MATTHEW 9

Mat 9:1 - *And getting into a boat he crossed over and came to his own city*.

Mat 9:2 - *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.”*

Mat 9:3 - *And behold, some of the scribes said to themselves, “This man is blaspheming.”*

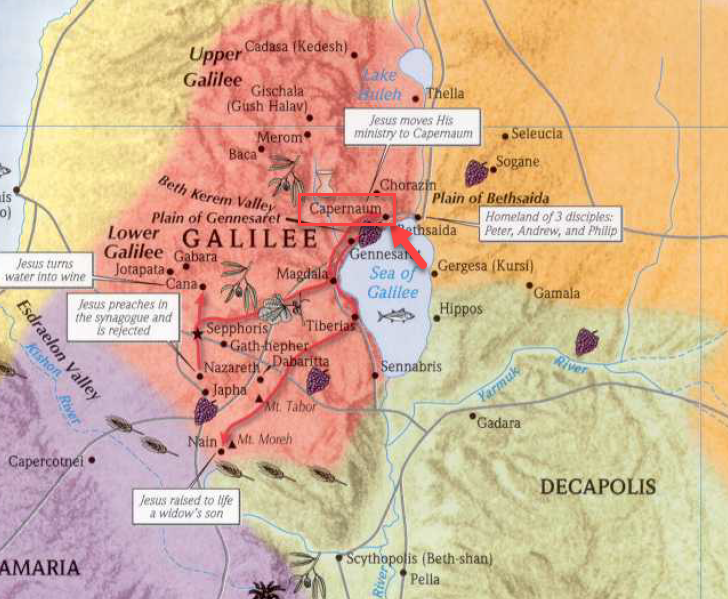
Mat 9:4 - *But Jesus, knowing their thoughts, said, “Why do you think evil in your hearts?*

Mat 9:5 - *For which is easier, to say, ‘Your sins are forgiven,’ or to say, ‘Rise and walk’?*

Mat 9:6 - *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.”*

Mat 9:7 - *And he rose and went home.*

Mat 9:8 - *When the crowds saw it, they were afraid, and they glorified God, who had given such authority to men.*

* After being turned away by the people of the Gadarenes, Jesus went back to Capernaum
* 
* When He arrived, some people brought a paralyzed man to Him to be healed.
* Jesus saw their faith and told the paralytic, “Your sins are forgiven.”
  + Do you think that is what the paralytic wanted to hear?
  + I’m sure he was happy his sins were forgiven, but I think he really wanted to be healed.
  + Jesus used this man to teach His audience that while He certainly had the power to heal physical ailments, upon realizing their spiritual ailment, namely sin, they should return to Him for their healing.
  + It was a window into Jesus’ real purpose on earth
    - He is the Great Physician when it comes to physical needs
    - But He is also the Great Physician when it comes to our spiritual needs.
* No doubt the scribes had been simmering in Capernaum ever since Jesus had preached the Sermon on the Mount and told the Gentile Centurion his faith was greater than theirs.
  + Now Jesus was making himself out to be God by forgiving sins (Luke 5:21)
  + They held their tongues but condemned Him in their minds.
* Jesus, reading their minds, challenges them.
  + Is it harder to say the words, “Your sins are forgiven?”
  + Or is it harder to heal a paralyzed person?
    - One has an invisible result (You can’t physically see someone’s sins go away.
    - The other has an observable result
  + Jesus would perform the observable miracle as evidence that He also had the authority to remove the invisible infirmity.
* So, that is just what happened. Jesus healed the paralyzed man and He took up His bed and walked home.

Mat 9:9 - *As Jesus passed on from there, he saw a man called Matthew sitting at the tax booth, and he said to him, “Follow me.” And he rose and followed him.*

Mat 9:10 - *And as Jesus reclined at table in the house, behold, many tax collectors and sinners came and were reclining with Jesus and his disciples.*

Mat 9:11 - *And when the Pharisees saw this, they said to his disciples, “Why does your teacher eat with tax collectors and sinners?”*

Mat 9:12 - *But when he heard it, he said, “Those who are well have no need of a physician, but those who are sick.*

Mat 9:13 - *Go and learn what this means: ‘I desire mercy, and not sacrifice.’ For I came not to call the righteous, but sinners.”*

