

# The Gospel of Matthew

**Title:** Missing the Miracle

**Text:** Matthew 9:1-8

**Sermon Aim, Proposition:** To see the power of Jesus to do the unthinkable to human wisdom, to forgive sins.

**Introduction:** We have a man who has a severe disability. One who cannot do anything for himself. His friends brought him to Jesus, and the Jesus acknowledged their faith. This isn't uncommon for us to see in this time of ministry. We saw this with the Leper, "Lord if you are willing", and the centurion "just say the word."

## POINT 1 - JESUS' FORGIVENESS PRONOUNCED (VS. 2)

This was considered blasphemy for any human to say such a thing, but Jesus isn't just a human, He is God. Not every sickness or suffering is a result of sin directly, however, all sickness, suffering, trials are because of sin, cf. Genesis 3:19, "**By the sweat of your face You will eat bread, Till you return to the ground, Because from it you were taken; For you are dust, And to dust you shall return.**" But sickness and suffering isn't always a result of personal sin, John 9:1-3, "**As He passed by, He saw a man blind from birth. And His disciples asked Him, Rabbi, who sinned, this man or his parents, that he would be born blind? Jesus answered, *It was neither that this man sinned, nor his parents; but it was so that the works of God might be displayed in him.***"

In context here, it is very likely this man had a personal sin that did result in sickness and suffering. Just like the centurion whose servant was sick, this man had friends who knew Jesus could heal him. In Mark 2:1-5 describe their faith for their friend in extraordinary means (many homes had upper rooms, staircases outside leading to the rooftop). And Jesus "**seeing their faith**" made this pronouncement.

What Jesus pronounced was the forgiveness of sins. The statement of Jesus brings us to assume a close link between the man's sin and his condition. We see this truth in 1 Corinthians 11:27-30 "**Therefore whoever eats the bread or drinks the cup of the Lord in an unworthy manner, shall be guilty of the body and the blood of the Lord. But a man must examine himself, and in so doing he is to eat of the bread and drink of the cup. For he who eats and drinks, eats and drinks judgment to himself if he does not judge the body rightly. For this reason many among you are weak and sick, and a number sleep.**" There are at times a connection to sin and sickness.

## POINT 2 - THE SCRIBES PROBLEM WITH JESUS (VS. 3)

Both Matthew and Mark says Scribes, but Luke includes the Pharisees as well. It's interesting to note that in all of these miracles, teachings, and gatherings that it always included those who were well

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educated, leaders and supposedly knew the law of God. The Scribes and Pharisees “said to themselves” or better yet “muttered” about what Jesus said. They knew the law enough to know that no man can say your sins are forgiven. Only God can forgive **“I, even I, am the one who wipes out your transgressions for My own sake, And I will not remember your sins”** (Isaiah 43:25). Isaiah 44:22 **“I have wiped out your transgressions like a thick cloud, And your sins like a heavy mist. Return to Me, for I have redeemed you.”**

### POINT 3 - THE DISCERNMENT OF JESUS (VS. 4)

According to some commentators, blasphemy was a disputed term and what constituted it, “Here the teachers of the law, in their whispered consultation, expanded blasphemy to include Jesus' claim to do something only God could do.”<sup>1</sup> Jesus had seen the faith of the paralytic and his friends; now he saw the evil thoughts of some of the teachers of the law. Such discernment may have been supernatural, though not necessarily so. Jesus' charge probed beyond their talk of blasphemy to what they were thinking in their hearts.

The key issue here was Jesus was exposing their hearts. What they were seeing with their own eyes, they would not believe. They had such a “presupposition” about Jesus, they refused to see the truth of who He is. The most familiar texts about a “hard heart” is from Exodus. Approximately 20x in Exodus we see where the heart of Pharaoh was hardened, even in the midst of phenomenal miracles. Today, many sit in church, hear the word, and even see miracles of God transforming lives, and yet, sit in the pew. But the one next to them, is moved by God, believes in who He is. We see this in 1 Samuel 16:7 **“But the Lord said to Samuel, “Do not look at his appearance or at the height of his stature, because I have rejected him; for God sees not as man sees, for man looks at the outward appearance, but the Lord looks at the heart.”** 1 Chronicles 28:9 **“As for you, my son Solomon, know the God of your father, and serve Him with a whole heart and a willing mind; for the Lord searches all hearts, and understands every intent of the thoughts.”**

