Matthew 9 • “According to your faith be it done to you”

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Good morning. We're going through the Book of Matthew here on Sunday morning. We're taking a chapter each week, which is crazy. I mean, this chapter alone has like seven different topics essentially that Jesus covers. And normally I would have taken seven weeks to go through a chapter like this.

I think I told you guys before that the last time we went through Matthew, we took two and a half years to get through this one book. And now we're scooting through a chapter at a time so we better start with prayer.

Father, we thank You so much for the opportunity to gather this morning. What a blessing Lord to be here today, to be with brothers and sisters in Jesus. Thank You, Lord, also for the people that are tuning in online and watching us live this morning as well from around the world.

We just thank You, Lord that every heart has a desire to hear from You. And we pray that You would tune our hearts to your voice, that we would hear Your grace and the ministry of wisdom and insight from the Word.

We thank You Father and ask You to minister among us. And teach us today in Jesus precious name, we pray, amen.

All right. Verse number 1. *“And getting into a boat he crossed over and came to his own city.* (and that would be Capernaum) ² *And behold, some people brought to him a paralytic, lying on a bed.” (ESV)*

Now, as I told you guys last week, Matthew tends to be a little more abbreviated as he talks about these various events in the ministry of Jesus. But it's Mark that actually tells us how uniquely these guys brought this paralytic to Jesus because we're told that the crowds were such that they couldn't get close to Jesus. There's just too many people crowding in and this was a common thing back in those days. Even though Jesus was in the house there were people piled in there, and even spilling out into the courtyard, and there was just no way they could

get a paralytic lying on a mat, carried by four people, even close to Jesus. And so these four men came up with this idea to climb up on the roof.

You're thinking about this guy's already paralyzed. I don't know. Maybe they thought what worse can we do to, if we drop him, it's like he's paralyzed. Anyway, they climb up on the roof of the house, and they decide that they're going to lower him down right in front of Jesus. So they start digging through the roof if you can imagine. And I don't know, I think it's pretty clever.

But more than that, more than that, it demonstrated their faith. It demonstrated their faith and their determination. We are not going to let anything stop us from getting this guy to Jesus, right? Yeah, exactly.

And we're still in the middle of verse 2. And that's exactly what Jesus saw. Look at there. It says, *"And when Jesus saw their faith,..."* And that's critical right there, *"...when Jesus saw their faith,* (it says) *he said to the paralytic, "Take heart, my son; your sins are forgiven."* And the four guys responded by saying we brought him here to get healed, not to have his sins forgiven.

No, I just threw that in there, but you understand that's a little bit of a deviation from their goal, right? You do know that. I would imagine that some of them were wondering, I wonder why He said that. We brought our friend here to get healed, and Jesus is saying, *"your sins are forgiven."* And they're maybe even wondering, is that all He's going to say and we're just going to pack him out of here now?

But I think it's worth asking, why did Jesus say to the paralytic, *"your sins are forgiven."* Why? Why say that? I mean, clearly these four guys brought this man to him to have his body healed, not to specifically have his sins forgiven. So why? Did Jesus do this?

And frankly, I don't think there's any reason to believe that his condition was caused by his sin. That doesn't seem to be really included in any of the conversation or our thought processes here.

Honestly, I got to tell you I think what's going on is that Jesus is addressing mankind's more pressing problem. Did you hear me? I think Jesus is addressing mankind's more pressing problem. And that is sin and our need to be forgiven from it. Because, as horrible as I'm sure it is to be paralyzed, I've actually experienced a little bit of that.

I was 15 years old when I was in a pretty serious car accident and I was actually paralyzed on my right side, my right arm and my right leg for a period of time. I was in the hospital for almost a month while they were getting it all back. And that was weird enough and a little bit scary. And I can imagine what it's like to be completely paralyzed to the point where you can't move.

But you know what? That's nothing compared to living in eternity separated from God. You with me? A lifetime of paralysis is nothing compared to living an eternity separated from God. And so Jesus is addressing the more pressing issue.

