

Gospel of Matthew Chapter 9 -- John Karmelich

1. In the Gospel of John, there is a great little sentence in which I'm going to take out of context.
 - a) It says, "Sir, we wish to see Jesus." (John 12:21b, NKJV)
 - b) This little sentence is often placed on plaques on preacher's podiums.
 - i) It is a reminder to those preachers that the audience is there to learn about Jesus and not about the preachers themselves.
 - c) Chapter 9 is all about people seeing Jesus work.
 - d) Chapter 9, along with Chapter 8 focus on "Jesus, the miracle worker".
 - i) Jesus is demonstrating his power, and the crowds are flocking to him to see him work. That is why I kept thinking of the line "Sir, we wish to see Jesus".
 - e) The application to you and I is that Jesus gives us the same power and authority to teach and yes, perform miracles as we see in Chapter 8 and 9.
 - i) There is not a miracle in this bunch that has not been replicated by the apostles, and missionaries throughout history.
 - ii) Our job, like Jesus himself, is to point people to Jesus. God does give people the authority to perform miracles like this in order to turn people to Jesus.
 - a) Let me repeat a thought I gave in the last lesson:
 - b) "I (Jesus) tell you the truth, anyone who has faith in me will do what I have been doing. He (us!) will do even greater things than these, because I am going to the Father.
 - (1) I believe Jesus gives us tremendous power as believers if we are willing, by faith to step out and trust him.
 - (2) Jesus is not looking at ability, as much as he is looking for availability of us to be used by him.
2. One of the most interesting things to note about all of the miracles in Chapters 8 and 9 is the lack of any sort of pattern or style.
 - a) We see all sorts of different miracles performed in lots of different ways.
 - b) It is almost as if Jesus is thinking, "I did it that way last time, I'll do this way this time."
 - i) Jesus never wants us to focus on the methodology of the miracle. It is the person performing the miracle that is the focus, not the method itself.
 - c) Miracles are mostly used as validation of Jesus as God.
 - i) Only God himself has the power to perform such miracles.
 - ii) Jesus uses this power on people to demonstrate who he is.
 - d) In many cases, he often will use miracles to demonstrate some teaching point he is making at any one given moment.
 - e) It also shows the love and compassion Jesus has for us now. It is not just about eternal salvation, but also that He loves us, and wants the best for us here in this lifetime.
3. Chapter 9 ends with Jesus requesting that prayers be made to God for more Christian workers.
 - a) We'll get to the specifics of the verse near the end of the lesson.
 - b) What I want you to think about is all the miracles of Chapters 8 and 9 leading up to Jesus teaching the apostles (paraphrasing) "There is so much work to be done. There are so many people out there who need to know about me and my mission. Pray to God the father to send out more people to help."
 - i) With that statement, Jesus is saying in effect, "the miracles I'm performing now, are not enough to convince the world of who I am. Pray to God for more workers to help out.
 - ii) With that, said, let's jump into Chapter 9.

4. Verse 1: Jesus stepped into a boat, crossed over and came to his own town.
 - a) The latter part of Chapter 8 had two stories:
 - i) First, we had Jesus calming the storm on a boat with the disciples.
 - ii) They sailed to the east side of the Sea of Galilee, which was “Gentile country”.
 - iii) At that location was the episode of the demon possessed man and the demons were cast into a swine of pigs. (Yes, the story of the deviled ham. ☺)
 - b) Now we have Jesus sailing back to Capernaum, which is on the west side of the Sea of Galilee, which was Jesus base of operation.
5. Verse 2: 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."
 - a) You can read this same story in Luke 5:17-26 with more details.
 - b) Matthew gives a more abbreviated story with the emphasis on Jesus forgiving their sins.
 - i) Remember the purpose of Matthew’s gospel is to present Jesus as the promised Messiah to Israel. It was not Matthew’s purpose to give a detailed account of every aspect of everything that Jesus did.
 - ii) In Luke’s account, we learn that the friends of the paralytic did some impressive planning engineering.
 - a) Jesus was speaking in a very crowded house. No one else could get in.
 - b) These friends, figured out the exact spot where Jesus was teaching from, cut a whole in the roof at that spot, and lowered the man down via ropes all in his paralytic state.
 - c) Notice Jesus complimented the faith of the men who lowered the paralytic on the rope.
 - i) Matthew says, “When Jesus saw their faith”. Notice the plural aspect.
 - ii) These men, who understood Jesus had the power, and had enough love and care for the man who was a paralytic, that they went to all of this trouble.
 - d) The next thing to notice is that Jesus says to the paralytic, “Your sins are forgiven”.
 - i) Personally, I don’t think that is what the paralytic wanted to hear.
 - ii) I think he wanted to hear, “You are healed.” Or, “Get up and walk”.
 - iii) The earliest Christian commentators and historians believed this man had some sort of venereal disease that causes this man to be a paralytic.
 - a) This is a strong possibility as Jesus said to him, “Your sins are forgiven”.
 - b) If the guy was born a paralytic, or became one out of an accident, then Jesus statement of “Your sins are forgiven” may not be an issue.
 - c) This guy was looking to be healed of his physical condition, not his sins.
 - d) Personally, if this theory is true, the man may have felt guilt ridden and somehow felt he “deserved” to be in his paralytic state.
 - iv) If this is not true and the man became a paralytic “by accident”, then he was as puzzled as everyone else in the room why Jesus would make that statement.
 - a) It would be to say, “Why should I be forgiven by *you*, we as Jews already have this religious methodology (in Leviticus) for the forgiveness of sins”.
 - b) Jesus’ healing of this man in a few verses was all about demonstrating Jesus’ power to forgive sins.
6. Verse 3: At this, some of the teachers of the law said to themselves, "This fellow is blaspheming!"
 - a) Luke’s account of this story says, “Pharisees and teachers of the law, who had come from every village of Galilee and from Judea and Jerusalem, were sitting there.” (5:17, NIV)
 - i) Chuck Missler likes to point out that the “Pharisees and teachers of the law” have a very important Christian ministry:
 - a) Every time Jesus says something really important, they either try to kill him or accuse Jesus of blasphemy.
 - b) Therefore, when you read of these guys cursing Jesus or trying to kill him, look back and see what Jesus just said. It was important.” ☺

