

JESUS OVER SICKNESS

+ **SESSION IN A SENTENCE:**

Jesus healed those who acted in faith in Him.

+ **BACKGROUND PASSAGE:**

Matthew 9

+ **SETTING:**

Chapters 8 and 9 in Matthew's Gospel are a collection of stories showing the healing power of Jesus. He touched a leper to cleanse him, He healed the servant of a centurion who understood true authority, He cured Peter's mother-in-law, He cast out demons and sent them into pigs, and He commanded a paralytic to get up and walk. Matthew wanted His readers to clearly see that Jesus heals.

DAY 1

READ:

Matthew 9:9-13

FOCAL PASSAGE:

Matthew 9:9-13

NOTES

Don't you wish you could sit down and get to know Matthew? He seems to be quite an interesting character: A Jew but collecting taxes for the Roman government. We don't know his interaction with Jesus before he became a disciple; maybe there was none. But when Jesus saw Matthew at the tax office (Matthew 9:9), it took only an invitation, and the man left his office and followed the Rabbi creating a fuss from those around them.

Surely the Romans hadn't approved his indefinite leave of absence. Surely his Torah-following friends were suspicious of this new rabble-rouser. Surely he wondered, just for a second, how he'd pay the bills or explain to his mother what he was doing. (Moms haven't changed that much in 2,000 years.)

But Matthew's willingness to follow Jesus also got others to look His way too. Immediately after the verse telling us that Matthew got up to follow Jesus, we see Him sitting at a table in a house with many "tax collectors and sinners" eating with Him. This is actually a funny scene: God Almighty had come down to earth; the ones who should have recognized Him first had snubbed their noses at Him, while the ones who seemed furthest away were chatting with Him over hors d'oeuvres.

Following Jesus attracts attention. Regardless of what your friend group—or former friend group—says about Jesus, they will perk up if you really follow Him and as they see the change in your life because of Jesus.

From his own changed life, Matthew went on to write his Gospel, showing how Jesus heals and changes lives.

What is your life revealing to others about Jesus?

VOICES from CHURCH HISTORY

"Let this be your whole endeavor, this your prayer, this your desire—being stripped of all selfishness, you can with great simplicity follow Jesus only."¹

—Thomas à Kempis (1380–1471)

DAY 2

READ:

Matthew 9:18-26

FOCAL PASSAGES:

Matthew 9:18-19,23-26

NOTES

Sometimes the humblest faith can seem like the craziest. According to Mark's and Luke's versions of this story, the synagogue leader first approached Jesus to ask for help when his daughter was "dying" (Mark 5:23; Luke 8:42). Asking for healing when this man Jesus had already proven He could heal didn't seem like a stretch.

But then some others arrived and reported the worst: the daughter had died; quit bothering the Teacher (Mark 5:35; Luke 8:49). After all, all hope was lost, right? Even the best healer couldn't conquer death.

Perhaps, though, this synagogue leader remembered an Old Testament story about a man who believed God could raise the dead because he'd been instructed to sacrifice his only son as a burnt offering (Genesis 22:2). We who know this story often wonder: How could he do such a thing? Why in the world did Abraham follow God in this crazy test? Because he believed God could raise the dead (Hebrews 11:19).

Now, the crazy thing about Abraham believing God could raise the dead was that no one had ever done it before; his faith was obviously off the charts. But Jesus had already raised a man, an only son of a widow in Nain (Luke 7:15). And this news was reported throughout Judea and beyond (v. 17).

So maybe the father had considered Abraham's faith. Maybe he'd heard about the miracle in Nain. Maybe he was simply a good father who wanted his little girl to live. Whatever the situation, he believed when no one else did. Maybe we can too.

Where do you want to believe God for a miracle today?

DAY 3

READ:

Matthew 9:20-22

FOCAL PASSAGE:

Matthew 9:20-22

NOTES

In this week's lesson, you'll see this woman described as one having bold faith. But at first glance, you may think her faith is anything but bold: she snuck up behind Jesus, touched the hem of His garment, and hoped to sneak back out. Not that bold, right?

But there's more to the story. You see, she had uncontrolled bleeding, which made her ceremonially unclean (Leviticus 15). So she was basically forbidden from going anywhere near people. Perhaps we can see her bold faith in the fact that she stepped out of her religious confines to grab onto God Himself.

Note that she must have been weary as well: her issue of bleeding had been going on for twelve years. Twelve years! Think about your life situation twelve years ago; seems like forever, doesn't it? And yet, after these twelve miserable years, she still had the audacity to hope. Perhaps we'll see her bold faith in her ability to persevere.

