

Rev. Dustin Daniels | River Bible Church  
**Matthew 9:1-8 | Nothing Else Matters: The Forgiveness of Your Sin**  
Sunday, August 13, 2023

**WELCOME:**

- Please turn your Bibles to Matthew 9:1-8
- Bibles in the back—our gift to you.

**REVIEW:**

Over the past several months, we have been watching how Matthew, our Gospel writer, reveals Jesus' power through miracles.

If you flip back a chapter to Matthew 8, we watched Jesus heal a man with leprosy, heal a soldier's servant, and heal Peter's mother-in-law.

So we have three healing miracles back to back.

Then we learned of Jesus' power and authority over creation when he told the winds and waves to stop.

And then, Last Sunday, we learned about Jesus' power and authority over demons.

We had several key points—but let me just mention one—

**LW KEYPOINT:**

*Jesus restored the demon-possessed men to sanity, society, and service.*

He gave them new life.

One man had six thousand demons dwelling within him.

We don't precisely how demon possession works—we do know that once a non Believer opens himself up to certain habitual sins or the occult—those are prime activities for demon possession to take over your physical body.

Last week's narrative is so important to understand because that demon-possessed man was a Gentile—just like you and me.

Meaning we're non-Jews.

The behavior of that Gentile is the ultimate picture of what we will become if Jesus doesn't take over the authority in our lives.

We are born alienated from God—and Jesus casting out those demons is a terrifying and visible picture of his holiness and our sinfulness.



### **INTRODUCTION:**

Today we see the crescendo of miracles—

Matthew has presented an ascending type of authority—and that authority is the forgiveness of our sins.

~~Now~~ Today, Matthew paints the picture of what the Jews look like.

If the Gentiles have no hope to live a healthy life on Earth and no hope for salvation after they die, then what's it look like for the Jews?

Well, we meet a new character today—a paralyzed man.

And Jesus says something to this paralyzed man that is the most important statement anyone, Jew or Gentile, could ever hear.

What is that statement? Glad you asked. Let's find out together.

*\*Please stand for the reading and honoring of God's Word.\**

**SCRIPTURE:**

**Matthew 9:1**—So he got into a boat, crossed over, and came to his own town.

**Matthew 9:2**— Just then some men brought to him a paralytic lying on a stretcher. Seeing their faith, Jesus told the paralytic, "Have courage, son, your sins are forgiven."

**Matthew 9:3**— At this, some of the scribes said to themselves, "He's blaspheming!"

**Matthew 9:4**— Perceiving their thoughts, Jesus said, "Why are you thinking evil things in your hearts?"

**Matthew 9:5**— For which is easier: to say, 'Your sins are forgiven,' or to say, 'Get up and walk'?

**Matthew 9:6**— But so that you may know that the Son of Man has authority on Earth to forgive sins"—then he told the paralytic, "Get up, take your stretcher, and go home."

**Matthew 9:7**— So he got up and went home.

**Matthew 9:8**— When the crowds saw this, they were awestruck, and gave glory to God, who had given such authority to men.

*These are the very words from the authoritative, inerrant, inspired, and infallible Word of Almighty God.*

**PRAY:**

*How joyful is the one whose transgression is forgiven, whose sin is covered! (Ps. 32:1)*

**EXEGESIS:**

*Jesus*  
**Matthew 9:1**—So he got into a boat, crossed over, and came to his own town.

So from last week, Jesus and the Disciples crossed back over the Sea of Galilee from the Decapolis, where He healed two demon-possessed men.

*↳ Gentile region - "otherside"*

After this miracle, the townspeople told Jesus to leave, so He did.

Note this—Jesus doesn't stay where He's not wanted.

He didn't try to convince them in any way to do something that they didn't want to do.

The same goes for us today.

So Jesus left that area—now what's fun is that these people don't know that Jesus will soon be back because he left a missionary to minister to them—one of those men he healed.

Jesus told this now saved and sane man to return to his family and proclaim God's mercy to everyone.

And he did precisely that.

