

Matthew 9:1-8: And getting into a boat he crossed over and came to his own city. ² And behold, some people brought to him a paralytic, lying on a bed. And when Jesus saw their faith, he said to the paralytic, "Take heart, my son; your sins are forgiven." ³ And behold, some of the scribes said to themselves, "This man is blaspheming." ⁴ But Jesus, knowing their thoughts, said, "Why do you think evil in your hearts? ⁵ For which is easier, to say, 'Your sins are forgiven,' or to say, 'Rise and walk'? ⁶ But that you may know that the Son of Man has authority on earth to forgive sins" - he then said to the paralytic - "Rise, pick up your bed and go home." ⁷ And he rose and went home. ⁸ When the crowds saw it, they were afraid, and they glorified God, who had given such authority to men.

Intro: In Matthew chapter 8, we saw that Jesus has **all authority** over disease & sickness; He has all authority over His disciples & all people; He has all authority over all nature & calamity; He has all authority over demons & devils! Today we see that He even has authority to forgive sins! That's our King! He has all authority in heaven & on earth! & He has the authority to save us from what we need saved from most: our sins and the wrath of God!

David Platt: Jesus' authority penetrates to the root of all suffering, which is sin.

1. We See People Bringing A Lame Man To Jesus In Capernaum

Matthew 9:1-2: And getting into a boat he crossed over and came to his own city. ² And behold, some people brought to him a paralytic, lying on a bed.

a. Jesus went back to His own city: Capernaum. He was born in Bethlehem; He grew up in Nazareth; But when He started His public ministry, his town (or base operations) became Capernaum: **Matthew 4:13:** And leaving Nazareth he went and lived in Capernaum by the sea

Here, Jesus taught in the synagogue; delivered a man from an unclean spirit; healed Peter's mother-in-law and healed many others as well; Jesus healed this paralyzed man; He raised Jairus' daughter from the dead here; Dyer and Hatteberg note that more of Christ's recorded miracles were performed in Capernaum than in any other city!

Yet they didn't believe!: **Matt. 11:23-24:** & you, Capernaum, will you be exalted to heaven? You will be brought down to Hades. For if **the mighty works done in you** had been done in Sodom, it would have remained until this day. But I tell you that it will be more tolerable on the day of judgment for the land of Sodom than for you.

b. Some people brought a paralyzed man to Jesus: There is no greater love that you can show a person than to bring them to Jesus! Pastors; husbands and wives; parents and children; church members; friends; evangelists!

Spurgeon: It was a very [exceptional or out of the ordinary] action which the bearers performed. Who would have thought of breaking up a roof? Nobody but those who loved much, and much desired to benefit the sick. O that God would make us attempt [exceptional, out of the ordinary] things to save souls. May a holy ingenuity be excited in the church; a sacred inventiveness set at work for winning men's hearts. It appeared to his generation [an exceptional] thing when John Wesley stood on his father's tombstone and preached at Epworth. Glory be to God that he had the courage to preach in the open air. It seemed an extraordinary thing when certain ministers delivered sermons in the theaters; but it is [a] matter of joy that sinners have been reached by such irregularities who might have escaped all other means. Let us but feel our hearts full of zeal for God, and love for souls, and we shall soon be led to adopt means which others may criticize, but which Jesus Christ will accept.

2. We See Jesus Forgive Sins

Matthew 9:2: & when Jesus saw their faith, he said to the paralytic, "Take heart, my son; your sins are forgiven."

a. Jesus saw their faith: Everyone had faith here – the paralytic and those who brought him.

Craig Keener: The paralytic was not alone in his faith; his friends who brought him believed, too.

b. Faith alone is the only way we can receive forgiveness: Faith alone justifies!

