

Matthew 9:1-8

Disclaimer: this is an automatically generated machine transcription - there may be small errors or mistranscriptions. Please refer to the original audio if you are in any doubt.

Date: 30 September 2018

Preacher: Randy Matthews

[0 : 00] But I love it. I just love how that you and the worship team, and I'm sure other people do it, but it starts with this whole idea of our great need in the Lord and our need in life and it's a soft woe.

You know, it reminded me of scripture, woe is me, I'm undone. And then it builds into this exalting worship of Jesus and this crescendo of woe.

So people are going to ask me when I go back where we live about an hour from here, and they're going to say, how was it at Shoreline? And I'm going to say one word, woe. Just woe. That's all I can say. It's a joy to be with you.

And I was asked to join in the series that you're actually in, and that is amazing to me.

And I want to join into that series. But before I do, I told them, no missionary can ever come to a church and not present something.

[1 : 19] So I have two messages for you. The first one is that you could see and hear what God is doing in answer to your prayers. All over the world, and even here in Connecticut, I have the opportunity to stand before people, and I tell them about you.

There are many things I would tell them, but one of the things I tell them is that this is a church that prays. And so I'm thankful. And as I've shared with you before, one of my heroes is Charles Spurgeon.

And he said to his congregation, let me know when you decide not to pray for me, and that's the day I will resign. Because I can't go forward if you don't pray. The powerhouse is in the prayer, so thank you.

Very quickly, so we can get to the message, three trips I was on since the last time I was here. And by the way, last time I was here, I gave you a report, and I said I won't be back until December because every Sunday is all taken up.

And I want to tell you that the only reason I could be here today was my brother died. I had scheduled to fly out today to Texas because his birthday is tomorrow.

[2 : 43] But the Lord took him home to heaven, and he went to be with Jesus in July. And it's the only reason I can be here today.

And I look forward to not only seeing Jesus, but my brother again one day. So what has happened since the last time I was here? Well, I went to China in fulfillment of what Jesus said to go to the world.

And you can see Beijing there. That's where I spent my time. And that, did it not work?

Or am I going to, let me try it again. Yes, Lord? You can do it. Do you want to do it?

Or do you want me to do it? Oh, look. Yeah, wonderful. No, it's okay. Wherever we need to go. All right. So China is an incredible land.

[3 : 47] Have any of you been to China? Raise your hand. Yeah, very good. Excellent. All right. A handful of us have been there. It's a land of great beauty and great history.

You can see on the left there the Great Wall. It was amazing going up there and how many steps you have to climb to actually get to the wall. But China is also a place of great spicy food.

And like a lot of places that I go, I don't have a clue what I'm eating. So I just say, Lord, sanctify the food and please let it stay down. And so I don't know what we were eating here.

But I said, I'll take a picture. It's a place of great architecture. But it's a place of great people. And this is a small group of people.

We're meeting on the 18th floor of a high rise apartment. And these wonderful people, only five of them, we're leading and doing some leadership training.

[4 : 50] I've just got to tell you that the house church movement meeting in apartments like this is flourishing in China. But I also need to tell you that while it's flourishing, it's also very vulnerable.

Very vulnerable. It's vulnerable because they need the Word of God in order to evaluate and to be able to find their context for ministry. And often that is lacking.

So here's what happened. This group of people meeting in this apartment, a man came and met with them and some other house churches. And he built them, swindled millions of dollars.

A lot of people, these have regular jobs, but some of them that we met have been very successful in business. One businessman was sitting on a day that we didn't take a picture.

And he said, this man took two million of my dollars. Now they could have very easily, by the Word of God, evaluated if this man was even a pastor. These people are hurting, especially right here.

[6 : 00] This particular man, by the name of Mark. At least that's his English name. Mark is a prestigious professor of Peking University.

One of the greatest universities in China. And yet you can see how thin he is. He's suffering from cancer. And this false shepherd said to him that you are suffering cancer because you've opposed my leadership.

We told him this is not from God. And we prayed for him. We don't know what God will do. But like all of these situations when we're facing difficulty, especially physical, we lift this person to the Lord and we ask for healing grace.

These incredible people invited us into their apartment. And when we left, when I left, they were reported.

And they can no longer have any meetings in that apartment. There's a crackdown going on in China that is amazing. And the new president is cracking down like never before.

[7 : 06] And what he is telling them, anything that opposes the atheistic communist doctrine has got to be stopped. And so many, many are facing.

You can make a good living, quite frankly, in China by people paying, the government paying you to rat out someone else. These people will never meet again in that apartment unless God intervenes. Next, please. Yeah, you know, I've got to be careful or go too long. But China has a great cultural history that's steeped in the Word of God.

Over to the left, we find the word righteousness. And you can see it in Chinese there. The circles aren't part of Mandarin.

That was someone writing out the word righteousness on a napkin so I could take a picture. And the word righteousness in Mandarin just simply means the lamb covered me.

[8 : 16] That's the word for righteousness in Mandarin. Mandarin, by the way, number one spoken language in all the world. Over here, this kind of word is the word for ship.

And it comes from where they, and it means a larger boat. But what they do in order to say larger boat is they begin with the word that means small ship.

But it morphs as it's a ship with eight people. What do you know about the flood? How many people were in the ark?

Eight. And so steeped in the language of China, whether it be a term of moral, a moral term, or even a religious term, or even a secular term, it's steeped in biblical cultural history.

This one, I had them write from my wife. That says, I love you in Mandarin. So, Marsha, this stands until I revoke it. Okay.

[9 : 25] All right. All right. Let's go to the next one, please. You all know this. How many of you can tell me what this is? Amazing grace. How sweet the sound that saved a wretch like me.

