

Matthew 9:1-13

“And he entered into a ship, and passed over, and came into his own city [Capernaum]. 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. And, behold, certain of the scribes said within themselves, This *man* blasphemeth. And Jesus knowing their thoughts said, Wherefore think ye evil in your hearts? For whether is easier, to say *Thy* sins be forgiven thee; or to say, Arise, and walk? But that ye many 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. And he arose, and departed to his house. But when the multitude saw *it*, they marvelled, and glorified God, which had given such powers unto men. And as Jesus passed forth from thence, he saw a man, named Matthew [Matthew Levi], sitting at the receipt of custom: and he saith unto him, Follow me. And he arose, and followed him. And it came to pass, as Jesus sat at meat in the house, behold, many publicans and sinners came and sat down with him and his disciples. And when the Pharisees saw *it*, they said unto his disciples, Why eateth your Master with publicans and sinners? But when Jesus heard *that*, he said unto them, They that be whole need not a physician, but they that are sick. 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.”

True Friends of faith, Jesus heals a paralytic

Matthew chapter 9, we have come across through the storm, and the demoniacs at Gadera, and now we have Jesus coming back to Capernaum. **“And he entered into a ship, and passed over, and came into his own city** [Capernaum had a population of 10,000, which would have been considered a city in those days].” Mark tells us clearly it’s Capernaum. **“And, behold, they brought to him a man sick of the palsy”**, he’s crippled, *paraludicus* in the Greek, we don’t know if it’s his arms and legs, but he’s a man whose paralyzed, **“lying on a bed. And Jesus** (notice this, it says) **seeing their faith,”** I wonder how he sees that? **“said unto the crippled man sick of**

the palsy, ‘Son, be of good cheer, thy sins be forgiven thee.’ And, behold, certain the scribes said within themselves, ‘This man blasphemeth.’...” Mark says the rest of the sentence, **“because only God can forgive sins.”** So, they’re right and wrong. Only God can forgive sins, correct. That this man Jesus blasphemeth is not. Either he is a blasphemer, and a deceiver, or he is who he says he is, and can forgive sins. **“And Jesus, knowing their thoughts said, ‘Wherefore think ye evil in your hearts?’”** Luke is the one who clearly tells us that there were gathered there (in Luke 5:17), ***‘It came to pass on a certain day, that he was teaching, that there were Pharisees, doctors of the Law, sitting by which were come out of every town of Galilee and Judah and Jerusalem. And the power of the Lord was present to heal...’*** So Jesus is sitting there, this crowd is there, they’re looking in the windows, they’re trying to fit into this room, and he’s talking, he’s not preaching. Evidently he’s sitting there and he’s talking to them, and teaching. And the crowd has swelled without the house. Remember when he was there before in Capernaum, it said the entire city (and the population about 10,000 at that time) had gathered at the door of Peter’s house. So we’re assuming this is Peter’s house again. And there’s this man who is crippled. We don’t know if he is born that way. We don’t know if it’s through some accident. Evidently he had laid for a long time, and had watched life go by, and had none of what we take for granted every day.

The Faith Of The Paralytic’s Four Friends

Fortunately (cf. Mark 2:1-12; Luke 5:17-26) he had four friends, it seems, that’s what he still did have, and they came. Now they have to be familiar with Jesus to a degree, because they’re determined to get their friend to him, very determined. So you can imagine this guy laying in his house, because it says at the end of the account Jesus sent him back to his house. This morning four guys walk in, and they grab him on a stretcher, on a litter, and start to take him out. He says, *‘Where we going?’* There’s nothing he can do about it, he’s the only guy who has no say in this whole picture. *‘Where we going?’ ‘Never mind. We’re going to see the Master. He’s healing people, lepers are being cleansed, people who are crippled are being healed.’* Now as they get to the crowd, they can’t get near the house, we’re told in both Luke and Mark. And you know these friends, how determined they are, because they’re gonna dig a hole in the roof, and let him down through the hole. Mark’s Gospel