Sometimes we get, well not sometimes, actually it's pretty often, we get requests into the office, prayer requests. Some of you guys get them on Calvary Connection if you're on there, you hear people or see people sending in prayer requests for a family member or a friend. Or somebody who's in need of some kind of a physical touch. And it is very common for people to leave out whether or not the person is a believer or whether they are unsaved.

And I got to tell you, I think that's critical information because, we're happy to pray for people, always happy to pray for people. But if our concern for that individual ends with just their physical situation, or their physical well-being, what good have we really done? What good have we done?

Even if God supernaturally heals someone from whatever their infirmity or whatever their issue is, and they go for the rest of their life problem free related to that particular physical issue or whatever. And then they die without Christ, what good have we done? That's a question we need to ask you guys.

Can I just encourage you guys, when you send a note to Calvary Connection to pray for somebody, include in your note whether they know the Lord or not. It's really important information. We pray differently if you write and you say, hey, my uncle, needs prayer. He had a stroke and he can't move, or he can't speak, or whatever. And you, we really need prayer. Let us know if your uncle knows the Lord because we're going to include that in our prayer. We're not just going to pray that he's healed. We're going to pray that he is born again, because that is so incredibly important.

I love how Jesus before He heals this man's paralysis, He deals first and foremost with the most important aspect of this man's life and that's his eternal future. But we learned that Jesus's statement about his sins being forgiven didn't go over very well with some who were there.

Verse 3 says, *"And behold, some of the scribes said to themselves, "This man is blaspheming."* And by the way, they considered blasphemy, anything that a mere man would say that only God could say. And there's different reasons, different things that are called blasphemy, but this is one of them.

To claim or to lay claim to something that only God can lay claim to would be considered blasphemy. And they said this in this particular case, because the scribes believed that God being, the ultimate judge is the only one who can forgive sins. And guess what? They were right. The scribes were right. They were correct. They were not wrong. And Jesus did not say to them, you're wrong because they weren't wrong. Only God can declare complete forgiveness of sins.

Now, when I say that only God can forgive sins, I know you can forgive sins for things that people did against you, but that's not the same as declaring someone forgiven by God. We cannot randomly declare that someone's sins are forgiven by God. And I use the word randomly, very purposefully there because we can tell people their sins are forgiven, but only under certain circumstances or conditions.

If that person has confessed their sins and they have sought God for forgiveness, we can say to that person, you know what? God's promise is that He forgives you. But we can say that because He said so. Had He not said so, we couldn't say it. You with me? We can only say what He told us we could say. We can't presume just to go around telling people, well, God says, when there's not a validation of what God says. You with me? People do go around doing that, by the way, all the time.

This is the interesting thing about this situation. I can say to you, I forgive you if you've done something against me, but I can't... But what Jesus said to this man is very different. The scribes were correct in identifying that what Jesus said is something only God can say.

Look with me again at verse 4, or let's keep reading in verse 4. *"But Jesus, knowing their thoughts, said, "Why do you think evil in your hearts? [5] For which is easier, to say, 'Your sins are forgiven,' or to say, 'Rise and walk'?"* All right.

Now I want you to understand the question that Jesus is posing to these scribes, because it's really masterful knowing that only God can forgive sins. All right. He asks them. If only God can say that, then which of these two statements is actually easier, *"Your sins are forgiven, or…, 'Rise and walk'?"* It's a little bit

of a trick question, because technically speaking, both of them are equally hard and something only God can do. You with me? But Jesus knew that only one of these things would be instantly validated in their sight.

In other words, if somebody said, I declare to you in the name of God, your sins are forgiven. I can say that to somebody but there's really no way to say, to know for sure if what I just said was true. There's no way to instantly validate that. You with me? I can say it, but I would be saying it presumptuously.

However, if I say to a paralytic, rise up, take up your mat and go home. Well, if he doesn't rise up, take up his mat, and go home, they're going to know me instantly as a fraud. Okay, so that's the important thing about it.

What Jesus is really doing, and this is what's so masterful about it, what He's really doing is He's challenging them to watch as He proves His authority to do both. He said something which He could not instantly prove He had the authority to do. So what he does, He says, so now I'm going to do something I also have the authority to do and for which you will instantly see the result. And I'm going to prove by that, that I have the authority to do both of those things, right?