There it is in Mandarin. Next, please. So, China is a place that's closing very quickly, but we've got to look beyond the boundaries. And so, I'm asking for prayer.

I thought I would be back in this next trip in China, but I'm prevented from doing so. But let's ask God to find new ways to reach people so that this guy with this skin color can get in without alerting people.

We're looking beyond the boundaries. Next, please. Also, we went to Ecuador and Quito, Ecuador, right here. A beautiful place and a place where you may know Jim Elliott, Nate Saint, and three others were killed back in the, what was that, the 50s?

Bringing the gospel to Ecuador. What we went to do was to launch the Spanish, the new Spanish translation of our latest edition of our training manual, God's plan for his church.

[10 : 44] But what they told us is in Spanish. If you just simply write the plan of God for his church, for his church, iglesia, if you write that, the word his and your can be interchanged.

And so, what ended up happening, they said, we've got to change the name so they don't think it's about them. So, this is the plan of God for the church of Christ.

That's the new name. Next, please. This wonderful lady, Renee, and her husband have been giving professional treatment to translating God's plan for his church.

Next, please. We had a group of people all graduating with, meaning they've worked through a very lengthy Bible study over months. And they graduated and now are commissioned to go out in Jesus' name.

Next. Key leaders there in Ecuador are Oswaldo and his dear wife. And, you know, as they are going and planning to reach the entire country and continent, let's continue to pray for them.

[12:01] Oswaldo and Jenny, dear people. This is Tim Bunn, the man who actually started the ministry that I'm a part of. And I don't know who that is, but let's go to the next one.

Nigeria is the third place that I've gone since I was with you. And you always fly in to Abuja, the capital, and then northwest to Joss, a five-hour jaunt on very difficult roads.

And finally make it to Joss. Next, please. I found this as I was sitting in traffic. You have all of these three-wheeled taxis, and this one says, without Christ, there is crisis.

And I said, wow, that's awesome. I hope people pay attention. Next. Next. It's the rainy season. It was the end of the rainy season. And so this, the kind of roads we would go on, and they often would stop and say, can we even go through it?

Jimmy, my driver, I renamed Moses because the waters parted, and we were able to go. Next, please. Again, working with some key leaders in Nigeria. And I'll tell you in a minute, I'll be back there.

[13:12] So please continue to pray for them. Next. All right. Let's see if we can do this. I wanted you to hear, not just see. I want you to hear, not just see.

I want you to hear, not just see. I want you to hear, not just see. I want you to hear, not just see.

I want you to hear, not just see. I want you to hear, not just see. Can't you see?

He has made my life so beautiful. Cause he gave his son, who broke the chain and set me free. Oh, yes I ain't how I am.

Give me a brighter day. What more can I say that you are amazing every day? We can't stop it.

[14:44] So join in. Yeah, that, that actually in their own language, but I wanted you to hear the English too. Did you know that your life is beautiful because he sent his son for you?

And those women, young girls really, all rescued from the street, had no hope for any other life than prostitution. And every one of them brought into a ministry where they hear the gospel.

Every one of them putting their faith in Christ and finding new life. It's an amazing work, as is this one. This young boy from a Islamic background, many like him.

I was in a group of 200 of them, and they all gathered around me, and one touched my white hair. It was amazing. But they were all over, all over me.

And when we finally were able to get them to settle down, we were able to tell them a message of hope in Jesus. He carries this little plastic bowl because that's what he did begging in the streets.

[15:51] He would beg in the streets for a little bit of money. Many of these young kids, five years old, are sent out into the street because of superstition.

I heard a number of older guys who were once that age, and they said this, my father or one of my relatives died, and my parents or my mother, the remaining one, said, you must be in witchcraft, and that's why our relative died, and they sought to kill their own child.

That's what's going on in Nigeria right now. And so at five years old, they flee from their own family to live on the streets, a life of begging. But this ministry grabs these young guys and tell them about Jesus and give them hope in a new life.

And here are some of the older ones. I heard from three in this group in a period of about seven minutes, every one of them, same story, accused of witchcraft.

I said, witchcraft? He goes, I didn't even know what witchcraft was. Never even heard of it. And they accused me, and I had to go on the streets. Next. Many people are displaced because of the suffering that you read in the news, and you hear in the news, and this is a displaced people's camp.

[17:13] They're your accommodations, and this is a step up. Next, please. A little boy at the displaced camp playing with his toy.

You can see how it's manufactured. Somebody just took whatever they had, including the screw caps to a water bottle.

Those are the wheels. And that's his only toy. Displaced peoples. Right in the area where I was, many of them killed, and they had to come to places like this for refuge.

Next. This young man, he decided to come and work with the displaced people for three months. He's been there now about seven years.

He decided this was his calling. And I am honored to actually even be in the presence of someone like that. I think that's the last one.

[18:09] Is it? Yeah. So we're transitioning. Thank you for praying. We want to get into the message for today, but let us pray. Lord, we thank you that you're the God who is still in control, even though there are many obstacles and things in the path of those who know you in China.

Lord, we know that you want to use Ecuador to reach all of South America and that it might be a shining light to the entire world.

Lord, you're doing a work in Nigeria, but there's so much more to be done. So we lift these to you and we pray for just an invasion of the gospel throughout these lands and throughout the 1040 window and that there would be massive, rapid church planting movements to disciple the unreached people groups.

We lift them to you in Jesus' name. Amen. And here's what's next for me. As I leave you, I'll be in five countries in five weeks. I leave October 11th.

I'll be in Laos, Thailand, Malaysia, Myanmar, and then back in Nigeria. And so this is going to need a lot of prayer. I'll have a prayer sheet for you next week.

[19:35] All right? Let's go. You've been in a series in Matthew, and here's the passage that you're coming up to is Matthew 9. In Matthew 9, 1 to 8, we really want to just ask two questions.