* Jesus continued on His way through Capernaum and there found Matthew (also called Levi, Mark 2:14) sitting at the tax booth
* Jewish Tax Collectors in the 1st Century:
  + The Jews hated the tax collectors
  + This was true for the obvious reason (nobody likes giving their money to the government or seeing the IRS show up at their door.)
  + But it was also true because these tax collectors were Roman sell-outs. They were Jews who worked for the ruling Romans.
  + In addition to these reasons, tax collectors were notorious for being thieves.
    - The Romans would issue a tax of 5 dollars
    - The tax collector would tell his fellow Jews the Romans wanted 7 dollars.
    - He would collect the money, give 5 dollars to Rome, and keep the extra 2 dollars for himself.
* Imagine the response of the other Apostles Jesus called when the Lord stopped at this tax booth and asked Matthew to follow Him.
  + Many of Jesus’ followers probably couldn’t believe that He would go up to someone like this and ask him to follow Him.
  + It was likely an ego check for some of them!
  + Initially, the Apostles probably thought thy were pretty special because the Messiah had selected them to join Him, but now Jesus was selecting Matthew who everyone considered despicable.
    - Have you ever been chosen for a team thinking it was an exclusive privilege, only to find out after the rest of the team members were recruited that the team isn’t anything special?
    - The Apostles may have felt that way.
  + Jesus was essentially putting all of these men on the same level, which may have ben hard for some of them to swallow.
    - They could have quit following Jesus in offense
    - “If you are going to pair me up with this guy, I’m out of here!”
    - But to their credit they didn’t.
  + What was important for them to realize was that they all needed Jesus just as badly as the sinful tax collector.
* After calling Matthew, Jesus was invited to a feast in Matthew’s house (Luke 5:29)
  + The text says that the other guest were a combination of “tax collectors and sinners.”
  + While they were eating, the Pharisees peaked their head through the door or window and judged Jesus
  + They asked His disciples, “If this man is really the Messiah of Israel, why is spending time with the rabble of this town” (paraphrase)
  + They probably thought the Messiah would spend His time with them because they were the cultural and religious “elite.”
  + Jesus tells them He allots His time to them because those who are healthy don’t need to the doctor.
    - Sick people need the doctor
    - And these “sinners” were certainly sin-sick.
  + That isn’t to say the Pharisees were spiritually healthy. The Pharisees problem was that they were too arrogant to recognize their ailment and seek help. Their pride blinded them to the fact that they needed Jesus just as bad as all the other sinners.
  + Later on in His ministry, Jesus tells a parable that illustrates this point very well.
    - Two men went into the Temple to pray, one was a tax collector and the other a Pharisee.
    - The Pharisee prayed:
      * “Lord, thank you for not making me like this tax collector over here!”
      * “I don’t commit adultery”
      * “I don’t steal”
      * “I’m not an extortioner”
      * “Thank you for making me such a good person!”
    - The tax collector prayed:
      * “Lord, have mercy on me because I am a sinner”
      * He wouldn’t even lift his eyes up to heaven because he was ashamed of his sin.
    - Two men, but with very different perceptions of how badly they needed God’s help.
    - Jesus said, it was the tax collector who went away justified
* APPLICATION:
  + What can someone who isn’t a Christian learn from this?
    - Have you ever heard someone play the comparison game?
      * They might say, “Well, I’m a pretty good person”
      * “I don’t think God would send me to hell”
      * “At least I’m not like this person over here! I’ve never killed anyone, I’ve never cheated on my wife, or stolen anything from the IRS!”
    - They have the idea that because they don’t sin as “badly” as some other people, they will be alright on Judgement Day.
    - The problem with thinking like that is, that was exactly the thinking of the Pharisees. They looked around at all the people who sinned “worse” than them and thought, “I’ll be alright! I’m not as bad as that guy.”
    - But Jesus’ entire ministry teaches us how incorrect that thinking really was/is.
    - Just because the Pharisees didn’t sin like the tax collectors didn’t mean they didn’t have a need for the forgiveness found in Christ.
  + What can someone who is inside the Church learn from this?
    - Think about our attitude towards those who are outside the Church and our attitude about reaching out to those people.
    - There are times when we don’t feel like sharing the gospel with someone because we don’t believe they will have any interest.
    - Or perhaps we don’t want to associate with a particular group of people.
    - The only reason we would feel that way about someone is if we believed ourselves better than those people.
    - The message of the gospel destroys that way of thinking. It informs us that we need Jesus to remedy our sin and corruption just as badly as everyone else needs him.
    - That may be an ego check and a hard pill to swallow.
  + What can someone inside the Church learn from this passage about their perspective of other Christians, particularly those who fall into sin
    - I imagine it is the same in your congregation, some sins are considered “worse” than other sins, and people who commit *those* sins are often treated like second class Christians.
      * Getting pregnant before marriage
      * Having an affair
      * Doing something criminal.
    - Once a person’s reputation is tainted by these kinds of sins, many in the Church never look at them the same again.
      * Their fellow Christians always look down their nose at them, always associating their sin with their identity.
      * It is very hard for a person who has committed one of these sins to ever “recover” their good name.
    - What this text can teach us is that the only reason you would have “second-class Christians” who are looked down on is because you have a Pharisaical mindset in the “first-class Christians.”
    - What is their problem? Their problem is they don’t realize they need Jesus just as bad as a person whose committed the worst possible sins.
    - Jesus told the parable of the two men in the Temple for a specific reasons. The reason is given in Luke 18:9.
      * Luk 18:9 - He also told this parable to some who trusted in themselves that they were righteous, and treated others with contempt:

I WILL HAVE MERCY, AND NOT SACRIFICE

Mat 9:14 - *Then the disciples of John came to him, saying, “Why do we and the Pharisees fast, but your disciples do not fast?”*

Mat 9:15 - *And Jesus said to them, “Can the wedding guests mourn as long as the bridegroom is with them? The days will come when the bridegroom is taken away from them, and then they will fast.*

Mat 9:16 - *No one puts a piece of unshrunk cloth on an old garment, for the patch tears away from the garment, and a worse tear is made.*

Mat 9:17 - *Neither is new wine put into old wineskins. If it is, the skins burst and the wine is spilled and the skins are destroyed. But new wine is put into fresh wineskins, and so both are preserved.*”

* If you remember, John the Baptist had been arrested.
* Some of John’s followers came to Jesus and wanted to know about fasting.
* In the Old Testament, fasting was commanded on the Day of Atonement but many of the Jews practiced additional religious fasting.
* According to these disciples, both the followers of John and the Pharisees participated in voluntary fasting
* These men wanted to know why Jesus didn’t teach His disciples to fast.
* To understand Jesus’ response, it is important to understand a little bit about fasting. Why was it done? When was it done?
  + Fasting and prayer were often coupled together
  + It was often done when a big decision was to be made, a person was seeking the guidance of God, or during times of trial and sorrow.
* Jesus uses an illustration that appears several times in the Scriptures, Him as a bridegroom and His followers as a bride.
  + Jesus appears to be saying, “This is not a time for My followers to fast and be sorrowful, God, the Messiah is here to bring salvation to the world.
  + “And if My disciples need guidance of any kind they can come directly to Me and ask.”
* Jesus presents two pictures
  + (1) You don’t put a new piece of cloth on an old garment
    - Why?
    - Have you ever bought a new sweater at the store, it fits great, you wear it one time and love it, but then you put it in the washer and it shrinks 3 sizes?
    - In contrast, your our old sweaters, the ones you’ve had for 7.5 years, they don’t shrink anymore, they completed that process a long time ago.
    - In the same way, you don’t use a new piece of cloth to patch up an old garment
      * Lets say you use a new piece of cloth to patch up an old garment.
      * What will happen when the garment is washed for the first time?
      * Answer: the patch of new cloth will shrink, the old garment will not shrink, and the threads will tear and make the original hole even bigger.
  + (2) You don’t put new wine in old wineskins
    - This is a bit more difficult for modern readers to understand (unless you work at a vineyard)
    - This illustration involves the principles of fermentation
    - In the 1st Century, grape farmers took their fresh grape juice and put it into a wineskin (usually made of animal hides)
    - 
    - You don’t put new wine (new grape juice) into an old wineskin
      * Why? Answer: For the same reason as the first illustration.
      * New grape juice expands as it ferments
      * But an old wineskin is no longer flexible and pliable and it will not expand with the juice
      * So if you put new juice into an old wineskin it will eventually burst the skin and all your juice will leak out.
    - But if you put new juice into a new wineskin, that new skin is flexible enough to expand as the fermentation process takes place.
* Now that we understand the pictures Jesus is describing, we can begin to understand what He is trying to communicate.
  + I think what Jesus is trying to communicate here is that this new law, this new covenant He is delivering, is not going to be just a patched up version of the Old (what they already knew).
  + If they tried to interpret it as nothing more than the old traditions patched up with some new principles, they were going to miss the point.
  + This was a really important point because many of the Jews tried very hard to hold on to the Old Law even as they adopted the new one.
* These two contrary elements couldn’t work together.
  + Under the Old Law (Law of Moses) a person was justified by their works.
    - But everyone was a sinner
    - So no one was justified
  + Under the New Law (Law of Christ) a person is justified based on the righteousness of Jesus
  + Justification in the Old Law and the New Law don’t mix and by using these illustrations Jesus is trying to communicate that fact to them.
* Even though their initial question was only about fasting, it seems Jesus is giving them a broader principle with which to evaluate all of the questions they had about His ministry and teaching.
* APPLICATION:
  + As people who are called out of one way of living (living for the world) and called to live a new life in Christ, we can find some application in this principle.
  + Two contrary elements cannot mix. It will tear your life apart!
  + Many Christians try to live their “new” life in Christ as if it was just their old life with a few holy patches slapped on.
  + Unfortunately, this taints our communication of what it really means to be a follower of Christ
    - We give the world the impression that the Christian life isn’t all that much different than our old lives.
    - As long as they do a few “holy things” they can be Christians too.
      * Don’t sleep around
      * Get baptized
      * Etc…(insert your holy patch here)
  + But that is not how Jesus or His Apostles presented a life lived for Christ.
    - They spoke about it as if it was something new.
    - Jesus and Paul spoke of “dying” to your past life
      * There are two versions of you
      * The version of yourself before becoming a Christian
      * The version of you who finds identity in Christ
    - It is a totally new life
    - It isn’t just a patch job.