Verse 6. And that's exactly what He says. *"But that you may know* (all right) *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.""* And it says in verse 7, *"And he rose and went home."*

And the way Matthew tells it, the guy rolled up his mat and just walked away. I doubt that's what happened, I mean, I'm sure there's more going on. There's more things said. I'm sure he got up and probably praised the Lord, probably even did a little happy dance all the way home. I don't know.

But you see, this is what's so interesting about this whole thing, is that Jesus is exposing the error of the scribes here. And the error of the scribes is not that they said something wrong. When they said, or thought in their hearts, or whatever, this guy's blaspheming, only God can forgive sins. That was not in error.

The error was failing to recognize the person who was speaking. The error was not to recognize that we are in the presence of God the Son, who has the authority to not only say, son, *"your sins are forgiven*," but rise, take up your mat, and walk. Right? Now we're going to find out that the scribes were not the

only ones in error. Look at verse 8. *"When the crowds saw it, they were afraid, and they glorified God, who had given such authority to men."*

And again, that's see the crowds had the same error. They failed to recognize that this was not simply God giving authority to men. It was God's very own presence among them in the person of Jesus Christ; God in human flesh.

Verse 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."*

I think it's really interesting that, Matthew is writing this account and he has to put himself in here, can't leave that part out. And by the way, I know you know this, but the move that Jesus made of calling Matthew to be one of His disciples, following Him would have been highly criticized by the Jews. Because tax collectors were considered the worst of the worst. They were traitors and betrayers of the nation of Israel because they were Jews who collected tax for the enemy.

Not only did they collect tax for the enemy, but they gouged people. Rome allowed them to gouge people and then pocket the difference. And some of them became very wealthy pocketing the difference. And so they were hated, by the general populace. Here's, I love it, but you got to love it don't you? Jesus comes to Matthew, and says, here, come follow Me. I'm sure the other disciples are going, oh boy.

And it says in verse 10 that, *"And as Jesus reclined at table in the house,* (and that's, by the way, that's Matthew's house) *behold, many tax collectors and sinners came and were reclining with Jesus and his disciples."*

And by the way, when you see the term sinners there, don't think that Matthew is telling you that these people are sinners and the other people weren't. The term sinners is used to describe notorious sinners. In other words, people who live their sinful lifestyle, they don't close the door in their home, and go into a bedroom, or another room of the house to sin. They do it out in the open. And, you know what I'm saying?

So this is like pride parades. It'd be a modern equivalent. We're not going to do this behind closed doors. We're going to do this so that everybody knows we're doing it. They were what the Bible calls sinners but it was a word that meant, notorious. All right?

And it says that, here's Jesus sitting at a table with all these people and they're reclining with Him. Verse 11. *"And when the Pharisees saw this, they said to his disciples, "Why does your teacher eat with tax collectors and sinners?" [12] But when he heard it, he said, "Those who are well have no need of a physician, but those who are sick. [13] Go and learn what this means: 'I desire mercy, and not sacrifice.' For I came not to call the righteous, but sinners.""*

Now, Jesus said this specifically because the Pharisees believed themselves to be spiritually healthy, and they weren't in need of any help. They believed themselves, in fact, to be superior to the common sinful rabble because they kept the law, at least in their estimation.

And because of that, they were unable to really see their true condition. They didn't really have an understanding of who they really were in terms of their sinful condition. And because of that, they couldn't hear what Jesus had to say, but these sinners, and these tax collectors, and these social outcasts, they knew they were sinners. And because of that, they listened to Jesus. Isn't that interesting?

There's this critical element of simply knowing, I'm a sinner, that makes me open to hearing God's voice. Simply knowing, I'm a sinner. Why do you think God sent John the Baptist to prepare the way for the Messiah? All he did, was awaken people to their understanding of their sin. That was his ministry. That was his mode of preparation for Messiah. He had one job, make people aware of the fact that they're sinners. He went around telling people, you're a sinner. You want to get baptized and turn from your sin. And because of that, people's hearts were open to the Messiah. Pretty crazy, isn't it? It's just amazing.

