

Notes for Matthew -Chapter 9 (Page 1 of 6)

Introduction- The Growing Popularity of Jesus' Ministry

1. "Sir, we wish to see Jesus." (John 12:21b, NKJV) Crowds were thronging Jesus at this point.
 - a. That sentence is often placed on plaques of podiums.
 - b. It is a reminder to pastors that people want to hear about Jesus, not themselves.
2. Chapter 9, along with Chapter 8 focus on "Jesus, the miracle worker".
 - a. Jesus is demonstrating his power, and the crowds are flocking to him to see him
3. Remember that Jesus gives us the same power and authority to teach and perform miracles.
 - a. There is not a miracle in this bunch that has not been replicated by the apostles, and missionaries throughout history.
 - 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. (John 14:12, NIV)
 - c. Jesus is not looking at ability. He is looking for availability of us to be used by him.
4. Notice all the miracles in Chapters 8 and 9 lack of any sort of pattern or style.
 - a. Jesus never wants us to focus on the methodology of the miracle.
 - b. Miracles are mostly used as validation of Jesus as God and sometimes as a teaching tool.
 - c. It also shows the love and compassion Jesus has for our current issues, not just salvation.

Chapter 9 Verse 1: Jesus stepped into a boat, crossed over and came to his own town.

1. Chapter 8 ended with Jesus calming the storm on a boat with the disciples.
2. 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.

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."

1. You can read this same story in Mark 2:1-12 and Luke 5:17-26 with more details.
2. Matthew gives a more abbreviated story with the emphasis on Jesus forgiving their sins.
3. Notice Jesus complimented the faith of the men who lowered the paralytic on the rope.
 - a. Matthew says, "When Jesus saw their faith".
4. The next thing to notice is that Jesus says to the paralytic, "Your sins are forgiven".
 - a. I think the paralytic wanted to hear, "You are healed" or, "Get up and walk".
5. The earliest Christian commentators and historians believed this man had some sort of venereal disease that causes this man to be a paralytic.
 - a. If that theory is wrong, and this guy was born a paralytic, or became one out of an accident, then Jesus statement of, "Your sins are forgiven" may not be a relevant issue.

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

1. "Pharisees and teachers of the law, who had come from every village of Galilee and from Judea and Jerusalem, were sitting there ...(they said) who can forgive sins but God alone?" (Luke 5:17, 21b, NIV).
2. They are right; only God can forgive sins. They didn't get who Jesus was or his mission.

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

1. The key word in this verse is the word "evil".
2. Jesus didn't say, "you are wrong about me" nor "you are incorrect in your theology".
3. He called their thoughts "evil" to not think that Jesus was God.
 - a. That is an example of "blasphemy of the Holy Spirit". (Mark 3:29, Luke 12:10)
 - b. The only unforgivable sin in the bible is to continually deny Jesus as God.

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Verses 5-7: 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.

1. The important thing to understand about this whole story is that Jesus healed this man as to demonstrate that Jesus has the authority to forgive sins.
 - a. Remember that the paralytic is going to die again one day.
 - b. The forgiveness of sins, assuming he became a follower of Jesus lasts for eternity.
2. Many preachers use this story as an illustration of our sins.
 - a. Sin, if not dealt with, eventually grows and leads to death.
 - b. "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)
 - c. 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.
 - d. Jesus, first of all forgave the paralytic his sins, so he could have eternal life.
 - e. Jesus then healed him of his disease so that he could live the rest of his natural life as a living witness for Jesus.
 - f. That is an example of how we are to react to Jesus.
 - g. When God forgives us, out of gratitude we are to get up and respond.

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

1. Matthew's point of Verse 8 is that the crowd still didn't get who Jesus was.
 - a. They thought at this point, is Jesus was just "some guy" who God had given special powers to perform miracles.
 - b. They were so awe-struck by the paralytic getting up and walking they forgot about the part where Jesus says, "Your sins are forgiven".
2. This leads back to my argument that "miracles are not enough to change people".
 - a. Some people, even after seeing a miracle, give a quick "praise God" and go on their merry way, not changing their lifestyle.
 - b. "'No, father Abraham,' he (a condemned-to-hell 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)

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.