We would say that this guy was on fire for Jesus—he wanted other people to know about the saving truth of Jesus Christ.

Charles Spurgeon said, "If you don't wish for others to be saved, then your not saved yourself."

So we know this man got saved, and his life will never be the same.

**Matthew 9:1**—...and came to his own town.



This town in verse one is not Nazareth—Nazareth is where Jesus grew up, but He moved to a much larger town called Capernaum—and that's where we are today.

**Matthew 9:2**— Just then some men brought to him a paralytic lying on a stretcher. Seeing their faith, Jesus told the paralytic, "Have courage, son, your sins are forgiven."

This story is also told in Mark and Luke.

Matt's version is the shortest of all three accounts, so let's look at the other Gospel writers to fill in the gaps.

**Luke 5:17 NLT**—One day while Jesus was teaching, some Pharisees and teachers of religious law were sitting nearby. (It seemed that these men showed up from every village in all Galilee and Judea, as well as from Jerusalem.)

Jerusalem is a three-day walk to Capernaum.

Jerusalem is the center of Judaism. = JTS

Luke reveals that not only were Jesus' followers here listening to Jesus teach, but so were His enemies.

These Pharisees and Scribes had Doctors of Ministry degrees and Ph. D.s in OT theology.

Why were they there?

These men are responding to Jesus healing the leper back in chapter eight.

After Jesus healed the leper, Jesus told him to go show himself clean to those in Jerusalem.

So he did that.

Keep in mind that no one has ever healed anyone from leprosy.

It was very apparent, when someone was healed from leprosy in the OT, it was God who did the healing—and that's the point.

Rabbis viewed leprosy as something that could not be healed because man could not overturn God's decision of judgment. ~~by the~~

The belief was that leprosy was always punishment for sin.

Rabbis called lepers "the living dead." They had no hope.

So, this one-of-a-kind miracle <sup>by Jesus.</sup> triggered a special investigation by the Jewish Supreme Court—called the Sanhedrin.

What Luke reveals is step one of their investigation—observation.

During this first stage, a small delegation of Scribes and Pharisees were sent to listen to Jesus.

The same kind of investigation happened to John the Baptizer as well.

**Matthew 9:2**— Just then some men brought to him a paralytic lying on a stretcher.

**Mark 2:1 NLT**—When Jesus returned to Capernaum several days later, the news spread quickly that he was back home.

**Mark 2:2 NLT**— Soon the house where he was staying was so packed with visitors that there was no more room, even outside the door. While he was preaching God's word to them,

**Mark 2:3 NLT**— *four men arrived carrying a paralyzed man on a mat.*

**Mark 2:4 NLT**— *They couldn't bring him to Jesus because of the crowd, so they dug a hole through the roof above his head. Then they lowered the man on his mat, right down in front of Jesus.*

Here we're introduced to a paralyzed man and his four friends.

These four men want to get their friend, brother, son in front of Jesus for healing—the problem is the house is packed with wall-to-wall people.

It's standing room only.

Not only is it standing room only, but nobody is moving for these men.

There were no mandatory building codes for wheelchair accessibility.

There were no special care centers.

There was no group therapy.

In general, paralytics were lonely, helpless, and hurting people.

So what are the options?

1. Wait until Jesus is done teaching.
2. Send one person in to weave and make his way to Jesus and ask.
3. Dismantle the roof.

Wouldn't you love to hear that conversation?

*If we can't get through the crowd, let's go over it. Let's climb up on the roof, tear a hole in it, tie cords to the corners of our stretcher, and lower our friend to Jesus.*

Sounds like a great plan, as long as it's not your home.

Most likely, this is Peter's home—Jesus didn't have a home of his own.

Jewish houses in those days had outside staircases and flat roofs. (PIC)

So we have four men carrying a paralyzed man.

His paralysis is severe, and he may well have been a quadriplegic.

People who were crippled in the first century suffered not only from physical limitations but also suffered the social stigma of being crippled and the neglect that comes with it.