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12:2

The fact Jesus exposed the “evil” in their hearts, indicates they were plotting to kill Him. God knows everything about you today, your grumbling, bitterness, and even your hard heart. Jeremiah 17:10 **“For I the Lord search the heart.”** Today, God knows you and where you are at. He knows your rebellion, doubts, fears, and every single thought and intention. I often think of Isaiah 55:6 **“Seek the Lord while He may be found; Call upon Him while He is near.”**

### POINT 4 - NO ONE COULD ANSWER THE QUESTION - (VS. 5-7)

What is easier to do Jesus asked? Forgive sins or say get up and walk? Neither. Because with man all these things are impossible. But not with God. They taught that sin and disease were inseparable and

<sup>1</sup> Expositor's Bible Commentary (Abridged Edition): New Testament; <https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Matthew+9&version=NASB1995>

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if Jesus healed sickness, He could forgive sin. They were trapped. They knew He could heal. They couldn't say yes it was easier to heal because it wasn't, only God could do that. Their rejection was willful and on purpose. They rejected the truth. Many today reject the truth as well, even though they have no answer for anything else.

Notice the question Jesus asks here (vs. 5). It is easier just to say your sins are forgiven? Yes. But to say "arise and walk" that's harder. He is proving He is God. I can do both. But I am going to do the harder, so you can know that I am the Son of God, arise and walk. If Jesus had just said your sins be forgiven, they wouldn't know He did it. But now He gives them ample proof.

Jesus says arise and walk, and he gets up and walks. What did this prove? It proved to the Scribes that He must have forgiven his sins, because the sin and forgiveness were inseparable. In our previous text, Jesus orders the demons to go into swine. If He had just said "go" then nobody would have seen it. But He orders them into the swine so people can see, it was a demonstration. As is this today. Arise and walk Jesus says, and the man gets up and went home. Imagine the scene in that house (friends looking down through roof, the crowds making a way for him).

### POINT 5 - RECOGNIZING JESUS WITH FEAR (VS. 8)

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5:25

The word for "awestruck" can also be translated "afraid, marveled." It's important to understand the context of the word. The Greek word use is often in the sense of "reverence." It's the kind of fear when in the presence of one who is infinitely superior. They knew these were the works of God, but they see a man. I don't know if they understood the "fully God, fully man" concept, but they knew something. The term is used when Jesus was walking on water, it was used in the reaction when Jesus calmed the storm, Matthew 8:27 "**The men were amazed**", meaning they were in fearful respect. The crowd here was "awestruck, marveled, fearful" of this great superior authority doing these great works. This word is used to describe the reaction of the healing of the demonic, the raising of a widows son at Nain. Furthermore, in Luke 1:12 "**Zacharias was troubled when he saw the angel**."

The crowd was stunned, awestruck and marveled at the work of God. The church today isn't primarily like this. We today aren't amazed at what God does. Acts 9:31 describes how we should be as the church today in the midst of the culture, "**So the church throughout all Judea and Galilee and Samaria had peace and was being built up. And walking in the fear of the Lord and in the comfort of the Holy Spirit, it multiplied**" (ESV). We should be amazed at what God is doing in our own lives, watching over us, caring, directing and being merciful. But the begging questions is do we fear God? Do we live our lives in the presence of God? Holiness? Righteousness? Proverbs 19:23 "**The fear of the Lord leads to life, So that one may sleep satisfied, untouched by evil**."

As a matter of conclusion, I want to address a concluding point. Do you marvel at who God is? Or are you marred in just being a follower or religionist? 2 Corinthians 7:1 "...**let us cleanse ourselves**

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**from all defilement of flesh and spirit, perfecting holiness in the fear of God.”** It is the fear of being judged by your own self worth that brings a man to repentance. Why? Because your self righteousness isn’t going to help you when you stand before God. And if you don’t fear or marvel at who He is now, you will then. You will call Him Lord and confess He is God. It is this fear of God that helps keep our brothers and sisters walking with the Lord, **“and be subject to one another in the fear of Christ”** (Ephesians 5:21; ESV). It is 1 Timothy 5:20 that illustrates this perfectly, **“Those who continue in sin, rebuke in the presence of all, so that the rest also will be fearful of sinning.”**

In our text today we have the Scribes who missed the miracle of who God is and what He did. They were so wrapped up in their laws and righteousness. Then we have those who were marvel at God, one who had authority in the flesh. Today you fear God and judgement, and it drives you to be holy and repent or you miss the work of God.

The greatest miracle is the gift of forgiveness. The crowd here was split, some were furious, others were forgiven. Some just left. What about you today?