1. Here we have the story of Matthew's conversion. It is also in Mark (2:14-17) and Luke (5:27-31).
2. In both Mark and Luke's Gospel Matthew is known as Levi. It is common to have two names.
3. My personal view is that Jesus renames "Levi" to Matthew. I can't prove it from the text.
 - a. Tax collectors were the most hated people in Israel. They were viewed as traitors.
 - b. Matthew means, "Gift from God". I believe Jesus renamed him "gift from God".
 - c. The lesson is Jesus doesn't look at somebody as the "scum of the earth".
 - d. He sees people for the potential, not as who they currently are.
 - e. We need to see those society considers "beyond help", as somebody who needs Jesus.
4. When you read Luke or Mark's account, Matthew gave up his livelihood to follow Jesus.
 - a. Matthew himself doesn't record that fact. Maybe it was out of humility.
 - b. "Let another praise you, and not your own mouth; someone else, and not your own lips. (Proverbs 27:2, NIV)

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Verse 9 (cont.): A discussion about Matthew himself:

5. 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.
 - a. 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.
 - b. The riches of his tax-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.

Verses 10-13: 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."

1. After being saved, Matthew invites his tax collecting buddies over to his house to meet Jesus.
 - a. That is a great testimony on living the Christian life. He leads others to Jesus.
 - b. Matthew does not mention if anyone else gets converted.
 - c. 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.
 - d. 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. This reminds us of the danger of religious smugness (i.e., "holier-than-thou").
 - e. When you read through all four Gospel accounts, the only people Jesus ever argued with are the religious leaders.
 - i. 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. It is God's job to change people, not ours.
2. All of this can be summed up by Jesus saying, "I desire mercy, not sacrifice."
 - a. "Sacrifice" refers to our self-disciplined acts as believers (prayer, bible study, etc.)
 - i. 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.
 - b. Jesus wants us to have compassion on those who don't know Him. We are to see people not as being inferior to us, but of those who also need Jesus.
 - c. "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.)

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?"

1. Next comes followers of John the Baptist. They knew that Jesus was the Messiah. (John 1:29).
2. 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:

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.

1. First of all, Jesus does not condemn the practice of fasting. Verse 15 says, "...then they will fast."

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Verse 15 (cont.):

2. We, collectively as believers are referred to as the “bride of Christ” (Rev. 21:2, 21:9 and 22:17). Jesus is our bridegroom. When Jesus refers the “bridegroom mourning”, he means believers.
3. Therefore, when the “groom is taken away” refers to the 2,000 year plus Christian era when Jesus was no longer “bodily” form.
4. 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.
 - a. It is about not letting your stomach rule your life.
 - b. Fasting is not a Christian requirement, only a recommendation.

Verses 16-17: "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."

1. 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.
2. Jesus is still speaking to the disciples of John the Baptist.
 - a. They were wondering why Jesus’ disciples were not fasting while they did.
 - b. Second it also refers to Jesus taking our sins upon himself as payment.
3. When you read Luke’s account of the same story, Jesus adds another sentence:
 - a. “And no one after drinking old wine wants the new, for he says, ‘The old is better.’” (Luke 5:39, NIV).
 - b. Jesus is saying in Luke is that people prefer the “old way” to the “new way”.
 - c. What all of this means is that you can’t fix the old system, you have to start fresh.
 - i. Christianity cannot survive by being a branch of Judaism.
 - ii. People get set in their ways. This is the idea behind Luke 5:39.
 - iii. A good prayer for ministry: “Help us not to put new wine into old wineskins”, meaning, help us not to rely on yesterday’s methods for tomorrow’s needs.

Verses 18-19: 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.