- ii) In Luke's account, these same guys also said, "Who can forgive sins but God alone?" (Luke 5:21b, NIV).
 - a) They are right. Only God can forgive sins. They didn't comprehend who Jesus was or what was his mission.
- 7. Verse 4: Knowing their thoughts, Jesus said, "Why do you entertain evil thoughts in your hearts?"
 - a) The key word in this verse is the word "evil".
 - b) Jesus didn't say, "you are wrong about me" or "you are incorrect".
 - c) He called their thoughts "evil" to not think that Jesus was God.
 - i) That is an example of "blasphemy of the Holy Spirit". (Mark 3:29, Luke 12:10)
 - ii) The only unforgivable sin in the bible is to continually deny Jesus as God.
- 8. Verse 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, take your mat and go home." ⁷ And the man got up and went home.
 - a) Jesus asks the question to the audience (paraphrasing) "Is it easier to say "your sins are forgiven?" when there is no way I can prove it to be so, or is it easier to say "get up and walk" if you see the guy actually get up and walk".
 - b) The important thing to understand about this whole story is that Jesus healed this man to demonstrate that Jesus has the authority to forgive sins.
 - i) Remember that the paralytic is going to die again one day.
 - ii) The forgiveness of sins, assuming he became a follower of Jesus lasts for eternity.
 - c) Many preachers use this story as an illustration of our sins.
 - i) Sin, if not dealt with, eventually grows and leads to death.
 - a) "But each one is tempted when, by his own evil desire, he is dragged away and enticed. Then, after desire has conceived, it gives birth to sin; and sin, when it is full-grown, gives birth to death." James (1:14-15, NIV)
 - ii) Sin, which is the willful disobedience of what God commands us to do, grows like a cancer. If not dealt with, it eventually consumes a person and kills them.
 - a) Examples include those who die from alcoholism or drug addiction.
 - b) Other examples include those who are so stressed out and worry about things; they die at a young age of a heart attack.
 - iii) Here was this paralytic. He probably got this way via some sin in his life. This is why Jesus' first words to him are "Your sins are forgiven".
 - a) Jesus, first of all forgave his sins, so he could have eternal life.
 - b) Jesus then healed him of his disease so that he could live the rest of his natural life as a living witness for Jesus.
 - iv) We are the same way. God has forgiven our sins and given us new life.
 - a) We now have the free choice to go back and live the way we were living, or now live in gratitude to God for forgiving our sins.
 - v) Let's also give the paralytic a little credit. He could have said, "I don't believe you have the power to heal me. I'm just going to lie here". He got up.
 - a) That is an example of how we are to react to Jesus.
 - b) When God forgives us, out of gratitude we are to get up and respond.
- 9. Verse 8: When the crowd saw this, they were filled with awe; and they praised God, who had given such authority to men.
 - a) Matthew's point of Verse 8 is that the crowd still didn't get who Jesus was.
 - i) They thought at this point, is Jesus was just "some guy" who God had given special powers to perform miracles.
 - ii) They were so awe-struck by the paralytic getting up and walking they forgot about the part where Jesus says, "Your sins are forgiven".

