

Matthew

Sermon on the Mount

October 06, 2024

I. Introduction

A. We looked at **Matthew 8** last week and will do the same with **Matthew 9:1-13** this week. These stories present examples of Jesus' dealings with people, and these examples help us understand Him, His ministry, His humility, His compassion, His power, who He came to serve and to save, and how we should live. I will read and comment on each story as we come to it.

B. Pray

II. Examples of Jesus' dealings with people that reveal His mindset and the scope of His ministry

A. **Matthew 9:1-8**, Getting into a boat (*having been told to leave by the Gadarenes*), Jesus crossed over the sea and came to His own city (*Capernaum*). [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." [3] And some of the scribes said to themselves, "This fellow **blasphemes** (*acting as if he can take God's place*)." [4] And Jesus knowing their thoughts said, "Why are you thinking evil in your hearts? [5] Which is easier, to say, 'Your sins are forgiven,' or to say, 'Get up, and walk'? [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." [7] And he got up and went home. [8] But when the crowds saw this, they were **awestruck** (*Had reverential fear. The Greek word used here is translated as some form of fear 94 times in the NASB, and once as awestruck and once as respect. To me, reverential fear seems a better translation.*), and glorified God, who had given such authority to men.

1. According the **Matthew 4:12-13**, Jesus relocated His base of operation from Nazareth to Capernaum – possibly for security reasons: "Now when Jesus heard that John had been taken into custody, He withdrew into Galilee; [13] and leaving Nazareth, He came and settled in Capernaum, which is by the sea, in the region of Zebulun and Naphtali."
2. In the four Gospels, Jesus refers to himself as the **Son of Man** – with one exception, **John 10:36** – when He referred to Himself as the Son of God. However, the devil, the demons, and the soldiers at the cross,

- referred to Jesus as the **Son of God**, which means the label or title was said in public and therefore heard by those nearby.
- a. It is possible that Jesus referred to Himself as the Son of Man because of the prophecy in **Daniel 7:13-14**, “I (*Daniel*) 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. [14] And to Him was given dominion, glory and a kingdom, that all the peoples, nations and men of every language might serve Him. His dominion is an everlasting dominion which will not pass away; and His kingdom is one which will not be destroyed.”
 - b. However, it is also possible that Jesus used this title to affirm His humanity and express His humility (*He had set aside His equality with God to become human servant*).
3. In **vs 2**, we read that Jesus **saw** their faith (*the paralytic’s and those who brought him*).
- a. In what way did He see their faith? He saw it in their actions – the actions of bringing to Jesus what was humanly impossible, healing a paralytic, on the belief that Jesus could heal him.
 - (1) In what ways does God see your faith in the daily affairs of life?
 - (2) Have you brought to Him what was humanly impossible on the belief that He could take care of it, or have you given up?
 - b. For some reason, before healing the paralytic physically, Jesus healed him spiritually – by forgiving his sins. Though this story also appears in Mark and Luke, and it is the only story of Jesus forgiving a person’s sins before healing him. This doesn’t mean this has to be the only time Jesus did this, but this is the only record we have of Him doing this.
 - c. So why did Jesus start with the forgiveness of sins when the paralytic came for physical healing? We don’t know.
 - (1) We do know that God, in the Blessings and the Curses linked behavior to health. And we know that Job’s three friends inferred his troubles were the result of some sin or failing on his part.
 - (2) Yet when asked who was at fault for a man’s blindness, Jesus said, “It was neither that this man sinned, nor his parents; but it was so that the works of God might be displayed in him” (**John 9:3**). In other words, sin was not the cause of blindness in this case.

- (3) And James, though he links sickness with sin does not say sin must be the cause or is always the cause. **James 5:14-15**, “Is anyone among you sick? Then he must call for the elders of the church and they are to pray over him, anointing him with oil in the name of the Lord; [15] and the prayer offered in faith will restore the one who is sick, and the Lord will raise him up, **and if** he has committed sins, they will be forgiven him.”
- d. I think the wise way of dealing with sickness is to begin by examining ourselves and asking God to see if there is some reason of our own making that has led to this sickness. If so, we ought to deal with it – even as we continue seeking healing. If not, we should just seek the healing.
4. In **thinking evil in their hearts**, the religious leaders took one part of a situation and assumed the worst about Jesus. They saw what He was doing as acting as if He was God – which to them was blasphemy as stated in **Numbers 15:30**, “The person who does anything defiantly, whether he is native or an alien, that one is **blaspheming** the LORD; and that person shall be cut off from among his people.”
- a. However, their perception of reality was built on an assumption, and it was in assuming the worst that motivated them to label Jesus’ behavior in the worst possible way – **He blasphemes**.
- (1) Though they did not say it out loud, they saw Jesus as totally evil, without any good, deserving to be ostracized. In other words, they demonized Him.
- (2) And yet, because it was known in the surrounding areas that Jesus had healed many before this paralytic came for healing, they must have known He had some good in Him – yet they ignored that part of Jesus’ life.
- b. My purpose in bringing this to your attention is the ease with which we demonize people who fail us, or wrong us, or who are immoral or dishonest or generally evil.
- (1) In our day, we don’t keep such thoughts inside, we blurt them out – to influence others to see the one we have demonized in the same way we do.
- (2) This has become especially flagrant when discussing politics. And so I am urging you to guard your thoughts and your words in regard to anyone.
- (3) In your **thoughts**, consider the whole person. See the good and the bad. Keep a balanced view so that you are able to praise the good and condemn the bad. In your **words**, avoid exaggera-

tions, all or nothing comments, and language that presents the person as either a saint or a demon.