tells us that, Mark was discipled by Peter, I think it was Peter's house, that's why Peter takes a note *'They dug a hole in my roof [laughter].'* And that's what the word there means, *'to dig.'* They start trying to get through the crowd, into the house. Imagine four guys with a cripple on a litter, and the place is jammed, there's doctors of the Law, there's Pharisees, the scribes, people have come from Jerusalem, they want to assess this. They had followed John the Baptist, now there's this new prophet, there's this new teacher, this rabbi, so they're coming, they want to hear, they want to see what's going on. And you can imagine, these guys bumping into everybody, they're trying to get in with a guy on a stretcher, and as determined as they are, I'm sure they had at least one or two arguments, *'Come on, man, move outa the way, our buddy's crippled.'* *'Get outa here, we were here first...'* you can just imagine, and we know they were like that, because they kind of pull back and brainstorm *'What are we gonna do now? We gotta get him in there, he's in there teaching, how we gonna get him in there?'* The guy's probably saying, *'Take me home, we can do this tomorrow, we can do this another day.'* So they decide they're going to go up on the roof, and they're going to dig a hole through the roof and let him down in the middle of the Bible study. So these guys, now they're up there, coming across the rooftops with their buddy, and the crowd outside is probably seeing them. Now they didn't have pitched roofs like we do today, they have a flat roof, and it was a favorite place in the evening. And in that day the building is built out of stone, the wooden structure is put across, with the sticks across that, and then a mud-type of a plaster that was thick. And the floor/roof was probably about this thick, sometimes it was tiled on top, and you could walk up there and it felt just like a concrete floor. So these guys get to the middle of this roof where Jesus is underneath. And they're probably drawing an X, *'Do you think he's here? No he's about over here.'* And the guy on the litter is saying *'What are you guys doing!? Get me outa here, you guys are crazy!'* So they start, it tells us in Mark, digging through the roof. So you can imagine the people sitting down in the Bible study, all of a sudden there's this banging, smashing, you know, people are looking up, plaster is starting to fall down. Then all of a sudden, somewhere a little hole finally opens up, and a little beam of light's coming through now. And you see, probably, Jesus looking up, everybody in the crowd's looking up, and fingers are coming through the hole. And they're pulling out the dirt to make room, and their friend must be up there saying, *'Take me home, pleasee don't do this to me, take me*

home! Do they make the hole long enough for the guy, *'No, we need to make it another foot longer.'* I don't think so, I think what they probably did is strapped him to the stretcher and let him down long-ways, you know [laughter], because this is a big project, coming through somebody's roof like this. Imagine the scene. Jesus is moved, there's dust in the air, there's plaster falling, and here comes this guy down like a cocoon on a stretcher and hits the ground and he falls down sideways. And he's laying there, he can't do anything. And you know, the doctors of the Law and everybody are dead silent now, because they've been hearing about Jesus and his power to heal, and they're watching. We're not sure, exactly, what he saw in the face of Jesus. But we know this, Jesus says **"Son, be of good cheer,"** *Technon* Mark uses, a very endearing term, he looks at him and he says, **"Child, be of good cheer, your sins are forgiven."** Now he's telling us something by saying this. Because the Sadducees are going to think *'Who can forgive sins but God?'* So what that is telling us is Jesus knows what these men are thinking, he knows what the Pharisees are thinking, he knows what the crowd's thinking. There's a couple guys up on the roof looking down like little kids, pointing at him, *'That's it, Lord, do it, here he is.'* **"And Jesus seeing their faith"**, well you could see their faith, because there's a big hole in the roof, you're right you can see their faith. **"take heart, your sins are forgiven."** And you know his friends are saying *'No, no, not the sins, the legs! We didn't bring him here to get his sins forgiven, we got it done to get the legs, that's why we brought him here.'*

Forgiveness of sins is much more important than healing

Jesus had come to do something much more important than physical healing, hadn't he? Because you see, this guy's gonna get up and walk home. I don't know how old he is. But I guarantee you within ten years, he's gonna have a cold, he might have pneumonia, he's gonna get arthritis, he's gonna have prostate problems, he's gonna get old. And the healing is going to wear out. The forgiveness is never going to wear out. The day that he closes his eyes in this world, that forgiveness would be alive and fresh. Healing is wonderful, but it's going to wear out. **'Child, your sins are forgiven, be of good courage.'** The religious leaders, rightly so, said **'Wait, this is blasphemy. Only God can forgive sins,'** and they're right. They knew somebody had to go to Jerusalem and offer a sin offering or trespass offering to obtain forgiveness. You just