- b) This leads back to my argument that “miracles are not enough to change people”.
 - i) In order to become a Christian, one has to realize that their own lifestyle is wrong and want to depend upon Jesus moment by moment to live their life.
 - ii) Some people, even after seeing a miracle, give a quick “praise God” and go on their merry way, not changing their lifestyle.
 - iii) Grant it, many do see or receive a miracle and change their life.
 - iv) My point is that a miracle is no guarantee that someone will become born-again.
 - a) ‘No, father Abraham,’ he (condemned man) said, ‘but if someone from the dead goes to them, they (his brothers) will repent.’ “He said to him, ‘If they do not listen to Moses and the Prophets, they will not be convinced even if someone rises from the dead.” (Luke 16:30-31, NIV)

10. Verse 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.
- a) Here we have the story of Matthew's own conversion.
 - b) This same story is told in Mark's Gospel (2:14-17) and Luke's Gospel (5:27-31).
 - i) In both Mark and Luke's Gospel Matthew is known as Levi.
 - ii) It was not uncommon for a Jew to have more than one name, just as many people today have more than one name or a common nickname.
 - iii) “Levi” may have been his birth name, or he may have been of the tribe of Levi.
 - iv) To summarize, don't worry about the fact that he has two names. ☺
 - c) My personal view is that Jesus renames “Levi” to Matthew. I can't prove it from the text.
 - i) Tax collectors were the most hated people in Israel.
 - ii) They were seen as Jews who were traitors to their own people.
 - iii) The tax collectors commonly cheated the people and grew in wealth, and it was encouraged and enforced by the Roman army.
 - iv) In the “pecking order” of status for a religious Jew was as follows: 1st was a religious Jew, 2nd was a non-religious Jew, below that was a non-Jew (Gentile) and much lower than that was a tax collector, because he was a traitor.
 - v) Matthew means, “Gift from God”. I believe Jesus renamed him “gift from God”.
 - a) The lesson is Jesus doesn't look at somebody as the “scum of the earth”.
 - b) He sees people for the potential, not as who they currently are.
 - c) When we see someone who we consider corrupt or beyond help, we need to see them as somebody who needs Jesus.
 - d) Most adults can tell stories of people who society has “written off”, who has become born-again, and has done great things in Jesus' name.
 - d) When you read Luke and Mark's account, you read that Matthew gave up his livelihood, and all his income to follow Jesus. That is something most are not willing to do.
 - i) Matthew himself doesn't record that fact.
 - ii) He may have done this out of humility. He let others “brag” about his repentance.
 - a) “Let another praise you, and not your own mouth; someone else, and not your own lips. (Proverbs 27:2, NIV)
 - e) I further speculate that there is much more to this story than Matthew just sitting in his tax collector booth, Jesus saying “follow me” and he does so on the spot.
 - i) For Matthew to give up his livelihood must have been some real soul searching.
 - ii) My personal view is that Matthew attended the Sermon on the Mount, and wrote it down. He was following and listening to Jesus in the background.
 - iii) Further, he was feeling guilty about his own lifestyle. All the riches of his job didn't satisfy his soul. Therefore, when Jesus said “follow me”, I suspect from Matthew's perspective, it was like being released from a mental prison.

- a) He was already outcast from Jewish society by being a tax collector. He now realized there is more to life than making a good income. He left all and in exchange, received eternal life.
- 11. Verse 10: While Jesus was having dinner at Matthew's house, many tax collectors and "sinners" came and ate with him and his disciples. ¹¹ When the Pharisees saw this, they asked his disciples, "Why does your teacher eat with tax collectors and 'sinners'?" ¹² On hearing this, Jesus said, "It is not the healthy who need a doctor, but the sick. ¹³ But go and learn what this means: 'I desire mercy, not sacrifice.' For I have not come to call the righteous, but sinners."
- a) One of the first things that Matthew does is invite his tax collecting buddies over to his house to meet Jesus.
 - i) That is a great testimony on living the Christian life.
 - ii) It is the opposite of "I'm saved now, I can do whatever I want".
 - iii) Out of gratitude, he begins to live in service to Jesus. He leads other people to Jesus to receive the Gospel message.
 - iv) Matthew does not mention if anyone else gets converted.
 - a) In a sense, that is not our job to worry about that. Our job is to point the way to Jesus. The Holy Spirit's job is the actual conversion, not ours.
- b) The religious leaders of that community are "outraged" that Jesus would eat with these people. They didn't mind Jesus preaching to them, but to actually eat with them is to become "one" with them. Eating is to dip your bread in the same sauces.
 - i) The same way the Christian ritual of communion is the sharing of bread is the idea of us becoming "one with each other".
 - ii) This scenario has repeated itself thousands if not millions of times through Christian history.
 - a) Think of all the "religious" Christians who shun and turn away from sinners thinking they are better people.
 - b) There are many churches that won't allow someone to join or even come into service if they didn't dress a certain way, or if they didn't abide by some set of rules.
 - (1) We make the mistake that people have to "clean up their act" before coming to church. That is never taught anywhere in the bible.
 - c) When you read through all four Gospel accounts, the only people Jesus ever argued with are the religious leaders.
 - (1) People get so hung up on rules and regulations, we forget that it is God's job to change people's lives, not ours. Our job is simply to preach the gospel message and point people to Jesus. God takes over from there.
- c) All of this can be summed up by Jesus saying, "I desire mercy, not sacrifice."
 - i) This is a quote from Hosea 6:6
 - ii) Jesus is speaking to the religious leaders, who knew their Old Testament well.
 - iii) "Sacrifice" refers to our self-disciplined acts as believers. This is where we do things like daily prayer, daily time in God's word, fasting etc. None of these things are wrong. But all of them have to be kept in perspective that we are not better than others because we do them.
 - iv) Jesus wants us to have compassion on those who don't know Jesus. We are to see people not as being inferior to us, but of those who also need Jesus.
 - a) "There But For The Grace Of God Go I" – "On seeing several criminals being led to the scaffold in the 16th century, English Protestant martyr John Bradford remarked, 'There but for the grace of God, goes John Bradford.' ("Encyclopedia of Word and Phrase Origins" by Robert Hendrickson, Facts on File, New York, 1997.)