And here are the questions. Who does he think he is? Don't go back. Yeah. Who does he think he is? That's speaking of Jesus. Who does he think he really is? And then secondly, what difference does it make?

Who does he think he is? And what difference does it make to me at all? If we answer these two questions out of Matthew 9, 1 to 8, we will have handled the Word of God very well.

So let's look at the Word of God. And here's what I'd like us to do. I don't know how you normally handle Scripture reading, but we're told to be about public reading of Scripture.

So I'd like you all to stand. And if you can see this, join with me. And let's say it all out loud. You get an opportunity to participate by saying the Word of God.

[20:37] So this is Matthew 9, 1 to 8. Are you ready? Okay. All of you who can read, let's go. All right. And getting into a boat, he crossed over and came to his own city.

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.

And behold, some of the scribes said to themselves, This man is blaspheming. But Jesus, knowing their thoughts, said, Why do you think evil in your hearts?

For which is easier to say, Your sins are forgiven, or to say, Rise and walk? But that you may know that the Son of Man has authority on earth to forgive sins.

He said to the paralytic, Rise, pick up your bed, and go home. And he rose and went home. When the crowd saw it, they were afraid.

[21:43] And they glorified God who had given such authority to men. Now may God, through the Holy Spirit, lead us in his Word. Thank you.

Be seated. Let's go to the next one. There are really three themes that we want to deal with in this passage. And here are the three themes.

The three themes are forgiveness, faith, and friendship. And they go in that order. Forgiveness, faith, and friendship.

I'd like you to think of this. And had I thought of it while I was putting the PowerPoint together, I would have put it this way. Think of concentric circles. In the bullseye, in this tightest circle, is forgiveness.

Forgiveness. Forgiveness. Forgiveness. And if you move out from that theme, the next one is faith. And if you move out from that one, you have friendship.

[22:44] Faith and friendship are all conditioned on this bullseye of the target, forgiveness. So these three themes are most important.

Next, please. When we look at this aspect of forgiveness, we need to ask ourselves a question. And if you're not asking it, people around you are.

They're all asking it. I shouldn't say they're all asking it. Some people are asking if they've ever heard of Jesus. And here is the question. Can Jesus really forgive sins?

Is that really his role and his responsibility? Can he do it? So the bullseye of this passage, if you want to just really focus on the main idea, here it is.

It's found in verse 6. But that you may know. God wants us to know. Not question. Not doubt.

[23 : 55] But that you may know. That you may know that the Son of Man has authority. That's a big word. You know, not in our world necessarily, because authority is often questioned.

You know, going back to when I was getting out of high school and moving into college. And that was so many years ago. All right? When I was getting out of high school, going into college, was right around Watergate.

And in Watergate, with all of the authorities and what they were doing, there were bumper stickers on many of the cars. And it said, question authority.

Well, in some ways we should. We see that happening today, don't we? The whole Brett Kavanaugh thing. We're questioning authority. Now, whatever you believe about that, this is a process that has been a beauty of our country.

I'm not saying what's happening is beautiful. But the beauty is that we can really question authority.

I go places where people can't. I go places where, listen, let me just tell you, I'm going to Thailand.

[25 : 08] In Thailand, I was there a couple of years ago, right when the king of Thailand died.

If you even say a word against the king, you're immediately put in jail. Most of the world, you can't question authority.

But what we have in the scriptures is they welcome a question of authority, even assuming, they even anticipate it and say, let me talk about that topic.

We're going to spend most of our time on this one topic, the authority of Jesus and his authority on earth to forgive sin. That's what we're going to deal with. And after we really focus on that, then we can move into the topics of faith and friendship.

But if this one falls apart, let's just conclude and all go out and not even talk about faith or friendship. They have no meaning. So the bullseye is the authority of Jesus.

[26 : 15] All right, let's go. Now, I'm going to first talk about Jesus' authority in general according to Matthew and some other places, but primarily Matthew.

And why do I want to do that? Because I want to go back for you and kind of review or recap some things you've probably already studied. And so when we look at Jesus' authority, before we ever talk about the authority to forgive sin, we've just got to establish, does Jesus have authority of any kind?

Matthew assumes people are going to question authority. And so he builds a case in a narrative way. This is the beauty of narrative is that we're reading a story, but in those stories, things keep repeating.

And when they repeat and you look at them, you go, wow, what is he saying? Because he said it this way, then he said it that way. And he said it again and he said it again. And Matthew, like a great prosecuting attorney, is laying forth a case for the authority of Jesus.

Now, the first thing that we want to look at is that Jesus has the authority of Scripture. Now, what do we mean by that? Well, it's primarily in what you've already studied, Matthew 1 to 4, the first four chapters.

[27 : 43] If you look at it, how many times is Scripture quoted and how many times in those passages this fulfills that Scripture? What Matthew is trying to get us to see is that Jesus has the authority of Scripture.

Scripture explains his life. And not only explains his life, his very life is a fulfillment of the Scriptures. Let's look at this next thing.

Fifteen times in Matthew does he use the word fulfilled or fulfilled. In 14 of those, he always quotes Scripture.

This is from Matthew 1 all the way to 28. Fifteen times he says Jesus is the fulfillment of Scripture. And only one of them does he ever mention the word fulfill, and it is not connected specifically to a Scripture.

All right, you Bible scholars, what is that one? Jesus' baptism. He comes to John the Baptist who says, you need to baptize me, not me, you.

[28 : 54] And Jesus said, this is to fulfill all righteousness. It's the only time in Matthew that he uses the word fulfill and doesn't tie it directly to a Scripture quote.

