And the multitudes marveled, saying, "It was never seen like this in Israel!"

NRS Matthew 9:33 And when the demon had been cast out, the one who had been mute spoke; and the crowds were amazed and said, "Never has anything like this been seen in Israel."

YLT Matthew 9:33 and the demon having been cast out, the dumb spake, and the multitude did wonder, saying that 'It was never so seen in Israel:'

- **the mute man spoke** - Mt 15:30,31 Ex 4:11,12 Isa 35:6 Mk 7:32-37 Lu 11:14
- **Nothing like this** - 2Ki 5:8 Ps 76:1 Jer 32:20 Lu 7:9

**After the demon was cast out, the mute man spoke; and the crowds were amazed, and were saying, "Nothing like this has ever been seen in Israel.**

**Spurgeon** - Our Lord does not deal with the symptoms, but with the source of the disorder, even with the evil spirit. "The devil was cast out"; and it is mentioned as if that were a matter of course when Jesus came on the scene. The devil had silenced the man, and so, when the evil one was gone, "the dumb spake." How we should like to know what he said! Whatever he said it matters not; the wonder was that he could say anything. The people confessed that this was a wonder quite unprecedented; and in this they only said the truth: "It was never so seen in Israel." Jesus is great at surprises: he has novelties of gracious power. The people were quick to express their admiration; yet we see very little trace of their believing in our Lord's mission. It is a small thing to marvel, but a great thing to believe. O Lord, give the people around us to see such revivals and conversions, as they have never known before! (see [Matthew 9 Commentary](#))

## Matthew 9:34 But the Pharisees were saying, "He casts out the demons by the ruler of the demons."

NET Matthew 9:34 But the Pharisees said, "By the ruler of demons he casts out demons."

GNT Matthew 9:34 ο δ Φαρισα οι λεγον, ν τ ρχοντι τ ν δαιμον ων κβ λλει τ δαιμ νια.

NLT Matthew 9:34 But the Pharisees said, "He can cast out demons because he is empowered by the prince of demons."

KJV Matthew 9:34 But the Pharisees said, He casteth out devils through the prince of the devils.

ESV Matthew 9:34 But the Pharisees said, "He casts out demons by the prince of demons."

NIV Matthew 9:34 But the Pharisees said, "It is by the prince of demons that he drives out demons."

ASV Matthew 9:34 But the Pharisees said, By the prince of the demons casteth he out demons.

CSB Matthew 9:34 But the Pharisees said, "He drives out demons by the ruler of the demons!"

NKJ Matthew 9:34 But the Pharisees said, "He casts out demons by the ruler of the demons."

NRS Matthew 9:34 But the Pharisees said, "By the ruler of the demons he casts out the demons."

YLT Matthew 9:34 but the Pharisees said, 'By the ruler of the demons he doth cast out the demons.'

▪ Mt 12:23,24 Mk 3:22 Lu 11:15 Joh 3:20

### Related Passages:

Matthew 12:23; 24<sub>+</sub> All the crowds were amazed, and were saying, "This man cannot be the Son of David, can he?" 24 But when the Pharisees heard this, they said, "This man casts out demons only by Beelzebul the ruler of the demons."

Mark 3:22+ The scribes who came down from Jerusalem were saying, "He is possessed by Beelzebul," and "He casts out the demons by the ruler of the demons."

Luke 11:15+ But some of them said, "He casts out demons by Beelzebul, the ruler of the demons."

## CHRIST CHARGED WITH COLLUSION!

**Collusion** is an agreement between two or more parties, sometimes illegal and therefore secretive and often for a deceitful purpose. Now the Pharisees accuse Jesus of being in collusion with Satan, Beelzebul!

**But the Pharisees (pharisaios) were saying, "He casts out the demons by the ruler of the demons."** - New Living Translation renders it this way: "He can cast out demons because he is empowered by the prince of demons." **Were saying** is in the imperfect tense picturing this brood of vipers hissing this false accusation over and over! In essence they were accusing Jesus of performing diabolical acts! They could not deny the reality of the miracles and were forced to try to debunk His miraculous powers. And so they were repeatedly (imperfect tense) telling others Jesus' works were possible because he was in league with Satan who was His power source. He refers to this accusation in Matthew 10:25<sub>+</sub> declaring "It is enough for the disciple that he become like his teacher, and the slave like his master. If they have called the head of the house Beelzebul, how much more will they malign the members of his household!" In essence the Jews called Jesus **Beelzebul (beelzeboul)**! They were calling Jesus the Devil! In claiming that Jesus cast out demons by Beelzebul, **BDAG** says they were accusing Him of witchcraft!

**J Vernon McGee** - The convincing nature of Jesus' miracles forced the Pharisees to offer some explanation for them. They could not deny the existence of miracles when they were happening before their eyes. They resorted to the basest and most blasphemous explanation for the miracles of Jesus. They did not deny that they took place but claimed that they were done by the power of the Devil.

Note that **casts out** is in the present tense which is clear admission by the **Pharisees** that demons were continually being cast out by Jesus! They did not argue with His power, but the source of His power. In essence the **Pharisees** were saying Jesus was in league with Satan in a sense serving as Satan's subordinate! Amazingly absurd and inconsistent with all reason, logic, and common sense!

**Steven Cole** - In that day, there were a number of Jewish exorcists who tried to cast out demons by special potions or incantations or magical procedures. Sometimes they seemingly succeeded, although they often failed. But every time Jesus cast out a demon, He simply spoke the word and the demon obeyed. Yet in spite of His obvious power, **these skeptics accused Jesus of casting out demons by Satan's power. We learn from this that belief in Jesus Christ is not simply a matter of having sufficient evidence.** If Jesus had not done these mighty works of miraculous power, or if He had done them by some sleight of hand, surely His critics would have pounced on this and accused Him of practicing magic. But they never used that line of attack. Since they couldn't dispute the fact of the miracles, all they could do was to accuse Jesus of doing them by Satan's power....Truly, the god of this world had blinded them (2 Cor 4:4+), as he does every unbeliever! ([Luke 11:14-28 The Heavenly War](#))

**MacArthur** asks an interesting question - Now, why don't they conclude that He's just insane? Because they have to explain the supernatural. Insanity doesn't explain the supernatural. It doesn't tell you anything....They knew He had power over disease. They had to explain the supernatural power. No getting around it. And it was either God or Satan, because those are the only two supernatural persons who have that kind of power....And they're unwilling to say it's the power of God, which was the logical thing to say, which is what the sort of popular opinion was, and they had to change that, "No man could do this except God be with Him." But they had to make people think it was satanic, so that was their mantra, "He's possessed by Beelzebul." ([The Unforgivable Sin](#))

**Spurgeon** - Of course, they had some bitter sentence ready. Nothing was too bad for them to say of Jesus. They were hard pressed when they took to this statement, which our Lord in another place so easily answered. They hinted that such power over demons must have come to him through an unholy compact with "the prince of the devils." Surely this was going very near to the unpardonable sin. (see [Matthew 9 Commentary](#))

**Casts out** ([present tense](#)) ([1544](#)) (**ekbállō** from **ek** = out + **bállō** = to cast, throw, drive) means to cast out, drive out, throw out, expel often with the idea of force - ejection by force (Mt. 8:12; 15:17; 25:30; Acts 16:37, 27:38; Lxx - Lev. 14:40). **Ekballo** is used by Mark in Mk 1:34, 39 of Jesus "casting out the demons." In Mark 3:15 Jesus gave His disciples "authority (the right and the might) to **cast out** the demons." All of Mark's uses of **ekballo** - Mk. 1:34; Mk. 1:39; Mk. 1:43; Mk. 3:15; Mk. 3:22; Mk. 3:23; Mk. 5:40; Mk. 6:13; Mk. 7:26; Mk. 9:18; Mk. 9:28; Mk. 9:38; Mk. 9:47; Mk. 11:15; Mk. 12:8; Mk. 16:9; Mk. 16:17;

**Ruler** ([758](#)) (**archon** from present participle of **archo** = to rule) in context describes Satan as the one who had eminence in a ruling capacity, and exercised authority over the "lower ranked" demons. Lk 11:15+ = "He casts out demons by Beelzebul, the **ruler** ([archon](#)) of the demons." If Satan is the chief demon the Pharisees are implying Jesus bows to Beelzebul and serves Satan! There is a demonic **hierarchy** a word which describes a system or organization in which one is ranked one above others according to status or authority. Paul alludes to the stratification of authority in Ephesians 6:12+ "For our struggle is not against flesh and blood, but against the **rulers** (related word [arche](#)), against the **powers**, against the **world forces** of this darkness, against the **spiritual forces** of wickedness in the heavenly places." Paul uses **archon** in Ephesians 2:1-2+ "And you were dead in your trespasses and sins, 2 in which you formerly walked according to the course of this world, according to the **prince** ([archon](#)) of the power of the air, of the spirit that is now working ([energeo](#) in [present tense](#)) in the sons of disobedience."

**Demons** ([1140](#)) (**daimonion** from **daímon** = demon) most often describes demons or evil spirits who have supernatural powers and are neither human nor divine (Mt 7:22). **BDAG** says **daimonion** is a "transcendent incorporeal being with status between humans and deities." All the uses in Matthew - Mt. 7:22; Mt. 9:33; Mt. 9:34; Mt. 10:8; Mt. 11:18; Mt. 12:24; Mt. 12:27; Mt. 12:28; Mt. 17:18

**Alan Carr** asks "Have you ever been misunderstood? Have you ever been misrepresented? Has anyone ever taken your words and motives and twisted them around and used them against you? If you live long enough in this world you are going to face that kind of a personal attack. I can remember an instance in another church when a certain group in that church took my preaching tapes and listened to them to find words and phrases they disagreed with. These disagreeable sayings were brought up in a business meeting and used to attack me personally. It hurt at the time, but it was a good lesson to me. It served to remind me that God's servants will be attacked. It also reminded me to think about my words before I say them because I might be called on to give an account of them. The earthly ministry of the Lord Jesus was surrounded by constant controversy. Nearly everyone He met misunderstood Him and what He came to this world to do. Nearly everyone was guilty of misrepresenting His words and His works. The things He did and said in love were used to attack Him in hate!"