12. Verse 14: Then John's disciples came and asked him, "How is it that we and the Pharisees fast, but your disciples do not fast?"
 - a) In order to understand this verse, one needs to see it in context of the previous verse.
 - b) Jesus just condemned the Jewish religious leaders for being "holier than thou" and not seeing Jesus compassion for those who are spiritually "lost".
 - c) Now come some followers of John the Baptist.
 - i) They understood that Jesus was the Messiah.
 - ii) John the Baptist stated it as so. (See John 1:29, 1:36)
 - d) So here are these guys, hung up on their fasting rituals, asking Jesus, "Why don't you guys do what we do?" "With that, let's move on to Jesus' answer:
13. Verse 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.
 - a) First of all, Jesus does not condemn the practice of fasting.
 - b) Notice Verse 15 says, "Then they will fast."
 - i) Jesus says when the "bridegroom" is taken away, then they will fast".
 - ii) We, collectively as believers are referred to as the "bride of Christ" (Revelation 21:2, 21:9 and 22:17). Jesus is our bridegroom.
 - iii) Therefore, when the "groom is taken away" refers to the 2,000 year plus Christian era when Jesus was no longer "bodily" form.
 - c) Fasting is a form of discipline where you deny yourself food or some delicacy so you can better focus on prayer and/or God's word.
 - i) It is about not letting your stomach rule your life.
 - ii) Fasting is not a Christian requirement, only a recommendation.
 - iii) The topic is covered in more detail back in Matthew Chapter 6.
14. Verse 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. 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."
 - a) There are two illustrations here. The first indicates that if you sew a new piece of cloth on an old garment, the garment will be ruined by mixing the old and the new cloth. When the new material shrinks, it tears the garment. The same application applies to wine in old wineskins. The fermenting of the new wine will cause the wineskin to burst.
 - b) Again, in order to understand what Jesus meant, we have to read these verses in context.
 - c) Jesus is still speaking to the disciples of John the Baptist.
 - d) They were wondering why Jesus' disciples were not fasting while they fasted and the Pharisee's fasted.
 - e) Jesus gives these two illustrations of, "You don't put unshrunk cloth on an old garment" and "You don't put new wine into old wineskins".
 - i) In both cases, the illustration leads to the same point. If you put "something new" on/in "something old", you will cause tears and it ruins the original.
 - f) When you read Luke's account of the same story, Jesus adds another sentence:
 - i) "And no one after drinking old wine wants the new, for he says, 'The old is better.'" (Luke 5:39, NIV).
 - ii) Jesus is saying in Luke is that people prefer the "old way" to the "new way".
 - iii) What all of this means is that you can't fix the old system, you have to start fresh.
 - a) Christianity cannot survive by being a branch of Judaism.
 - b) People get set in their ways. This is the idea behind Luke 5:39.
 - c) People would be looking for the "Jewish way" of doing things by fasting, rules and rituals.