didn't say to somebody *'Your sins are forgiven.'* (Unless, the point being, you're God in the flesh, the very Messiah, who was in his pre-incarnate form Yahweh, which Jesus was.) Moses (God through Moses) prescribed in the Law this guy's gotta get to Jerusalem. Even though he's a cripple, he's a sinner. So, you can't just say *'You're forgiven.'* When you went to the priest with your sacrifice, the priest didn't examine the worshipper, he examined the sacrifice. The fact that the worshipper was there with the sacrifice was a confession that the worshipper was sinful. The worshipper had spot and blemish. But the Law said you couldn't bring a lamb that was crippled or had a blemish or a spot, because the lamb had to look forward to the Messiah, to Christ (who, btw was sitting right there, saying ***'Child, your sins are forgiven, be of good courage.'***) And that's exactly what was happening here. The worshipper was paralyzed, but the Lamb was perfect. And he knows that the religious leaders are thinking *'This is wrong, you can't just say your sins are forgiven.'* But desiring to demonstrate something, in his love for those religious leaders, ***"Jesus, knowing their thoughts...knowing their thoughts, said, 'Why are you thinking this in your hearts?'"*** They don't have a chance to ask it, he knows they're thinking it, and that must shock them in the first place. He turns to them and says ***"Why are you thinking evil in your hearts?"*** The people are looking, because they don't know what these religious leaders are thinking, so the people must all turn and look at the religious leaders. ***"Whether is easier to say, You sins are forgiven, or to say Rise up and walk?"*** Two people are having a great time here, that's the paralytic and Jesus. I'm sure the paralytic, he had tears in his eyes, because he knew when Christ said to him, ***'Child, be encouraged, your sins are forgiven,'*** he knew something happened, and Jesus knew something happened. But nobody else did. So for the rest of us Jesus says, ***'Well, come on, what's easier to say, your sins are forgiven, or rise up and walk?'*** You can say to somebody *'Your sins are forgiven,'* and how do you know whether you have authority to say that or not? But if you say to somebody *'Rise up and walk,'* and they don't move, you know you don't have any authority. It's much easier to say *'Your sins are forgiven.'* But **verse 6**, Jesus says, ***"that you may know"*** that's what he wants to show, ***"that you may know that the Son of man has power on earth to forgive sins, then sayeth he to the sick of the palsy, 'Arise, take up thy bed, and go unto thy house.'" "Arise, take up thy bed, and go to thy house"***, next three words are amazing, ***"and he arose."*** You have to understand

what's happening here. My son [Pastor Joe Focht speaking here] had surgery on his ACL in July, and it was two weeks before rehab started. Do you know in two weeks, you lose, there's atrophy, you lose probably your quad muscle, in just two weeks. And there's months of rehab, to get your muscles working again, after two weeks of not using them. This guy's been laying there, probably arms paralyzed, spine paralyzed, legs paralyzed for a long time. When Jesus says **'Get up, take your bed and go home,'** he doesn't say *'But Lord, what about therapy? What about rehab?'* because Jesus speaks to him, and he speaks to the neurons and his nerves and to his muscles and to his structure, and it must have been like *Snap, Crackle, Pop!* bones are coming in place, muscles immediately regenerate. That's nothing for the one who said **"Let there be light...let the waters above the firmament be separated from the waters below the firmament."** **"Rise up, take your bed and go home.'** **And he arose and departed."** When the multitude saw it, it says, **"they marvelled,"** that's the word that means **"feared,"** **"and they glorified God which had given such power unto men."**

Something to note about forgiveness of sins

Now, some important things to take note of here. One is, **"so that you might know that the Son of man has power to forgive sins on earth."** Okay, **"on earth"**, because once you leave earth, it's too late to have your sins forgiven. He has authority to forgive sins on earth. [Comment: i.e. God's overall plan of salvation is being worked out in the here below, on earth. see <http://www.unityinchrist.com/plaintruth/battle.htm> to see one interpretation of what happens for those who do not accept Jesus in their normal lifetimes, in the present age of man. This interpretation differs from that which most of Christianity holds, but it is Biblical and I believe totally accurate.] He has power on earth to forgive sins. That means any of you here tonight who don't know him as your Saviour, he has authority, he is the same yesterday, today and forever, right now, tonight, to forgive the sin of any of you who in your heart are aware of that fact.

How Determined Are You To Get Your Friends To Jesus?