And so in these great things, he is quoting the Scripture and saying Jesus is the fulfillment of Scripture. As a matter of fact, if we read all of Matthew, he quotes the Old Testament 96 times more than anyone else in the New Testament, except one, only one book. 96 times more than any Gospel writer, more than Paul. Paul quotes Scripture in Romans 84 times. Matthew 96.

Now what's the one that is more? The book of Revelation. I think it's somewhere around 214 times the Old Testament is referred to. You want to understand Revelation, you've got to go to the Old Testament.

But you see, what Matthew is doing is he's marshalling all of the Scriptures that he had ever heard from a boy or in synagogue or anything else.

[30 : 09] And he says, Jesus is the fulfillment. Next, please. So notice what Jesus said, and you studied this in Matthew 5, 17. Do not think I've come to abolish the law and the prophets.

I have not come to abolish but to fulfill them. That's Matthew's argument. Next, please. Now, Jesus would say, according to John, that the religious leaders of the day would be really good Bible students.

And he says, you search the Scriptures because you think that in them you have eternal life, but these bear witness of me. Jesus is saying, I am the sum total of all the Scripture.

Matthew is making that clear. John makes it clear. Why? Because Jesus has the authority of Scripture. Next, please. Luke would say it this way.

On Easter Sunday night, then he said to them, he's in a locked room with his disciples, these are my words that I spoke to you while I was still with you, that everything written about me in the law of Moses and the prophets and the Psalms must be fulfilled.

[31 : 18] Then he opened their minds to understand the scriptures. You see, this whole thing that the gospel writers do. But Matthew, more than any of them, builds the case that Jesus has the authority of Scripture.

Next, please. More than just the authority of Scripture. If that was enough alone, we would all have to say, whatever God was saying from Genesis on, Jesus is the fulfillment.

But there's something more. Jesus also has the authority of truth. Now, we said Scripture was often quoted in the first four chapters.

What you had studied before coming here is Matthew 5 through 7. And in Matthew 5 through 7, we see Jesus having the authority of truth.

Now, you've got to understand this. Scripture's truth. What are we saying here? He has the ability to say with the same authority of Scripture, truth about God, life, and who we are.

[32 : 20] He has the authority of truth. We can see that very clearly in Matthew. Look at this. Matthew 4.23. It says that he went through all Galilee, teaching in their synagogues, and proclaiming the gospel of the kingdom.

All right, I'm doing that now. What's different between me and Jesus? What's the difference? Let's look at the next one. Jesus said, or this is the summary, I think, that Matthew and the people were saying, And Jesus finished these sayings, the crowds were astonished at his teaching, for he's teaching them as one who had authority, not as their scribes.

You see, quite frankly, my best effort here this morning is more like the scribes than it is Jesus. His teaching was different. His teaching had a ring of authority that he had the right to say.

And this is the authority of truth. Let's look at the next one. Here's what you studied. Matthew chapter 5. Six times.

In Matthew chapter 5 alone, Jesus said, But I say to you. But I say to you. Now, I don't know. I haven't heard all of the series.

[33 : 42] But I just want to tell you that in Matthew 5, some people think that Jesus is arguing against the tradition of the Pharisees. Not so. I want to tell you that's not it.

I've read that in commentaries. That's not it. And I'll tell you how I know it's not it. Let's take the first one of these.

And let me find it for you. I believe it's in verse 22. Let's take this one. All right?

Verse 22. And notice what Jesus says in verse 21. I don't have a slide for it. I just want you to hear it. You have heard that it was said to those of old, You shall not murder.

And whoever murders will be liable to judgment. Now, he said you've heard that said, but that's actually said in Scripture. But Jesus said, But I say to you, that everyone who is angry with his brother will be liable to judgment, and whoever insults his brother will be liable to the council, and whoever says you fool will be liable to the hell of fire.

[34 : 55] Notice what Jesus is doing. He's not countering the traditions of men. As a matter of fact, he's not really countering anything, and I'll explain that in a second.

But what he is saying is that this word, you shall not murder, is in the Word of God. But when he says, But I say to you, he says, I'm going to say to you something that is equal to that.

You shall not murder. But listen. I want to tell you something with equal weight. Now, you've got to understand, that's an amazing, amazing statement.

It'd be like me coming to you right now, and saying that the Bible says, that believe in the Lord Jesus Christ, and you shall be saved.

Oh, but I say to you. And I try to add on to that, or even change it. You've got to understand that when Jesus is using this phrase, but I say to you, he's actually saying something of authority.

[35 : 56] He's saying, this is what the Bible says, but I've got something on equal weight. As a matter of fact, it's very beautiful, those of you who read Greek.

It starts, each of those sentences start with the pronoun I. I have something to say. And then it's followed by but, the conjunctive that contrasts.

And then it says, I say. You scholars, I just know you. This is what it says.

Ego de lego. Or, ego de lego. Can you say that? Ego de lego. Say that.

One more time. What I say to you. Hmm. It's beautiful. It's so beautiful. Jesus is saying, God has said this in all of the past.

[36 : 58] But I've got something equally important. If you believe the word of God, that you should not murder, I'm telling you, if you have anger in your heart, you've already committed it.

And you know the rest of them. You know about lust. If you've looked on a woman to lust, you've already committed adultery. It's the same thing that Jesus is saying, but I say to you.

And it is this authority of truth. Notice that we saw, or that we will see, or you can look it up yourself, six times in Matthew 5 alone, but I say to you.

And 30 times in Matthew, he says, truly I say to you, I want to tell you something of truth. And it's something you won't get on your own. I'm revealing it. He's claiming the authority of being able to speak truth.

Look at the next. Now notice of these 30 times, you get halfway through Matthew, Matthew 14.

You're halfway through. 11 of these, truly I say to you, happened before 14.