**THOUGHT**- Have you ever been unjustly accused of something? Take heart, because you are in good company. Jesus was also unjustly accused. And as the writer of Hebrews says "For since He Himself was tempted in that which He has suffered, He is (CONTINUALLY) able to **come to the aid of** ([boetheo](#) = MEANS HEAR THEIR CRY AND COME RUNNING TO THEIR AID!) those who are (CONTINUALLY BEING) tempted." (Hebrews 2:18+)

**Matthew 9:35 Jesus was going through all the cities and villages, teaching in their synagogues and proclaiming the gospel of the kingdom, and healing every kind of disease and every kind of sickness.**

NET Matthew 9:35 Then Jesus went throughout all the towns and villages, teaching in their synagogues, preaching the good news of the kingdom, and healing every kind of disease and sickness.

GNT Matthew 9:35 Καὶ περιγένετο ἵνα διδικτεῖ τὰς καὶ τὰς μαρτυρίας τοῦ βασιλείου τοῦ αὐτοῦ λιονταρίας καὶ θεραπείας πάντων τοῦ σώματος τοῦ βασιλείου τοῦ αὐτοῦ.

NLT Matthew 9:35 Jesus traveled through all the towns and villages of that area, teaching in the synagogues and announcing the Good News about the Kingdom. And he healed every kind of disease and illness.

KJV Matthew 9:35 And Jesus went about all the cities and villages, teaching in their synagogues, and preaching the gospel of the kingdom, and healing every sickness and every disease among the people.

ESV Matthew 9:35 And Jesus went throughout all the cities and villages, teaching in their synagogues and proclaiming the gospel of the kingdom and healing every disease and every affliction.

NIV Matthew 9:35 Jesus went through all the towns and villages, teaching in their synagogues, preaching the good news of the kingdom and healing every disease and sickness.

ASV Matthew 9:35 And Jesus went about all the cities and the villages, teaching in their synagogues, and preaching the gospel of the kingdom, and healing all manner of disease and all manner of sickness.

CSB Matthew 9:35 Then Jesus went to all the towns and villages, teaching in their synagogues, preaching the good news of the kingdom, and healing every disease and every sickness.

NKJ Matthew 9:35 Then Jesus went about all the cities and villages, teaching in their synagogues, preaching the gospel of the kingdom, and healing every sickness and every disease among the people.

NRS Matthew 9:35 Then Jesus went about all the cities and villages, teaching in their synagogues, and proclaiming the good news of the kingdom, and curing every disease and every sickness.

YLT Matthew 9:35 And Jesus was going up and down all the cities and the villages, teaching in their synagogues, and proclaiming the good news of the reign, and healing every sickness and every malady among the people.

■ Mt 4:23,24 11:1,5 Mk 1:32-39 6:6,56 Lu 4:43,44 13:22 Ac 2:22 10:38

**Jesus was going through all the cities and villages** - "Jesus traveled through all the towns and villages of that area."

**Teaching in their synagogues and proclaiming the gospel of the kingdom**- Jesus never wasted a second of His precious 3 years of ministry and was always **teaching**, preaching or performing miracles so that the Jews might see the King had arrived on the scene!

**Teaching** ([1321](#))**(didasko**) from **dáō**= know or teach; English = didactic; **didaskalia** and **didaktikos**) means to provide instruction or information in a formal or informal setting. The root meaning carries with it the idea of systematic teaching or systematic training. It is the word that is used to refer to a choir director who trains a choir over a long period of rehearsals until they are able to perform. Didasko in Matthew - Matt. 4:23; Matt. 5:2; Matt. 5:19; Matt. 7:29; Matt. 9:35; Matt. 11:1; Matt. 13:54; Matt. 15:9; Matt. 21:23; Matt. 22:16; Matt. 26:55; Matt. 28:15; Matt. 28:20;

**Proclaiming** ([2784](#))**(kerusso**) from **kerux/keryx** = a herald - one who acts as the medium of the authority of one who proclamation he makes; **kerugma** = the thing preached or the message) means to proclaim (publicly) or to herald or act as a public crier - the town official who would make a proclamation in a public gathering. **Kerusso** was used of the official whose duty it was to proclaim loudly and extensively the coming of an earthly king, even as the **gospel** is to clearly announce the coming of the King of kings and Lord of lords (Rev 19:16±)!

**Gospel** ([2098](#))**(euaggelion**) from **eu** = good + **aggélio** = proclaim, tell) is literally good news or glad tidings. In the NT euaggelion is used only of God's message of salvation in three senses (1) act of proclamation (preaching the gospel) (1Cor 4:15), (2) the work of evangelization (spread of the gospel) (Phil 4:3), (3) the

content of the message as an offer of salvation (good news) (Ro 1:16). In secular Greek it originally referred to a reward for good news and later became the good news itself. The word **euaggelion** was commonly used in the first century as our words "good news" today. The idea then and now is something like this - "Have you any **good news** (euaggelion) for me today?" This was a common question in the ancient world. In ancient secular Greek **euaggelion** described **good news** of any kind and prior to the writing of the New Testament, had no definite religious connotation in the ancient world until it was taken over by the "Cult of Caesar" which was the state religion and in which the emperor was worshipped as a god. Our English word **Gospel** is from the Old English or Saxon word **gōdsPELL** (**gōd** = good + **spell** = message) which is literally "good tale, message". When I was a young man **Godspell** was actually the name of a popular musical play ([See description](#)). I wonder if they really understood the meaning of this word which is the very foundation stone of Christianity. In modern secular use **Gospel** has an interesting meaning of something accepted as infallible truth or as a guiding principle (e.g., such and such is "the Gospel truth"). This is not a bad Biblical definition either! Uses in Matthew - Matt. 4:23; Matt. 9:35; Matt. 24:14; Matt. 26:13

**Kingdom** ([932](#))**(basileia)** from **basileus** = a sovereign, king, monarch) denotes sovereignty, royal power, dominion. Basileia can also refer to the territory or people over whom a king rules. **Basileia** is used most often in the NT to describe God's (Christ's) rule and reign, a rule and reign which in turn most often described by the phrases **kingdom of heaven** or **kingdom of God**. Here are several detailed discussions on the **Kingdom of God** in the commentaries on the following verses...

- Luke 17:20-21-[commentary](#)
- Luke 19:11ff-[commentary](#)
- Acts 1:6-[commentary](#)
- Matthew 5:3 - [commentary](#)

Here is my simplistic summary of the Kingdom of God/Heaven:

THE KINGDOM OF GOD/HEAVEN		
Internal Invisible	In Hearts of Believers	Present Age (Between 1st & 2nd Comings)
External Visible	Literal On earth	Messianic Age (After 2nd Coming)
External Visible	Literal New Earth	Eternal Age (After Christ gives Kingdom to Father)

1. **Internal, Invisible - in hearts of believers only** - in this present age (between Christ's First and Second Comings)
2. **External, Visible - literal earthly Kingdom** - will include both believers ("internal" aspect of Kingdom) and unbelievers - in the next age (After Christ's Second Coming)
3. **External, Visible - literal heavenly Kingdom** - only believers ("internal" aspect of Kingdom) - following age #2 (After Christ gives the Kingdom to His Father)

Related Resource:

- See Peter's massive 3 volume treatise on The Theocratic Kingdom

**and healing every kind of disease and every kind of sickness** - Despite continually performing miraculous healing probably to the point that there were almost not diseased people left in the land, the people still refused to accept Jesus as the Messiah. Beloved, be careful! Miracles do not save anyone. Only the Gospel has the power of salvation.

**Healing** (curing) ([2323](#))**(therapeuo)** from **therapon** = an attendant, servant) means primarily to care for, to wait upon, minister to. It has two main senses in the NT, one speaking of rendering service (Acts 17:25) and the more common use describing medical aspects such as to take care of the sick, to heal, to cure (Matt. 4:24; 12:10; Mark 1:34; Luke 6:7; 10:9), to recover health, to restore. Therapeúō means to heal miraculously

in Matt. 4:23, 24; 10:1, 8; Acts 4:14. Providing care to improve a situation.

