

Episode #740 - Matthew 9 Part 4-Healing the Blind and the Dumb

I. The purpose of the gospel of Matthew is to present Jesus as the Christ, the King of Israel. It is another grand treatise like John to prove to Israel Who Jesus really is. It is the book of being “in Israel,” in contrast to believers today who are “in Christ.”

II. In Matthew 9, the Lord was called by a ruler who was the father of a girl who he thought had just died to come and bring her back to life. On the way there, he was touched by a woman with a flow of blood, and when she touched the hem of His robe the flow of blood was immediately stopped. On getting to the house of the ruler, He told the hired mourners to leave, as the girl was not dead, but in fact sleeping. They did not believe Him, however, and mocked Him. Yet He put them all out and raised up the girl. Today we will continue to consider more miraculous healings of our Lord.

III. Healing: Two Blind Men. Matthew 9:27-31.

- A. Verse 27. The cries of these two blind men are all the explanation we need for the various blind men of Jericho. Many have noted that some gospels speak of Him healing a blind man/blind men on the way into Jericho, and some that He did it on the way out. An ingenious idea has been put forward that there were two Jerichos, the old and the new, and He did it halfway in between. But what makes us think that there was only one blind man in Jericho? These two men spread their story far and wide, verse 31. Every blind man in the land must have heard it, and thought, “If He ever comes my way, I will say, ‘Son of David, have mercy on me,’ just like they did.” That multiple blind men of Jericho said the same thing is perfectly understandable.
- B. Verse 28. Notice that He did not act right away, or as soon as the blind men started following Him. He wanted this healing kept secret, like the healing of the supposedly-dead girl. He asks them if they believe He is able, *dunatai*, has inherent power?
- C. Verse 29. Some take this to mean that healings were always according to the faith of the one healed. Then modern healers charge unsuccessful “healees” for not having faith. But the Lord also healed men who had no faith beforehand, like the man at the pool of Bethesda in John 5. This was one case, not a rule.
- D. Verse 30. He severely charged them to speak to nobody of this. The Lord was not at all unclear about this. They knew very well what He wanted.
- E. Verse 31. They literally blazed it abroad. How much better would it have been if they had taken Him at His word and responded accordingly, if they had responded in faith! But they thought they knew better than He did and did it their way. This is lack of faith, which may often be excused but is never justified.

IV. Healing: A Mute, Demonized Man. Matthew 9:32-34.

- A. Verse 32. Again in Greek “demon-possessed” is a single word, demonized.
- B. Verse 33. Such power never shone forth before in Israel!
- C. Verse 34. If the Pharisees wished to argue against Him they had better have an answer for these miracles He was doing! This was their answer, and the best they could do. They claimed He did it by the *archon*, the ruler or chief of the demons. In other words, through Satan himself. The Lord answered this charge in Matthew 12.

V. The Lord’s Compassion on the Multitudes. Matthew 9:35-38.

- A. Verse 35. He taught in the synagogues, which were community centers. He was proclaiming or heralding, not preaching sermons, as we think of them. The gospel of the kingdom was the right message of the coming government of God. It was not the

gospel of our salvation as we proclaim it today. He had not accomplished His death, burial, and resurrection yet, and His message was the kingdom, not Himself. He was not proclaimed as Messiah until after His resurrection. He was healing all maladies, *therapeuo*. This chapter has given us multiple examples, but there were a host of others. This was showing that the kingdom of God had come to them. After the Lord had been there, you couldn't have found a sick or crippled person in any of these towns. This was not about their worthiness to be healed, but about showing the character of God's government. Under God's government there will be no sickness and disease as we know it. The medical profession will be gone. But God will be able to find other jobs for them!

- B. Verse 36. Literally He was moved in the bowels, where compassion was thought to originate. We can understand this when we consider how strong emotions can affect our bowels. This word is used only in Matthew, Mark, and Luke. It is used OF the Lord, it is ASKED of the Lord, and the Lord USES it for the master in His parables. These sheep were in the fold, but lacking in caring shepherds.
- C. Verse 37. On the one hand the harvest is plenteous, but on the other hand the laborers are few. Where were all the shepherds? Where were all the laborers? We would like to think harvests are always plenteous, but not so. Sometimes harvests are great, at other times they are very sparse. At this time in Israel the harvest was great. In Israel laborers were often hired servants, hired day to day for daily tasks, particularly at important times like the harvest. Few were ready for God to hire them. Many missionary organizations like to emphasize the first. But the second is often true as well. There seem to always be fewer laborers than there is work to do. Satan's agents are all too willing to step in and steal the harvest when the laborers are lacking.
- D. Verse 38. This was realized within two years after this, when at Pentecost the laborers were increased. Can also have a violent connotation: drive forth. This is how it was with Paul, I Corinthians 9:16. Thanks to the work of Acts an enormous harvest was gathered in. This is not always the case.

VI. Conclusion: The Lord healed two blind men when they had faith that He could do it. However, He then ordered them not to tell anyone what had happened, and they proved that their faith when they were asked to obey was not like their faith when they asked for God's favor! It is sad when people fail to have faith in order to obey. Christ freed a demonized man who could not speak, and this caused great admiration among the multitudes, but the Pharisees passed it off with a ridiculous argument. The Lord had compassion on the people of Israel, so neglected and mistreated by their own leaders. He told His disciples to ask the Lord to send laborers into His harvest. Now, like then, there is much work that needs to be done for God, and few to do it. Will we submit to be laborers for God?