The other thing, as I look at this, you know these guys are determined, the paralytic's friends who cut open Peter's roof. How determined am I to get my friends to Christ? They had to do some things to get their friend to Christ. First they had to get their friend past people, didn't they. Because they tried to get to the house and people were all in the way. You know, isn't it sometimes people that keep, you want to tell your friend about Jesus, and your friend says *'Ya, what about all these phony guys on TV, what about all these guys who are begging for money all the time? What about this screwball and this...'* You have to get your friends past those people and get them to Jesus. *'No, don't look at that, don't look at this, don't look at that. Look at this, look at the claims of Christ. You examine them for yourself. Don't look at people, you'll never come.'*

Sometimes we have to remove the human structure, don't we, tradition. [To see the direct Biblical claims of who Jesus Christ is, see <http://www.unityinchrist.com/prophecies/1stcoming.htm>]

Sometimes somebody needs to tear a hole in the roof of a denomination and let some light in, so that people can see the Truth, Jesus. [Comment: Those are Pastor Joe Focht's words. And he without knowing it stated the SPS for this website, it is designed by God to **tear a hole in the roofs of all the Holy Spirit indwelt denominations, letting the light of Christ shine in, so their people can see Jesus, the Truth and the Way.**] I don't need to tear a hole in the roof, but do I spend 15 minutes on my knees to bring one of my friends to Christ? Grant me the determination in my heart that these men demonstrated to get their friend to Jesus. Am I willing to spend an hour and pray for somebody whose crippled, emotionally, physically, that needs his touch, to get them to Jesus? And to say *'Lord'* and to tear a hole in the roof and let the light of heaven shine through? And say *'Lord, touch my friend, bring my friend into the Kingdom, Lord, look down on them and say **'Child, be of good cheer, your sins are forgiven, they're sent away.'*** That's what he did for me and what he did for you, isn't it? These guys are good friends, I hope we all have friends like this. They'll say *'Where are you taking me?'* *'Never mind, some hole-in-the-wall, some hole-in-the-roof, just don't worry.'* [laughter] And here's the funny thing, you know, some of our friends, it would probably be easier to get them to Jesus if they were crippled, because they couldn't do anything, we'd just load them up and drive 'em to church. The problem is, they can get away. Not on our knees though, they can't get away from us then.

Tension building between two ministries

And remember, the tension is mounting now, between the Temple in Jerusalem and the ministry of Christ in Galilee. He had sent lepers [healed lepers] there, remember, to offer those sacrifices that had never been offered before, those found in Leviticus 14, never offered in the history of the nation of Israel, that chapter written for Caiaphas and Annas. Now the religious leaders have come, and they've seen him say **'Child, be of good cheer, your sins have been forgiven.'** And they said, *'No, that's not right, you can't do that, there's the sacrificial Law of Moses.'* You know the crowd that wouldn't let the paralytic in parted to let him out. As he came walking out, you know, it was like a sea, they all parted, they all looked at him. And you know his buddies up on the roof, they were scurrying to get back down to meet him, and what a scene that was. And Peter saying *'The roof, what about my roof!? The roof, you know, the roof.'* So, remarkable scene.

Matthew Levi, the tax collector

"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. 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. And when the Pharisees saw *it*, they said to his disciples, 'Why does your Teacher eat with tax collectors and sinners?' When Jesus heard that, he said to them, '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.'* [Hosea 6:6] For I did not come to call the righteous, but sinners, to repentance' (Matthew 9:9-13). (cf. Mark 2:13-17)

What was a tax collector back then?

"And as Jesus passed forth" passed by, verse 9, "from there, he saw a man named Matthew sitting at the receipt of custom. And he said unto him, 'Follow me.' And he arose and followed him." Mark says, "that Jesus saw Levi, the son of Alpheaus, a tax collector." (Mark 2:14) Luke says "Jesus saw Levi, the publican" (Luke 5:27-31). Now you have to