**Disease** ([3554](#)) (**nosos**) means a physical malady, disease, illness. **BDAG** adds it was "frequently viewed in Mediterranean society as socially devaluing." Matt. 4:23; Matt. 4:24; Matt. 8:17; Matt. 9:35; Matt. 10:1; Mk. 1:34; Lk. 4:40; Lk. 6:18; Lk. 7:21; Lk. 9:1; Acts 19:12

**Spurgeon** - This was his answer to the blasphemous slanders of the Pharisees. A glorious reply it was. Let us answer calumny by greater zeal in doing good. Small places were not despised by our Lord: he went about the villages as well as the cities. Village piety is of the utmost importance, and has a close relation to city life. Jesus turned old institutions to good account: the "synagogues" became his Seminaries. Three-fold was his ministry: expounding the old, proclaiming the new, healing the diseased. Observe the repetition of the word "every" as showing the breadth of his healing power. All this stood in relation to his royalty; for it was "the gospel of the kingdom" which he proclaimed. Our Lord was "the Great Itinerant": Jesus went about preaching, and healing. His was a Medical Mission as well as an evangelistic tour. Happy people who have Jesus among them! Oh, that we might now see more of his working among our own people! (see [Matthew 9 Commentary](#))

The writers of the New Testament adapted the term Gospel as God's glorious message of salvation for lost otherwise hopeless, helpless sinners. **Euaggelion** is found in several combination phrases, each describing the gospel like a multifaceted jewel in various terms from a different viewpoint (from the NASB, 1977):

1. the gospel of the kingdom (Mt 4:23+, Mt 9:35+, Mt 24:14+)
2. the gospel of Jesus Christ, the Son of God (Mk 1:1+) because it centers in Christ
3. the gospel of God (Mk 1:14+, Ro 15:16+, 2Co 11:7+, 1Th 2:2+, 1Th 2:8,9<sub>+</sub>, 1Pe 4:17+) because it originates with God and was not invented by man
4. the gospel of the kingdom of God (Lu 16:16+)
5. the gospel of the grace of God (Acts 20:24+, Ro 1:1+),
6. the gospel of His Son (Ro 1:9+)
7. the gospel of Christ (Ro 15:19+, 1Co 1:9+, 2Co 2:12+, 2Co 9:13+, 2Co 10:14+, Gal 1:7+, Phil 1:27+, 1Th 3:2+)
8. the gospel of the glory of Christ (2Co 4:4+)
9. the gospel of your salvation (Eph 1:14+)
10. the gospel of peace (Eph 6:15+)
11. the gospel of our Lord Jesus (2Th 1:8+)
12. the glorious gospel of the blessed God (1Ti 1:11+)
13. In Ro 16:25, 26+ Paul called it "**my Gospel**" indicating that the special emphasis he gave the gospel in his ministry.

For a rewarding study, study the preceding references in context making notation of the truth you observe about the gospel. If you would like a special blessing, take an afternoon to go through all 76 uses of **euaggelion** in context making a list of what you learn about the gospel. The Spirit of God will enlighten your heart and encourage your spirit in a very special way...and you'll want to share the "good news" with someone because of your "discoveries"!

**Euaggelion** - Matt. 4:23; Matt. 9:35; Matt. 24:14; Matt. 26:13; Mk. 1:1; Mk. 1:14; Mk. 1:15; Mk. 8:35; Mk. 10:29; Mk. 13:10; Mk. 14:9; Mk. 16:15; Acts 15:7; Acts 20:24; Rom. 1:1; Rom. 1:9; Rom. 1:16; Rom. 2:16; Rom. 10:16; Rom. 11:28; Rom. 15:16; Rom. 15:19; Rom. 16:25; 1 Co. 4:15; 1 Co. 9:12; 1 Co. 9:14; 1 Co. 9:18; 1 Co. 9:23; 1 Co. 15:1; 2 Co. 2:12; 2 Co. 4:3; 2 Co. 4:4; 2 Co. 8:18; 2 Co. 9:13; 2 Co. 10:14; 2 Co. 11:4; 2 Co. 11:7; Gal. 1:6; Gal. 1:7; Gal. 1:11; Gal. 2:2; Gal. 2:5; Gal. 2:7; Gal. 2:14; Eph. 1:13; Eph. 3:6; Eph. 6:15; Eph. 6:19; Phil. 1:5; Phil. 1:7; Phil. 1:12; Phil. 1:16; Phil. 1:27; Phil. 2:22; Phil. 4:3; Phil. 4:15; Col. 1:5; Col. 1:23; 1 Thess. 1:5; 1 Thess. 2:2; 1 Thess. 2:4; 1 Thess. 2:8; 1 Thess. 2:9; 1 Thess. 3:2; 2 Thess. 1:8; 2 Thess. 2:14; 1 Tim. 1:11; 2 Tim. 1:8; 2 Tim. 1:10; 2 Tim. 2:8; Phlm. 1:13; 1 Pet. 4:17; Rev. 14:6

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#### James Smith - MIGHTY TO SAVE MATTHEW 9:35

**JESUS CHRIST** is—

1. A Wise Saviour, "Teaching."
2. A Gracious Saviour, "Preaching the Gospel."
3. A Mighty Saviour, "Healing every disease."
4. A Willing Saviour, "He went about."

SCRIPTURE: Matthew 9:35–38; John 4:34–38; 1 Corinthians 3:5–9

**INTRODUCTION:** One of the issues the church grapples with is the need for laborers. Various methods have been devised for recruiting workers. While it may not be wrong to use a number of methods to discover, direct, and deploy workers we must never lose sight of God's way.

1. The Lord of the Harvest. The Lord of the harvest knows the state of the harvest, the shortage of workers, and the source of the workers.

2. Laborers for the Harvest. The Lord directs His disciples to pray to the Lord of the harvest. The Lord is responsible for the deployment of personnel. The Lord also designates the placement of personnel.

3. The Laws of the Harvest. The laws of the harvest include the sovereignty of the Sovereign, the supplication of the saints, the sending of the servants, and the sharing in the success.

**CONCLUSION:** Laborers are needed for the harvest. The simple sufficient solution to the shortage of servants is to pray to the Lord of the harvest.

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#### **“Harvest Time” By Drew Wilkerson Matthew 9:35–38**

**INTRODUCTION:** Jesus came to save the lost. His concern for people never diminished. Ours shouldn't either. If we are disciples of Christ, we must be willing to reach out to those in need. Jesus models the three steps it takes to touch the world.

Step #1: Be willing to go. Jesus went out among the people. It is easy to stay in our comfort zones, but God said go!

Step #2: Be willing to see. Ignorance is not bliss. We must be willing to open our eyes to the needs surrounding us and respond with compassion.

Step #3: Be willing to ask. The Lord of the harvest is ready to help us if we will ask. There is nothing more important than to reach out to people who are hurting and lost.

**CONCLUSION:** “A ship in harbor is safe, but that is not what ships are built for” (William Shedd). It's harvest time!

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**Matthew 9:36 Seeing the people, He felt compassion for them, because they were distressed and dispirited like sheep without a shepherd.**

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NET Matthew 9:36 When he saw the crowds, he had compassion on them because they were bewildered and helpless, like sheep without a shepherd.

GNT Matthew 9:36 διότι δέ οἱ λαοί σπλαγχνίζει τὴν οὐρανούσαν στολήν περὶ αὐτῶν, τοις δὲ σκυλούσιοι καὶ προστατεύοντα ποιεῖ ναόν.

NLT Matthew 9:36 When he saw the crowds, he had compassion on them because they were confused and helpless, like sheep without a shepherd.

KJV Matthew 9:36 But when he saw the multitudes, he was moved with compassion on them, because they fainted, and were scattered abroad, as sheep having no shepherd.

ESV Matthew 9:36 When he saw the crowds, he had compassion for them, because they were harassed and helpless, like sheep without a shepherd.

NIV Matthew 9:36 When he saw the crowds, he had compassion on them, because they were harassed and helpless, like sheep without a shepherd.

ASV Matthew 9:36 But when he saw the multitudes, he was moved with compassion for them, because they were distressed and scattered, as sheep not having a shepherd.

CSB Matthew 9:36 When He saw the crowds, He felt compassion for them, because they were weary and worn out, like sheep without a shepherd.

NKJ Matthew 9:36 But when He saw the multitudes, He was moved with compassion for them, because they were weary and scattered, like sheep having no shepherd.

NRS Matthew 9:36 When he saw the crowds, he had compassion for them, because they were harassed and

helpless, like sheep without a shepherd.

YLT Matthew 9:36 And having seen the multitudes, he was moved with compassion for them, that they were faint and cast aside, as sheep not having a shepherd,

■ **Seeing the people**- Mt 14:14 15:32 Mk 6:34 Heb 4:15 5:2

■ **like sheep without a shepherd**.- Mt 10:6 15:24 Nu 27:17 1Ki 22:17 2Ch 18:16 Isa 56:9-11 Jer 50:6 Eze 34:3-6 Zec 10:2 11:16 13:7,8

## **A SYMPATHIZING SAVIOR GOES TO HARASSED AND HELPLESS SHEEP IN NEED**

**Seeing the people** - Jesus was a people Person, alway mentally alert and ready to catch sight of people and perceive their spiritual needs. O, that God would grant us to have the eyes of Jesus to see people the way He saw them. In Jesus' Name. Amen

**Guzik** points out that "In the previous verses Jesus was terribly and unfairly criticized, yet it did not make Him stop His work. He didn't say, "Oh, they are saying terrible things about Me! What can I do? How can I make them stop?" Jesus simply ignored terrible and unfair criticism and got about His Father's business." ([Matthew 9 Commentary](#))

**Adrian Rogers** - Jesus looked at the marching, milling multitudes on their way to Hell, and Jesus wept tears over them. "He was moved with compassion"—not just that He had compassion; "he was moved with compassion" (Matthew 9:36). His compassion caused Him to do something. That's what the word means. It literally means "to suffer." And, dear friend, what good is orthodoxy without compassion? What good is it to dot every "I" and to cross every "T" if we can't spell the word compassion? Someone has well said, "People really don't care how much we know until they know how much we care." Compassion. (Source: [Sermon Rescue the Perishing - see page 75](#))

**He felt compassion for them** - Here we see the true heart of Jesus, for His ultimate mission was to seek and save the lost (Lk 19:10+, Mk 10:45+) and as he encountered the depth of their depravity and thus their great need, He was moved with compassion. He felt sympathy with and for the people. He took pity on them. We should never think of Jesus as unfeeling or stoic in the face of the problems of people and this same truth applies today. He is still filled with great compassion for His creatures.