- iv) I have been very careful with this statement. The God of the New Testament is the God of the Old Testament. There were some rules given in the Old Testament that were specifically for the Jewish people. The key to read the Old Testament is to understand it is interpreted by the New Testament.
 - a) This is about habits and rituals. Jesus was starting a new religion. While the Old Testament pointed the way to Jesus, the New Testament teaches how we are to *live* as followers as Jesus. In a “sense” the Old Testament is abandoned by the New Testament.
 - v) This is a tough concept to grasp, so let me give you another illustration.
 - a) In the history of Christianity, there has never been a major new growth within any Christian denomination.
 - b) Whenever a revival happens, and many new people become believers, it is always outside of an existing denomination.
 - (a) That new group eventually becomes a new denomination.
 - c) This is not to say the new group is “Christian correct” and the old group is “Christian wrong”. There are many wonderful followers of Jesus in all denominations and independent churches. All of us simply disagree on minor issues.
 - d) This is about “style” in worship and worship habits. The gospel message itself does not change with the times. The gospel message and the whole Word of God should be preached systematically and consistently.
 - (1) What changes “with the times” is the style of dress, the style of music, the way we worship God. God cares about our hearts, not our fashion statements or musical taste.
 - vi) One of my favorite applications on this passage comes from a prayer given by Chuck Smith of Calvary Chapel. When he prays with his pastoral staff, one of his regular prayers is to “help us not put new wine into old wineskins”. What he means by that is to not trust in yesterday’s success and yesterday’s method for what will work today and tomorrow.
15. Verse 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.” ¹⁹ Jesus got up and went with him, and so did his disciples.
- a) There is an old rabbinical saying that goes, “Coincidence” is not a kosher word.”
 - i) A similar expression is “Coincidence” is just God working in the background”.
 - ii) The reason I mention this is so you notice the first part of Verse 18 says, “While he was saying this”. Also notice Verse 20 opens with “Just then”.
 - iii) There is a story of a new miracle beginning in Verse 18.
 - iv) There is a story of another miracle beginning in Verse 20.
 - v) The first thing to notice is that all three stories are meant to be tied together.
 - a) The first is about Jesus teaching a new way of thinking (“new wine”)
 - b) The second will be Jesus raising from the dead the daughter of a synagogue leader. This is the story beginning in Verse 18.
 - c) The third is Jesus healing a young woman who had a constant menstrual flow of blood for 12 years! This is the story beginning in Verse 20.
 - d) The two miracles intertwine and that is not a coincidence, from God’s eye.
 - vi) Jesus just finished discussing the fact that “you can’t put new wine into old wineskins”. That whole illustration has to do with the way people misunderstood Jesus’ ministry and purpose. Jesus was “starting something new” in that his purpose was not understood by the religious Jews of that day.
 - a) These two miracles are examples of “working something new” as we’ll see.

- b) Let's get to the story itself. In this verse a Jewish "ruler" states that his daughter died. He begs Jesus to come touch her and she will live.
 - i) Mark and Luke also tell this story (Mark 5:35-42, Luke 8:41-42)
 - a) In both Mark & Luke's account, we learn that the man's name is Jairus and that he is a ruler of a synagogue.
 - b) We also learn that this was his "only daughter". It may be his only child.
 - c) We also learn that this girl was about 12 years old.
 - d) A synagogue leader was usually an administrative position as opposed to a rabbi-teacher.
 - ii) It may have been dangerous for him to bow down to Jesus. He knew that the leading religious leaders were anti-Jesus at this point. It was "technically" a violation of the 1st Commandment that you worship no one but God alone.
 - a) When one is in pain, one does desperate things.
 - b) There is nothing more painful in life to lose one's child, especially if it is your only child.
 - c) Jesus didn't argue with this guy, or give him any teachings. He simply agreed to go with him to heal his daughter.
 - iii) Notice Jesus didn't say. "It's not necessary for me to go to your house. Tell you what, I'll just snap my fingers and she will be fine".
 - a) He could have done that. Jesus is God. Jesus purposely agreed to go to his house to perform the miracle 1) to grant the man's request and 2) to give a visual demonstration of Jesus' power to others.
- c) Why would this "ruler" think Jesus has this power?
 - i) I suspect because there was an Old Testament prophet named Elisha (not to be confused with Elijah, a separate person) who once performed a miracle by laying upon a dead boy and bringing him back to life. (2nd Kings 4:32-37).
 - ii) This ruler assumed Jesus had the same power as Elisha.
 - iii) I doubt he comprehended Jesus as Messiah. He just thought Jesus was a prophet given this great power to heal people.
 - iv) A point to notice is that Jesus didn't spend time arguing with this man's theology.
 - a) The man is in pain. When your only child is dead, who cares about religious theology at that moment?
 - b) Jesus often performs miracles so then one can hear the gospel message.
 - c) That same principal applies today. I don't even know if the religious leader ended up becoming a Christian. The text doesn't say. The text simply says (coming up) that Jesus heals this girl as an opportunity to demonstrate His power.
- d) It is also interesting to compare this ruler's "faith" with the Roman soldier's faith.
 - i) The Roman soldier said (paraphrasing). Jesus, I understand chain-of-command. Just say so, and I know my servant will be healed".
 - ii) Compare that with this synagogue ruler who begged Jesus to "come touch her" so that she can live again.
 - iii) In comparison the "Gentile Roman" who probably didn't believe in the God of the Bible had more faith in Jesus' power than a Synagogue ruler who probably knew his Old Testament very well.