But when somebody goes around saying, well, I'm not so bad. I mean, compared to whoever, at least I'm not a politician, I'm not so bad. That person has their hearts closed. They're not going to hear, they're not going to hear the gospel.

Verse 14, *"Then the disciples of John* (and that is John the Baptist) *came to him, saying, "Why do we and the Pharisees fast, but your disciples do not fast?" [15] And Jesus said to them,* (listen to His response) *"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."*

Now He's referring to Himself as the bridegroom. He is the bridegroom. And He's basically saying My disciples or God's people who hear My voice are the bride in this metaphorical sort of a way. And so He says to them, how in the

world can the bride mourn when the bridegroom is right there in their midst. And what Jesus is doing is helping you and me to understand a little bit about the context of fasting. A lot of people ask about fasting. What about fasting? I don't understand fasting.

Well, Jesus helps us to understand a little bit of the context here by connecting the words fasting with mourning. And what He's essentially saying is, that fasting is something that people do when they recognize their situation as dire and perhaps even dangerous. And they need to press in on God in prayer. And so in order to press in without hindrance, fasting is a way of setting aside my daily comforts, and even my daily routine of eating, to press into God. I'm essentially communicating to God, this is more important.

And we, in our culture, and I think all throughout the ages, people have looked at eating as a relatively important process of our lives. And we know that we need to do it to sustain our very life, and yet the idea of fasting is saying, I'm taking even the most important elements of my daily routine and I am setting them aside for a season that I might press in on the Lord. That I might communicate with the Lord related to whatever happens to be going on.

Jesus goes on to say and this is important in verse 16 And 17. He says, *"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."* It's because a new garment hasn't shrunk yet. Yeah.

And then He says in 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."*

And what this passage of Scripture is all about is Jesus communicating that He is ushering in some changes. And this is really Jesus, just His way of saying, guys, just want you to know there are changes coming. Okay. I'm bringing in some new stuff where it's not going to be like the old stuff. This is going to be new.

And He's essentially saying this, if you try to attach the old stuff to the new stuff that I'm bringing, you're going to ruin both of them. Okay. And you guys have heard me many times say that the covenant that we have with our Lord Jesus Christ and with the New Testament church is very different from the covenant that God made with Israel through Moses, right? That is based on the law.

Our covenant is not based on the law, it's based on grace. And yet there are people still today, there were people back in Jesus's day, there are people today who are trying to merge the Old Covenant with the New Covenant. They're trying to put pieces of the Old Covenant into the New Covenant. Whether it's Sabbath keeping, or food laws, or keeping the Jewish festivals, or whatever. There's just this constant attempt by people to try to merge these. We're going to figure it in here somehow, and they're just… They're cramming it in there and trying to make it work.

And they're saying, Jesus is great and all that, but we're also going to do this. And I, can I just really warn you that some of it starts off in a very subtle and almost indiscernible sort of a way.

It may start off with some believers saying, what would be cool? It'd be cool here as Christians if we would, I think we would get a lot out of our understanding of what Jesus came to do, if we would begin to just really look into the Jewish feasts and start to keep those feasts like the Jews did. And it would be really, we're not going to do it because, as a means of salvation. And they'll say that at the beginning, but we're going to do it so that we can learn more about Jewish history. And the way God, spoke to Israel and how all those things are fulfilled in the person of Jesus Christ. And it'll be really cool and we'll learn more.

And it starts off wonderfully but little by little by little, legalism just begins to seep in to the whole equation. And pretty soon they're not doing it just for insight and fun and more understanding. They're doing it, they're beginning to realize or think that, now we've got to do this. And if we don't do it, then we're not right with God.

And now we're going to add on Sabbath keeping. And you know what, let's just kick Sunday to the curb and we're going to start meeting on Saturday because that is the Sabbath. You guys know that, right?