understand, there were three receipts of custom in that day, one was in Caesarea by the Sea, one was in Jericho, and one was in Capernaum. There was the head tax collector in each of those places, and he basically collected taxes on grain, which was 5 percent tax, he collected tax on wine, which was 20 percent tax, he collected a poll tax on each one of your sons if they were 13 or older, your daughters if they were 12 years or older, and on adult folks in the home, 1 percent each, and a property tax. Zacchaeus, in Jericho, whom we're going to meet, was a head tax collector. Matthew, the publican, is a different type of tax collector, he stood with a Roman guard behind him with a spear, and there was a road tax, he no doubt had receipt of custom, he had a booth set up somewhere. There was a road tax, there was a certain tax on burros and beasts of burden, there were certain taxes on carts, by the number of axles. [Now that sounds like the New Hampshire toll booths, almost identical! They use their collected revenues exclusively for road maintenance, and that is why their roads are so well paved and hold up so well, compared to Massachusetts and Maine roads. They don't allow any *politicians* to dip into this road tax.] We're finding archaeological records that there were taxes sometimes by the number of wheels. There were taxes on boats, if you could get your boat at dock at the Sea of Galilee you paid certain taxes, and there were taxes on the number of fish that you caught, and there were particular taxes called luxury taxes. Some say that Matthew was the man who taught Peter to curse. Matthew is that kind of tax collector. He's despised by the Jews, because he's a traitor, he's turned away from his own people, he's working for the hated Romans, and he's collecting taxes. You had to collect what was expected of Roman legal taxes, and anything above that which you could squeeze out of the people, that was your salary. So tax gatherers were despised for being traitors...the Romans wanted a Jewish tax collector because he knew the customs, he knew the people, he knew where he could get the money.

Who was Matthew Levi? What did he contribute to the Gospels?

This man's name is Levi [Matthew Levi, if you combine Matthew, Mark and Luke's Gospels]. He is either from Aaron's line or he is an ordinary Levite. [Aaron's line was within the tribe of Levi, it was the priestly line from which the high priest came from.] In Matthew's Gospel we have 99 quotations from the Old Testament, more than Mark, Luke and John combined.

More than that, 38 times we have Matthew saying to us, **“Jesus fulfilled...”**. Now that’s not just an Old Testament quotation, this is a man who knows the Old Testament, who is steeped in it. And he knows it enough to say 38 times to his readers **“Jesus fulfilled that which was spoken through the prophet, saying...”** He is a man, evidently, who saw the gouging of people in the Temple in Jerusalem, the Essenes were very critical of the religious climate in that day. Remember Jesus overturned the tables of the money changers, he cleansed the Temple in the beginning and the end of his ministry. Matthew had evidently grown up in the that, he had seen the hypocrisy of it, like kids grow up in the Church, and they see the hypocrisy, and they see people on TV gouging people for money, and that’s all they care about, and then the people [our kids] then turn away from the Church, because they want to put all of us into one “basket,” they want to paint all of us with one color. No doubt there were sincere Jews, but the religious leadership was corrupt. And the Sadducees were in cahoots with the Romans, they didn’t believe in the resurrection of the dead, they didn’t believe in angels, they didn’t believe in spirits. The Pharisees were trying to hold onto orthodoxy, but they were steeped in tradition by this time.

Jesus always sees a man, a woman, not a sinner

Mark says, **“Jesus passing by saw Levi the son of Alphaeus, a tax gatherer” (Mark 2:14)**. Luke says **“...he went forth, and saw a publican, named Levi...” (Luke 5:27)**, a hated work, there’s always publicans and sinners, put together. Matthew’s the one who says **“Jesus was passing by, and he saw a man...”**, he saw a man, and that’s what Jesus always sees. You might see a prostitute, Jesus sees a woman. You might see a drug-pusher, Jesus sees a man. You might see a pornographer, you might see someone whom you despise, *but Jesus sees a human being*, somebody at some point in time who was a toddler, someone who had been tucked into bed by a parent, someone who had been abused along the way, someone who had lost all trust in human beings at some point, someone who had been hardened and jaded and turned away. And God is able to look, as he looked into the heart of this man, and said, *‘Child, be of good cheer, your sins are forgiven,’* he’s able to see a man. **“...and he saw a man, called Matthew”**, Matthew means “the gift of God.” **“And he said to him, ‘Follow me.’”** The Greek tense is **“be following me.”** [Comment: Matthew Levi knew the Old Testament, so he knew all those prophecies

about the Messiah were being proved right in front of his eyes. Most people in society today are Biblically illiterate, they don't even know the Bible, let alone the Old Testament, so they may need a little bit of proof. The Bible itself says "Prove all things, hold fast to that which is good." See <http://www.unityinchrist.com/prophecies/1stcoming.htm> to see most of the prophecies Matthew knew proved Jesus' Messiahship.] He's looking at Jesus thinking '*This is the Messiah, this is what Isaiah said, I'm seeing it.*' And Jesus walks up to him, and looks into his face, and all he has to say is '**Come on, follow me, every day, for the rest of your life, be following me.**' And it says Matthew got up, and walked away. Luke says he left all. Lost nothing, left everything, lost nothing. Matthew, once he walked away, he could never go back to that position with the Romans, ever.