- c. Remember, out of your heart comes the words you choose. If you don't demonize people in your heart, you won't demonize them with your mouth.

B. **Matthew 9:9-13**, 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. [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. [11] When the Pharisees saw this, they said to His disciples, "Why is your Teacher eating with the tax collectors and sinners?" [12] But when Jesus heard this, He said, "It is not those who are healthy who need a physician, but those who are sick. [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."

1. In calling Matthew, a tax collector, to follow Him, Jesus gave NT reality to these OT words, "Man looks at the outward appearance, but the LORD looks at the heart" (**1 Samuel 16:7**).
 - a. Jesus looked beyond what Matthew's job said about him, whereas the Pharisees looked no further than a person's job (*tax collector*) or life-style (*sinner*) to determine if a person was worthy of their attention and help. It was for this reason that they questioned why Jesus would give attention to or even eat with the likes of tax collectors and sinners.
 - b. And when you couple this story with the Pharisees (1) criticism of Jesus healing on the Sabbath, their (2) criticism of the disciples picking and eating grain on the Sabbath, and (3) the parable about the good Samaritan, it appears that the Pharisees generally overlooked human need when determining if a person was worthy of their attention and help.
 - c. However, in response to Jesus, Matthew got up and followed Him – and became one of His disciples. The Pharisees, on the other hand, turned against Jesus, even to the point of having Him crucified. If Matthew's and the Pharisees' responses to Jesus is an indication of what was in their heart, then looking past their outward appearance was wise.
 - d. What do you look at when determining if a person is worthy of your attention and help?

- (1) Without question, it is wise to take into consideration what is on the outside, what we can see – but to make that the only or most important consideration results in being as foolish as the Pharisees.
 - (2) Therefore, may we take Jesus’ approach and go beyond the outward appearance to consider a person’s need and what is in their heart.
2. The Pharisees’ question, “Why is your Teacher eating with the tax collectors and sinners?” was really a criticism in the form of a question. Have you ever used this method yourself?
 - a. Jesus responded by saying, “It is not those who are healthy who need a physician, but those who are sick.” Jesus affirmed this truth in **John 3:17**, “For God did not send the Son into the world to judge the world, but that the world might be saved through Him.”
 - b. So why did the Pharisees criticize Jesus over eating with tax collectors and sinners? They were more interested in appearances, that is, in looking godly than being godly, and in upholding their theology and religious practices than helping the needy and saving the lost.
 - c. And yet, the Pharisees were just as spiritually sick as the tax collectors, prostitutes, and other sinners whom Jesus ate with.
 - (1) However, based on their outward appearances, they choose to deceive themselves into believing they were spiritually healthy, whereas the tax collectors and sinners knew their condition because of the religious culture’s view of them.
 - (2) In other words, the sinners knew they needed a physician – which opened some of them up to the words of Jesus and the gospel message.
3. How do you treat the sinners around you? Do you despise and avoid them as much as possible? Do you embrace and treat them as if you support their life-style? Or do you love them, and treat them as you want to be treated while inviting them to turn from their sin to God, and making it clear you do not support their life-style. May we, who have experienced God’s gracious forgiveness and salvation, treat those around us with the love and honesty we have received and they need.
4. Jesus concluded His response to the Pharisees by saying, “Go and learn what this means: ‘I desire compassion (*mercy, benevolence*), and not sacrifice (***Hosea 6:6***).”
 - a. In telling the Pharisees to “Go and learn what an OT passage means,” Jesus was exhorting them to study their scriptures and

figure out what is more important to God so that they would know how God wants them to live.

- (1) We need to be doing the same thing. God's word is our source of truth, wisdom, and practical teaching about how we are to live – in every area of life.
 - (2) However, God's word covers a lot of topics and is not always easily understood – especially by a new believer. Therefore, if we are to go and learn, we must spend years studying, pondering, and seeking help from those who know more than we in order to learn the most we can about how to live.
- b. The Pharisees devoted themselves to learning and living according to the outward practices of their religion, but that is not enough – as is obvious from some of their attitudes and behavior.
 - (1) And if it was not enough for them, learning to look like a Christian on the outside is not enough for us.
 - (2) We must pursue God's truths and ways until our understanding and application of them changes us on the inside.
5. In His response to the Pharisees, Jesus quoted **Hosea 6:6**, "For I delight in loyalty (*Hebrew: loving-kindness, mercy*) rather than sacrifice, and in the knowledge of God rather than burnt offerings."
- a. In other words, God is happy – when after doing wrong – we want to make things right with Him by bringing a sacrifice or confessing our sin.
 - b. But what He wants most, what He delights in, what makes Him the happiest, is when we are godly and loving toward everyone, and intentional in sowing the seeds of truth and God's word with whomever will listen and whenever we can.

III. Conclusion

- A. It is way too common to think more highly of ourselves than we ought and less of others than is fair or true. It is way too common to help those who are easy to help and who show appreciation for the help given. It is way too common to unwisely help more than we ought or give no help at all. Finding the balance in all these areas is not natural, but it can become natural by God's gracious help, self-honesty, humility, and holding the example of Jesus as the example we choose to imitate.