But in the Jewish culture, the stigma was worse because many people believed that diseases and afflictions directly resulted from their personal sin.

The disciples believed this, but Jesus corrected their faulty belief system.

**John 9:1 NLT**—As Jesus was walking along, he saw a man who had been blind from birth.

**John 9:2 NLT**— "Rabbi," his disciples asked him, "why was this man born blind? Was it because of his own sins or his parents' sins?"

There is no doubt that the paralyzed man believed this as well.

In his own mind, his paralysis was a vivid representation of his own sinfulness and God's judgment.

And that may be true, as we'll see in a moment—but Jesus showed us that all diseases and disabilities are not from personal sin.



**John 9:3 NLT**— "It was not because of his sins or his parents' sins," Jesus answered. "This happened so the power of God could be seen in him."

**Matthew 9:2**— Just then some men brought to him a paralytic lying on a stretcher. Seeing their faith.

The prosperity preachers love this verse.

They say you're not healthy and wealthy because you don't have enough faith.

We dare not take this verse out of context and isolate it from the rest of Scripture.

Because those same words are spouted out of the mouths of Job's friends.

Job's friends told Job repeatedly, "your life is falling apart because of your sin."

→ Not enough faith  
→ Confess

And that's not true. God makes that perfectly clear by the end of Job's story.

BTW, Have you ever wondered why prosperity preachers don't teach the book of Job?

— can't extract money from the church.

They can't line their pockets with the truth.

The truth is that Jesus sometimes healed people with no faith at all.

Other times, Jesus healed people with little faith.—

But somehow and in some way, Jesus "sees their faith"—All five men.

Some preachers say that Jesus saw the faith of the four - not the paralytic  
→ Text doesn't say that.

How did Jesus see their faith?

1. He's God, and he saw their hearts.

Let me show you a couple verses from the OT.

**1 Samuel 16:7 NLT**—The Lord doesn't see things the way you see them. People judge by outward appearance, but the Lord looks at the heart."

**1 Kings 8:39 NLT**—for You (God) alone know each human heart.

**1 Chronicles 28:9**— for the Lord searches every heart and understands the intention of every thought.

**Jeremiah 17:10 NLT**— I, the Lord, search all hearts and examine secret motives.

**Ezekiel 11:5 NLT**— for I know every thought that comes into your minds.

So Scripture shows us how Jesus saw their faith.

But number 2—Jesus also saw their actions.

Property damage says a lot about these men—they were willing to do whatever it took to get their brother, friend, or son in front of Jesus.

**James 2:14 NLT**—What good is it, ... if you say you have faith but don't show it by your actions?

Our faith propels us to do something with it.

Think about some of your heroes—they are not your heroes because they believed—they're your hero because they did something with their faith.

If our faith doesn't propel us to action in some form or fashion...James goes on and says this—

**James 2:26 NLT**—faith is dead without good works.

*Meaning you don't have faith.*  
These men are living out their faith.

Notice what happens next...

**Matthew 9:2**— Seeing their faith, Jesus told the paralytic, "Have courage, son, your sins are forgiven."

Jesus speaks.

This paralyzed man nor his friends say anything.

Isn't that interesting?

Not one Gospel writer records any dialogue between Jesus and these five men.

Regardless, Jesus continues...

**Matthew 9:2**—"Have courage,

Why would Jesus tell this paralyzed man to have courage?

Your translation may say, "take heart, be of good cheer."

The sense here is to have confidence and reassurance—

In other words, Jesus is saying—*there's nothing to fear.* - hole in ceiling.

Jesus is not speaking about the type of fear to where you have to grit your teeth to overcome it—

He's also not speaking of the kind of courage where you have to muster it up by sheer willpower and determination.

Jesus was saying, *Don't be afraid, because you no longer have anything to be afraid of—have courage!*

→ PAST vs. Present.

Please don't misunderstand. This man's fears are real and well-founded.

An unrepentant sinner is separated from God and under divine judgment.

But when he repents in faith, he no longer has reason to fear, because he is no longer under judgment.