People say to me all the time, when did God change the Sabbath from Saturday to Sunday? And I say, never, it's always been Saturday. Well then why don't you keep it? That’s somebody who doesn't understand that you can't put new wine into old wineskins, because you see when you put… An old wineskin is already stretched as far as it's going to stretch. And you put new wine in there, and you seal it up, and they would hang it up in the rafters of the house, and they would let it sit and ferment. And the grape juice would ultimately become wine.

But during that fermentation process, it gives off gas, and it begins to bloat that wineskin. But you see, they put it in an old wineskin, and it can't stretch anymore. And so when it begins the fermentation process, it breaks the wineskin, and it goes all over the place. And it ruins both the wine and the wineskin. And the idea behind that is if you take something from the Old Covenant and you try to cram it into the New, you're going to ruin both of them.

God told the nation of Israel back in Jeremiah chapter 31, I'm going to make a New Covenant with you and it won't be like the Old one. And yet they didn't hear it. And there are people today who still don't hear it. And some of the people sitting in this room right now have been influenced by people, and institutions, and organizations, that have tried to cram the Old Covenant into the New, and it didn't work. You ruin both of them.

And that's exactly what the people in the region of Galatia were doing. And Paul wrote to them in his letter to those people and he said, I am just, I am astonished that you are so quickly deserting the one who called you by faith. I'm astonished. And he says, and here you are turning to a new gospel. And then he said this, which is no gospel at all. (Galatians 1:6-7) You take the new gospel and you try to change it. You don't end up with another gospel. You end up with nothing.

The reason the gospel means good news it's because we're saved by what Jesus did, not what we do. That's what makes it good news. Because it's not dependent on you so there you go.

Verse 18. Look with me there. *"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.""* And we know from the other gospel accounts, this man's name was Jairus. He served as a ruler for a local synagogue there.

"[19] And (it says that) *Jesus rose and followed him, with his disciples. [20] And behold,* (and this means basically along the way) *a woman who had suffered from a discharge of blood for twelve years came up behind him and touched the fringe of his garment, [21] for she said to herself, "If I only touch his garment, I will be made well." [22] Jesus turned, and seeing her he said, "Take heart, daughter;…"*

The fringe of my garment has made you well. You guys are looking at your Bible going, what is he reading? I just threw that in there. It doesn't say that, does it? It doesn't say, the fringe of my garment has made you well.

What does it say? It says, *"your faith has made you well."* Doesn't it? Your faith has made you well. And it says, *"And instantly the woman was made well."*

Now the woman, as we've said many times, she focused on touching the fringe of Jesus's robe, but Jesus clarified in His response to her that the real element that made the healing happen was her faith. It wasn't the fringe of His garment. Right. He didn't say, the fringe of my garment made you. He said, your faith.

You see, it wouldn't have mattered whether she touched the fringe of His garment or the top of His garment, or the sleeve of His garment, or, it wouldn't have mattered. It wouldn't have mattered if she didn't touch his garment at all.

Whatever she believed, it was her faith. If she would have said, if I come within five feet of this guy, I just know that I'm going to be healed. She could have said, I'm going to get in such a place where His shadow falls across me as he walks by. That would have been enough. Because, and again, it's not my shadow made you well. It's your faith.

Different people have a different touch points that they consider to be a place of faith. You remember the old televangelists that used to have people hold, put their hand on the TV to get healed. You know what? Some of them got healed. Oh, I want to buy one of those TVs. Glory. It's miraculous TV.

Now, yeah, here's the point. We look at people, we say, touching your TV, that's really stupid, right? But you know what? God doesn't sit up in heaven judging people when they have faith. When people have faith, He honors their faith. Even if it sounds to you and me ridiculous.

If somebody puts their faith in God, in some particular something that they, whatever they're going to do, Lord, if I just. Just like the woman said, if I just touched the hem of His garment, that'll be enough. God doesn't sit there and go, okay, I'm withholding this thing because that's dumb. Garments and fringes have nothing to do with healing, and you need to know better.