**Adrian Rogers** - "Actually, the word **compassion** means, "from the pit of your stomach." Have you ever hurt so bad that it feels like someone has kicked you in the stomach? That's the word moved with compassion. The Bible speaks of His churning with pain. The Latin word **compassio** is a word that we get our word compassion from. It means, "to suffer with."...It's a very powerful word; it literally means "to convulse; convulsed." I mean, it has the idea of just hurting right in here. "He was moved with compassion." Do you know what the word compassion means? It comes from our English word meaning "with" and "passion," meaning "to feel" or "to suffer." Jesus was convulsed as He felt with those sheep. He saw them as sheep having no shepherd. That's what caused Him to leave heaven and come and die for us....The word compassion comes from two Latin words: the first one, **com**, which means "with"; the second one, **passion**, which means "to suffer." When we have compassion, we learn to suffer with other people. No man has ever been a great man of God, no man has ever been a great deacon, until he's a man of compassion." (Source: Sermon on [Zechariah 13:6 The Scars of Jesus - see page 64](#))

**Because** - Term of explanation, explaining why Jesus was moved with compassion.

**Trapp** comments that "This troubled our Saviour more than their bodily bondage to the Romans, which yet was very grievous."

**They were distressed (skullo) and dispirited (rhipto)** - Both **distressed and dispirited** are in the **perfect tense** describing this as their enduring condition, their state. **Robertson** writes "A sad and pitiful state the crowds were in. Rent or mangled as if by wild beasts." ([Matthew 9 Commentary](#))

**A B Bruce** - "The state of things suggested two pictures to His mind: a neglected flock of sheep, and a harvest going to waste for lack of reapers. Both imply, not only a pitiful plight of the people, but a blameworthy neglect of duty on the part of their religious guides ... The Pharisaic comments on the Capernaum mission festival (Matthew 9:11) were sufficient to justify the adverse judgment."

**Spurgeon** - A great crowd is a demand upon compassion, for it suggests so much sin and need. In this case, the great want was instruction: "they fainted" for want of comfort; they "were scattered abroad" for lack of guidance. They were eager to learn, but they had no fit teachers. "Sheep having no shepherd" are in an ill plight. Unfed, unfolded, unguarded, what will become of them? Our Lord was stirred with a feeling which agitated his inmost soul. "He was moved with compassion." What he saw affected not his eye only, but his heart. He was overcome by sympathy. His whole frame was stirred with an emotion which put every faculty into forceful movement. He is even now affected towards our people in the same manner. He is moved with compassion if we are not. His heavy

heart sought solace among "his disciples", and he spake to them. He mourned the scantiness of workers. ([Full sermon - Joy of the Harvest](#))

**Like sheep without a shepherd** - This is the description of ALL mankind apart from a personal relationship with their Creator through the sacrificial death of the Shepherd! Yes, kings, rulers, presidents, Nobel prize winners, etc, etc, are but dumb, helpless sheep apart from a relationship with Jesus!

**THOUGHT** - Shepherds in ancient Israel were vital to ensure that the sheep were not devoured by wild, ravenous wolves and other animals. The same principle applies to every man and every woman who is not watched over by the Good Shepherd!

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**Felt compassion** ([4697](#)) (**splanchnizomai** from **splagchnon** = bowel, viscera) means to experience a deep visceral feeling for someone, to feel compassion for, to feel **sympathy**, to take **pity** on someone. **Splanchnizomai** is the strongest word for pity and describes the compassion which moves a man to the deepest depths of his being. **Spurgeon** notes that "The original word is a very remarkable one. It is not found in classic Greek. The fact is, it was a word coined by the evangelists themselves. They did not find one in the whole Greek language that suited their purpose, and therefore they had to make one." **Compassion** is the sympathetic consciousness of others' distress together with a desire to alleviate it. This verb expresses an outward flow of one's life in contrast to our natural tendency toward self centeredness. It is not surprising that 8/12 NT uses describe this deep seated emotion in Jesus. It follows that if we desire to imitate Jesus, we need to be men and women of deep compassion!

**SPLANCHNIZOMAI** - 12V - **feel compassion**(2), **felt compassion**(7), **moved with compassion**(2), **take pity**(1). Matt. 9:36; Matt. 14:14; Matt. 15:32; Matt. 18:27; Matt. 20:34; Mk. 1:41; Mk. 6:34; Mk. 8:2; Mk. 9:22; Lk. 7:13; Lk. 10:33; Lk. 15:20 It is not found in the Septuagint.

**Distressed** ([4660](#)) (**skullo**) means literally to skin, flay, lacerate but in NT is used metaphorically meaning to be afflicted, to be grievously affected. To suffer trouble or harassment. To be bothered. Cause trouble, bother, annoy, harass (Mk 5:35; Lk 8:49) Trouble oneself (by taking an interest in) (Lk 7:6). **Robertson** adds "Skullō occurs in the papyri in sense of plunder, concern, vexation. "Used here of the common people, it describes their religious condition. They were harassed, importuned, bewildered by those who should have taught them; hindered from entering into the kingdom of heaven (Mt 23:13), laden with the burdens which the Pharisees laid upon them (Mt 23:3)." ([Matthew 9 Commentary](#))

**SKULLO** - 4v - **distressed**(1), **trouble**(3). Matt. 9:36; Mk. 5:35; Lk. 7:6; Lk. 8:49. Not found in the Septuagint.

**Dispirited** (cast down) ([4496](#)) (**rhipto**) means to throw, hurl or cast and here used figuratively meaning to be discouraged or be dejected. **Robertson** ([Matthew 9 Commentary](#)) adds that **rhipto** "denotes men cast down and prostrate on the ground, whether from drunkenness, Polyb. v. 48.2, or from mortal wounds" (Allen): This **perfect** passive participle from **rhiptō**, to throw down. The masses were in a state of mental dejection. No wonder that Jesus was moved with compassion."

**RHIPTO** - 8x - **cast**(1), **dispirited**(1), **laid...down**(1), **threw**(2), **throwing off**(1), **thrown**(1), **had thrown...down**(1). Matt. 9:36; Matt. 15:30; Matt. 27:5; Lk. 4:35; Lk. 17:2; Acts 22:23; Acts 27:19; Acts 27:29

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**QUESTION** - [What is the significance of sheep without a shepherd \(Matthew 9:36\)? GOTQUESTIONS.ORG](#)

**ANSWER** - The role of a shepherd is to watch over, feed, protect, guide, comfort, and sustain the flock under his care. Spiritual leaders have a similar responsibility toward the people entrusted to their oversight. While Jesus traveled the countryside ministering to the crowds, He felt deep concern for the people because they lacked spiritual guidance and pastoral care from their leaders: "When he saw the crowds, he had compassion on them, because they were harassed and helpless, like sheep without a shepherd" (Matthew 9:36).

A shepherd theme twines throughout the Bible. In the Old Testament, the Lord's people, the Israelites, are portrayed as a flock of sheep, and God is their loving, caring Shepherd (Psalm 23; 100:3; Jeremiah 23:3; 31:10). God expected Israel's leaders to be spiritual under-shepherds to His flock (2 Samuel 5:2; Numbers 27:17). Sadly, they failed at their duty (see Ezekiel 34). The prophets declared, "I saw all Israel scattered on the hills like sheep without a shepherd, and the Lord said, 'These people have no master'" (Kings 22:17; see also Isaiah 56:11; Jeremiah 10:21).

The shepherd theme continues in the New Testament, with Jesus portrayed as the "[Good Shepherd](#)" (John 10:11; cf. Isaiah 40:11) and the "[Great Shepherd](#)" (1 Peter 5:4). The people swarming toward Jesus are like sheep without a shepherd because their spiritual overseers, Israel's religious leaders, have harassed and abandoned them. In Matthew 9:36, the verb translated as "harassed" (**skyllomai** in the original Greek) means "to be afflicted, troubled, grieved, bothered, annoyed." "Helpless" comes from a verb that means "to be thrown down, rejected; thrown away, cast off." This word speaks of the utterness of the people's abandonment by their leaders and its thoroughly damaging effect. Jesus was profoundly moved when He looked into their faces

because He saw people who were wholly disheartened, demoralized, and discouraged.

In Matthew 9:36, Jesus fulfills the prophecy of Ezekiel 34:2–6: “Son of man, prophesy against the shepherds, the leaders of Israel. Give them this message from the Sovereign Lord: What sorrow awaits you shepherds who feed yourselves instead of your flocks. . . . You have not taken care of the weak. You have not tended the sick or bound up the injured. You have not gone looking for those who have wandered away and are lost. Instead, you have ruled them with harshness and cruelty. So my sheep have been scattered without a shepherd, and they are easy prey for any wild animal. They have wandered through all the mountains and all the hills, across the face of the earth, yet no one has gone to search for them” (NLT).

Sheep without a shepherd scatter easily, wander into dangerous territory, and become lost (Isaiah 53:6; Zechariah 10:2; 13:7; Matthew 26:31; John 10:12). Like sheep, we all need a shepherd to guide us along the right path (Psalm 23:3). Without a shepherd we will eventually starve and die. Therefore, a truly good shepherd never leaves his flock unattended (John 21:15–19). And if even one of his sheep goes astray, he will “[leave the ninety-nine](#) others on the hills and go out to search for the one that is lost” (see Matthew 18:12–14). Jesus, the perfect Shepherd, lays down His life for the sheep (John 10:15).

In sharp contrast with the biblical depiction of a good shepherd, Israel’s leaders received this scathing indictment from Jesus: “They crush people with unbearable religious demands and never lift a finger to ease the burden. Everything they do is for show. . . . And they love to sit at the head table at banquets and in the seats of honor in the synagogues” (Matthew 23:4–6, NLT). Jesus goes on to call them “hypocrites” who “shut the door of the Kingdom of Heaven in people’s faces” (Matthew 23:13, NLT). Instead of shepherds, they are “blind guides” only looking out for themselves (Matthew 23:16).