[38 : 05] You get to 14, and you get this testimony, truly you are the Son of God. Jesus has been saying, truly I say to you, truly I say to you, truly I say to you, but I say to you, but I say to you, truly I say to you.

And he says that 11 times, and then somebody gives a testimony. Truly you are the Son of God.

And then 19 more follow. Truly I say to you, truly I say to you, Jesus says, and then you have another testimony.

Matthew 27, 54. Truly this was the Son of God. This is the man at the cross watching Jesus breathe his last. And as Jesus died on the cross, he said, let me use the word Jesus used, truly this is the Son of God.

Do you get what Matthew is doing? He's saying that Jesus has the authority to speak truth just as the scriptures have. And if you don't believe Matthew, go over to John.

Look at this one. John's favorite phrase of Jesus was truly, truly I say to you. And he says that 24 times in John.

[39 : 14] Truly, truly. Amen, amen. He's saying that I have the authority to speak truth. Now what we're building as Matthew is building a case for Jesus. We're going to get to the authority to forgive sin.

He has the authority of scripture. He has the authority of truth. You've already studied that. Matthew 1 to 4. Scripture. 5 to 7. He's teaching the Sermon on the Mount.

He's speaking truth. Next, please. Jesus has the authority of power. And that's the section that we're in now. Jesus has the authority of power.

What does that mean? He performs the miracles of God. He not only is the fulfillment of scripture, he not only speaks scripture, but he is one who authenticates everything that he said with power. He is performing miracles. And you can see the miracles begin to show up in Matthew in chapters 8 and 9. It's just the way he's building the story.

[40 : 16] So notice this. Once again, we're going to look back at Matthew 4, 23. And he went through all Galilee, teaching in their synagogues and proclaiming the kingdom.

He's speaking truth. And healing every disease and every affliction among the people. You see the two? It is of truth and of power. Next, please.

Jesus had a, according to Matthew, he has authority over disease. These are just the passages in Matthew 8 and 9.

We're not even looking at the rest of the book yet. He has the authority over nature. Next, the authority over demons. And he has the authority over death.

What is Matthew doing? He's building to a point where we will believe and understand with full certainty his authority to forgive sins.

[41 : 16] That's where he's building. Now notice that this incredible thing that we're not even going to address today. You'll get this in the next chapter when whoever teaches in Matthew.

And he called to him 12 disciples and gave them authority. This is unbelievable. The one with authority now gives authority. And so these can go out with a great commission.

That's going to be Matthew 10.1. So Jesus is this one who has authority. And we can say with no uncertainty to people in our culture Jesus is the authority of the universe.

Now what Matthew would say in the passage that we're looking at before we go there is he would say how did God give this to men?

How can this God who exists in heaven give this on earth? And Jesus is just simply making some radical claims.

[42 : 20] And I want to tell you he's either a megalomaniac or he is who he says. That's what Matthew is trying to get us to see. That Jesus not only has authority but he has the authority to forgive sins.

And this is germane right to the passage that we're looking at. Now notice first of all that Jesus' enemies understood his claim. It wasn't like hmm what's he saying?

They immediately understood his claim to be able to forgive sins. Notice what happened. Why does this man speak like that? He is blaspheming.

Who can forgive sins but God alone? They understood the claim. And they rejected the claim and hated him for it. They claimed he was a blasphemer.

A blasphemy is that one category of sins that we claim what only God can claim. We either claim his truth or we claim his power his authority and Jesus is claiming something that his opposers actually said only belongs to God.

[43 : 32] Next. Blasphemy then from this point on as you read Matthew is the charge that nails Jesus to the cross. That's the charge.

You find it if you get all the way to Matthew 26. He has spoken blasphemy and he deserves death. It is the one charge.

No other charge could they crucify the Son of God. The one charge is blasphemy. Now notice that Jesus is taking this opportunity of healing a paralytic to confront the wrong views of who people saw him to be.

Who is he? Who does he think he is? That's the question. Jesus has the authority to forgive sins. Next. And his abilities also prove it.

You see not only did his opposers really understand the claim but look at the abilities in this story. First ability. His ability to know what they're thinking.

[44 : 46] That's omniscience. You see John would put it this way about Jesus. He didn't need anybody to tell him about any person because he knew what was in a man. And he could read their thoughts.

He knew what was in their hearts. You got to see that in this story it said that the scribes said to themselves we're over here in a corner. Did you hear what he had to say?

Jesus can't hear them. He knows what they're thinking. And Jesus is putting a claim out before people that he has the omniscience only that belongs to God.

Next. And it says he has the ability to heal the paralytic and that is his omnipotence. He has the power to do what other people can't.

Omniscience and omnipotence. Jesus is making a radical claim. Now before we don't go to that yet. Let's just think about this just for a moment. And by the way if you're not wrestling with this you know somebody who is.

[45 : 51] And so this is just a way you can go through Matthew and help them see Jesus. Think about this for a minute. Two things are happening. Son your sins are forgiven.

Get up and take your mat. And here's what is going on in the story. which is easier to say? Which is easier? Your sins are forgiven or take up your mat?

Jesus isn't saying which is the easiest to perform. It's just which is easiest to say? You know what's the easiest to say? Your sins are forgiven. Right? Because you have no way of knowing if it was ever done.

You can't know that. Well your sins are forgiven. Well how do I know that? You can't. There's no way you can know it. It's a transaction between a human being and God and there is absolutely no way.

Somebody might say well I got a smile on my face like your smile. You have a beautiful smile by the way. Yay! That doesn't mean God forgave your sin.

[46 : 54] It may mean that you believe this delusional man. That's all it means. You can never tell a transaction that only God can see. So what Jesus says which is easier to say?

Well the hardest thing to say is take up your mat and walk. That's the hardest thing because it demands an immediate reaction. An immediate consequence.