So here's the picture—Jesus sees the faith of the four friends and knows the heart of the paralyzed man.

Jesus obviously sees what others can't—

This man's pride and self-sufficiency have been "crushed, literally crippled, and broken."

Scripture talks about a contrite heart...

**Isaiah 66:2 NLT**—I will bless those who have humble and contrite hearts, who tremble at my word.

*Evidently - This paralyzed man has both -*

When *contrite* modifies *the heart*, Scripture paints the picture of a conscience crushed by the weight of its own guilt regarding his sin.

A contrite heart offers no excuses and doesn't blame others.

This man is throwing himself upon the mercy of God—knowing full well that he deserves nothing but God's righteous eternal wrath.

Knowing how terrified and embarrassed this man is, Jesus speaks tender words of mercy.

Jesus then says....

**Matthew 9:2**— son,



Not only is this a continued term of endearment, but Jesus, as God, chose to take a sinner and turn him into a son!

Jesus knows this man is not looking for loopholes in the Bible study.

He's not crashing the Bible study to point out a theological error or chide, mock—but because he truly wants to hear the Word of God, be healed and forgiven.

**Matthew 9:2**— your sins are forgiven.

Now, what's everybody else thinking?

*Wait, Jesus you got it all wrong! He's here for healing not forgiveness!*

Don't miss this—

### **KEYPOINT 1:**

*Jesus is not only the Great Physician (Mark 2:17) but, more importantly, the High Priest (Heb. 2:17).*

By Jesus being the High Priest, he can treat this man's greatest need first.

*Because Jesus knew that's what he wanted - God doesn't forgive people who don't ask.*

By forgiving his sins, Jesus first stops the spiritual bleeding and crushing weight of guilt.

Sure, healing this man's body would save him decades of physical suffering—but he still has a problem...his sin debt has not been paid to God.

*Why are the hospitals so big & our churches so small?*

The apostle Paul proclaims—

**Romans 4:7 NLT**— "Oh, what joy for those whose disobedience is forgiven, whose sins are put out of sight."

**Romans 4:8 NLT**— Yes, what joy for those whose record the Lord has cleared of sin."

In other words, the happiest man is the man who knows he's forgiven.

**Matthew 9:2**— your sins are forgiven.

Those are the most beautiful words ever spoken!

Out of all the miracles in Scripture, this is the greatest.

And it's the greatest because it cost God the most.

We've seen how easy it is for Jesus to heal people—Jesus does that with a word.

But for Jesus to forgive us, it cost him his very life.

**KEYPOINT 2:**

*Forgiveness of sin is God's greatest gift because it meets man's greatest need.*

*Nothing else matters!*

This now forgiven paralyzed man looking back up at Jesus—what's he thinking?!

*Did you just say what I think I heard you say? Did you say I was forgiven!?*

The basic idea of forgiveness is that God sends or drives away our sin.

David declared...

**Psalms 103:12 NLT**— He has removed our sins as far from us as the east is from the west.

**Psalms 103:13 NLT**— The Lord is like a father to his children, tender and compassionate to those who fear him.

*— "Son"*

**Psalm 103:14 NLT**— *For he knows how weak we are; he remembers we are only dust.*

When Jesus forgave this man, here's what happened—

**Micah 7:19 NLT**— *Once again you will have compassion on us. You will trample our sins under your feet and throw them into the depths of the ocean!*

The apostle Paul proclaims—

**1 Timothy 1:15 NLT**— *"Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners."*

All that to say this....nobody saw Jesus forgiving this man—except the paralytic himself. *- he asked.*

**Matthew 9:3**— *At this, some of the scribes said to themselves, "He's blaspheming!"*

Not only does Jesus know the hearts and faith of those five men--Jesus also knows the hearts and minds of the Scribes and Pharisees.

Now, at this point, we've heard many preachers start to rail in on these Scribes and Pharisees.

Scribes were scholars skilled in copying and interpreting the OT.

They viewed themselves as guardians of Jewish traditions.

And we know that because we've read to the end of the book.