What Matthew Gives Us

He gives us certain things, this "gift of God," that none of the other writers do, he gives us two miracles not recorded anywhere else, he gives us eleven discourses not recorded anywhere else. He gives us nine particular incidences not recorded anywhere else. If it wasn't for Matthew, he's the one who tells us that the wise men came from the east, that Herod destroyed the children of Bethlehem. He's the one that says to us "**Come unto me all ye that labour and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest for your souls...take my yoke upon you, learn of me, my yoke is easy, my burden is light...I'm meek and lowly,**" we get it from Matthew. Matthew is the one who tells us about the fish that Peter caught with the coin in his mouth. Matthew is the one who tells us at the end of the Gospel "**Eli, Eli, lama sabachthani?**", "**My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me?**" We'd have that nowhere else. And I am thankful every day to know that Jesus cried that, so that I never have to cry it. Matthew is the one who tells us about the Roman guard at the tomb of Jesus. None of the other ones do, they were fishermen, they would not have known. But because Matthew was a tax gatherer, he was familiar with the Romans, he heard the inside scoop of what happened at the tomb, how the guard [a Roman guard detail was usually 40 specially armed soldiers, similar to our Navy Seals] fell down like dead men, and then they got up and fled. Then they were paid not to say anything. Jesus saw in him a man. So I don't care what you've done, what kind of sin, I don't care how many people despise you. I don't care how many family members

hate your guts. I don't care how empty you are, and discouraged and disillusioned you are, Jesus when he looks at you, he sees a man, a human being, a woman. And I think if you listen close you'll hear him saying **'Be following me, let that be your life, get up, follow me.'**

Matthew invites Jesus to his house for dinner, Jesus shocks the Pharisees, and challenges them---who Jesus tends to call, draw to himself, and why

"And it came to pass as Jesus sat at meat in the house", Mark tells us it's Matthew's house, **"behold, many publicans",** lots of tax collectors, Matthew only had certain people he could invite, **"publicans and sinners came and they sat down with him and his disciples."** Here's the amazing thing, Matthew is not hesitant at all, he doesn't think *'Boy, the crew I hang around with, you know, this is the Messiah and his disciples, I really can't invite my friends.'* No, he knows exactly those are the kind of people that he wants to bring, because he had looked into the face of Jesus and heard the voice of Jesus, and heard Jesus say to him **'Come on Matthew, you, follow me, I don't hate you, I love you.'** And he invites them, and they come. **"And when the Pharisees saw it, they said unto his disciples,"** you know, they don't talk to him directly, **"Why eateth your Master with publicans and sinners?"** Now you have to understand, culturally, if you broke bread with someone, you were becoming one with them. they're saying *'Why is he doing this? We came here, you know, there's lepers being sent to Jerusalem to offer sacrifices we've never offered before, we come here, we see him, people are being cleansed, healed, and this guy in the house of Peter who hasn't walked...this is inconsistent, how could he be a prophet of Israel, and how can he then be eating with tax gatherers and sinners, I don't understand, what is this? It doesn't fit into the religious system.'* **"But when Jesus heard that, he said to them..."** Now Jesus answers, he turns around and looks at them and says, **"Those that are healthy don't need a physician...They that be healthy need not a physician, but they that are sick."**

Some churches wrongly teach that it is a lack of faith, a sin, to go to a doctor, to seek medical attention

There are churches that teach that it's a sin to go to the doctors, it's a lack of faith. Jesus said **"They that are sick have need of a physician."** [Luke was a physician.] When Hezekiah was dying, and God sent and extended his life, he could have just healed him, but instead he said he had to put a poultice of figs on his wound. He used a medical way to heal him. Paul will say to Timothy, **'Use a little wine for your stomach.'** Jesus says **"those that are sick have need of a physician."** It isn't a lack of faith, in fact, you have to have faith to go to a doctor, it's no lack of faith [laughter]. Healing is an art, as much as it is a science. There's a sense to it, to really diagnose, to see what's going on, to be sensitive and to care. And Jesus does not maintain the teaching that you are lacking faith if you go to a physician. He says those that are sick have need of a physician, and I say that because there are churches in the area that have watched children die instead of taking them for simple medical treatment. There is a book written by a man who was in prison in Barstowe who watched his son die, instead of taking him for a simple medical treatment that would have saved his life, it is titled *"The Greatest Of These Is Love."* God showed him in prison **'Faith, Hope, Love, these three abide, but the greatest of these is Love.'** He said *'God showed me, the greatest of these is not faith. I had faith, but I didn't have love. I watched my child die.'* Those that are sick have need of a physician. I think all of you should go [laughter]. [Comment: This, with wisdom, includes therapy and therapists. Try to use wisdom and use Christian therapists.]