The apostle Paul instructs church leaders: “Keep watch over yourselves and all the flock of which the Holy Spirit has made you overseers. Be shepherds of the church of God, which he bought with his own blood” (Acts 20:28). Instead of leaving people as sheep without a shepherd, God’s Word calls true spiritual leaders to “care for the flock that God has entrusted to you. Watch over it willingly, not grudgingly—not for what you will get out of it, but because you are eager to serve God. Don’t lord it over the people assigned to your care, but lead them by your own good example” (1 Peter 5:2–3, NLT).

Shepherds patterned after the example of Jesus Christ are self-sacrificing servants, willing to lay down their lives for the sheep (John 15:13; 1 John 3:16). They provide spiritual nourishment and guidance and rule people justly and with love.

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**Adrian Rogers** - Perhaps the worst thing is not that we don’t win souls; perhaps the worst thing is not that we don’t share; the worst thing is that we don’t even care. Now I know that you have an intellectual feeling about it. But do you have a tender and a sympathetic heart? The Bible says, “When Jesus saw the multitudes as they fainted and were scattered abroad as sheep without a shepherd, He was moved with compassion.” (Matthew 9:36)

Some years ago, I read a story I’ve never been able to forget. It took place in my home state of Florida—over in the Tampa area, as I remember. A man was driving a high-powered boat. He tried to go underneath a bridge, somehow lost control, hit a bridge abutment, and the boat was wrecked, and the man was seriously injured. They fished him out of the water. They were trying to resuscitate him to keep him alive. They were giving him some sort of artificial respiration, or they were doing something on him, the medics who were there. And this man drove up and he looked and he saw that the boat had been wrecked. He saw the crowd there. He saw the ambulance there and he saw the medics there. And the man was trying to figure out the situation. And he was thinking, “You know, that’s tragic. Look at that. That could happen just like that. One moment, here’s a man in a boat; and the next moment, he’s hanging by a thread between life and death.” And as he got up closer to look, they turned the face of the man who was on the ground being ministered to, and the man said, “My God! That’s my brother!” It was his own brother in the flesh. He had no idea. He looked down. He said, “That is my brother!” At that moment, the man was transformed. He said, “Hey, somebody do something! Help this man, medic! Listen, people! Pray! Here’s a man in danger! Pray for him that he’ll not die!” And he was transformed. What was the difference? One time, he had an intellectual belief; the next time, he had an emotional conviction: “That is my brother.” .... I’ll tell you, one of the great problems today is, in the words of another, “a dry-eyed Church in a Hell-bent world.” There are people in our auditorium today—when I give the invitation, they’ll start to look at their watch, so they want to get out. They’re not concerned about the lost. They’re not concerned about souls coming to Jesus. They’re not praying during the invitation. Many of us have brothers, and sisters, and fathers, and mothers, and neighbors who, if they die in their state today, are going to die and go to Hell. And, we claim to know the answer. Now friend, we must share our faith with compassion and with love.....And, if you do not have tears for the lost, it is because you do not have the Spirit of Jesus Christ in you. There’s the soul winner’s program: “He that goeth forth” (Psalm 126:6). There’s the soul winner’s passion: “He that goeth forth and weepeth” (Psalm 126:6). The tragedy today is a dry-eyed church in a Hell-bent world. Turn on the television and see the debauchery. Pick up the newspaper—see the tragedy. Look around you and see the confusion, the heartache, the despair, the marching, milling multitudes who do not know. Your heart will be moved with compassion....If you don’t have a broken heart for the unsaved, I suggest that you get on your knees in prayer before God, confess the coldness of your heart, and ask God to give you a broken heart to be moved with compassion. (SOURCE -[Learning to Share Jesus Psalm 126:5–6, PAGE 843](#))

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**Adrian Rogers discusses sheep** (from [sermon on Luke 15:4-7 PAGE 485](#)) - And so Jesus is speaking of the weakness of man without God. He's like a sheep. You know, it is not like a real compliment to be called a sheep. You know, let me tell you several things about a sheep.

**A. A Sheep Is Dumb** - In the first place, a sheep is dumb. That's right: dumb. Now you may have heard of a trained horse and seen a trained cat or a trained seal. Or I've even heard of trained fleas. Has anybody ever seen a circus act where the sheep were in it? Trained sheep? They're just stupid. You can't train them. They are dumb. A sheep is dumb. And therefore, because he is dumb, he is easily lost. A sheep can't find his way home: he just wanders. That's the reason the Bible says in Isaiah chapter 53, "All we like"—what?—"sheep have gone astray." (Isaiah 53:6) A sheep has gone astray. It's just the nature of a sheep to go astray. He'll nibble here, and browse here, and feed here; and first thing you know, he's lost and can't find his way home. A dog can find his way home. A horse can find his way home. A cow can find her way home. A cat—have you ever tried to get rid of a cat? There's about one way: put them in a bag. Well, I won't say that. It's hard to get rid of those things. They come home. But a sheep, he just keeps on wandering. And so a sheep is stupid. Now you say, "Now, wait a minute. I'm not a Christian, but I'm not stupid." Right. You're smart. You made good grades in school, and you run your business, and you manage your home, and you're very intelligent. But we're not talking about that kind of stupid. A man may be brilliant in this world, but spiritually he's without understanding. You know, the Bible says in Romans chapter 3, "There is none that understandeth ... no, not one" (Romans 3:11–12)—none that understandeth in spiritual things. That's the reason that Jesus had to say to Nicodemus, who was one of the high muckety-mucks in his day, "You are master in Israel, but you don't understand these things; you don't understand the new birth." I mean, he had it all. He had a pedigree. He had the background. He had education. He had it all. But he didn't understand spiritual things.

**B. A Sheep Is Dependent** - But not only is a sheep dumb; a sheep is also dependent. Did you know that a sheep has to have someone to take care of him, or something will get him? It's just that true; it's just that simple. That's the reason the Bible says of Jesus, "When he saw the multitudes, he was moved with compassion on them, because they fainted, and were scattered abroad, as a sheep having no shepherd." (Matthew 9:36) A sheep needs a shepherd, because a sheep is dependent upon the shepherd. That is, you just don't let the sheep go out on the dangerous hillside alone like you might some other animal, because he is so dependent. Keller, in his book **A Shepherd Looks at Psalm 23**, tells the condition that a sheep may get into, in which he says that a sheep is cast. That is an old English term, an English sheepherder's term, for a sheep that gets himself in a predicament that he cannot get out of. What he does is this: the sheep sometimes, after feeding upon the tender, succulent grass, will lie down in the warm sun to rest. And as he stretches, if he is not on level ground, there may be a crevice there or a hollow place in the ground, and the center of gravity will shift on the sheep, and he rolls over on his back with his paws and legs up in the air. And he cannot get over it to push himself up or right himself, because he's not agile enough to do this. So he just falls frantically in the air. Sometimes he may bleat and call for help; but many times he will just lie there in confusion and frustration, just pawing. Now as he does this, the gases begin to build up in his abdomen, and he bloats. And this cuts off the circulation to his legs. And in a few hours, he will be dead—just lying there, absolutely, completely, helpless. And so the shepherd, when he gets back to the fold at night, will count the sheep, because one of them may be out there on his back, and he must go. For, you see, the shepherd must take that sheep and right him up. He cannot rise; he cannot get up by himself.

**C. A Sheep Is Defenseless** - But the shepherd is not the only one that watches for a sheep like that. The coyotes, the wolves, the vultures are watching for this sheep. You see, the sheep is dumb, and the sheep is dependent; but I will tell you something else about a sheep: he's defenseless. A sheep can't defend himself. He's not equipped for flight or fight. A horse can run and kick. The dog can bite. The cat can scratch. The skunk—we all know what they can do. You heard of the little baby skunk with the mother skunk cornered in a cave by a fox, and it looked like the fox was going to get them, but the mother skunk said to her children, "Children, let us spray." The sheep has no defense. The sheep is at the mercy of those animals, those wolves, those vultures, those other things.

Some visitors, some tourists, were in the Scottish highlands, and they were looking at the scenery—the mountain scene. And as they were on one mountain looking across the valley, one of them said to the guide, "What is that animal over there on the sheer face of the cliff across the ravine?" "Oh," he said, "that's a sheep." He put his glasses on it. He said, "Take a look." The visitor said, "How did he get down there?" He said, "Well, the sheep, many times, feeding in this area will go from one ledge to another ledge looking for a morsel, a bit of grass, and they step down. When they get to a certain place, they sometimes get on a very narrow ledge where they cannot turn around and go back. And that sheep will perish." "Well," the visitor said, "what will happen to him?" He said, "The eagles will get him." He said, "Do you want to stay and watch?" And he said, "Yes." And so before too long they saw five mighty eagles flying through that valley. The lead eagle spotted the helpless, defenseless sheep, and he folded his wings like a bomber diving and hit that sheep on the head. When he did, it stunned the sheep, and he went to his knees. But then he rose up again, and the old eagle flew off. But then he circled again and dived again and hit the head of that sheep—stunned him. The sheep went to his knees. The old eagle flew off. The sheep, this time bleeding from the head, rose and looked around frantically and turned around to try to scramble back up the mountainside. And of course, the ledge was so narrow, and the sheep plunged to his death on

the rocks beneath. And those five eagles zeroed in for the feast. A sheep is so defenseless. And what Jesus was saying when He talked about a lost sheep was this: We are no match for the devil's eagles; we are no match for the devil's wolves; we are no match for the devil's coyotes and the devil's vultures. What He is saying is, "The reason that I keep company with these people is because they so need me"—the weakness of man without God. (from [sermon on Luke 15:4-7 PAGE 485](#))

**Matthew 9:37 Then He said to His disciples, "The harvest is plentiful, but the workers are few.**

NET Matthew 9:37 Then he said to his disciples, "The harvest is plentiful, but the workers are few.