But let's put ourselves in their shoes at this moment.

In Jewish theology, one thing was clear: sin could only be forgiven by bringing an offering to God in the temple in Jerusalem.

It's called the Day of Atonement.

The Day of Atonement was a festival where the entire nation fasted and dealt with their sin through the blood sacrifice of animals. (Lev. 16 and Numbers 29)

↳ Temp. forgiveness

Everybody in Pete's house knows that—

But what do we find here?

There is no sin offering, no priest, and no temple.

This is Capernaum, not Jerusalem.

Jesus is not recognized as a priest, and the paralytic has brought no sacrifice for sin.

If you were in that room at that time, you probably would have thought the same thing—Jesus is blaspheming!

If only God can forgive sins, which is what their Hebrew Bible says, then what on Earth is Jesus doing?

The Jewish scribes are not three stooges.

They are not bumbling idiots.

They knew that if God alone can forgive sins, then Jesus was doing one of two things:

1. Jesus is either claiming to be God
2. Or is guilty of blasphemy.



**KEYPOINT 3:**

Blasphemy is any action or word that disrespects God.

So the Scribes did what most of us would have done—we would have thought Jesus was guilty of blasphemy.

Now you may think, *blasphemy*...so what?!

What's the big deal?

We hear people commit the sin of blasphemy multiple times—every single day in our culture.

And make no doubt about it—it is sin.

Blasphemy is number three on God's top ten list—God will not tolerate being disrespected.

We hardly blink when the majesty of God is insulted.

From, OMG to taking the Lord's name, Jesus Christ, in vain.

The big deal is this—according to God, this is a capital offense—meaning the death sentence. (Lev. 24:10-16).

And here's the thing—if Jesus is indeed a blasphemer, He must die.

Jesus clearly acts with the authority that only belongs to God himself by saying,

"Your sins are forgiven."

So back to the paralytic—

He's still lying at Jesus' feet!

*He's still lying at Jesus' feet!*

He's like the demon-possessed men from last week—at Jesus' feet.

He reminds me of the woman who washed Jesus' feet...

+ **Luke 7:37 NLT**—When a certain immoral woman from that city heard he was eating there, she brought a beautiful alabaster jar filled with expensive perfume.

+ **Luke 7:38 NLT**—Then she knelt behind him at his feet, weeping. Her tears fell on his feet, and she wiped them off with her hair. Then she kept kissing his feet and putting perfume on them.

He reminds me of Jairus...

+ **Mark 5:22**— ...Jairus, came, and when he saw Jesus, he fell at his feet

Jesus now addresses the Scribes...

+ **Matthew 9:4**—Perceiving their thoughts, Jesus said, "Why are you thinking evil things in your hearts?"

So we have the paralytic elated and the Scribes offended.

So the question becomes, can one blaspheme and save simultaneously?

*No - one or the other*

Jesus replies to their question—and asks a question of his own.

*Ans ✓* Evil men think evil things.

+ **Genesis 6:5 NLT**—The Lord observed the extent of human wickedness on the Earth, and he saw that everything they thought or imagined was consistently and totally evil.

Question: Has anything changed? Time changes nothing because God's standard's never change.

Back to our text...

**Matthew 9:4**— "Why are you thinking evil things in your hearts?"

The irony is quite thick here... The scribes accuse Jesus of the sin of blasphemy when in fact, they are those who blaspheme.

So Jesus presses in...

**Matthew 9:5**— For which is easier: to say, 'Your sins are forgiven,' or to say, 'Get up and walk'?

Let's think about this—

Both statements are easy for anyone to say, but only one is provable.

If someone says your sins are forgiven—how do you know for sure?

What proof do you have? None.

But when Jesus says, "Get up and walk."—now we have proof.

Here's the thing, the Scribes and Pharisees never discounted Jesus' miracles.

They don't deny them—They admit all of it to be true. — except the resurrection —

With Jesus' miraculous resume before them, it's as if Jesus says,

*Why, do you think it impossible for Me to forgive sins? Is one easier than the other?*

Once again, the Scribes are smart guys. They know that sin and disease are inseparable.

