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**Turn in your Bibles with me to Matthew chapter 9.**

Over the last several weeks we've been watching Jesus perform miracle after miracle in Matthew chapter 8 and today we continue with Matthew, chapter 9. Now, you'll remember the purpose for these miracles is to give evidence that He is the Son of God, the One sent by God to be the payment for the sin that we all carry in our souls.

You see Church family, every single one of us in this room has a sin problem. Yes, I know you might have problems at work or home or with your car or even with your toaster this morning...but, the biggest problem we all have is: SIN! Because sin is a death sentence in God's economy and it's penalty is spiritual death that leads to an eternity in Hell. But, Jesus came to this earth and He directly dealt with sin on the cross. He went to the cross and took your sin and mine... He paid for it with His own life...but, the question is...will you accept that payment?

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Today we are going to see Jesus do something He hasn't done up to this point in the five miracles He's already performed as chronicled by Matthew in Matthew chapter 8. But, as we arrive to chapter 9, we're going to see Jesus perform the greatest miracle of all: He's going to forgive sin! The title of today's message is: Jesus' Power Over Sin.

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**Pick up with me in Matthew 9:1**

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**Matthew 9:1-8**

**1** And getting into a boat he crossed over and came to his own city. **2** And behold, some people brought to him a paralytic, lying on a bed. And when Jesus saw their faith, he said to the paralytic, "Take heart, my son; your sins are forgiven." **3** And behold, some of the scribes said to themselves, "This man is blaspheming." **4** But Jesus, knowing their thoughts, said, "Why do you think evil in your hearts? **5** For which is easier, to say, 'Your sins are forgiven,' or to say, 'Rise and walk'? **6** But that you may know that the Son of Man has authority on earth to forgive sins"—he then said to the paralytic—"Rise, pick up your bed and go home." **7** And he rose and went home. **8** When the crowds saw it, they were afraid, and they glorified God, who had given such authority to men.

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You will remember from our time together last week that Jesus has made a return trip from Gergesa. See our map.

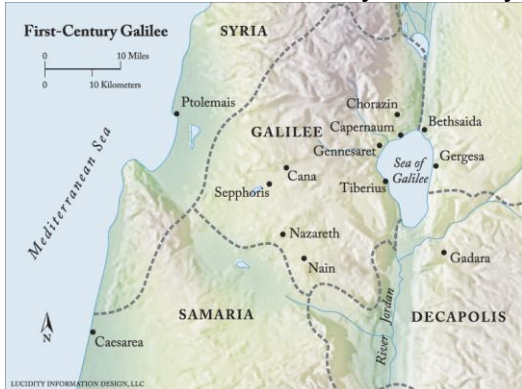


Jesus was there in Gergesa (about 3 o'clock on the Sea of Galilee), healing two demon-possessed men. He showed that He had power over the supernatural world by casting the demons into 2,000 pigs who then made a swan dive...I mean hog dive over the cliffs of Gergesa into the Sea of Galilee. After this, the herdsmen and the people of the town

became so afraid that they would lose their prosperity and their hog business that they begged Jesus to leave. We saw last week, that they truly preferred their pigs over salvation and so, Jesus got back into His boat and made His way NW back across the Sea of Galilee to His own city.

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Now where is His own city? You say, "Nazareth." No. See the map again...



Jesus left Nazareth because the people thought He was crazy and so He made Capernaum and the house of Peter His home base or HIS OWN CITY.

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In fact Mark's Gospel describes the fact that Jesus was at home when He went to Capernaum. **Turn to Mark 2.** This is actually from Peter's perspective as he describes that Jesus called his house "home." And once again this morning, we'll be seeing different angles of this account through Mark and Luke's Gospels.

### **Mark 2:1**

**And when he returned to Capernaum after some days, it was reported that he was at home.**

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Now you might remember we've showed you Peter's house in Capernaum. I've shown it to you several times. It was a really large home. Peter was obviously an amazing commercial fisherman.



Now following along as we continuing reading in Mark 2.

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### **Mark 2:2-4**

**2** And many were gathered together, so that there was no more room, not even at the door. And he was preaching the word to them. **3** And they came, bringing to him a paralytic carried by four men. **4** And when they could not get near him because of the crowd, they removed the roof above him, and when they had made an opening, they let down the bed on which the paralytic lay.

