

**Session 5: Healings and Sabbath Controversies**

**Matthew 8:2-4; 9:1-17; 12:1-14; Mark 1:40-3:6; Luke 5:12-6:11**

**A Leper is Healed**

<b>Matthew 8:2-4</b>	<b>Mark 1:40-45</b>	<b>Luke 5:12-16</b>
<p><b>2</b> And behold, a leper came to Him and was bowing down before Him, and said, "Lord, if You are willing, You can make me clean."  <b>3</b> And Jesus stretched out His hand and touched him, saying, "I am willing; be cleansed." And immediately his leprosy was cleansed.  <b>4</b> And Jesus said to him, "See that you tell no one; but go, show yourself to the priest and present the offering that Moses commanded, as a testimony to them."</p>	<p><b>40</b> And a leper came to Jesus, pleading with Him and falling on his knees before Him, and saying, "If You are willing, You can make me clean."  <b>41</b> And moved with compassion, He stretched out His hand and touched him, and said to him, "I am willing; be cleansed."  <b>42</b> And immediately the leprosy left him, and he was cleansed.  <b>43</b> And He sternly warned him and immediately sent him away,  <b>44</b> and He said to him, "See that you say nothing to anyone; but go, show yourself to the priest and offer for your cleansing what Moses commanded, as a testimony to them."  <b>45</b> But he went out and began to proclaim it freely and to spread the news around, to such an extent that Jesus could no longer publicly enter a city but stayed out in desolate areas; and they were coming to Him from everywhere.</p>	<p><b>12</b> And it happened that while He was in one of the cities, behold, there was a man covered with leprosy; and when he saw Jesus, he fell on his face and begged Him, saying, "Lord, if You are willing, You can make me clean."  <b>13</b> And He stretched out His hand and touched him, saying, "I am willing; be cleansed." And immediately the leprosy left him.  <b>14</b> And He directed him to tell no one, "But go and show yourself to the priest and make an offering for your cleansing, just as Moses commanded, as a testimony to them."  <b>15</b> But the news about Him was spreading even farther, and large crowds were gathering to hear Him and to be healed of their sicknesses.  <b>16</b> But He Himself would often slip away to the desolate regions and pray.</p>

This is the first record of Jesus healing someone with leprosy. Leviticus 13 describes 7 forms of skin disease called a defiling skin disease resulting in a pronouncement of being ceremonially unclean. This is not the same as the modern medical definition of leprosy. These biblical descriptions of a defiling skin disease serve as an illustration of sin, and the estrangement sin brings: People forced to live outside the community of faith; forced to cover the evidence of sin; but also forced to dress in a way that made your sin obvious; forced to shout their condemnation to anyone near them. Jesus cleansing of this leper is basically a forgiveness of sins and a restoration to his faith community.

The leper is prostrate before Jesus not from custom or courtesy, but in recognition of Jesus' power.

The faith of the leper in Jesus' power is in the form of his question. The leper does not ask 'If you can heal me. . .' The leper asks 'If you will. . .'

Jesus healing is compassionate and tender, including touching the leper who is instantaneously healed, so that Jesus is not ceremonially unclean.

Jesus asks the leper to first go and be pronounced cleansed by the priests, not to hide what Jesus had done, since many saw it. The leper's testimony would have been a testimony to the priests. The priests thought only God could heal leprosy. They would have been confronted with testimony that Jesus had healed the man. Unfortunately, that did not happen, as outlined in Mark 1:45 and Luke 5:15.

Luke's mention of Jesus slipping away to desolate regions to pray is a distinctive of his Gospel.

**Reflection questions:**

When have you been sure of Jesus' power to act in circumstances in your own life?

Have you had the faith to ask Jesus 'If you will . . .?' instead of 'If you can . . .?'

When was the last time you were excited to share what Jesus had just done in your life?