GNT Matthew 9:37 τ τε λ γει το ζ μαθητα ζ α το , μ ν θερισμ ζ πολ ζ, ο δ ργ ται λ γοι.

NLT Matthew 9:37 He said to his disciples, "The harvest is great, but the workers are few.

KJV Matthew 9:37 Then saith he unto his disciples, The harvest truly is plenteous, but the labourers are few;

ESV Matthew 9:37 Then he said to his disciples, "The harvest is plentiful, but the laborers are few;

NIV Matthew 9:37 Then he said to his disciples, "The harvest is plentiful but the workers are few.

ASV Matthew 9:37 Then saith he unto his disciples, The harvest indeed is plenteous, but the laborers are few.

CSB Matthew 9:37 Then He said to His disciples, "The harvest is abundant, but the workers are few.

NKJ Matthew 9:37 Then He said to His disciples, "The harvest truly is plentiful, but the laborers are few.

NRS Matthew 9:37 Then he said to his disciples, "The harvest is plentiful, but the laborers are few;

YLT Matthew 9:37 then saith he to his disciples, 'The harvest indeed is abundant, but the workmen few;

■ **The harvest** - Mt 28:19 Mk 16:15 Lu 10:2 24:47 Joh 4:35,36 Ac 16:9 18:10

■ **but** - Ps 68:11 1Co 3:9 2Co 6:1 Php 2:19-21 Col 4:11 1Th 5:12,13 1Ti 5:17

A PLENTIFUL HARVEST OF SOULS

## GREAT NEED GIVES GREAT OPPORTUNITY

**Then** (Expression of time) Your "encounter" with the word then should prompt a question, at least asking "When?" Answer (it is usually determined by examination of the context). When He felt compassion. Compassion should not be static but dynamic. It should be an attitude that leads to an action. Does your compassion affect your actions toward those you feel compassion? Compassion and appropriate response are two sides of the same coin as Jesus shows us in this section.

**He said to His disciples** - In Matthew 10 we see them begin to join in as laborers as "These twelve Jesus sent out after instructing them." (Mt 10:5)

**Disciples** ([3101](#)) (**mathetes**) from **manthano** = to learn which Vine says is "from a root *math*, indicating thought accompanied by endeavor". Gives us our English = "mathematics") describes a person who learns from another by instruction, whether formal or informal. Discipleship includes the idea of one who intentionally learns by inquiry and observation (cf [inductive Bible study](#)) and thus **mathetes** is more than a mere pupil. A **mathetes** describes an adherent of a teacher. **Mathetes** itself has no spiritual connotation, and it is used of superficial followers of Jesus as well as of genuine believers. As **followers** of Jesus we are to be, first of all, **learners**. We are to learn from Him by listening to Him, learn the truth that will set us free (John 8:32) and keep us from error. But we are also to learn from Him by looking at Him- learn how to live a life of beauty and blessing. Mathetes in this chapter - Matt. 9:10; Matt. 9:11; Matt. 9:14; Matt. 9:19; Matt. 9:37;

**Spurgeon** - His heavy heart sought solace among "his disciples", and he spake to them. He mourned the scantiness of workers. Pretenders were many, but real "labourers" in the harvest were few. The sheaves were spoiling. The crowds were ready to be taught, even as ripe wheat is ready for the sickle; but there were few to instruct them, and where could more teaching men be found? ([Full sermon - Joy of the Harvest](#))

**Adrian Rogers** - The problem in today is not primarily with the harvest; it is with the harvesters, with the reapers. The harvest is white (Jn 4:35). We've talked unto harvest. The fields are white unto harvest. That means, not that the grain is ripening—it's already past ripe and falling to the ground.

**The harvest is plentiful** (polus = large, great), **but the workers are few** - This was true then and is sadly true today. How many sit in church on Sunday and live the other 6 days almost completely unconcerned and/or indifferent to the the eternal destiny of those souls they encounter?

**Harvest** (2326)(*therismos*) from **therízo** = harvest, reap in turn from **theros** = summer which is harvest time) means the process of harvesting or reaping (Jn 4:35; Lxx = Ge 8:22, 30:14), but most NT uses are figurative - harvest of converts or saved souls (Mt 9:37, 38, Lk 10:2), the time of future judgment (Mt 13:30, Rev 14:15 because their iniquity is "ripe"). In the Septuagint the Feast of **Harvest** (First Fruits, Pentecost) (Ex 23:16)

**THOUGHT - Play [Lord of the Harvest](#)**-- as you sing it note you are singing a prayer! I pray this song breaks our hearts for those who are dropping off into a Christ-less eternity and begin with me Lord. In Jesus' Name. Amen.

Lord of the Harvest  
Let your voice be heard  
  
In every nation  
In the farthest comes  
Of the World  
  
Shatter the darkness  
Let your truth be known  
  
Gather the nations to bow  
At Your throne  
  
Lord of the Harvest  
  
The fields are ripe for harvest  
But the labourers are few  
Father send Your workers  
Those with hearts for You  
  
Out into your vineyard  
Weeping as they go  
Help them reap a mighty  
Harvest of souls  
  
Some of us will water  
Others plant the seed  
Some of us will battle  
In the heavenlies  
  
None of us take glory  
For those who find the truth  
Jesus their praises  
Are waiting for You  
  
Lord of the Harvest

**Guzik** - The good of a harvest can go to waste if there are no laborers to take advantage of the bounty. Jesus warned us that opportunities to meet human need and bring people into His kingdom may be wasted because of a shortage of laborers. ([Matthew 9 Commentary](#))

**Luther** - "The householder hath somewhat to do, the magistrate more, but the minister most of all. He labours more in a day many times, than the husbandman does in a month. The sweat of the brow is nothing to that of the brain; the former furthers health, the latter impairs it, wearying and wearing out the body, wasting the vitals, and hastening old age and untimely death."

**Spurgeon** - "Pretenders were many, but real 'laborers' in the harvest were few ... Man-made ministers are useless. Still are the fields encumbered with gentlemen who cannot use the sickle. Still the real ingatherers are few and far between. Where are the instructive, soul-winning ministries?"

**THOUGHT** - You may say "I am not really able to go out into the mission field and harvest souls for Jesus."

You may have many good reasons. But let me suggest an alternative -- you can "go" in a sense by **praying for the souls** of those around you and around the world. You can pray for the **unreached people groups**. Some unreached groups number in the millions and yet have **not a single known believer in Jesus**. This should shock us because their destiny is eternal punishment away from the presence of the Lord! So consider going daily into the harvest by pleading daily using the tool below. And if you need more motivation to engage in this great eternal enterprise read the seven reasons below.

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### Why Should You Consider Interceding for the Hidden People Groups?

1. "The harvest is plentiful, but the workers are few." (Mt 9:37) - Will you be a laborer for the Lord of the harvest (Mt 9:38)?
2. You are in effect *entering* the mission field with your intercessory prayers. "With all prayer and petition pray at all times in the Spirit, and with this in view, be on the alert with all perseverance and petition for all the saints (including those of the hidden people groups who will become saints - see Rev 5:9 below) (Eph 6:18±)
3. You are storing up "for yourselves treasures in heaven, where neither moth nor rust destroys, and where thieves do not break in or steal; for where your treasure is, there your heart will be also." (Mt 6:20-21±)
4. You will rejoice with Paul for those precious souls in this hidden people group who accept Christ as their Savior for they will be your "hope or joy or crown of exultation...in the presence of our Lord Jesus at His coming." (1 Th 2:19±)
5. You will shine like the stars for "those who lead the many to righteousness, like the stars forever and ever." (Da 12:3)
6. You can be confident God will answer your prayer for Rev 5:9± says Jesus was "slain, and purchased for God with (His) blood men from EVERY tribe and tongue and people and nation."
7. If these Biblical truths are not sufficient motivation to [redeem the precious time](#) then take a moment and [Read the longer answer](#).
8. Here is [the daily prayer link](#) for the hidden people groups.

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**ILLUSTRATION** - In a city dump in the Philippines is a "squatter village" called "Smokey Mountain" with needy people everywhere; but in the middle of the dump stands a new building with a banner over it, saying: "Welcome to Smokey Mountain." It is the "Smokey Mountain" headquarters of Youth With A Mission. These youth teach about health, give inoculations, and run literacy programs. If you were to ask them why they're located in the middle of a dump, they'd say, "The Lord of the Harvest sent us. We wanted to be obedient. We know God loves these people, though circumstances are forcing them to live in a dump." This is a symbol of our church—a beam of hope in the middle of a hopeless world. It's also a symbol of you and me, ambassadors for Christ in the midst of the moral dump of this city. Let's be His laborers, viewing people compassionately, submitting and praying to Christ as Master, and allowing Him to use us for His global purpose.

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### QUESTION - [What does it mean that the harvest is plentiful \(Matthew 9:37\)? GOTQUESTIONS.ORG](#)

**ANSWER** - Matthew 9 lists a number of incidents, in somewhat "rapid fire" fashion, that involve Jesus ministering while the Pharisees are being critical:

Mt 9:1–8 — Jesus heals a paralytic.

Mt 9:9–13 — Jesus calls Matthew, a tax collector, and is chided by the Pharisees for spending time with "sinners."

Mt 9:14–17 — The Pharisees criticize Jesus and His disciples for not fasting enough. Apparently, Jesus' followers are too social.

Mt 9:18–26 — A woman with chronic bleeding is healed, and Jesus raises a young girl back to life.

Mt 9:27–31 — Jesus heals two blind men.

Mt 9:32–34 — Jesus heals a man unable to speak, but the Pharisees say He heals by demonic power.