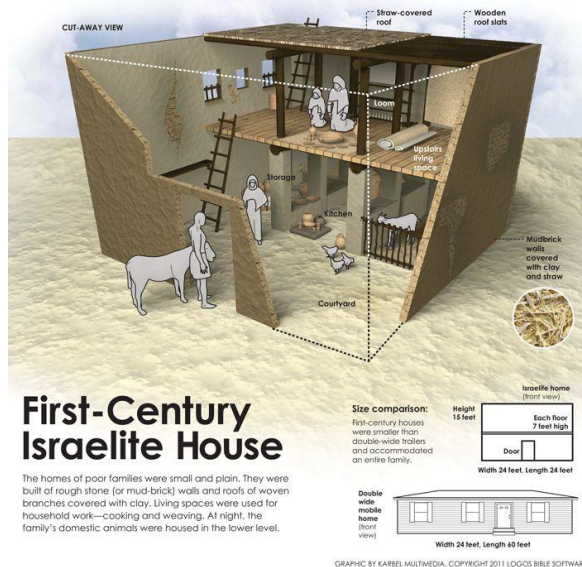
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**Now I want you to turn to Luke's Gospel, chapter 5** and see something else about this home and what these men did to get the paralyzed man to Jesus.

## Luke 5:19

19 but finding no way to bring him in, because of the crowd, they went up on the roof and let him down with his bed through the tiles into the midst before Jesus.

Now let me show you some things about the construction of these first century homes. Take a look at this...

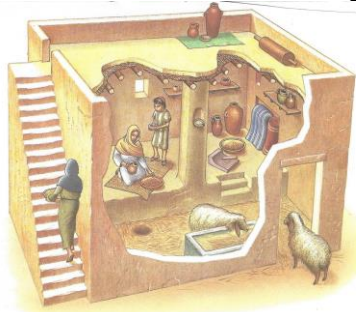


Most of the homes were two-story. They were built with mudbrick walls, covered with clay and straw. The ground floor would have had the kitchen area and the area where the farm animals were kept and some possible room for storage. On the second floor would be the den or living room. Usually the roof system was a mixture of woven branches and clay, which were smoothed out with a stone roller. Here's a picture of a replica of the inside of one of these types of homes...



Kitchen on the ground floor with the animals on the living room up top.

Now, there's something else that's important for you to know. Many of the nicer homes had an exterior staircase that could get you to the second floor. Like this...



It was on this second floor that you would spend most of your time, because it would be more open and a pleasant breeze could blow through and cool you in the evenings. You might remember that it was from the rooftop of a home that Bathsheba was bathing when she was seen by King David in 2 Samuel 11. Now here's why I tell you all of this. It's

from this rooftop area that the men broke through the roof to get the paralyzed man down to Jesus.

**Go back with me to Matthew chapter 9, verse 2.** We will now meet this man who was paralyzed. **And as you are turning back to Matthew 9,** let me tell you that we don't know who the men are who carried the paralyzed man to Jesus. We don't know if they are brothers of the paralyzed man? We don't know if they are cousins, or neighbors or just friends. But, we DO KNOW THIS...they were DETERMINED to get him to Jesus because they believed Jesus could heal him.

**Matthew 9:2**

**2 And behold, some people brought to him a paralytic, lying on a bed. And when Jesus saw their faith, he said to the paralytic, "Take heart, my son; your sins are forgiven."**

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So here's a man "lying on a bed." And folks that BED, is literally, most likely, the bed he lives in and stays in every second of every day. The word "bed" means "a small cot or mattress or mat of heavy quilts." These guys literally carried his little bed to Peter's house. Because, they HAD TO GET HIM TO JESUS and there was no other way! They were desperate.

Perhaps the man's paralysis had brought him to a place that he was nearing death? We don't know. But, they showed an amazing sense of urgency. And Church, be reminded of the fact, IF YOU TRULY COME TO JESUS IT WILL REQUIRE DESPERATION AND SENSE OF URGENCY ON YOUR PART.

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Listen...if you are "ho-hum" about this deal...you're not ready. You see, it's embarrassing what these guys are doing...they're tearing up a house...think of the potential consequences of that...but they didn't care.

And you see, church family, in order for anyone to come to Jesus, you must get to a place that you don't care what anyone else thinks...you don't mind being embarrassed... You're hungry and you're desperate to get Jesus!