### Jesus Heals the Paralytic Lowered Through the Roof

Matthew 9:1-8	Mark 2:1-12	Luke 5:17-26
<p><b>1</b> And getting into a boat, Jesus crossed over the sea and came to His own city.</p> <p><b>2</b> And behold, they brought to Him a paralytic lying on a bed. Seeing their faith, Jesus said to the paralytic, "Take courage, son; your sins are forgiven."</p> <p><b>3</b> And behold, some of the scribes said to themselves, "This man blasphemes."</p> <p><b>4</b> And Jesus knowing their thoughts said, "Why are you thinking evil in your hearts?"</p> <p><b>5</b> "For which is easier, to say, 'Your sins are forgiven,' or to say, 'Get up and walk'?"</p>	<p><b>1</b> And when He had come back to Capernaum several days afterward, it was heard that He was at home.</p> <p><b>2</b> And many were gathered together, so that there was no longer room, not even near the door; and He was speaking the word to them.</p> <p><b>3</b> And they came, bringing to Him a paralytic, carried by four men.</p> <p><b>4</b> And being unable to bring him to Jesus because of the crowd, they removed the roof over where He was; and when they had dug an opening, they let down the mat where the paralytic was lying.</p> <p><b>5</b> And Jesus seeing their faith said to the paralytic, "Child, your sins are forgiven."</p> <p><b>6</b> But some of the scribes were sitting there and reasoning in their hearts,</p> <p><b>7</b> "Why does this man speak that way? He is blaspheming; who can forgive sins but God alone?"</p> <p><b>8</b> Immediately Jesus, aware in His spirit that they were reasoning that way within themselves, said to them, "Why are you reasoning about these things in your hearts?"</p>	<p><b>17</b> And it happened that one day He was teaching; and there were some Pharisees and teachers of the law sitting there, who had come from every village of Galilee and Judea and from Jerusalem, and the power of the Lord was present for Him to perform healing.</p> <p><b>18</b> And behold, some men were carrying on a stretcher a man who was paralyzed; and they were trying to bring him in and to set him down before Him.</p> <p><b>19</b> But not finding any way to bring him in because of the crowd, they went up on the roof and let him down through the tiles with his stretcher, into the middle of the crowd, in front of Jesus.</p> <p><b>20</b> And seeing their faith, He said, "Friend, your sins are forgiven you."</p> <p><b>21</b> The scribes and the Pharisees began to reason, saying, "Who is this who speaks blasphemies? Who can forgive sins, but God alone?"</p> <p><b>22</b> But Jesus, knowing their reasonings, answered and said to them, "Why are you</p>

<p>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, pick up your bed and go home."</p> <p>7 And he got up and went home.</p> <p>8 But when the crowds saw this, they were afraid, and glorified God, who had given such authority to men.</p>	<p>9 "Which is easier, to say to the paralytic, 'Your sins are forgiven'; or to say, 'Get up, and pick up your mat and walk'?"</p> <p>10 "But so that you may know that the Son of Man has authority on earth to forgive sins"—He said to the paralytic,</p> <p>11 "I say to you, get up, pick up your mat, and go to your home."</p> <p>12 And he got up and immediately picked up the mat and went out before everyone, so that they were all amazed and were glorifying God, saying, "We have never seen anything like this."</p>	<p>reasoning in your hearts?</p> <p>23 "Which is easier, to say, 'Your sins have been forgiven you,' or to say, 'Get up and walk'?"</p> <p>24 "But, so that you may know that the Son of Man has authority on earth to forgive sins,"—He said to the paralytic—"I say to you, get up, and, picking up your stretcher, go home."</p> <p>25 And immediately he rose up before them, and picked up what he had been lying on, and went home glorifying God.</p> <p>26 And astonishment seized them all and they began glorifying God; and they were filled with fear, saying, "We have seen remarkable things today."</p>
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Jesus has left His home city of Nazareth and makes a new base, Capernaum. He was likely crashing with Simon Peter.

This is the second time Matthew uses the phrase 'The Son of Man', and he uses it more than any other Gospel writer. Mark and Luke use it here for the first time.

'Son of God' = Jesus divine reference

'Son of David' = Jesus Jewish reference

'Son of Man' = Jesus preferred self-designator, emphasizing His lowliness and humanity, foretelling His suffering and death, and His future reign as King.

<sup>13</sup> "In my vision at night I looked, and there before me was one like a son of man, coming with the clouds of heaven. He approached the Ancient of Days and was led into his presence. <sup>14</sup> He was given authority, glory and sovereign power; all nations and peoples of every language worshiped him. His dominion is an everlasting dominion that will not pass away, and his kingdom is one that will never be destroyed. Daniel 7:13-14

As in the healing of the leper, many physical infirmities were seen to have their cause in sin. Our spiritual need is our greatest problem, and Jesus starts there.

Jesus knows what His critics are thinking. Did the looks on their faces give it away as well? The Pharisees knew only God could forgive sins, and they were sure this man could not possibly be God in the flesh. He didn't fit their expectations. Jesus does not attempt to reason with His critics. He just demonstrates His power over both spiritual needs and physical needs.

