

9:1

And He entered into a ship. Jesus spent a lot of His time around these vessels and you might remember that we are now on the same weekend. Now it is Sunday morning of this weekend, very full weekend, and once again we're in a boat, and once again we're on the Sea of Galilee.

Now Mark's account, which I don't go to very often, but it keeps us, when we know Mark and Luke's accounts, it keeps us from making mistakes in how we interpret Matthew. And Mark makes us very well aware that **His own city** is Capernaum, not Nazareth, but Capernaum. And we also realize that at the end of verse 1 (Mark inserts this from his version) that they were waiting for the Lord when He landed the ship. Now that is a long, long ministry outing.

Let's try to remind ourselves what we've seen in the book of Matthew so far, particularly chapter 8. You might remember Jesus comes down from the Sermon on the Mount and Matthew is very careful with continuation language to make sure we know we're still happening on the same day here. He comes into Capernaum on the north shore of Galilee and He heals a leper by touching him. And then He heals a centurion's servant by speaking the word. And then He heals Peter's mother-in-law by touching her. Then He casts out devils by speaking the word. Then He wants to get on a ship because He sees the multitudes and He's trying to get away. And we see time and again that the Lord Jesus is still moving in that direction.

And so what we find is that Jesus is still in the middle of His day. He's still handling ministry, which is proving to be at times pretty exhausting and inconvenient. Not every weekend was like this. This is a cross-section. But if there's anything that's timeless truth for us to learn from today, it is that there will be times when serving the Lord will wear you out, and you need to get a break, take a rest, and you'll need to step away.

What that looks like today is it means that you're not answering your phone right away. It means that you're letting the voice message pick it up. It means that you have a particular section of your day that you answer email and that you don't feel like you have to sit down as soon as you get it and answer it. And so Jesus gets on a boat and He sleeps in the rain He created. He leaves them on the beach. And there they are watching as the boat disappears, into the sea. And not just into the sea, but into the storm that is waiting for them on the sea.

and passed over, and came into His own city. Now folks, He was just there the night before.

9:2

And, behold, they brought to Him a man sick of the palsy lying on a bed: And this is that story that in Mark and Luke they tell us that they let him down through a roof. Jesus is actually preaching in a house when they let down this sick man in the middle of the preaching.

and Jesus seeing their faith said unto the sick of the palsy; Son, be of good cheer; thy sins be forgiven thee. I do not want you thinking for a minute that I think that every ache, pain, sickness, disease, or infirmity, is the result of sin. I don't. But, I think we say that so much that we never think there's a connection.

My grandfather, my mom's dad, died in a bar. I never met him. He died of a brain aneurism and fell down the back stairs of a bar in Madison, Wisconsin. I don't know that alcohol killed him, but I know this: it would have been hard to fall down the stairs of a bar if he was not at a bar.

My grandmother, my mom's mom—I never met her, died of emphysema, at around 48 years old. She was a smoker. My friends, I think we can say there's a connection. And we're so busy trying to convince people, "God's not mad." Maybe He's not mad, but I promise if you jump off a building there is about a 100% chance you're going to hit the ground. And sometimes there's a connection between what we do and how we feel. I know this, if I eat how I want I shouldn't be upset if my immune system is not the way it ought to be. I know that we think that we should be able to do whatever you want, live however you please, but I promise you if Ho-Ho's and cupcakes and Ding-Dongs are all you eat, don't expect your system to shut down the infection when it comes. I'm not trying to be a legalist. I haven't told you what you should eat and shouldn't eat. I'm just trying to say if all you eat is pizza don't be surprised if your skin starts feeling greasy after a while. Sometimes there's a connection between what we do and how we feel. "Why is God so hard on me? My back's been hurting for 30 years." Well, I don't want to be critical folks, but America is the most obese country that I know of.

So why is this obvious sick man having his spiritual state addressed? It's not like he asked for any help with his sickness, much less his sin. Is it because it was a result of sin? John 9, the disciple said, "Lord why is this man blind? Is it because of his sin or his parent's sin?" And Jesus said, "In that case, neither, but for the glory of God." So, it's not always a connection between what we do and how we feel. Maybe we should say, "Lord, is there any sin in which I am knowingly ignoring Your Holy Spirit or the clear-cut Word of God concerning?" I cannot guarantee that my sickness is a result of my sin, but if I am sinning I cannot guarantee that it is not a result. I'm not trying to be hard. I'm just trying to be honest and the Scripture clearly says there is a connection between this man's palsy and his sin. Otherwise, why is Jesus bringing it up?