16. Verse 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. ²¹ She said to herself, "If I only touch his cloak, I will be healed." ²² Jesus turned and saw her. "Take heart, daughter," he said, "your faith has healed you." And the woman was healed from that moment.

- a) The first thing to notice is the phrase “Just then”.
 - i) As Jesus was on the way to the home of the synagogue ruler, this woman touched Jesus and was healed.
 - ii) Reading this story in Mark’s Gospel and Luke’s Gospel, we learn that there were multitudes of people touching and trying to touch Jesus. Jesus “stopped dead in his tracks” to tell his disciples that He “sensed” power going out of Him in order to heal this woman.
 - a) Jesus wanted to make sure his disciples understood that this particular woman was healed. It was as if He wanted it recorded in the Gospels.
- b) Let’s talk about why this women thought, “If I only touch his cloak”.
 - i) Notice in Verse 20, that she touched the edge of his cloak.
 - ii) I can help explain this with an illustration. When we see an American general, we know his rank by the number of stars on his shoulder. An American military uniform puts their ranks as emblems on one’s shoulder (or close to it).
 - iii) For Jewish rabbis and Jewish families in general, they would often decorate the bottom edge of their cloak with family emblems. It may be a reference to which tribe they descended from.
 - a) The point is that one looks at the edge of a Jewish’ persons cloth as their “signature” of who they were, the same way we look at a general’s stars.
 - b) There is an Old Testament story of King Saul trying to kill David. David found King Saul “reliving himself” in a cave. David cut off the edge of Saul’s garment at that time as a sign to him. (1st Samuel 24:4).
 - (1) This is the same symbolic picture of focuses on the garment’s hem.
 - iv) Now let’s get back to the girl with the flow of blood. She thought, “If I can just touch Jesus garment hem, I know I can be healed.”
 - a) The question to ponder is was it necessary? Could she have touched Jesus elsewhere? Could she just ask Jesus?
 - v) My point is Jesus didn’t correct her methodology of healing.
 - a) Jesus said, “Your faith has made you well”.
 - b) I find that Jesus does the same with us, especially with less-mature believers. Jesus doesn’t question if your methods are correct when you are hurting. Jesus just deals with the hurt.
 - c) We as Christians get overly obsessed with our methodology in prayer and forget that Jesus understands our needs and wants to help our needs!

17. Verse 23: When Jesus entered the ruler's house and saw the flute players and the noisy crowd, ²⁴ he said, "Go away. The girl is not dead but asleep." But they laughed at him. ²⁵ After the crowd had been put outside, he went in and took the girl by the hand, and she got up. ²⁶ News of this spread through all that region.

- a) Now that the episode of healing the woman with the flow of blood is over, Matthew now takes us to the location where Jesus enters the house of the dead girl.
- b) Notice that before Jesus heals this girl, he kicks out the “scoffers”.
 - i) I have to wonder who these people are. I assume some are friends and relatives. It was also common in Jewish custom to hire “professional mourners” at a funeral.
 - ii) Personally, I like the synagogue leader, the father of the girl at this point.
 - iii) This guy really had faith in Jesus. His daughter was dead. He refused to give up. He even helped (assumed) kick out the mourners so Jesus could work.
- c) I also think there is a principal here for us in church.
 - i) Anytime you want to accomplish a great action, Christian or otherwise, there will always be scoffers. There will always be the pessimists who say, “You can’t do that” or “It’s impossible”.