Here the scribes and Pharisees openly oppose Jesus in Galilee for the first time.

**Reflection questions:**

The old saying goes 'You can't go home again.' What makes that saying true? How could that have impacted Jesus ministry?

Have you seen or received a miraculously healing from God? How did it make you feel?

As believer, you have experienced Jesus power to forgive sins.

How did that feel when you first believed?

How does it feel today?

Is anything different?

If so, what or why?

**Jesus Calls Matthew**

<b>Matthew 9:9-13</b>	<b>Mark 2:13-17</b>	<b>Luke 5:27-32</b>
<p>9 And as Jesus went on from there, He saw a man called Matthew, sitting in the tax office; and He said to him, "Follow Me!" And he stood up and followed Him.</p> <p>10 Then it happened that as Jesus was reclining at the table in the house, behold, many tax collectors and sinners came and were dining with Jesus and His disciples.</p> <p>11 And when the Pharisees saw this, they said to His disciples, "Why is your Teacher eating with the tax collectors and sinners?"</p> <p>12 But when Jesus heard this, He said, "It is not those who are healthy who need a physician, but those who are sick.</p> <p>13 "But go and learn what this means: 'I DESIRE COMPASSION, AND NOT SACRIFICE,' for I did not come to call the righteous, but sinners."</p>	<p>13 And He went out again by the seashore; and the entire crowd was coming to Him, and He was teaching them.</p> <p>14 And as He passed by, He saw Levi the son of Alphaeus sitting in the tax office, and He said to him, "Follow Me!" And he stood up and followed Him.</p> <p>15 And it happened that as He was reclining at the table in his house, many tax collectors and sinners were reclining with Jesus and His disciples. For there were many of them, and they were following Him.</p> <p>16 And when the scribes of the Pharisees saw that He was eating with the sinners and tax collectors, they were saying to His disciples, "He is eating and drinking with tax collectors and sinners!"</p> <p>17 And hearing this, Jesus said to them, "Those who are healthy do not have need for a physician, but only those who are sick; I did not come to call the righteous, but sinners."</p>	<p>27 And after that He went out and noticed a tax collector named Levi sitting in the tax office, and He said to him, "Follow Me."</p> <p>28 And he left everything behind and rose up and began to follow Him.</p> <p>29 And Levi gave a big reception for Him in his house; and there was a great crowd of tax collectors and other people who were reclining at the table with them.</p> <p>30 And the Pharisees and their scribes began grumbling at His disciples, saying, "Why do you eat and drink with the tax collectors and sinners?"</p> <p>31 And Jesus answered and said to them, "It is not those who are well who need a physician, but those who are sick.</p> <p>32 "I have not come to call the righteous but sinners to repentance."</p>

Matthew = Levi, used mostly by Mark and Luke and not at all by Matthew. Mark lists him as Levi the son of Alphaeus. There is another apostle, James son of Alphaeus, but no biblical passages mention these two men are brothers, so the consensus is they are not.

Tax Collector = Viewed by the Jews as Roman collaborators/sympathizers. They got their posts by bidding to deliver a certain amount, then could keep anything over their guaranteed payment. Tax collectors were outcasts in Jewish society.

Sinners = people with jobs that made them ceremonially unclean, or living contrary to the rules and direction of the Pharisees, who would not be associated with such sinners.

Scribes = teachers, mostly Pharisees, professional students and defenders of the scriptural and traditional religious law. They were also referred to as lawyers because they administered religious law as judges in the Sanhedrin.

Matthew 9:13 quotes from Hosea 6:6 'For I desire mercy, not sacrifice, and acknowledgment of God rather than burnt offerings.'

**Reflection questions:**

Have you ever felt or been treated as an outsider or looked down upon because of your job?

Have you ever looked at others as outsiders because of your job or their job?

Who were the sinners Jesus is calling to repentance?