1. There is a story of a new miracle beginning in Verse 18. Notice the, “While he was saying this”.
2. There is another miracle story beginning in Verse 20. Verse 20 opens with “Just then”.
 - a. Both miracles are meant to be tied together with Jesus teaching on “old ways/new ways”.
3. In Verse 18 a Jewish “ruler” states that his daughter died. He begs Jesus to come touch her.
 - a. In both Mark & Luke’s account (Mark 5:35-42, Luke 8:41-42), 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” and she was about 12 years old.
4. 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. 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.
 - b. The man (Jairus) is in pain. Jesus didn’t argue “religion” with him. When your only child is dead, who cares about religious theology at that moment?
5. It is also interesting to compare this ruler’s “faith” with the Roman soldier’s faith in Chapter 8.
 - a. The Roman soldier said, “Just give the word”. This guy said “Please come & touch her”.

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Verses 20-22: 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."

²²Jesus turned and saw her. "Take heart, daughter," he said, "your faith has healed you." And the woman was healed from that moment.

1. 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.
2. Let's talk about why this woman thought, "If I only touch his cloak".
 - a. For Jewish rabbis and Jewish families in general, they would often decorate the bottom edge of their cloak with family emblems.
 - b. 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 an officer's emblem's to see their rank.
3. Why was it necessary for her to touch his cloak? Couldn't she touch him elsewhere? Ask Jesus?
 - a. My point is Jesus didn't correct her methodology of healing.
 - b. Jesus said, "Your faith has made you well".
 - 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!

Verses 23-26: 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.

1. 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.
2. Notice that before Jesus heals this girl, he kicks out the "scoffers" in Verses 24-25.
 - a. Personally, I like the synagogue leader, the father of the girl at this point.
 - b. This guy really had faith in Jesus. His daughter was dead. He refused to give up. He even helped (assumed) kick out the scoffers so Jesus could work.
 - c. When you want to accomplish a great action, there will always be scoffers. There will always be the pessimists who say, "You can't do that" or "It's impossible".
 - d. Jesus said, "With man this is impossible, but with God all things are possible." (Matthew 19:26b, NIV)
3. Imagine if you were the dead-girl's father, and Jesus was busy healing the other girl with the blood flow. You would probably be very impatient with Jesus and angry he was healing others.
 - a. 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).
 - b. 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!"
 - c. God is in charge and we're not. 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.

Verses 27-31: 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.

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Verses 27-31 (cont.)

1. Here we have the story of two blind men receiving their sight.
 - a. The two blind men “followed” Jesus (Verse 27) and came to Jesus’ house (Verse 28).
 - b. If they were blind how did they do this? The point here is to notice their persistence.
 - i. God encourages us to persistently bring our prayer requests to God.
 - ii. It is not about “praying 36 times before God will answer”, it is about keeping our focus upon God through that situation.
 - c. These two men called Jesus “Son of David”. That is a title of the Messiah.
 - i. I believe these two men are eternally saved by that declaration.
 - ii. They acted on their faith by following Jesus. Their blindness-cure was a bonus. ☺

Verses 32-33: 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."

1. 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.
 - a. Their method is to find out the name of the demon, and then pray to God to cast out that demon.
 - b. Here was the problem. This man, here in Matthew was mute.
 - c. How could a rabbi cast out the demon, when we can’t find out his name?
 - d. That is why Verse 33 says: “Nothing like this has ever been seen in Israel.”
 - e. I personally wonder how they knew this man was demon-possessed if he couldn’t talk.

Verse 34: But the Pharisees said, "It is by the prince of demons that he drives out demons."

1. Matthew’s point is simply that the Pharisees refused to believe in Jesus even after the miracles.
2. It is easy to refute the Pharisees’ argument. :
 - a. 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)

Verses 35-36: 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.

1. Did all of these people who Jesus perform miracles upon him “believe” in Him?
 - a. Probably not. This is another example that miracles are not enough for conversion.
2. It also shows Jesus compassion for everyone not just those who are going to be saved.
 - a. “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)

Verses 37-38: 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."

1. Verse 37 indicates that the last set of miracles had a purpose. That purpose is stated in Verse 38. Jesus wants the disciples to pray to the “Lord of the Harvest” to send out more workers.
2. There was probably a large crowd approaching Jesus at this point. Jesus, talking to his disciples is saying in effect, “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.
3. This verse is a reminder for us to pray for more workers to be of Christian service.
4. Missionaries use this verse. Many read this, and see God calling them into the mission fields.