- ii) When you encounter those types, remember Jesus famous words:
 - a) “Jesus looked at them and said, “With man this is impossible, but with God all things are possible.” (Matthew 19:26, NIV)
- iii) There are times we have to “kick out the scoffers” in order to work.
 - a) If there is a loud scoffer at a church service, I don’t have a problem with an usher taking the guy out. There are times to witness to people and there are times when Christians need to separate themselves from the world.
 - b) The purpose of “church” is for Christians to “recharge their spiritual batteries” so we can be a witness to the world. Yes we can bring non-believers to church, and should. I’m simply talking about disruptive scoffers in service.
 - c) OK, I’m drifting off topic here. ☺ Back to the text.
- d) Again, we get more details of this story in Mark and Luke’s account.
 - i) They mention that Jesus was alone in the room with the mother and father.
 - ii) Jesus specifically said “Talitha, cumi,” which is translated, “Little girl, I say to you, get up! (Mark 5:38b, NIV)
 - iii) Jesus specifically commanded the parents not to tell anyone and to give the girl something to eat.
 - iv) Verse 26 here in Matthew says that the news spread around the region, which means the parents disobeyed that order.
 - a) As I stated earlier, Jesus discouraged telling others about miracles.
 - (1) I believe he primarily did this so he could teach without being thronged for the purposes of healing.
- e) I heard a sermon giving an interesting perspective from the point of view of the “dad”.
 - i) Here was this synagogue ruler begging Jesus to come to his house, and he did.
 - ii) Jesus stopped along the way to point out how the other girl, with the menstrual blood flow was healed.
 - iii) Imagine if you were that father during the time of the other miracle:
 - a) “Yes yes, that’s wonderful, you healed the other girl with the blood flow. Whoopee! At least she was and still alive. My girl happens to be dead. Can you speed it up a little Jesus?!”
 - (1) Yes I am speculating here. There is no indication that the father was bothered by the other miracle.
 - (2) You have to suspect, that this desperate father, wanted Jesus to run full speed to his home, and not heal someone else in the meantime.
 - iv) The application for us is to realize that when God tells us to wait, he often has a reason for us to wait. God’s timing is always perfect. We may want God to rush and hurry up, but God often has a reason for his delay (from our perspective).
 - v) Further, we need to be grateful for others receiving miracles.
 - a) It is easy to get jealous and think, “Why did God choose to heal that person when I’m here suffering from the same thing”. It is not fair!”
 - b) God is in charge and we’re not. One has to accept that. If God chooses to perform a miracle on someone else and not you or me, that is His prerogative. He makes the rules, we don’t.
 - c) Our job is to give God the glory despite our trials. We get to spend eternity in heaven. Everything else is just a “bonus”.
 - d) It may not make your pain go away. God does love us and does care about our pain. If God is allowing that pain to continue, it may be for a reason or for a proper time for that healing to occur. Again, God’s in charge, and we’re not.

18. Verse 27: As Jesus went on from there, two blind men followed him, calling out, "Have mercy on us, Son of David!" 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. ²⁹ Then he touched their eyes and said, "According to your faith will it be done to you"; ³⁰ and their sight was restored. Jesus warned them sternly, "See that no one knows about this." ³¹ But they went out and spread the news about him all over that region.
- a) Here we have the story of two blind men receiving their sight.
 - b) I've always wondered about this story from the perspective of the "blind men":
 - i) The two blind men "followed" Jesus (Verse 27).
 - ii) They came into the house where Jesus was (Verse 28).
 - iii) If they were "blind" how did they do this? How did they know where Jesus was?
 - iv) Obviously they followed the sound of the crowd and inquired where Jesus was.
 - v) The point here is to notice the persistence of the two blind men.
 - vi) God encourages us to persistently bring our prayer requests to God.
 - a) Often, for whatever reason, God tests our faith and often wants us to pray consistently over a matter before God chooses to act on our faith.
 - b) It is not about "pray exactly 36 times, and on the 36th occasion (or whatever number) I'll answer that prayer."
 - c) We have to wait for God's timing. God may specifically wait to answer a prayer until a specific time. It may be so that the answer to our prayer can be as a witness to others around us. It may be so that we have given up all other possibilities therefore God and God alone gets credit. We don't know the reason, but God does. God just calls us to be persistent. (For more on this, see Luke 11:5-13)
 - c) It is important to see this miracle in context of the surrounding miracles.
 - i) Jesus just raised a girl from the dead.
 - ii) Now we read of Jesus healing blind men.
 - iii) Next we read of Jesus healing a deaf and mute.
 - iv) Remember that Matthew is trying to teach people who Jesus was.
 - a) We have in Chapters 8 and 9 a good number of miracles.
 - b) In my introduction to Chapter 8 I mentioned that one needs to consider who is being "cured" in each miracle and why that it is included.
 - d) Onto the miracle itself. I talk the view that even though these two men were physically "blind" they saw a lot more than the crowd around them.
 - i) These two men called Jesus "Son of David". That is a title of the Messiah.
 - ii) Despite their blindness, they knew enough about Judaism and enough about Jesus that they believed Jesus was the promised Messiah.
 - iii) I believe these two men are saved by that declaration.
 - a) They acted on their faith by following Jesus.
 - b) The curing of their blindness "was just a bonus". ☺
19. Verse 32: While they were going out, a man who was demon-possessed and could not talk was brought to Jesus. 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."
- a) The Jewish religion had a method of dealing with demons. Jewish Rabbi's performed a ritual to exorcise demons. This is not in the bible itself, but comes from Jewish tradition.
 - i) The method is to find out the name of the demon, and then pray to God to cast out that demon.
 - ii) Here was the problem. This man, here in Matthew was mute.
 - iii) How could a rabbi cast out the demon, when we can't find out his name?
 - iv) That is why Verse 33 says: "Nothing like this has ever been seen in Israel."