## Using Parables, Jesus Defends His Disciples

Matthew 9:14-17	Mark 2:18-22	Luke 5:33-39
<p>14 Then the disciples of John came to Him, asking, "Why do we and the Pharisees fast, but Your disciples do not fast?"</p> <p>15 And Jesus said to them, "Can the attendants of the bridegroom mourn as long as the bridegroom is with them? But the days will come when the bridegroom is taken away from them, and then they will fast.</p> <p>16 "But no one puts a patch of unshrunk cloth on an old garment; for the patch pulls away from the garment, and a worse tear results.</p> <p>17 Nor do people put new wine into old wineskins; otherwise, the wineskins burst, and the wine pours out and the wineskins are ruined; but they put new wine into fresh wineskins, and both are preserved."</p>	<p>18 And John's disciples and the Pharisees were fasting; and they came and said to Him, "Why do John's disciples and the disciples of the Pharisees fast, but Your disciples do not fast?"</p> <p>19 And Jesus said to them, "Can the attendants of the bridegroom fast when the bridegroom is with them? So long as they have the bridegroom with them, they cannot fast.</p> <p>20 "But the days will come when the bridegroom is taken away from them, and then they will fast in that day.</p> <p>21 "No one sews a piece of unshrunk cloth on an old garment; otherwise that patch pulls away from it, the new from the old, and a worse tear results. 22 And no one puts new wine into old wineskins; otherwise the wine will burst the skins, and the wine is lost and the skins as well; but one puts new wine into fresh wineskins."</p>	<p>33 And they said to Him, "The disciples of John often fast and offer prayers, the disciples of the Pharisees also do likewise, but Yours eat and drink."</p> <p>34 And Jesus said to them, "Can you make the attendants of the bridegroom fast while the bridegroom is with them?"</p> <p>35 "But the days will come; and when the bridegroom is taken away from them, then they will fast in those days."</p> <p>36 And He was also telling them a parable: "No one tears a piece of cloth from a new garment and puts it on an old garment; otherwise, he will both tear the new and the piece from the new will not match the old.</p> <p>37 "And no one puts new wine into old wineskins; otherwise, the new wine will burst the skins and it will be spilled out, and the skins will be ruined.</p> <p>38 "But new wine must be put into fresh wineskins.</p> <p>39 "And no one, after drinking old wine wishes for new; for he says, 'The old is good enough.'"</p>



The annual Day of Atonement was the only scriptural Jewish day of fasting, but the Pharisees and John the Baptist's disciples had added fasts every Monday and Thursday. By imposing their observances on others, they were turning these outward signs into demonstrations of their self-righteousness. Jesus draws two comparisons using parables.

In the first, Jesus is the bridegroom. The groomsmen cannot mourn while the groom is in attendance. Jesus is saying true fasting requires sorrow or mourning, not just the practice of a ritual or routine.

In the second, Jesus uses a parable the poor working class would know well to explain that His message is much more than a patched up/rejuvenated version of Judaism. The structure of the old legalism could not contain the vitality of the new covenant. Instead of trying to mend what is broken/damaged, something totally new was needed.

**Reflection Questions:**

It can be hard to grasp the newness of what Jesus brought to the world from our perspective. Is it part of your nature to embrace and follow certain practices out of custom and familiarity and lose sight of the why and what you are trying to accomplish?

**Controversies About the Sabbath**

<b>Matthew 12:1-14</b>	<b>Mark 2:23-3:6</b>	<b>Luke 6:1-11</b>
<p>1 At that time Jesus went through the grainfields on the Sabbath, and His disciples became hungry and began to pick the heads of grain and eat.</p> <p>2 But when the Pharisees saw this, they said to Him, "Look, Your disciples do what is not lawful to do on a Sabbath."</p> <p>3 But He said to them, "Have you not read what David did when he became hungry, he and his companions,</p> <p>4 how he entered the house of God, and they ate the consecrated bread, which was not lawful for him to eat nor for those with him, but for the priests alone?</p> <p>5 "Or have you not read in the Law, that on the Sabbath the priests in the temple break the Sabbath and are innocent?</p> <p>6 "But I say to you that something greater than the temple is here.</p> <p>7 "But if you had known what this means, 'I DESIRE COMPASSION,</p>	<p>23 And it happened that He was passing through the grainfields on the Sabbath, and His disciples began to make their way along while picking the heads of grain.</p> <p>24 And the Pharisees were saying to Him, "Look, why are they doing what is not lawful on the Sabbath?"</p> <p>25 And He said to them, "Have you never read what David did when he was in need and he and his companions became hungry;</p> <p>26 how he entered the house of God around the time of Abiathar the high priest, and ate the consecrated bread, which is not lawful for anyone to eat except the priests, and he also gave it to those who were with him?"</p> <p>27 And Jesus was saying to them, "The Sabbath was made for man, and not man for the Sabbath.</p> <p>28 Consequently the Son of Man is Lord even of the Sabbath."</p>	<p>1 Now it happened that on a Sabbath He was passing through some grainfields, and His disciples were picking and eating the heads of grain, rubbing them in their hands.</p> <p>2 But some of the Pharisees said, "Why do you do what is not lawful on the Sabbath?"</p> <p>3 And Jesus answered and said to them, "Have you never read what David did when he was hungry, he and those who were with him,</p> <p>4 how he entered the house of God, and took and ate the consecrated bread which is not lawful for any to eat except the priests alone, and gave it to his companions?"</p> <p>5 And He was saying to them, "The Son of Man is Lord of the Sabbath."</p>