And that is why Jesus is pitting these two together. easier. I wish we had time just to develop that theme. I found in my own life that God often does this. He'll give you something that you can measure so that you will believe something that you can't.

He'll give you something that you can see in this world so you will believe something that you can't see. He's done that in my life. I don't have time to go there.

But it's a fascinating, fascinating thing. So Jesus with his authority is proving his claim. How is he proving it? By healing the paralytic.

[48 : 03] I'm going to give you something that you can measure right now. And I'm telling you to believe something you can't see. So what we see in this passage is forgiveness.

Can Jesus really forgive sins? Yes. Matthew is building this case. that he has the authority on earth to do that. Next.

Found this online. Love this guy's thinking because he picks up Matthew 7 29. Jesus taught with authority not as those.

That's not seven, is it? Is that 729? That's what he said. Yeah, it is. It's actually 729. And when Jesus had finished these things, the crowds were astonished at his teaching.

He was teaching them as one who had authority and not as the scribes. So we have three options. This sounds very familiar to many of you. He has divine authority, so he's God's son, and he is the Christ.

[49 : 10] Or we've got to go on the other side, that he doesn't have this authority, and he knows he doesn't have it, and so he's a criminal. He just is claiming something that he knows is false, just like me saying to you.

You have a beautiful smile. I'm telling you, your sins are forgiven. You may smile because you think I have the authority, but if I don't have it, you've been deluded. That's a criminal. That's a crime.

And if he thinks he has it, he's crazy. Here's what you've seen before. Next. That's C.S. Lewis' argument, right? C.S.

Lewis made this very popular in mere Christianity. Jesus claims to be God. Omnipotence, power to forgive. He also has omniscience. He claimed to be God.

If his claims were false, we only have two options. He knew his claims were false, or he didn't know it. That's all you got. Logic won't let you go anywhere else. And if he knew his claims were false, as C.S.

[50 : 10] Lewis would say, he made a deliberate misrepresentation. He was a liar, he was a hypocrite, he was a demon, he was a fool, because he died for the very thing he knew was false.

Now what if he claimed to be God and the ability and authority to forgive sins, and he didn't know it was false, well now he's sincerely deluded, he's a lunatic, a mental case.

And if we look through those, and logic only gives us those, we've got to say, was Jesus this? Right here.

was he? Maybe. Maybe. Maybe he was a fool and a criminal. Maybe. But here's what you find of a criminal.

They will always do things for their own advantage. They'll take advantage of you. You'll be disadvantaged for them. That's what you always see. That's why prisons are full of them.

[51 : 07] You see, if I was to take advantage of you for my good, and you don't get anything out of it, you'd say he's a criminal. If Jesus was walking around and saying to people, hey, I can forgive sins, and by the way, I know what you're thinking, and if none of it is true, then he's a basic criminal, and because he's this basic criminal, he's also a fool because he died for his own lie.

This is one of the reasons, C.S. Lewis said, that he believed in Scripture. Excuse me, believed in Christ. By the way, let me throw another argument out, and if you want to talk about it after the congregational meeting, we can.

But here's another argument. What if this isn't true? And that's what Matthew said, and it's only a legend. It's not the historical Jesus. You hear that all the time.

C.S. Lewis dealt with that, by the way. But in this, believing that the Scriptures are true, we would have to say, Jesus never took advantage of anyone.

Usually fine, financial or sexual, don't you? In the world, financial or sexual. If I'm going to take advantage of somebody, I'm either going to get their money, like the guy did in China, or I'm going to take advantage of them for pleasure.

[52 : 31] And you never find Jesus doing that. You don't even find secular writers saying, St. Jesus ever did that. Well, was he a madman? Madmen are incoherent.

They don't make good sense. Jesus did teach and seem to talk. He wasn't a madman. So C.S. Lewis said, we must come over on this side and say that his claims were true, he is Lord, and we only have two alternatives, you accept it or you reject it.

I want to tell you, when I first saw this many years ago, I've written this out on a napkin and led people to faith in Jesus. Now, some would say, this is inconclusive evidence, and I've even looked into that as well.

I believe it's very sound. So next, please, forgiveness. Can Jesus really forgive sins? Well, Jesus, after he had died and rose and again, he said, thus it is written that the Christ should suffer, and on the third day rise from the dead, and that repentance and forgiveness of sins should be proclaimed in his name to all nations beginning from Jerusalem.

This is the message. And so before we move on, and the next two points are very quick, let me just say this. Do you believe it? You've wrestled with sin.

[53 : 52] Perhaps you're even a follower of Jesus. And you have this plaguing doubt or guilt, a shame-based religion that tells you, oh, you should have never have done that.

And you look back over your life, and you see things where you failed. I should never have done that. And you continually beat yourself up because you believe that in beating yourself up, you're going to find wholeness.

Never works that way. Never. It only works with the authority of the one who says, I forgive you. So I just want to say to you, if you've never put your faith in Jesus, consider this crazy man or God. Who is he? But if you have, may God refresh you. Because his authority is to forgive. There is salvation in no one else, for there is no other name under heaven given among men by which we must be saved.

God has just got the authority. So if we look at these three things, we've dealt with how Matthew would deal with forgiveness. Now let's just simply look at faith because that's how we get that forgiveness.

[55 : 08] Let's look at faith and let's ask one question, what is faith? And it says very clearly that Jesus in his announcement of forgiveness, it says when Jesus saw their faith.

So the secondary issue is faith. Jesus can have the authority, but you not enter into his forgiveness. So it is about faith.

So what is faith in this passage? First of all, it's complete reliance upon the person of Jesus. I'd like you to see this. Matthew states, and behold some people brought to him a paralytic lying on a bed. That is very 30,000 foot view. You know, some of you know the story. Let's look at it from Mark's perspective. This same story.