- b) This is simply another demonstration of Jesus power.
 - i) It is greater than the power of the Jewish rabbi's of that day.
 - ii) No miracle like this is recorded anywhere in the Old Testament.
 - iii) It also should open our mind to realize that nothing is beyond Jesus' help.
 - c) I also wonder how they knew this man was demon-possessed if he couldn't talk.
 - i) There must have been something about his actions that gave that away.
 - ii) I'll have to ask somebody that question one day in heaven. ☺
20. Verse 34: But the Pharisees said, "It is by the prince of demons that he drives out demons."
- a) It is interesting that Matthew mentions this sentence, but no others.
 - i) In Mark and Luke's gospel, Jesus goes on to rebuke that statement.
 - ii) Matthew's point is simply that the Pharisees refused to believe in Jesus even after the miracles.
 - iii) It is simply another proof that miracles are not enough to change people.
 - b) A purpose of casting out demons is to show that Jesus power is greater than the demons.
 - c) It is easy to refute the Pharisees' argument.
 - i) If Jesus is using demonic power to cast out demons, that would weaken demon power. If you "worship" Satan, you would want to encourage demons to possess people and not cast them out. That is why Jesus responded to this argument in the other gospels by saying, "How can Satan drive out Satan? If a kingdom is divided against itself, that kingdom cannot stand. (Mark 3:23b-24, NIV)
21. Verse 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. ³⁶ When he saw the crowds, he had compassion on them, because they were harassed and helpless, like sheep without a shepherd.
- a) Did all of these people who Jesus perform miracles upon him "believe" in Him?
 - b) I suspect that there are many in this crowd who also yelled out "crucify".
 - c) Jews wanted a Messiah to overthrow Rome. They accepted the miracles as a sign. The fact that he didn't lead a revolt to overthrow Rome caused Jesus rejection despite the miracles being performed. It is another example of "miracles are not enough".
 - d) It also shows Jesus compassion for everyone not just those who are going to be saved.
 - e) God the Father desires that everyone turn and accept Jesus. He has compassion on all people, not just the ones who were saved.
 - i) "This is good, and pleases God our Savior, who wants all men to be saved and to come to a knowledge of the truth. (1st Timothy 2:3b-4, NIV)
22. Verse 37: Then he said to his disciples, "The harvest is plentiful but the workers are few. ³⁸ Ask the Lord of the harvest, therefore, to send out workers into his harvest field."
- a) Verse 37 indicates that the last set of miracles had a purpose.
 - b) That purpose is stated in Verse 38. Jesus wants the disciples to pray to the "Lord of the Harvest" to send out more workers.
 - c) So why did Jesus make this statement?
 - i) Possibly to get the disciples to consider the fact that converting people is a bigger job than his audience can handle.
 - ii) There was probably a large crowd approaching Jesus at this point. Jesus, talking to his disciples is saying, "Look at all of these people. They all need help. I love every single one of them and want to minister to them. Christianity is not a solo job. Ask God the Father (called here "Lord of the Harvest") for help to send out more people.
 - d) Don't get too obsessed with the title "Lord of The Harvest". When one reads through the entire bible, there are lots of titles for God the Father and God the Son. The title simply refers to God's purpose as described in that section of the text.

- e) Missionaries use this verse. Many read this, and see God calling them into the mission fields.
 - f) This section is a nice-ending to our two-chapter section on miracles.
 - i) We read of Jesus over the last two chapters starting his public ministry.
 - ii) It is full of miraculous stories, showing Jesus power.
 - iii) Mixed in with those miracles are wonderful lessons about Jesus himself, what he teaches his disciples, and some applications for our lives.
 - iv) Finally, it ends with a calling for “more help” to with the missionary work of preaching the Gospel message.
 - a) Out of gratitude for what Jesus has done for us, he expects us to “get busy” and help out, in some way in the church.
 - (1) For some, it is being a missionary to lead new people to Christ.
 - (2) For others, it is working with other Christians to help them in their needs or to help lead them into maturity as believers.
 - v) With that said, I’ve written way too much this week, and I’ll end in prayer. ☺
23. Let’s pray: Heavenly Father, Lord of the Harvest, we ask that you send more workers into the harvest field. You have done so much for our lives. Each of us is a walking miracle, who you have saved for eternity. Help us and guide us to now live *for* You in gratitude of what you have done for us. Help us to understand our individual and collective role within the church and have the boldness to go forth for what have called us to do. For we ask this in Jesus name, Amen.