It must be that Jesus wanted him to know his real need was sin and not sickness. Maybe he already knew. Jesus says after all, "Take heart." I mean, isn't that what it says in verse number 2? "Son, be of good cheer; your sins are forgiven."

And what's clear is that Jesus decided that the man needed his sin addressed and not his sickness. And after all, later on in the passage Jesus said, "By the way, they're both pretty easy for me. I can heal your sickness or cast away your sin. Either one is fine. I'm good with either one. I'm not challenged in either way." But there is nothing more important than that sin is forgiven. You and I will answer questions this week about, "Why God this?" and, "Why Jesus that?" and, "Why this?" There's nothing more important than sins forgiven. Not even being healed of your palsy. Now clearly there's a connection here between this man's sins and his healing, but not always. Nowhere in the Scripture does it say there's always a connection and I think I beat that horse to death.

And, behold, they brought to Him a man sick of the palsy, lying on a bed: and Jesus seeing their faith. It doesn't say the palsy had no faith. Think through this with me. What kind of theological ramifications would it be if all of a sudden a man's sins are forgiven because someone else has faith? No, we find out at the end of the passage that he has faith. And how do we know that he has faith? Because he got up and went. He would not have known that he was healed if he didn't obey the command.

Son, be of good cheer not because your friend's roof is still intact, because it wasn't; not because you're walking around, because he isn't; not because everyone is on your team, because most people in that day assumed that he was in wicked sin. No, "Be happy, because I am forgiving your sin." And why is He forgiving his sin? We only have one answer from the text. He has faith. Isn't that what your verse 2 says? "When Jesus saw their faith, He said to the sick of the palsy." "Their" includes his. But what we don't find in this passage is a Sinner's Prayer in this passage. We don't find a trip down the aisle. We don't find a card being filled out. We don't even find a baptism. All we find is the faith of a sinner and his friends and the salvation given from a Savior. And he isn't even walking yet! All he has is forgiven sins. And Jesus says, "Get happy." That tells me that he didn't look happy. That tells me he might have been aware that his problems were brought on because of sin. He didn't look happy. "Son, be of good cheer."

How does He heal the man? By speaking the word. And that is enough to be happy about. And how? Why? What is Matthew's idea? Matthew 4:4, "It is by every word that proceeds out of the mouth of God that man lives." All through this passage of Scripture we find Jesus being portrayed as God, out of whom life comes. Think about it. Even the Pharisees knew what He was saying.

9:3

And, behold, certain of the scribes said within themselves, This man blasphemeth. And Jesus knowing their thoughts "Jesus saw their thoughts"? That is actually the meaning of the text. They're thinking it and He is seeing it. The all-watchful eye of God conveyed in the body of His Son Jesus. What a wonder!

"What's easier for Me to say?" Remember, they didn't tell Jesus this. They thought it. He said, "Why do you think this evil in your hearts?" How upsetting it would be to be wicked only internally and to have somebody know it in that very same room. And not just know it, but say something about it. "I know your hamper is full. Let me empty it, right here in front of everyone."

said, Wherefore think ye evil in your hearts? For whether is easier, to say, Thy sins be forgiven thee; or to say, Arise, and walk? My mind drifted over to the Mark passage. The Mark passage helps us understand

what they said. It says, “This man blasphemes for who can forgive sin but God only?” So even the Pharisees there knew that the only One who can forgive sins is God. And so, when God is in the flesh, and we find out from Matthew 4:4 (the author of this same passage) says, “Man will not live by bread alone, but by every word that proceeds out of the mouth of God,” all of a sudden this One named Jesus who will save His people from their sin, here for the very first time in the book of Matthew is saving someone from his sin. “Now we’re getting down to business,” Matthew says. “Your worst enemy is not leprosy, or a sick servant, or a fevered mother-in-law, or a demon-possessed neighbor, or a disjointed disciple, or an unruly wind, or a tumultuous wave, or demon-possessed cemetery dwellers, or even palsy. Your worst enemy, and My greatest victory, is sin and I’ll save you from it.”

And, what else do we have here to testify to the fact that Jesus is divine? “My sins are forgiven?” Imagine the reaction of this man. “My sins are forgiven.” This man found forgiveness of sins that made his body ache each morning. Let me say it again. Most of the time we’re limited to the guilt we feel, or the stress of covering up the guilt we feel. This man woke up to aches and pains that his sin caused every morning, knowing by his own countenance that his sins caused them. How audacious. He says He can forgive sins.

9:5-6

For whether is easier, to say, *Thy sins be forgiven thee; or to say, Arise, and walk?* Now, if Jesus was interested in not embarrassing people that was the wrong move. And then He says to the man, it tells us in the parenthesis, He now speaks to the sick of the palsy, **But that ye may know that the Son of Man hath power on earth to forgive sins,** What if we would say. “Junior describe God.”