Mat 9:18*While he was saying these things to them, behold, a ruler came in and knelt before him, saying, “My daughter has just died, but come and lay your hand on her, and she will live.”*

Mat 9:19*And Jesus rose and followed him, with his disciples.*

Mat 9:20*And behold, a woman who had suffered from a discharge of blood for twelve years came up behind him and touched the fringe of his garment,*

Mat 9:21*for she said to herself, “If I only touch his garment, I will be made well.”*

Mat 9:22*Jesus turned, and seeing her he said, “Take heart, daughter; your faith has made you well.” And instantly the woman was made well.*

Mat 9:23*And when Jesus came to the ruler's house and saw the flute players and the crowd making a commotion,*

Mat 9:24*he said, “Go away, for the girl is not dead but sleeping.” And they laughed at him.*

Mat 9:25*But when the crowd had been put outside, he went in and took her by the hand, and the girl arose.*

Mat 9:26*And the report of this went through all that district.*

* These miracles are recorded in Matthew, Mark, and Luke
  + Matthew’s account is the most abbreviated.
  + For this reason, we will not try to exhaust our study of this text until we reach Luke’s account.
* Here we have two individuals requesting a miracle
  + A ruler of the synagogue requesting help for his daughter
  + A woman with a chronic bleeding problem seeking healing
* In the first case, the ruler came to Jesus “while He was saying these things”
  + “These things” refers to Jesus’ words about the wineskins and the garments.
  + Jesus was willing to get up from His theological/doctrinal discussion to help a man in need.
  + APPLICATION:
    - It is a mistake to think getting together in a room and discussing theological truths is what Jesus wants from us.
    - Many people feel their religious obligations are fulfilled when they meet with the Church for an hour on Sunday and talk about the Bible and “holy things.”
    - Jesus shows us we must be discussers and doers of His words.
* Jesus words and miracles were intended to communicate spiritual truths through physical effects and stories.
  + Here, we find a spiritual truth communicated through physical healing
  + The two individuals came to Jesus for two specific physical needs
    - Cleansing/healing
    - Resurrection
  + I don’t have any chronic illnesses (thank God) and I don’t have a dead daughter (thank God), but in a spiritual sense, I have the same needs as these two.
  + Spiritually, I am in need of cleansing (from sin) and resurrection (at the last day).
  + Like these two, I can never accomplish these on my own, so I must come to Jesus for the power only He possesses.

Mat 9:27*- And as Jesus passed on from there, two blind men followed him, crying aloud, “Have mercy on us, Son of David.”*

Mat 9:28*- When he entered the house, the blind men came to him, and Jesus said to them, “Do you believe that I am able to do this?” They said to him, “Yes, Lord.”*

Mat 9:29*- Then he touched their eyes, saying, “According to your faith be it done to you.”*

Mat 9:30*- And their eyes were opened. And Jesus sternly warned them, “See that no one knows about it.”*

Mat 9:31*- But they went away and spread his fame through all that district.*

In another context, John records Jesus as saying, “Have you believed because you have seen me? Blessed are those who have not seen and yet have believed” (John 20:29)

* How did these men know about Jesus?
  + They had never seen Jesus’ face
  + They didn’t see Him raise the ruler’s daughter
  + They didn’t see Him calm the storm
  + They didn’t see Him cast out the demons in the Gadarenes
* So how did they know anything about the “Son of David?”
  + Either someone told them about Jesus
  + Or they overheard excited voices talking about a man who could perform miracles of healing.
* I want you to imagine the whole world is blind.
  + Ask yourself the question, would anyone know about Jesus?
    - Have I ever told anyone about Him?
    - Or has my voice ever carried a message of excitement about the One who healed my sin to a degree that someone could over hear me and want to find Him?
  + The truth is, people who live in our world will never see Jesus perform the miracles listed above.
  + The truth is, people who live in our world really are blind.
    - 2Co 4:4 - In their case the god of this world has blinded the minds of the unbelievers, to keep them from seeing the light of the gospel of the glory of Christ, who is the image of God.
  + Will they hear about Christ from us?
* Jesus tells them not tell anyone about their healing. Did they listen? No
  + They were told to tell no one and they told everyone
  + We are told to tell everyone and have we told no one?