Romans 4:4-5: Now to the one who works, his wages are not counted as a gift but as his due.⁵ And to the one who does not work but trusts him who justifies the ungodly, his faith is counted as righteousness

c. True saving faith overcomes obstacles: Doriani: But the story of the paralytic suggests something else. Sometimes God expects us to fight through an obstacle. That is, sometimes the door is open, sometimes the door is closed, and sometimes we have to tear the door off its hinges, whether by ourselves or with the help of friends. On one hand, the willingness to look for open and closed doors reflects a proper confidence in God's sovereign control over history. On the other, there are obstacles on the road to every great goal and we must break through them. It is naive to assume that every door will swing open if we have found God's plan. The story of the paralytic shows that if a door is blocked, someone may need to tear a hole in the roof.

d. Jesus said: "Take heart, my son": We see the tender love and compassion of Jesus.

Matthew 11:28-29: Come to me, all who labor and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest.²⁹ Take my yoke upon you, and learn from me, for I am gentle and lowly in heart, and you will find rest for your souls.

e. Jesus forgives sins: Jesus pronounces that this man's sins are forgiven! Jesus, the God-Man, has the authority to do this! Buddha cannot; Muhammad cannot; false gods cannot; presidents cannot; mere earthly kings cannot.

Matthew 1:21; Morris: it is the only occasion in this Gospel when Jesus forgives a specific individual.

Unbeliever, do you realize that you are a specific individual sinner who desperately needs Jesus? **GOSPEL!**

f. There is no forgiveness of sins without the cross: The cross overshadows everything in the Gospels – every Gospel (Matt., Mark, Luke, & John) are all moving toward the cross. Every sermon Jesus preached, every miracle He did – they are all moving toward the cross! Jesus is moving toward the cross! Even in our verses today, Jesus is accused of blasphemy which is one charge that got Him crucified on that cross!

g. Why did Jesus bring up forgiveness in the first place?: Many people in Jesus' day believed if you were sick, it must mean God is directly punishing you for sin that you committed.

John 9:1-3: As he passed by, he saw a man blind from birth.² And his disciples asked him, "Rabbi, who sinned, this man or his parents, that he was born blind?"³ Jesus answered, "It was not that this man sinned, or his parents, but that the works of God might be displayed in him."

Yes, it's true that all sickness is a result of sin having entered the world, but all sickness is not necessarily a direct result of personal sin. Personal sin can lead to sickness, but all sin does not necessarily result in sickness.

Craig Keener: Jesus knows that [these coming to Jesus] need forgiveness even more than physical healing.

3. We See Scribes Accuse Jesus Of Blasphemy

Matthew 9:3: And behold, some of the scribes said to themselves, "This man is blaspheming."

They accuse Jesus of blasphemy because only God can forgive sins!

- **Isaiah 43:25:** I, I am he who blots out your transgressions for my own sake, and I will not remember your sins.

- **John 10:32-33:** Jesus answered them, "I have shown you many good works from the Father; for which of them are you going to stone me?"³³ The Jews answered him, "It is not for a good work that we are going to stone you but for blasphemy, because you, being a man, make yourself God."

4. We See Jesus Read Minds, Rebuke Scribes, And Raise Up A Paralyzed Man

Matthew 9:4-7: But Jesus, knowing their thoughts, said, "Why do you think evil in your hearts?"⁵ For which is easier, to say, 'Your sins are forgiven,' or to say, 'Rise and walk?'⁶ But that you may know that the Son of Man has authority on earth to forgive sins" - he then said to the paralytic - "Rise, pick up your bed and go home."⁷ And he rose and went home.

a. Jesus knew their thoughts: V. 4: But Jesus, knowing their thoughts

b. Jesus calls their thoughts evil: V. 4: Why do you think evil in your hearts? **V. 3:** some of the scribes said to themselves, "This man is blaspheming."

c. Jesus asks them a question: V. 5: For which is easier, to say, 'Your sins are forgiven,' or to say, 'Rise and walk'?

It's just as easy to say either of those statements to the paralytic, but you can't really verify if his sins have been forgiven. But if you say to him, "Take up your bed and walk!" that can be verified – he's either going to do it or he won't, and you can see it! So Jesus does the thing that can be verified before their very eyes to prove to them the fact that He has authority on earth to forgive sins as well.