All of these incidents lead to the final section of Matthew 9:35–38:

"And Jesus went throughout all the cities and villages, teaching in their synagogues and proclaiming the gospel of the kingdom and healing every disease and every affliction. When he saw the crowds, he had compassion for them, because they were harassed and helpless, like sheep without a shepherd. Then he said to his disciples, 'The harvest is plentiful, but the laborers are few; therefore pray earnestly to the Lord of the harvest to send out laborers into his harvest.'

Jesus could have spent every waking hour healing and teaching. There was no shortage of people who needed the gospel of the

kingdom proclaimed to them. In His earthly existence, He was limited by His human body. He could not be everywhere at once, nor could He meet every need. He grew tired and hungry. Practically speaking, He needed others to go out and preach the gospel. People are the harvest—lost souls waiting to be saved and brought into God's kingdom. The problem was not that there were not enough people to harvest, but that there were not enough laborers to do the work.

If a man owned a farm, there are two problems he might encounter when it came time to harvest. The first is that he might hire a lot of people to work in the fields but there would not be enough work to keep them busy. The second might be that there is so much to harvest that he just can't find enough people to do the work.

The same set of problems could be evident in any church or Christian ministry. There might be so many volunteers and donors that the needs are fully met and many of the helpers just stand around with nothing to do. On the other hand, there might be so many needs that everyone who turns out to work is stretched to the max, with many needs remaining unmet. In reality, the second scenario is far more common, and the first is virtually unheard of.

In Matthew 10, Jesus sends out the disciples to begin the harvest. That pattern continues with the "Great Commission" in Matthew 28. All Christians are supposed to be working in the harvest. The problem is not that there are not enough needs to meet and souls to harvest but that there are too few workers to do all that needs to be done.

In Christian ministry, we need to pray for more workers to go out into the harvest fields to work. Practically speaking, instead of praying for more people to be saved, we should pray that more people actively share the gospel. When praying for a lost loved one, we should pray for him or her to encounter more believers who will reach out with truth and love. If we are dissatisfied with the way things are, we need to pray that God will send us out to make a difference. If any Christian is not involved in gospel ministry, it is not because there is nothing for him to do; rather, is that he has chosen to sit on the sidelines instead of joining in the work that surrounds him. The harvest is plentiful.

May God use this small article to motivate Christians to join the harvest workforce!

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#### QUESTION - [What does it mean that the workers are few \(Matthew 9:37\)? GOTQUESTIONS.ORG](#)

**ANSWER** - In Matthew 9:37, Jesus makes a lamentable statement: "The harvest is plentiful but the workers are few." This verse underscores the urgency of active participation in the work of God. The expression *work of God* refers to sharing the gospel of the kingdom with the unbelieving world. It is a work of God because believers lack the tools, resources, and strength to accomplish this task on their own. For this reason, the Holy Spirit must empower us for gospel ministry. Otherwise, we will not accomplish anything (see John 15:5).

Matthew 9:37 is situated within the context of Matthew 9:35–38. In Matthew 9:35, the apostle records that Jesus traveled through cities and villages, taught in synagogues, preached the gospel of the kingdom, and healed the sick. As a result, enormous crowds began to follow Him. The crowds saw a teacher and a miracle-worker, but Jesus saw into their heart: "When he saw the crowds, he had compassion on them, because they were harassed and helpless, like sheep without a shepherd" (verse 36, ESV). Without the care and protection of the Good Shepherd (see John 10:1–21), everyone will be harassed by the enemy and helpless to defend themselves. There is hope, but it can only be found in Christ (Hebrews 6:19–20).

Jesus employed the metaphor of a harvest to symbolize the abundance of individuals who are ripe and ready to hear, receive, and believe the gospel message (cf. John 4:31–38). Just as a waving field of grain invites many reapers, the crowds who flocked to Jesus were prepared to receive the gospel. Jesus saw both the spiritual readiness of the people and the opportunity to bring them into the kingdom of God.

Despite the plentiful harvest, Jesus lamented the gospel's labor shortage: "The workers are few" (Matthew 9:37). The labor shortage indicates an urgent need for more ministers to spread the gospel and gather the people of God into His kingdom. This is challenging because "Pretenders were many, but real 'laborers' in the harvest were few. . . . Man-made ministers are useless. Still are the fields encumbered with gentlemen who cannot use the sickle. Still the real ingatherers are few and far between. Where are the instructive, soul-winning ministries?" ([Charles Spurgeon, "The Joy of Harvest," no. 3058, 1865](#)). Are we pretenders, or are we laborers?

In response to the labor shortage, Jesus commands His disciples to "Pray earnestly to the Lord of the harvest to send out laborers into his harvest" (Matthew 9:38). Simply "throwing bodies at the problem" is not the best solution for the gospel's labor shortage. To the contrary, we must pray that God would supply the church with faithful and diligent ministers of the gospel to meet the demand of His harvest.

Ministry is burdensome, but ministers do not have to rely on their own strength: "For we do not want you to be unaware, brothers, of the affliction we experienced in Asia. For we were so utterly burdened beyond our strength that we despaired of life itself. Indeed, we felt that we had received the sentence of death. But that was to make us rely not on ourselves but on God who raises the dead" ([2](#)

[Corinthians 1:8–9, 12:9–10](#)).

In conclusion, the statement, “The harvest is plentiful but the workers are few” is a reminder that workers are needed for the spiritual harvest. There are abundant opportunities to share the gospel with unbelievers, but workers must go and preach the gospel. As the apostle Paul declared, “How then will they call on him in whom they have not believed? And how are they to believe in him of whom they have never heard? And how are they to hear without someone preaching? And how are they to preach unless they are sent?” ([Romans 10:14–15](#)). Let us pray that God will send more workers into the field.

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### Afraid To Fail?.—[Luke 10:2](#)

Things haven’t changed much in 2,000 years. Jesus observed in His day what a thoughtful Christian observes in ours. **“The harvest truly is great”** ([Lk. 10:2](#)).

Stroll through a bookstore and you can see shelves of books on “new age” and “spirituality.” But what is called “new age” is merely the age-old desire to make some sense out of life. Citizens of our age try to satisfy their thirst for significance by drinking too much, eating too much, watching too much television. What they are longing for is Jesus Christ.

The great theologian Augustine took the pulse of his time and ours when he wrote,

“O Lord, You have made us for Yourself, and our heart is restless until it finds its rest in You.”

The harvest has never been greater. But Jesus noted, **“The laborers are few.”** Why? How come there aren’t enough workers to gather in the crop? There are certainly enough professing Christians to make a dent in the harvest, but we don’t seem to want to go. Is it a fear that we may fail? Are we afraid that people will reject us and our message?

Don’t let fear stop you. Go out into the “fields” of your neighborhood, your worksite, your school. You can’t control the response—but you can preach the message. By Haddon W. Robinson ([Our Daily Bread. Copyright RBC Ministries, Grand Rapids, MI. — Reprinted by permission. All rights reserved](#))

**If faith in Christ is worth having, it's worth sharing.**

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### **Matthew 9:38 "Therefore beseech the Lord of the harvest to send out workers into His harvest."**

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NET Matthew 9:38 Therefore ask the Lord of the harvest to send out workers into his harvest."

GNP Matthew 9:38 δε θητε ο ν το κυρ ου το θερισμο πως κβ λ ργ τας ε ζ τ ν θερισμ ν α το .

NLT Matthew 9:38 So pray to the Lord who is in charge of the harvest; ask him to send more workers into his fields."

KJV Matthew 9:38 Pray ye therefore the Lord of the harvest, that he will send forth labourers into his harvest.

ESV Matthew 9:38 therefore pray earnestly to the Lord of the harvest to send out laborers into his harvest."

NIV Matthew 9:38 Ask the Lord of the harvest, therefore, to send out workers into his harvest field."

ASV Matthew 9:38 Pray ye therefore the Lord of the harvest, that he send forth laborers into his harvest.

CSB Matthew 9:38 Therefore, pray to the Lord of the harvest to send out workers into His harvest."

NKJ Matthew 9:38 "Therefore pray the Lord of the harvest to send out laborers into His harvest."

NRS Matthew 9:38 therefore ask the Lord of the harvest to send out laborers into his harvest."

YLT Matthew 9:38 beseech ye therefore the Lord of the harvest, that he may put forth workmen to His harvest.'

- **beseech-** Lu 6:12,13 Ac 13:2 2Th 3:1
- **the Lord of the harvest-** Mt 10:1-3 Joh 20:21 Eph 4:11
- **to send out workers -** Ps 68:11,18 Jer 3:15 Mic 5:7 Lu 10:1,2 Ac 8:4 1Co 12:28

**WORKERS NEEDED  
A CALL TO ACTION**

**Therefore** - Term of conclusion. Based on the preceding truths that there is a large harvest available but only a few workers, Jesus issues a command as if from a general in the army, for indeed we are involved in a spiritual war for the souls of men.

**Robertson** - Jesus turns from the figure of the shepherdless sheep to the harvest field ripe and ready for the reapers. Prayer is the remedy offered by Jesus in this crisis for a larger ministerial supply. How seldom do we hear prayers for more preachers. Sometimes God literally has to push or force a man into the ministry who resists his known duty. ([Matthew 9 Commentary](#))

**Beseech the Lord of the harvest** - **Beseech** is in the [aorist imperative](#) which is like the "Nike Commercial" meaning "Just Do It!" The idea is don't delay and it even conveys a sense of urgency. Souls are slipping into eternity and harvesters are needed! Notice that the harvest is the Lord, expressing His sovereignty over the harvest process. Since the harvest belongs to the **Lord of the harvest**, here we see that we are commanded to pray that He would compel workers to reap His harvest. Have you felt any compulsion in your innermost being to share the Gospel with someone? Then follow through in the power of the Spirit with the Gospel which is the power of God for salvation (since the results do not depend on you, this should take the pressure off of you!) We need the attitude of Spirit filled Paul who said "For I am not ashamed of the gospel, for it is the power of God for salvation to everyone who believes, to the Jew first and also to the Greek." (Romans 1:16+).