Mat 9:32  As they were going away, behold, a demon-oppressed man who was mute was brought to him.

Mat 9:33  And when the demon had been cast out, the mute man spoke. And the crowds marveled, saying, “Never was anything like this seen in Israel.”

Mat 9:34  But the Pharisees said, “He casts out demons by the prince of demons.”

* The Gadarenes were evidently not the only coast of the Sea of Galilee affected by demon possession. The demon who oppressed this man had the affect of making him mute (couldn’t speak).
* Jesus cast out the demon and received two very distinct responses from the audience around Him.
  + (1) Amazement – “Never was anything like this seen in Israel.”
  + (2) Slander – “He casts out demons by the prince of the demons.”
* When we preach Christ, we can expect a similar response.
  + Some will be amazed at Jesus’ sacrifice and resurrection
  + Some will mock the message, the messenger, and the power of God.
    - This is probably the type of person Jesus referred to in Matt 7:6
    - Mat 7:6 - “Do not give dogs what is holy, and do not throw your pearls before pigs, lest they trample them underfoot and turn to attack you.”
* The message was the same but the response of the hearers was different.
* This was the response Paul received when he taught on Mars Hill in Athens (Acts 17:32-34)

Mat 9:35*And Jesus went throughout all the cities and villages, teaching in their synagogues and proclaiming the gospel of the kingdom and healing every disease and every affliction.*

Mat 9:36*When he saw the crowds, he had compassion for them, because they were harassed and helpless, like sheep without a shepherd.*

Mat 9:37*Then he said to his disciples, “The harvest is plentiful, but the laborers are few;*

Mat 9:38*therefore pray earnestly to the Lord of the harvest to send out laborers into his harvest.”*

* In this text, we see Jesus extending his ministry even further beyond Capernaum
* While teaching and healing in various towns, He looks out and observes the needs and struggles and difficulties of all the people surrounding Him.
* Jesus expresses His concern in verse 37 that the work to be done is great, but the workers are few. There are very few people who are willing to take care of the physical needs and the spiritual needs of those around them.
* Why is that?
  + I think if we look at the actions of Jesus in this text, it will become clear why not many people are willing to give their lives in service to others.
  + Jesus does at least two things in this text that stir His compassion for others
    - Verse 35 – He “went”
      * He made Himself present in the lives and circumstances of the people struggling around Him.
    - Verse 36 – He “saw”
      * This was more than literal sight
      * Jesus saw into these individuals lives, their individual challenges, to perceive their battles and needs.
  + After doing these two things, the text says compassion was stirred up inside of Him because the people were harassed and helpless. They were like wandering sheep without a shepherd. They needed
  + SIDE NOTE:
    - The more knowledge we have (like Jesus being all knowing), the more compassionate that knowledge should lead us to be.
    - But unfortunately, sometimes it leads us in the opposite direction.
* When we make these observations about the way Christ acted in this text, it isn’t difficult to see why there are so few people who are willing to do the Lords work in caring for the needs of others.
  + People don’t like to “go” like Jesus “went” into the lives and circumstances of other people!
    - Why?
    - Because we think, “I’ve got my own problems, I’ve got my own difficulties, I’ve got my struggles”
    - “And when I get done facing those, I just want to go home and lay on the couch or stay at my house instead of getting back up to help someone else with their problems!”
  + We also have a difficult time “seeing” other people like Jesus “saw” others.
    - Why?
    - Because I have a difficult time getting my eyes off of myself, my goals, my needs, my wants, where I’m going in 10, 20, or 30 years.
    - We often fail to lift up our eyes like Jesus, observe the multitudes of people around us, and to see how they are struggling.
* The effect that going and observing the lives of these people had on Jesus, namely the generation of compassion, will not occur in us if don’t take the time to do those things ourselves.
* We’ve got to dedicate time, energy, brainpower, and effort to put ourselves into the lives of other people so we can understand how best to serve them.
* More compassionate people are more willing to reach out and help others, and if there are more people willing to reach out and help others, it means there are more workers in the field of the Lord.