What Is Jesus Saying Here? Who, What Group Of People Is Jesus Focusing His Call On?

But what is Jesus saying to these guys? What he's saying is this, **'Look, I'm not hob-knobbing with prostitutes and sinners and tax collectors, this is not a sin-party we're having, I'm not here to have fellowship, I'm making a house-call, they're sick, I'm the Doctor, they're infected with something that's killing them, and I am come as a physician. I'm not coming to find fellowship with them in their sin, in their error, in their emptiness, I'm coming to heal, to care, to love.'** He looks at the Pharisees and says **"Those that are healthy, they don't need a physician, but those that are sick."** And then he says **"Go ye and learn**

what this means", now that's an interesting phrase, because it was a rabbinic phrase, and when someone would ask a rabbi a foolish question, the rabbi would say '*Go and learn what this means,*' and then give him a verse from the Bible. So Jesus looks at the Pharisees and the doctors of the Law who know the Word and says to them **"Go and learn what this means,"** (I bet he blew steam out of their ears when he said that) **"I will have mercy, and not sacrifice."** Now he's quoting from Hosea, and you know the story of a Hosea, Hosea marrying a prostitute (he was told by God to marry her), and then she turns away from him, Hosea's heart is broken. And God says to Hosea, **'Hosea, now you can go prophesy to my people Israel, because they are my adulterous wife, and that's how I feel, and my heart is broken. They've turned away from me, and now you can share my heart with them as you prophesy.'** And Hosea said through the Word of the LORD, **"I desire mercy, not sacrifice, and the knowledge of God more than burnt offerings."** Here he says, **'I desire mercy, not sacrifice, not just ritualistic religion, but mercy.'** **"For I am not come to call the righteous, but sinners to repentance."** He didn't just come to call sinners, '*Hey, you a sinner? How you doing?*' He came to call sinners **to repentance.** That's how he came to call sinners. **"Go learn ye what this means, I will have mercy, not sacrifice, for I am not come to call the righteous, but sinners to repentance."** (verse 13) Jesus is the great physician. Number One, is that he makes house-calls. Number Two, his diagnosis is always correct the first time. **"Be of good cheer, your sins are forgiven."** He knows the root of the malady, he knows the root, he knows what the source is. His diagnosis and his prescription are always correct. And of course, the greatest reason why he's the Great Physician is, that he pays the bill himself. That's the doctor we're looking for, he pays the bill himself. He is the Lamb of God that takes away the sin of the world. [condensed down from a sermon transcript of Matthew 9:1-13, given by Pastor Joe Focht, Calvary Chapel of Philadelphia, 13500 Philmont Avenue, Philadelphia, PA 19116] Comment: The difference between Jesus' ministry and that of the Jews in the Temple is that Jesus' ministry was focused on spiritually healing the sick and downtrodden, reaching out to them both physically and spiritually, whereas the religious system of the Jews which God had originally set up at Sinai (now headquartered in the Temple at Jerusalem) had devolved into a legalistic religion that was not focusing on helping the sinners and downtrodden, but instead paraded their personal obedience around while gouging the poor and harshly judging them for their disobedience from their ivory towers. God's Law

wasn't the issue, as we have seen by what Jesus taught in Matthew chapter 5. There are legalistic churches and denominations out there, and yes, for the most part, they do have real born-again believers making up their membership (the Sabbath-keeping Churches of God tend to fall into this category). These legalistic churches and denominations tend to be infected with the same Pharisaic sickness Jesus accused the religious system the Jews were running out of the Temple in Jerusalem. They parade around in their own obedience, while not reaching out to the poor and needy, those who are both spiritually and physically needy, as Jesus did throughout his entire ministry. Jesus' call was to those who were sick, those who needed the Great Physician.

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