The Fall in Genesis three is how all this started.

*Jesus continues*  
**Matthew 9:6**— But so that you may know that the Son of Man has authority on Earth to forgive sins"—then he told the paralytic, "Get up, take your stretcher, and go home."  
*proot*

Here we see Jesus give these Scribes another clue to His identity.

The "Son of Man" is Jesus' favorite title for Himself.

It comes from the OT prophet Daniel in 7:13.

In other words, Jesus is the king with all divine authority on Earth.

Jesus as king means no more need for a temple on Earth, a sacrificial system on Earth, or a priesthood on Earth.

The Son of Man now has authority on Earth to forgive sins.

**Matthew 9:6**—... he told the paralytic, "Get up, take your stretcher, and go home."

I'm guessing you could have heard a pin drop.

If this were a reality TV show, the suspenseful music would begin...

If the man stands up, Jesus is God and has the authority to forgive sins.

If not, He's a blasphemer who must endure the death penalty.

The disciples have a lump in their throat.



The Scribes have a scowl on their face.

Eternity hangs in the balance.

~~If this were a TV show, we would suffer a commercial break.~~

So all eyes are on this forgiven paralyzed man... what's he do?

**Matthew 9:7**— *So he got up and went home.*

Talk about an understatement!

If we use our sanctified imagination, I picture the man getting up and saying, "I'm not sure why you're so surprised. I knew it!"

Maybe he walks over to the Scribes and says, "In your face!"

**Luke 5:25 NLT**— *And immediately, as everyone watched, the man jumped up, picked up his mat, and went home praising God.*

Can you imagine the reaction of his friends and family still on the ceiling? *- Surprised - falling to knees*

This man couldn't get through the crowd to get saved and healed, but you can bet that people made an aisle for him to leave as he walked home.

**Matthew 9:8**— *When the crowds saw this, they were awestruck.*

Notice that we have the reaction of the crowd but not the Scribes.

*the crowd*  
~~They~~ were awestruck. Your translation may say, "filled with awe, afraid, marveled, or fear."

The crowd is both fearful and reverent.

 **Matthew 9:8**— *and gave glory to God,*

This sounds positive until we realize that this glorification is superficial.

That they "glorified God" does not mean that they recognized Jesus' true identity.

It's tragically sad.

Now, what about the Scribes?

We learn from other parts of the Gospels that most of the Scribes never believed in Jesus as Savior because they saw no need for forgiveness.

They considered themselves already to be righteous.

Truth be told, the Pharisees and the Scribes resented Jesus' offering forgiveness.

They falsely believed that you couldn't ask for forgiveness but instead had to earn it—just like them.

 **Matthew 9:8**— *and gave glory to God, who had given such authority to men.*

The crowd's theology is wrong —God didn't give this authority to men, only to one man—God's Son.

 **PREACH:**

The title of today's sermon is, "Nothing Else Matters: The Forgiveness of Your Sins."

Last week we had two groups of people—the demonized men who were saved and now sane.

And the townspeople who didn't want Jesus at all.

Today we also have two groups—

1. Those who believe: paralyzed man and his friends
2. The Scribes who don't.

Which group are you in?

If you are free and forgiven from the bondage of sin through the saving work of Jesus Christ, praise God!

I pray that you're doing something with your faith—sharing Jesus day by day.

Second Group: Scribes—non believers.

The Scribes believed that they could get to heaven based on their good works.

Is that what you believe? (Test.)

Rev 21

### **PRAYER**

### **LORD'S SUPPER**

### **BENEDICTION**

*All glory to him who loves us and has freed us from our sins by shedding his blood for us. <sup>6</sup> He has made us a Kingdom of priests for God his Father. All glory and power to him forever and ever! Amen. (Revelation 1:5-6).*

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### **ADDITIONAL RESOURCES:**

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<https://www.gty.org/library/sermons-library/2262/jesus-power-over-sin>

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