He's not sitting up there being all judgmental. He's honoring their faith. And so we hear of these things that people do, and we roll our eyes. Oh, wow, that was really stupid. And God says, you know what? I love them. I love those people, because they put their faith in Me. And yeah, that was dumb, but they put their faith in Me and I'm going to honor that. Sometimes we get so fixated on external things. What God cares about is the condition of our hearts. He cares

about our faith. He cares about our faith being strong. Let me show you something Jesus said in Luke chapter 8 up on the screen. He says,

Luke 8:18 (ESV)

"...when the Son of Man comes, will he find faith on the earth?"

"...when the Son of Man comes, (here's the question God asks) *will he find faith on the earth?"*

What do you think? I'm not asking you to speak out I'm just asking you to think about it. What do you think? Do you think when Jesus comes He'll find faith on the earth? You think he'll find people who have faith, or you think you'll have people who are constantly doubting and really don't care? Faith is critical.

Verse 23, *"And when Jesus came to the ruler's house and saw the flute players and the crowd making a commotion,"* And by the way, they were hired mourners. People hired people when someone died to come to their home and wail and mourn because it was considered to be showing respect for the deceased.

It says that, *"[24] he said, "Go away, for the girl is not dead but sleeping." And they laughed at him. [25] But when the crowd had been put outside,* (and that's what you have to do sometimes to those who don't have any faith) *he went in and took her by the hand, and the girl arose. [26] And the report of this went through all that district.*

We just went through the Book of Leviticus on Wednesday night, and we learned that you touch a corpse and you're unclean for 7 days. You can't worship with the community of Israel for 7 days. I just love the fact that Jesus doesn't become unclean, the girl becomes alive. That is just so cool.

Verse 27. *"And as Jesus passed on from there, two blind men followed him, crying aloud, "Have mercy on us, Son of David." [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?""* I want you to notice the question. He says, *"Do you believe that I am able…?"* Did you catch that? Do you believe that I'm able?

Let me ask you a question. Do you believe God is able to do what you want Him to do? That's the question He asked these guys. And *"They said to him, "Yes, Lord." [29] Then he touched their eyes, saying,* (note this again) *"According to your faith be it done to you." [30] And their eyes were opened. And Jesus sternly warned them, "See that no one knows about it." [31] But* (it says)

they went away and spread his fame through all that district." But once again, we see in this passage that critical element of faith, believing that God is able.

And again, (verse 32) *"As they were going away, behold, a demon-oppressed man who was mute was brought to him."* Can I just tell you here that the Jews would have considered this man a lost cause? And the reason is they believe that in order to cast a demon out of a man, you had to somehow trick the demon into giving the demon giving the name, his name to you. You had to somehow get him to say his name and then if you could get him to do that, you could use that as a, I don't know, some kind of a tool to extricate, this demon or so forth.

This situation was unique in that this demon was clever enough, apparently, that he made this man mute, couldn't speak. He protected himself in a sense, speaking of the demon, from being cast out because you can't trick him into giving his name.

But what's interesting is verse 33, doesn't even, it just says *"And when the demon had been cast out,…"* Jesus didn't do any of that hocus pocus. He just cast out the demon. He just said, hey, you out and that was it. And the demon came out. And it says, when that happened, *"the mute man spoke. And the crowds marveled,…"*

Do you see why they marveled? It wasn't just that a demon got cast out of a man. It was the demon got cast out of a mute. That was amazing. They were like, whoa, mind blown. Who is this Jesus guy? And what do they say? They say, *"Never was anything like this seen in Israel."* This guy breaks all the rules. Yeah so they marveled.

Verse 34, *"But the Pharisees said, "He casts out demons by the prince of demons."* Well, this statement is not only reprehensible, it is also, and I think we can all tell a desperate attempt on the part of the Pharisees to distract and confuse the people concerning what Jesus was doing.

And yet, all the while, this is what their own Bible, these are the religious leaders, you guys. These are the people that are supposed to be teaching everybody else what the Bible says. Well, you know what the Bible says in their Old Testament? Let me show you this on the screen from Isaiah chapter 35.

Isaiah 35:5-6 (ESV)

Then the eyes of the blind shall be opened, and the ears of the deaf unstopped; then shall the lame man leap like a deer, and the tongue of the mute sing for joy.