<p><b>AND NOT A SACRIFICE,'</b> you would not have condemned the innocent.</p> <p><b>8 "For the Son of Man is Lord of the Sabbath</b></p> <p><b>9 And departing from there, He went into their synagogue.</b></p> <p><b>10 And behold, a man was there whose hand was withered. And they questioned Jesus, saying, "Is it lawful to heal on the Sabbath?"—so that they might accuse Him.</b></p> <p><b>11 And He said to them, "What man is there among you who has a sheep, and if it falls into a pit on the Sabbath, will not take hold of it and lift it out?"</b></p> <p><b>12 "How much more valuable than is a man than a sheep! So then, it is lawful to do good on the Sabbath."</b></p> <p><b>13 Then He said to the man, "Stretch out your hand!" He stretched it out, and it was restored to normal, like the other.</b></p> <p><b>14 But going out, the Pharisees took counsel together against Him, as to how they might destroy Him.</b></p>	<p style="text-align: center;"><b>CHAPTER 3</b></p> <p><b>1 And He entered again into a synagogue; and a man was there with a withered hand.</b></p> <p><b>2 And they were watching Him to see if He would heal him on the Sabbath, so that they might accuse Him.</b></p> <p><b>3 And He said to the man with the withered hand, "Get up and come forward!"</b></p> <p><b>4 And He said to them, "Is it lawful to do good or to do harm on the Sabbath, to save a life or to kill?" But they kept silent.</b></p> <p><b>5 And after looking around at them with anger, grieved at their hardness of heart, He said to the man, "Stretch out your hand." And he stretched it out, and his hand was restored.</b></p> <p><b>6 And the Pharisees went out and immediately began taking counsel together with the Herodians against Him, as to how they might destroy Him.</b></p>	<p><b>6 Now it happened that on another Sabbath He entered the synagogue and was teaching; and there was a man there whose right hand was withered.</b></p> <p><b>7 And the scribes and the Pharisees were watching Him closely to see if He heals on the Sabbath, so that they might find reason to accuse Him.</b></p> <p><b>8 But He knew what they were thinking, and He said to the man with the withered hand, "Get up and come forward!" And he stood up and came forward.</b></p> <p><b>9 And Jesus said to them, "I ask you, is it lawful to do good or to do harm on the Sabbath, to save a life or to destroy it?"</b></p> <p><b>10 And after looking around at them all, He said to him, "Stretch out your hand!" And he did so, and his hand was restored.</b></p> <p><b>11 But they themselves were filled with rage and were discussing together what they might do to Jesus.</b></p>
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People often understand what something says, but not what it means. The Pharisees understood what the written law said, but not what it meant. This gap between head and heart is drawn into sharp focus in these passages. In recalling 1 Samuel 21:1-6, the story of David and his men eating bread that only the priests were allowed to eat without condemnation or punishment, God had declared the urgent needs of people before the observance of ritual and ceremony as the priority. The same was also true because God allowed the priests to work on the Sabbath without condemnation, when it was a declared day of rest.

As in Matthew 9:13, Matthew 12:7 again cite Jesus quoting Hosea 6:6 to show the Pharisees that God desires proper hearts over empty externals which have become formalities.

For I desire mercy, not sacrifice, and acknowledgment of God rather than burnt offerings. Hosea 6:6

Jesus' action in healing the man with the withered hand shows that to avoid doing good when it is within one's power is really to do harm (sometimes referred to as a sin of omission, not a sin of commission).

The Pharisees had seen enough. They were ready to work with the Herodians to destroy Jesus. The Herodians were people dedicated to the Herod family, ruling governor over Galilee under the authority of Rome. As the saying goes, 'the enemy of my enemy is my friend.'

### **Reflection Questions:**

Do you ever find yourself going through the motions but not understanding the purpose of what you are doing?

Are you doing that at church?

How can you change that?

### **Memory Verse:**

***"But go and learn what this means: 'I DESIRE COMPASSION, AND NOT SACRIFICE,' for I did not come to call the righteous, but sinners."***

**Matthew 9:13**