The point is this: Jesus is God in the flesh Who has the power & authority both to forgive sins & to heal the sick!

d. Jesus, the Son of Man, wants the Scribes to know what kind of authority He has: V. 6: But that you may know that the Son of Man has authority on earth to forgive sins

D. A. Carson: "Son of man" both reveals and conceals.

Conceals: A frail, human who suffers: Isaiah 51:12: I, I am he who comforts you; who are you that you are afraid of man who dies, of the son of man who is made like grass

Reveals: A mighty, all powerful King: Daniel 7:13-14: I saw in the night visions, and behold, with the clouds of heaven there came one like **a son of man**, and he came to the Ancient of Days and was presented before him. And to him was given dominion and glory and a kingdom, that all peoples, nations, and languages should serve him; his dominion is an everlasting dominion, which shall not pass away, and his kingdom one that shall not be destroyed.

e. Jesus heals the paralytic: V. 6-7: he then said to the paralytic - "Rise, pick up your bed and go home."⁷ And he rose and went home.

Jesus granted this man's deepest need (whether he knew it or not): forgiveness. And Jesus granted him possibly his greatest earthly desire that he came to Jesus to meet in the first place – to be able to walk again.

Tim Keller: Cynthia Heimel writes: "I think when God wants to play a really rotten practical joke on you, he grants your deepest wish."

You know what Jesus is saying to the paralyzed man? I'm not going to play that rotten joke on you. I'm not going to just heal your body and let you think you've gotten your deepest wish. You see, at that moment Jesus had the power to heal the man's body, just as he has the power to give you that career success, that relationship, that recognition you've been longing for. He actually has the power and authority to give each of us what we've been asking for, on the spot, no questions asked. But Jesus knows that's not nearly deep enough. He knows that whether we're a paralyzed man lying on a mat or a struggling actor or a former struggling actor who's become a celebrity, we don't need someone who can just grant our wishes. We need someone who can go deeper than that. Someone who will use his claws, lovingly and carefully, to pierce our self-centeredness and remove the sin that enslaves us and distorts even our beautiful longings. In short, we need to be forgiven.

That's the only way for our discontent to be healed. It will take more than a miracle worker or a divine genie – it will take a Savior. Jesus knows that to be our Savior He is going to have to die. And we will discover that in the process of dealing with what we thought were our deepest wishes, Jesus has revealed an even deeper, truer one beneath – and it is for Jesus Himself. He will not just have granted that true deepest wish, he will have fulfilled it. Jesus is not going to play the rotten practical joke of giving you your deepest wish – until He has shown you that it was for Him all along.

5. We See The Crowds Respond With Fear And Praise

Matt. 9:8: When the crowds saw it, they were afraid, & they glorified God, who had given such authority to men.

a. The crowds were afraid: Like Isaiah 6; like when Jesus calmed the storm; like last week when Jesus cast demons out – when people come face to face with God Himself they are afraid!

b. The crowds glorified God, who had given such authority to men: They honored, thanked, & praised God!

Matthew 5:16: In the same way, let your light shine before others, so that they may see your good works and give glory to your Father who is in heaven.

But Jesus is not just a mere man that God had given authority to. He is the God-Man!

Pastor: Forgiveness is God's greatest gift because it meets our greatest need.

Forgiveness is not God's greatest gift. Why do we want forgiveness? So that we might be reconciled to God! God is our greatest gift! We want God above all! We need God above all!

1 Peter 3:18: Christ also suffered once for sins, the righteous for the unrighteous, that he might bring us to God

66 years ago yesterday, (January 8th, 1956) five missionaries (Jim Elliot, Nate Saint, Ed McCully, Peter Fleming, and Roger Youderian) were speared to death as they prepared to share the gospel with a tribal people in Ecuador.

Jim Elliot: He is no fool who gives what he cannot keep to gain what he cannot lose.

Christ Jesus Came Forgiving Sin
Showing He's The God-Man In
The World Who Greatest Victories Win
He Also Makes The Lamé To Grin
They Walk! Go Home! New Life Begin
For Christ Would Die And Rise Again
To Save His People Who Have Been
Enslaved to Sin And Gin And Skin
By Faith Alone He Makes Us Kin
Crowds Fear And Glory Praise Therein
For Such Authority Within
Now All Our Hopes On Christ We Pin!