Then the eyes of the blind shall be opened, and the ears of the deaf unstopped; then shall the lame man leap like a deer, (look at this) *and the tongue of the mute sing for joy.*

They all knew this was a Messianic promise and they saw Jesus doing the very things their own Scripture foretold that He would do. And yet they didn't believe it. They didn't believe it. Instead, they blaspheme. Yeah, it's a terrible, terrible thing.

Verse 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."*

I want to call to your attention one more time, well, one more time, I'm sure I'll do it again. But, did you notice that you have both teaching and proclaiming in that passage? It says He was, *"teaching in their synagogues and proclaiming the gospel of the kingdom."* The word proclaiming, is the exact same Greek word that is translated, preaching. And so we see here again that Jesus was teaching and preaching. And you guys should know the difference between the two.

Preaching is proclaiming. Teaching is instructing. He was doing both. And there needs to be both going on in our churches. There needs to be preaching and there needs to be instruction. Often there is not both of those things happening. And that's sad, unfortunately.

Verse 36. Okay. Stop here for a minute as I read this, I want you to hear the heart of God. Okay. As I read verse 36, just hear the heart of God. *"When he saw the crowds, he had compassion for them, because they were harassed and helpless, like sheep without a shepherd."*

We've already made note of the fact that the religious leaders of Israel were ignoring the Word of God, ignoring the prophecies about Messiah, and even trying to turn the people away from him by making all kinds of ridiculous claims that He was in cahoots with the devil.

Here you've got the religious leaders who are doing this junk. And what's the result with the people, they're sheep without a shepherd, right? They're harassed, and they're helpless, and they don't have a shepherd. And I suppose, you could read this just the way we have as an indictment against the religious leaders. But I also want you to hear and see God's heart and the heart of God is

represented in this verse by saying, *"he had compassion…"* And I want you to see that just as much.

It's one thing to be angry at the Pharisees and get all, frothing at the mouth over what they were doing, or not doing, but I want you to see what Jesus was doing. He was having compassion. He had compassion because you see what you're seeing people is the heart of God. I mean, how many times can I say it? You're seeing the heart of God.

When we consider the word, compassion, we need to connect it to the heart of our Heavenly Father. Jesus came to show us what the Heavenly Father is like. You know what He's like? Compassionate. You'd probably never take the time to look up the word compassion in a dictionary, because we all know what it means, but I like doing it anyway. Let me put it up on the screen. Here you go.

Com•pas•sion
noun
sympathetic pity and concern for the sufferings or misfortunes of others.

Compassion: Sympathetic pity and concern for the sufferings or misfortunes of others.

By the way, this is a secular definition. You want to know what the literal Greek definition of the word compassion is? It means to be moved in the inward parts. That's what it literally means.

And Matthew, interestingly enough, uses this word 5 times in his Gospel of Jesus. 5 times he declares that Jesus looked with compassion upon the people and I find that interesting. And by the way, this is a Greek word that does not appear outside of the Gospels. It is used uniquely for Jesus. Isn't that interesting?

God has a compassionate heart. I just wanted to announce that to you today. Thank you very much. God has a compassionate heart. You need to walk away from this service today knowing if you hear nothing else that I say today, know this, God is compassionate. And He is particularly compassionate in your circumstances that are dire and painful. He has compassion and we see it in a lot of places in the Bible. Let me show you a couple on the screen. Psalm chapter 103.

Psalm 103:13 (ESV)

As a father shows compassion to his children, so the LORD shows compassion to those who fear him.

As a father shows compassion to his children, so the LORD shows compassion to those who fear him.

And Isaiah chapter 49,

Isaiah 49:13 (ESV)

Sing for joy, O heavens, and exult, O earth; break forth, O mountains, into singing! For the LORD has comforted his people and will have compassion on his afflicted.

Sing for joy, O heavens, and exult, O earth; break forth, O mountains, into singing! For the LORD has comforted his people and will have compassion on his afflicted.

See, this is the heart of the Lord. This is God's heart and I want you to see it. It's who He is. And what that means you guys, is that we don't have to prevail upon God to be compassionate. We don't have to say, oh God, please be compassionate. You don't have to do that, people.