“Well, He’s omnipotent, all powerful...”

Yeah. Ok, well here’s Jesus forgiving sins right after He got done commanding nature and corrupting demons, sending them away to pigs. That’s where they belonged. So Jesus is omnipotent, and now we’re seeing He’s omniscient? Well no wonder He feels like He can forgive sins. If we were to describe God we would use these very same attributes! And here Jesus in the flesh, omnipotent and omniscient, and we would even say He’s omnibenevolent: He is nothing but good. He shows up and He wants a man happy, and so what does He do? He gives him the cause of his weakness that day, which is sin. Apparently Jesus knew the only way a man could be happy in this situation was to cure him of his sin.

In the previous chapter, two demon-possessed men are identifying Jesus as the Son of God.

*8:20 And Jesus saith unto him, The foxes have holes, and the birds of the air have nests; but **the Son of Man** hath not where to lay His head.*

What does Jesus call Himself? Son of Man. Then the demons in chapter 8 and verse number 29, what do they call Him? Son of God. And then here Jesus calls Himself the **Son of Man**. So, I’m not Jesus, but if I were I would be using the phrase that packs the most punch for me. Think this through. The later part of chapter 8, He’s talking to Jews; He says He’s the Son of Man. In chapter 8, later on in the chapter, He’s across the lake in Decapolis, a place where Gentiles live, and they called him the “Son of God.” He’s back across into Capernaum where Jews live and He calls Himself the **Son of Man**. Isn’t that interesting? Son of Man to the Jews; Son of God amongst Gentiles; Son of Man among the Jews. Huh. I wonder if there’s anything else? Yes, there is.

Who is the first one to call Jesus the Son of God, publicly? Well, it was these demons. Before that, who? Well, it was Satan. Satan: “Since, You’re the Son of God.” And before that, it was God of the Father. Now think this through with me. Satan calls Him the Son of God. Around the Jews Jesus calls Himself the **Son of Man**. Demons call Him the Son of God. Around the Jews Jesus call Himself the **Son of Man**. There must be something to this title, **Son of Man**. Now hear me well, if it only meant that He was a human being that would be really pointless. What would a Jew think about that reference? No wonder they would be calling Him blasphemous. A human being can forgive sins? That’s preposterous.

So here’s Jesus, looking at a man who can’t move because of something having to do with his sin and He says, “Your sin has an end.” And that’s why Jesus uses the title **Son of Man**. You see, to the Jews, the Son

of Man was as good as God (considering Psalm 80 and Daniel 7). It wasn't that Jesus was saying, "Oh, no, no, no, the devil's wrong. I'm really just a human being. Oh, no, no, no, the demons are wrong. I'm really just a human being." Nope, **Son of Man** to the Jews was like saying Son of God to the Gentiles. That's why "Son of God" is so much in the book of John. Because it's written 40 years after the other three gospels and it's primarily to Gentiles.

Arise, take up thy bed, and go unto thine house. I want us to know that this bed was more of a sleeping mat. It was a place he slept. "Rise, get up, roll up your bed and go home." He says, "I just want to prove to you that I have power on earth to forgive sins." Hear it again! I'm going to save you some conversations with some people in town. Why did Jesus tell the man to get up? So that you know that He has the **power to forgive sin**. Why did Jesus do those healings when He was here on earth? One answer, dear friends. So that you would know that He has the authority to forgive sins. We have 2,000 years of history proving that Jesus can forgive sin. Converted hearts. You should not expect regular works of healing in a supernatural, apostolic sense anymore. Why? Because they were for the purpose of proving to His listeners that He had the authority **to forgive sins**. And the apostles are also those ones sent by Jesus and their job was to do great works to validate what they were preaching. How many Testaments were there when Moses came preaching? Zero. And so he had to do miracles to validate what he was preaching. So here comes Jesus and some apostles. How many New Testaments were there when they started preaching? Zero. How many books were available when they started preaching, in the New Testament? Zero. So they had to validate their new message by doing miracles. Friends, we're not going to get another Testament of Jesus Christ. So there's no need for this, proving that Jesus has the **power on Earth to forgive sins** any longer.

9:7

And he arose, and departed to his house. But when the multitudes saw it, they marvelled, and glorified God, which had given such power unto men. Power to do what? To heal and forgive sins. Once again, Matthew reminds us that the very presence of Jesus is the presence of God. He starts in chapter 1 with this idea of His name is Immanuel meaning "God with us."