No...these men didn't and wouldn't stop. It might be their last chance to get their friend to Jesus. And ultimately they did! And all three Gospel writers say: **"And Jesus saw their faith."**

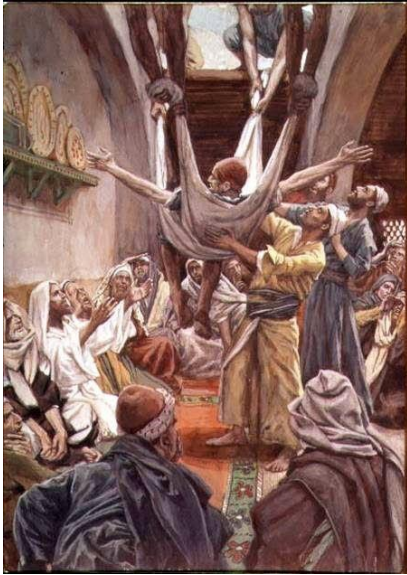
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You might ask, "Who's faith." THEIR FAITH... Just the four friends or all five? Well, we can't answer for sure, but I believe all five. We know it took faith for the men to carry him up those steps and break open that tile roof. But, what about the paralyzed man? Did he have faith?

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Well let me tell you this...if you study all three passages in Matthew, Mark and Luke, you'll find the paralyzed man never speaks. He never utters a word. And **perhaps** he couldn't. Perhaps he was paralyzed to the point that he couldn't even speak. Can you try to imagine his face as he is being lowered down into that room?





You know he had to be afraid. What if they dropped him? What if Jesus didn't accept him?

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As you are pondering that...think about the rest of the people in that crowded upstairs room... Think of all the dust and dirt and debris that's falling from the ceiling. Can you imagine Peter? "WHAT ARE YOU DOING TO MY ROOF?" But, no Gospel writer records anyone telling them to stop. By the way...that tells me that Peter didn't have a problem with being inconvenienced for the Gospel...for someone to be helped.

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**How about you? Do you mind being inconvenienced for the Gospel?** Does the Gospel cost you anything? How 'bout if the music is too loud or too soft...or not your favorite...can you be inconvenienced for the Gospel? How 'bout if the Pastor goes five minutes long? How 'bout if you have to wait outside the doors because the invitation runs long? How 'bout this...Will you tell someone at work about Jesus? Inconvenience. Or a family member? 98% (Anna Kilby of Baptist Campus Ministry at ASU) of Christians do not share their faith. Less than 800 of the 18,000 students at ASU identify as Christians. Yes, it's inconvenient to share the gospel because it might cost you ridicule or looking strange. No! There's no record of Peter complaining. How 'bout you?

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Do you complain about your church? About your pastors? About your Lord? Is He (today) not living up to your expectations? Is He breaking open the roof of your life? Is He making a mess to do something bigger? Will you let Him do that so He can do something powerful and extraordinary in your life? Or will you just complain about the roof and settle for the ordinary?

No...most people don't want to be inconvenienced for the Gospel. They don't want it to cost more than an hour and a half on a Sunday morning. Lord help us that this doesn't describe us.

**Well, the man is finally before Jesus, and what does Jesus say?**

**Matthew 9:2b**

**2 ..."Take heart, my son; your sins are forgiven."**

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What had Jesus just done? Jesus healed the man, on the spot. That's what it says. He's no longer paralyzed, right? Nope! Jesus said, "...your sins are forgiven." Uh...that's good...but, he's still paralyzed.

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Hey folks, isn't it enough what Jesus just did...Jesus just commuted this man's death sentence and delivered his soul from Hell. What's important for the man's eternity: that he can walk or be cleansed of his sin? You see, if he walks and is still a sinner when he dies...he's going to Hell. But, if he's cleansed of his sin, he'll go to heaven where he'll eventually walk one day anyway, right?

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Church family, I believe Jesus knew that the man was concerned most about his sin and his eternity, even more than paralysis. Because Jesus dealt with his sins first. Jesus knew what was in the man's heart and Jesus addressed that need first. And did you see what Jesus called him? Look at it again.