When they could not get near him, they're trying to bring their friend to Jesus. They could not bring him near because of the crowd. They removed the roof above him.

[56 : 11] And when they had made an opening, they let down the bed on which the paralytic lay. Keep that in mind. They removed the bed. Notice what Luke adds. Luke gives even incredible detail why we believe in scripture.

He says, and finding no way to bring him in because of the crowd, they went up on the roof and they let him down with his bed through the tiles. Through the tiles.

So this tells us about early construction that archaeology is actually proof. that these flat roof houses, they all had like slate rock blocks or tiles.

This is not a thatched roof like you find in Africa. This is not what this is. They have tiles. And so what they actually did, you go up on a roof that you can actually stand on.

That's where Peter received his vision. He was up on a roof. That's it. You can stand on it. It has that kind of structural support. But then you go in and you take out those tiles, those slate rock rectangular.

[57 : 21] Boom. And that's how they lowered him. I'm telling you, you can believe this story because the detail points to the archaeology. I mean, it points to the architectural design.

This is proved in scripture. But what the story tells us is not just these mere facts, but that these people would stop at nothing to get to Jesus.

And that's the complete reliance. Only him. Oh, not the scribes, not even his followers. I must get to Jesus. Second thing is, is that faith in this passage is complete trust in anything Jesus says.

Look at this. Jesus said, take heart, my son, your sins are forgiven. How do I know if they're forgiven? Look at the next thing. Jesus says, rise, pick up your bed and go home. And he rose and he went home.

In other words, what faith is simply this. It's taking Jesus at his word. And we know that the paralytic did it because when he commanded him, after he forgave him, he did exactly as he said.

[58 : 29] And this is what faith is. Faith is not mental assent. It's actually a complete trust in what Jesus says. Forgiveness.

Faith. Jesus saw it. It's how he could forgive. And I want to conclude with friendship. You say, where's friendship? Well, let's ask this question.

How does friendship help others find faith in Jesus? And I'd like to point out in verse 2, it says, when Jesus saw their faith. And Mark and Luke say the same thing.

When Jesus saw their faith. And I want to tell you something that is most difficult perhaps to understand.

Is that we find Mark saying there were four men. He even gives us the detail. You can see him carrying each corner of the mat.

[59 : 33] Four men. And here's a way that we, through friendship, can help others. We've got to carry them into the presence of Jesus.

How can we do that? Well, we can express our faith by listening, interacting, praying, and enjoying friends. For this message, I asked three people who have been a part of Shoreline or what was Shoreline before it became a church.

I asked three men. And I gave them four questions. And it was basically questions of how did the community help you either find faith or develop faith. And I'm going to leave these guys nameless. Just simply, you would know them. The reason I'm going to leave them nameless is I didn't ask them for permission to use their name. So I won't do that. But if they later give permission, we'll let you know.

But these are guys right from your own community. And one of the things I asked them, I just simply said, when did you first come to the community? And one of them was actually here.

[60 : 43] He was actually the first one here before anybody else, the believers, showed up. Another one came in 2011. And then the other one, I don't think I have the exact date.

Yeah, 2011 as well. So this goes back. And what happened, and I tell this story all over the world. Let me tell you about Shoreline because it was developed as a community.

They included people who were still exploring the faith. Those people came to faith and continued on in the journey. This is amazing, friends. I don't find many churches like this where you include people who are exploring the faith and you include them in friendship, genuine friendship.

So I asked one of them, I said, well, what was it about the community that kind of drew you in to the community? And here's what one of them said. The guys that I was around, they were asking big questions in ways that I understood.

So these were not guys that were complacent in their faith. They too are asking about life. But the thing, while they asked the big questions, these guys were doing life together.

[61 : 58] Another one said, these guys were selfless. You know, after eating, I would offer money for the food and they all laughed and said, it's all right, we took care of that.

They were caring. They were thoughtful. They were genuine. They were Christians who were also sociable and fun. They were always striving for improvement.

That's what I saw in the community. I saw these people who had similar interests that I did and I could hang out with them.

You see, sometimes as Christians we're too serious for our own good. And every one of them talked about laughing and joy. But we could also talk about things that mattered.

When I asked the question, in what ways did the friends and community help you become a Christ follower, one of them said patience. They were just so patient as I asked questions about Christianity.

[63 : 03] They invested in my life before I ever knew who Jesus was. They modeled before me what the Bible taught. But they modeled it in a way where they recognized they also fell short.

And so they would talk honestly about pornography on the internet and stuff in their own lives. But somehow in the midst of this struggle of life they had an accountability and they kind of held me accountable without being legalistic.

They prayed for me. They allowed us to dig deeply. They genuinely cared about my questions. One of them even said as far as the questions I had, I loved philosophy in college.

and they would listen. And not only did they listen but while I'm exploring faith they're getting deeper because of the questions I'm asking. Now why do I say all of that?

These three gentlemen said right here at Shoreline there are people who take up the corners of the mat and carry people to Jesus. And the way we do that is not physically.

[64 : 13] We do it by listening. By interacting. By praying. And by simply enjoying people. But friends enjoy the journey because their own faith is deepening as I said from these testimonies.

We find that these men that carried the paralytic they found every way to get to Jesus. Next please. So as we're growing in our faith as you're growing you can explore some of the questions.

Believe me you aren't the answer person. It's okay to say I don't know. And it's okay to search together. This is what Shoreline is.

And friends that's what we read in Matthew chapter 9. There's a very scholarly journal that I read regularly and it's called the double AARP journal.

It's about my level. Well at least it's my age. They had something about as we age the real value and the need for friends.

[65 : 27] That one of the greatest things about baby boomers me not millennials baby boomers is that we're growing older and we're losing friends and we don't know so often sit alone.