He's all, it's already there. He is compassionate. He doesn't just act in a compassionate manner. That's describes you and me. We can act compassionately. He is compassionate and He cares that people are saved.

Look at verse 37, *"Then he said to his disciples, "The harvest is plentiful,* (in other words, there's a lot of people who are needing to hear about the Savior) *but the laborers are few;"* And so He gives us something to do *"[38] therefore pray earnestly to the Lord of the harvest to send out laborers into his harvest."*

And this is a word that Jesus gives to the body of Christ, telling us, instructing us to pray for workers in the harvest field. But I want you to notice something about what He tells us to do.

Did you notice that He doesn't ask us to pray that our colleges and seminaries would start pumping out laborers? He doesn't pray that. He doesn't say, so pray that your colleges would start really encouraging people to get out there and evangelize.

What He says is that we are to pray to the Lord for Him to send out laborers. Did you catch that? In other words, we're not just looking for people. We're looking for people who are called, who are gifted, and who are sent out by God, not by man.

You see, this is the reason, this is so important for us to see as we wrap up here this morning is because we get messed up with this. And we get away from the whole idea of calling and anointing. And I know that the word anointing has been used and abused by some churches and groups and they talk about it.

I had somebody write me the other week and they said, is it appropriate to, and we can we anoint ourselves? No, the answer is no. God does The anointing comes from God, and we can call it a calling. We can also call it a gifting.

He gives the grace, and there are some people to whom God gives the grace, especially to evangelize and to go out and be workers in the kingdom of God, you with me?

Now, here's the deal. The Bible says that we're all to do the work of an evangelist. Did you know that? It tells us Paul, Paul writes in one of his letters, do the work of an evangelist. (2 Timothy 4:5) And that means that we're supposed to be prepared as Peter tells us, to give an answer to anyone who asks us to give a reason for the hope that we have, right? (1 Peter 3:15) We're supposed to be prepared to do that. That's doing the work of an evangelist.

Problem is, I'm not an evangelist and I'm willing to bet that some of you aren't either. In other words, we don't have the anointing or the gifting from the Lord to evangelize, to share our faith. It doesn't mean we're off the hook. We're supposed to be prepared, right, to give our faith, or to share our faith with someone who asks.

But we're all supposed to pray as well, that God would call, gift, and send out laborers into the harvest fields. I don't think we've done a very good job of it so we're going to do it right now.

Let's stand together and as we close in prayer this morning, we're going to pray for the Lord of the harvest to send out workers into the harvest field,

By the way, if you need prayer this morning we'll have our prayer team up front here to pray with you. Feel free to come on up and receive prayer for whatever is going on, but let's just pray together.

Father, we're going to take time here now this morning to be obedient to YOUR WORD. Something we need to do more often. But You told us here to pray to You, to send out people into the harvest field.

We know that involves bringing people to a place of calling them and gifting them, and then sending them out. So Father God, we ask You to do that in the name of Jesus Christ.

Lord, call people, gift them, and send them forth to declare the Gospel and to bring people into the kingdom because Lord, we know that you are a God of compassion, and you care that people hear the Gospel before it's too late.

And Father, I pray in Jesus name that we would also all be prepared to do the work of an evangelist by being ready to give an answer to anyone who might ask us to explain our faith.

Father, increase our faith. We've seen the importance in this study of faith over and over again. And we pray Lord God, that as we walk through life, we would walk strengthened in our faith, always believing that You are able to do exceedingly, and abundantly beyond what we could either ask or think. We ask You to do this work, Lord.

And we ask You, Lord, that in these last days of the last days, that you would empower each one of us to share the love of Jesus with whomever we come in contact and whoever is willing to hear. Because Lord, we know that not everybody is willing to hear, but we pray for those who are, that their hearts would truly be open to hear Your voice, to hear Your call, to draw them into the kingdom.

We thank You Father for this time. We praise You for Your goodness and we ask Your blessing upon each of us as we go from this place. In the name of Jesus Christ, our Savior, and all God's people said together, amen.

Have a good rest of your day.

Drive safe.