### **Matthew 9:2b**

**2 ...“Take heart, my son; your sins are forgiven.”**

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He called him: “Son.” Wow! He's now part of the family of God. He's a “son...” he's been adopted into the family of God. And Jesus said, “Take heart...” Oh what a tender, comforting thing to say to the man. “Don't be afraid...cheer up...your sins are forgiven...you're now my son.” Beautiful!!!

Those words, “TAKE HEART” are one Greek word: THAR-SEO and it's the word His disciples will hear again in about 2 ½ years, when Jesus appears before them in a locked upper room in Jerusalem on resurrection. He will say, “Take heart...it is I...I am alive!”

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Perhaps it's the word you need to hear today. Thar-seo...take heart...Jesus is in the room. His Spirit is here and He sees you from His throne in heaven. Take heart! He wears the Victor's Crown...He Breaks Every Chain and we can trust in Him!

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But some **didn't like** what Jesus did! Who would that be? The same old guys. The **Pharisees and the Scribes**.

### **Matthew 9:3**

**3 And behold, some of the scribes said to themselves, “This man is blaspheming.”**

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They were thinking in their minds that Jesus was guilty of claiming to be God. **Turn back to Mark 2 and as you do**, I'll tell you something that **Dr. Luke tells us. Some of these guys** came all the way from Jerusalem, 90 miles away.

### **Luke 5:17**

**17** On one of those days, as he was teaching, Pharisees and teachers of the law were sitting there, who had come from every village of Galilee and Judea and from Jerusalem. And the power of the Lord was with him to heal.

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And Mark's Gospel tells us...

### **Mark 2:6-8**

**6** Now some of the scribes were sitting there, questioning in their hearts, **7** “Why does this man speak like that? He is blaspheming! Who can forgive sins but God alone?” **8** And immediately Jesus, perceiving in his spirit that they thus questioned within themselves, said to them, “Why do you question these things in your hearts?”

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Do you see it? The Scribes and Pharisees weren't saying these things...they were just thinking them and Jesus showed once again that He was God in that He read their minds! He said, "Why do you question these things in your hearts?"

You see, we've already been through this... Remember when Jesus read the minds of the men who gave all of the excuses why they couldn't get into the boat with him. I've got to bury my father, I've got to say goodbye to my family... No, those were excuses and Jesus read right through those excuses **and He's still doing that today.**

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Listen, He knows the truth about our hearts. ARE QUESTIONING THINGS IN YOUR HEART? He knows your thoughts...He knows your motives... We can't hide from Him... We are naked and bare before our Creator God...the One who knows all. Don't hide the truth. Don't hide what you're feeling. He knows. **And I'm good with that.** I'm glad He knows. That's comforting to me. Is it comforting to you? **It's not if you're hiding something?** Are you? He knows... **Watch it play out in Matthew 9.**

#### **Matthew 9:4**

**4 But Jesus, knowing their thoughts, said, "Why do you think evil in your hearts?"**

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What was the evil in their heart? This was where it all began. Right here in Peter's house the seed was planted by Satan for the religious elite...the Pharisees and Scribes...to have Jesus killed. Why? Because they said He was a blasphemer in that He claimed to be able to forgive sins and no one could do that but God. And so He asked them:

#### **Matthew 9:5**

**5 For which is easier, to say, 'Your sins are forgiven,' or to say, 'Rise and walk'?**

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Listen, in that day, people equated sickness and disease with sin. They assumed if you were sick, you had sinned. Remember even the disciples said this about a blind man one time in John 9.

#### **John 9:2**

**And his disciples asked him, "Rabbi, who sinned, this man or his parents, that he was born blind?"**

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This had been going on since the days of Job. In the Jew's minds... difficulties and bad times...sickness and disease were directly correlated in the minds of the Jews with sin! You're sick because you sinned. That's wrong theology. But all sickness is not related to sin... But understand all sickness and disease are things we will deal with because of ORIGINAL SIN in that, when sin occurred in the Garden of Eden, it brought death and decay to the world until Jesus will one day reverse the curse. Until then, sickness is as much a part of our world as sin is a part of our world.

And so Jesus...to stump these pompous fools He said, "Which is easier for me to forgive the man or heal the man?" You notice they never answer. Because they can't. They know both healing a man and forgiving a man are impossible for just a man to do! BUT Jesus isn't just a man. He's GOD! And that's the point. God is standing in front of them in the person of Jesus Christ in Peter's house for God had put on flesh and was dwelling among them.