**Beseech** ([1189](#)) (**deomai** from **deo** = to bind) means to ask for something with the sense of pleading, beseeching or begging, even with a sense of urgency and a presumed need, in this case men and women going into a Christ-less eternity! When used in the context of prayer **deomai** means to make petition, to plead, to ask in prayer, to implore (pray for earnestly) and emphasizes the existence of a need. **Deomai** is a strong way to ask for something - a leper imploring Jesus to heal him (Lk 5:12+), a father's desperate plea to Jesus to cast a demon out of his son (Lk 9:38+). To **beg** in English means to ask for earnestly, urgently or insistently. It implies more urgency than simply asking, with is apropos for the need for workers is urgent.

**Spurgeon** - "He did not say, 'The harvest truly is plenteous, and the laborers are few, but that matters not, God can bless a few, and make them accomplish as much as many.' He believed in his Father's omnipotence, but he also believed that the Lord would work by means, and that many laborers were required to gather in a plenteous harvest, and therefore he told us to pray for them. We are to pray that the Lord would send out laborers: "Now the Greek is much more forcible, it is that he would push them forward, and thrust them out; it is the same word which is used for the expulsion of a devil from a man possessed. It takes great power to drive a devil out, it will need equal power from God to drive a minister out to his work."

**Guzik** - This is a prayer we must pray, but we can only pray it honestly if we pray with an ear open to hearing Him tell us, "You go into the harvest." ([Matthew 9 Commentary](#))

**Spurgeon** - God only can thrust out, or "send forth labourers." Man-made ministers are useless. Still are the fields encumbered with gentlemen who cannot use the sickle. Still the real ingatherers are few and far between. Where are the instructive, soul-winning ministries? Where are those who travail in birth for their hearers' salvation? Let us plead with the Lord of the harvest to care for his own harvest, and send out his own men. May many a true heart be moved by the question, "Whom shall I send? And who will go for us?" to answer, "Here am I! Send me." (see [Matthew 9 Commentary](#))

**To send out workers into His harvest** - **Workers** filled with and empowered by the Spirit are needed. It will be hard work, but the Spirit will supply the power (Acts 1:8, 1 Cor 15:10). Send out is **ekballo** which is a strong verb that means to drive out, to push out, to draw out even with force! It is the same verb used describing the casting out of demons (Mk 1:34, 39+), but here describes the casting out of disciples! **Ekbollo** also describes the "sons of the kingdom" being cast into the outer darkness (Mt 8:12), which is another reason we need to be urgent in our evangelistic efforts to both Jews and Greeks (Ro 1:16+). **Wiersbe** writes "In the same way, when we pray as He commanded, we will see what He saw, feel what He felt, and do what He did. God will multiply our lives as we share in the great harvest that is already ripe (John 4:34-38)." ([Bible Exposition Commentary](#))

**Send out** (throw) ([1544](#)) (**ekbállō** from **ek** = out + **bállō** = to cast, throw, drive) means to cast, throw out often with the idea of force (Mt. 8:12; 15:17; 25:30; Acts 16:37, 27:38+; Lxx - Lev. 14:40). To throw out of an area or object, throw out, jettison (Mt 21:39 Acts 27:18). Used of casting or throwing unbelievers into outer darkness (hell). Mark 1:12+ "Immediately the Spirit **impelled** Him (Jesus) to go out into the wilderness." May our Father by His Spirit impell you dear reader into the fields that are white unto harvest, in Jesus' Name. Amen

**THOUGHT** - Are you a pleader, pleading for workers? Are you a worker? Are you heeding the call of the Master to go into the mission fields, whether in your neighborhood, your school, your town, your place of employment, the world? Do you want to store up for yourself treasure (of souls) in heaven? Well, here is one way. Begin daily to intercede for unreached people groups <https://unreachedoftheday.org/>, for you can be assured that Jesus' blood has "purchased for God with Your blood men from **every tribe and tongue and people and nation**." (Rev 5:9) So pray, pray, pray!

Guzik ([Matthew 9 Commentary](#)) - In this chapter Jesus faced many accusations:

- He was accused of blasphemy.
- He was accused of low morals.
- He was accused of ungodliness.
- He was accused of being in league with the devil.

Though Matthew has fully established Jesus' credentials as the Messiah, Jesus is beginning to be rejected and criticized by the religious authorities. These conflicts with the religious leaders will become more frequent and intense.

**Adrian Rogers** - Intercessory Prayer Activates Soul Winner - If you have loved ones in your family that are lost, you need to begin to pray that God will send a soul winner, that God will send a witness, that God will move somebody next door, or that God will put somebody in the classroom beside them, or God will bring someone in that place of business. But you dare not do that unless you yourself are willing to be that person. I mean, listen. You cannot be such a hypocrite as to say, "God, I'll not go. I'll not speak. I don't want to do it. Don't use me, but use somebody else." Now He may not be able to use you. It may be that the door is shut. But what you need to do is to begin to pray that God will send somebody to that loved one. You ask, "Pastor Rogers, is this the prayer that we ought to pray?" Absolutely! Put in your margin Matthew chapter 9, verses 37 and 38. Jesus is speaking now: "Then saith he to his disciples, The harvest truly is plenteous, but the laborers are few;"—do you know the problem with Memphis, Tennessee? It's not out there; it's in here. The harvest is plenteous; the labourers are few. Here's a prayer that Jesus told us to pray—"pray ye therefore the Lord of the harvest, that he will send forth labourers into his harvest." (Matthew 9:37–38) Now prayer will activate soul winners. Jesus prayed, and there were four men who brought a man on a stretcher and laid that man right at the feet of Jesus. When this church gets serious about praying, our people are going to get serious about bringing people to Jesus Christ. And there are people, friend, they cannot come; they've got to be brought. They don't want to come; they've got to be sought. They don't know; they've got to be taught. And God is the One who has called us to do it.

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#### QUESTION - [What does it mean that God is the Lord of the harvest \(Matthew 9:38\)? GOTQUESTIONS.ORG](#)

**ANSWER** - In Matthew 9:35–38, Jesus travels throughout Galilee, teaching the good news of the [kingdom of God](#) and preparing His disciples to carry on His ministry. He looks at the crowds in their confused and vulnerable state and is filled with compassion. Because the spiritual needs were so great, Jesus asks His disciples to pray for more workers to evangelize the world: "The harvest is plentiful but the workers are few. Ask the Lord of the harvest, therefore, to send out workers into his harvest field" (Matthew 9:37–38).

The harvest is a familiar biblical metaphor related to the kingdom of God (Isaiah 27:12; Joel 3:13; Amos 9:13; Matthew 7:16–19; 9:37; 13:24–30; Luke 10:2; Revelation 14:14–16). The lost and hurting people that Jesus sees and we see all around us are like ripe pieces of fruit ready to be plucked and gathered into God's kingdom.

*God is the Lord of the harvest* means God is the One who controls the times and seasons of the harvest (Jeremiah 5:24; Amos 4:7). The harvesting of souls is God's work, not man's (Colossians 2:13). Salvation—acceptance into God's kingdom—is a gift of God, through the grace He pours out on us (Ephesians 2:8–9). God chooses us (John 6:44; Romans 8:28–30; 9:15; Ephesians 1:4–5), regenerates us (Titus 3:3–6), gives us the faith to believe in Jesus Christ (Romans 12:3; Philippians 3:9), and seals us with the promised Holy Spirit (Ephesians 1:13; 2 Corinthians 1:21–22).

*God is the Lord of the harvest* means the harvest's success depends on Him (Psalm 107:37–38). It is not by human might or wisdom that lost souls are gathered into God's kingdom but by His Spirit working in people's hearts to complete the harvest.

Jesus' [Parable of the Sower](#) (Matthew 13:3–9; Mark 4:2–9; Luke 8:4–8) shows that God prepares human hearts to receive Him. Many individuals' hearts are like trampled, rocky, or thorny soil in which the Word of God cannot take root (see Matthew 13:18–22; Mark 4:13–19; and Luke 8:11–14). But some people have hearts tilled by the Lord of the harvest into good, fertile soil ready to receive God's Word. When they hear it, they accept it and then continue maturing and bearing abundant fruit (Matthew 13:23; Mark 4:20; Luke 8:15).

The workers can't change the nature of the soil in the field. That job belongs to God—the Lord of the harvest. He is the One who puts "a new heart, and a new spirit" within His people and removes "the heart of stone" (Ezekiel 11:19–20; 36:26). As laborers in God's field, we are called to participate with Him, faithfully sowing, reaping, and praying, but the results of our labor are in God's hands. He is the Lord of the harvest.

Sometimes a crop takes years to yield its fruit, with different workers sowing, tending, and gathering in God's field (John 4:35–38; 1 Corinthians 3:6–9). God oversees the whole process. The phrase translated as "Lord of the harvest" means "Master of the yield" or

"Chief of the harvest" in the original language. God Himself is the Commander-in-chief of the harvest. He is infinitely concerned about the mission, with every aspect of its implementation under His sovereign control. The laborers can trust Him with the outcome, even if they never see the fruit of the work.

Immediately after Jesus tells His disciples to pray to the Lord of the harvest to send out workers, He summons the twelve and commissions them to go "to the people of Israel—God's lost sheep. Go and announce to them that the Kingdom of Heaven is near" (Matthew 10:6–7, NLT). This mission would eventually expand to encompass all God's servants, sending them to every nation and all the world's people to make disciples until He returns (Matthew 28:19–20).

Today, the harvest is still in great supply, and there are still too few workers. May we all do as Jesus asks and pray to the Lord of the harvest to send more workers into His field.