But here's what they say science is saying. People with close friends are more likely to get plenty of sleep eat healthy foods.

Boy I need more friends. Maintain peace of mind have less stress engage in brain health activities and take on new challenges as hobbies all because they have friends.

As a matter of fact some studies have shown that loneliness is the new smoking. According to one researcher it is equally as bad for you to be alone as inhaling 15 cigarettes a day.

studies show that loneliness can shave eight years off of your life expectancy and that it is a big negative effect on the quality of life.

[66 : 43] The mortality risk of loneliness is greater than obesity. this is becoming such a problem that in the UK the prime minister has appointed a minister of loneliness.

We've got to have somebody addressing this. We're dying all around us. It's fascinating that there are groups that are growing up in America and even corporations and they have a chief togetherness officer.

The internet and all of the things that we have as great things to help us or isolating us like never before. And what we find in this story is that God wants us to enjoy friends and friends who aren't like us.

Friends who don't know our Lord. Lord. And it's that kind of friendship that not only may result in their salvation but it brings health benefits to us.

So if we hit the bullseye on the authority of Jesus to forgive sins and we place our faith in Him He is calling us then go and be friends to all.

[68 : 09] It's a beautiful story. So next. So who does He think He is? What difference does it make?

Who does He think He is? With the authority of Scripture and truth and power behind Him, Jesus is God. And the only one with the authority to forgive sins.

The only one. The only human being ever who had the ability. Who does He think He is? What difference does it make? Through faith in Jesus we are assured that our sins are forgiven and we can enjoy true friendship by helping others in their faith journey.

Maybe that's the one way to sum up this whole story. Through faith in Jesus we are assured that our sins are forgiven and that we can enjoy true friendship by helping others in their faith journey.

Let us pray. Lord Jesus almighty God I'm overwhelmed by the evidence of who you are and I bow before you the only one with true authority in every dimension of life and specifically the only one with the authority to forgive.

[69 : 43] And yet Lord I know that as we've gone through details, numbers, scriptures, there are some who are sitting here today and there's this pain of defeat that they live under and they can't tell anybody about it.

It was something that happened long ago and they just can't seem to get over it and hurting. But they carry that privately.

And I'm asking Jesus that you would speak the way you spoke so long ago. And here's the way you speak.

Take heart. be encouraged. Your sins are forgiven. For those who believe in you Lord, we thank you that there is an objective reality.

Regardless of the smile on our face, there's an objective reality. Our sins are forgiven in you. You shed your blood on the cross and rose again and we can say with the authority that is in your name, our sins are forgiven.

[71 : 03] And so Lord, would that translate to many today with the forgiving of themselves. Lord, I thank you that perhaps someone here today came in and they've just been on the journey, but today they would like to have that forgiveness in a relationship with you.

And so I just simply say while I'm praying and everybody just stay head bowed. if today the Lord is just speaking to you and how do you know your heart's racing?

You're beginning to say, wow, that has something to say about my life. And if that's you and you simply say, I just want to express faith in Jesus for the first time that it really makes sense and I'm just ready.

I want a relationship with God. I want forgiveness of sin. If that's you, I'm just going to ask a bold move that you just simply raise your hand. I'm not going to embarrass you at all.

I see your hand. Thank you. Anyone else? Just simply, I want Jesus. I see your hand. Thank you. Anyone? It's just time to do business with God.

[72 : 19] That's all. You're on a faith journey. Jesus is who he said he is. And he wants to speak into your life.

Lord, I thank you for these that have raised their hands. And I pray right now for something that happened to me so long ago. That when I put my faith in you, there was like a burden that fell off my back trying to be good enough.

And I found a peace in my heart and a new purpose that put a spring in my step. That's what you did for me. But I pray you would do this for those.

That on the authority of Jesus, I say to you, whoever is your hands raised and by faith you're coming to him, I want to say on the authority of Jesus, your sins are forgiven.

No longer does it stand between you and God. And no longer does it need to remain in your heart. God isn't trying to shame you into righteousness.

[73 : 27] He's trying to free you. So on the authority of Jesus' name, your sins are forgiven. Now those of you who have done, made this move, but you say, I keep visiting the ghost of sins past.

I just got to say something to you. On the authority of Jesus, your sins are forgiven. God isn't looking at you and saying, I can't believe you made such a bonehead mistake.

I can't believe it. You see, Jesus knows all about you. He's omniscient. And he's got the power to speak truth into your life.

You're forgiven. Be free today. Be free. And then there are a group of people here today who are friends with those who don't know our Jesus.

I hope it's every one of us in this room. And I'm telling you, continue to be friends. And don't always be serious. Laugh. Enjoy life.

[74 : 41] Find similar interests. But as the conversation turns to matters that are deep and matter. Carry somebody's mat to Jesus.

You can't save them. Just grab hold of a corner of the mat and bring them into his presence. That's it. Jesus does all the work.

All we do is simply try to get people into his presence. God so if you know someone who is paralyzed in life. Oh they can walk physically but they're paralyzed in life and they really don't have that spring in their step and understand the purpose of life in Jesus.

If that's you I want you to do one thing right now. As Matt had us pray earlier I'm going to ask you to pray. And just right now where you're sitting would you just pray for them right now.

Carry their mat to Jesus. Do it in prayer right now. Pray for someone that you know who can't make their way to Jesus. Thank you Lord.

[76 : 04] Lord I just commit myself once more to be a mat carrier. That's all. Just want to carry somebody's mat. I want to do it every day.

And I pray that you would show up as people come into your presence and they would find the freedom and forgiveness that you died to give them. Thank you for Shoreline.

It's a place where this is happening. My prayer is it would happen even more in Jesus name amen. Amen. Just stand and sing this chorus.