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Yes, only God can forgive sin and that's who Jesus was claiming to be. For God said in...

**Jeremiah 31:34b**

**“...For I will forgive their iniquity, and I will remember their sin no more.”**

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God said to the prophet Isaiah:

**Isaiah 43:25**

**“I, I am he who blots out your transgressions for my own sake, and I will not remember your sins.”**

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Jesus forgave the man his sins and that could only mean one thing: He's God! And it's that fact that the Scribes and Pharisees couldn't handle. But, the question is: Would the man be able to rise and walk as Jesus commanded him? For, if he does, there would be indisputable evidence that Jesus is no ordinary man. If he doesn't, they'll know Jesus is an imposter. It's now the moment of truth.

Now, think about this church... it's like we're right back where we were last week. The Pharisees are NOW like the people standing there on the cliffs of Gergesa with the naked, maniacal demoniacs. The only way they would believe Jesus actually performed the miracle of casting out the demons was if they saw the reaction of the pigs as they went flying off those cliffs. So, now Jesus does the same thing, because the Scribes couldn't tell if the man's sins had truly been forgiven. After all, who can tell that? But, since they associated sickness and disease with sin...well...if Jesus had the power to heal the man...then, it stands to reason that he could forgive the man's sins.

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Can you imagine the tension in that upstairs den...you could cut it with a knife...

**Matthew 9:6-7**

**6 But that you may know that the Son of Man has authority on earth to forgive sins”—he then said to the paralytic—“Rise, pick up your bed and go home.” 7 And he rose and went home.**

Church, the man didn't limp out. He didn't stumble out. He didn't slowly straighten up trying to awkwardly hold on to people as he fell out of that house. No! He walked out of that house with new legs that had been recreated by Jesus on the spot. Jesus performed on that paralytic what he had performed when He created the universe. He made the man new legs underneath his garments. Just as He spoke and created ALL THINGS! Listen...just like the paralytic's sins...the old had passed away and all things become new...that included his soul AND his legs.

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Church, Jesus has all the authority of the universe in His hands.

**Matthew 28:18**

**18 And Jesus came and said to them, “All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me.**

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Do you know what happened in that den after that? Matthew tells us they were afraid.

**Matthew 9:8**

**8 When the crowds saw it, they were afraid, and they glorified God, who had given such authority to men.**

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They were in awe! The definition of the word "AFRAID," used there, means they were dumbstruck. Mouths hanging open!!! And all they could do was glorify God! Why? Because the crowds recognized that Jesus had authority had that authority to heal sins and men meant He was indeed God in the flesh standing right in front them.

**Please listen as we begin to close**...The deepest need of mankind is to be healed of sin. I told you that in the beginning of this message. The deepest need of every human being is to be cleansed of sin. And that's the message of Jesus and Christianity. The message that: **YOUR SINS CAN BE FORGIVEN** that Jesus has power over sin!

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People say, "Oh you shouldn't bring up sin, Pastor Kevin. That's too negative." Well, folks that's the Gospel... "For all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God." It's the message of Christianity and if we don't preach that fact...the fact that Jesus came to seek and save that which is lost, then all we are doing is prostituting a false gospel seeking only to put bottoms in seats and dollars in plates.

Listen carefully, the Bible is crystal clear when it records the **one word that Jesus spoke over and over** that is the word that will begin a person's journey to Him. That word: REPENT. "Repent," Jesus said, "for the kingdom of heaven is at hand."

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Listen and we're done... Sin is bound up deep in the heart of every single human being every born. Sin seeks to dominate the mind and the human heart. It perverts the will. It stains the affections. It pollutes the body. Sin brings mankind under the dominion of the devil. It brings men and women under the power of the wrath of God. Sin subjects mankind to misery so that he is subjected to nothing but emptiness and pain, so that he knows no peace, so that he will ultimately be doomed to hell. Oh...the best news you can give to any human being who has ever lived is that God made a way back to Himself. It's called forgiveness and He sent Jesus to die on the cross and rise from the dead so that you might confess and REPENT of your sin.

Yes, the paralyzed man walked out of Peter's house with roof particles in his hair, dust on his robe and peace in his new heart and strength in his new legs because Jesus has power over sin!

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