Luckily, Jesus isn't one to miss His own miracles. Instead, as soon as she touched Him, He turned and saw her. His words to her are beautiful: He told her to take heart and have courage and called her "daughter" (Matthew 9:22). This kind of statement reveals something about the woman, that she was fearful or discouraged. So maybe that bold faith shines in the fact that she took a step of faith even as she was scared to death.

This woman's story is for us too, when we feel called to bold faith, even when we're weary, or even when we're scared. Maybe we, like her, can take that bold step.

What's holding you back from a bold step of faith today?

DAY 4

READ:

Matthew 9:27-31

FOCAL PASSAGE:

Matthew 9:27-31

NOTES



KEY DOCTRINE #33: MIRACLES

A miracle is an event in which God makes an exception to the natural order of things, or supersedes natural laws, for the purpose of demonstrating His glory and/or validating His message. Miracles are recorded throughout Scripture; miraculous signs and wonders were oftentimes evident when a prophet or an apostle was speaking God's message to the people. Because we believe God to be all-powerful and personally involved in this world, we believe He can and does perform miracles.

In reading these few short verses about two blind men, there are a few things I can apply to my own life.

First, the blind men sought out Jesus; they knew He had authority. When I was a kid, I was always that kid, front row center, asking every question on my mind to the teacher. Even in college, I wouldn't leave class until I got some answers. I've learned that we need to seek those in authority when we need answers. And no one has full authority like Jesus. Like the blind men, in times of need, we need to seek Jesus.

The men also were calling for God's mercy in a time of trouble. I remember my first few years of motherhood brought me to my knees in every way. I've learned to pray for mercy regularly from God, and I'm not afraid to ask Him for it now. God is ready and willing to give us mercy when asked.

In the story, Jesus asked, "Do you believe that I can do this?" (v. 28). Jesus is constantly asking us this, and it's something we must ask ourselves. How much do I really believe what I say I believe? If the feet of my faith are put to the fire, would I pass muster? And if the miracle occurs only "according to [my] faith" (v. 29), would it even happen at all? Though God can choose to grant our need or not, we must believe that He is able, being the all-powerful, sovereign, good God.

God can do all things, but how are we to act when He chooses not to do what we are hoping for?

DAY 5

READ:

Ephesians 2:1-10

FOCAL PASSAGE:

Ephesians 2:8-9

NOTES

The synagogue leader's faith was demonstrated when he humbly asked Jesus for healing. The bleeding woman's faith was demonstrated when Jesus commended her for it. The blind men's faith was revealed when they were healed according to what they believed.

Faith is the cornerstone of our relationship with Jesus and our eternal satisfaction, but it's not something we can conjure up on our own: it is God's gift (Ephesians 2:8). So if you believe Jesus was born of a virgin, lived, performed miracles, died for your sins, and rose from the dead, you have been given a wonderful gift of faith from the Lord.

What do we do with a gift? Sometimes we get a gift that we really didn't want in the first place, and we stash it in a closet or give it to a donation center. Some gifts we cherish but don't really use, like a set of china or a delicate vase. We don't want to lose or break the gift, so it sits out of reach.

But a great gift—a perfect gift—is one we use; this is where James's words come in (James 2:20). Because if we have faith, even as small as a mustard seed, we live it. We clothe and feed those in need. We show patience to those who drive us crazy. We walk with confidence into the throne room of heaven, knowing that our prayers are accepted because of Jesus. Faith shapes our words, our attitudes, our lives, and our thoughts.

How are you living out your faith, knowing that your salvation is a gift of God?

GROUP

NOTES

VOICES from CHURCH HISTORY

"Though sorrows, heaviness, and faintings of heart ever so much increase; yet, if your faith increases also, it will bear you up in the midst of them."²

—Isaac Penington (1616–1679)

POINT 1: The Son of David responds to humble faith (Matthew 9:18-19,23-25).

Biblical humility includes putting aside our pride, _____, and preferences to _____ ourselves in submission to God, knowing He is Lord of all.

? How can we develop our own humility, particularly in approaching Jesus in prayer?

KEY DOCTRINE #33: MIRACLES

A miracle is an event in which God makes an exception to the _____ order of things, or supersedes natural laws, for the purpose of demonstrating His _____ and/or validating His _____. Miracles are recorded throughout Scripture; miraculous signs and wonders were oftentimes evident when a prophet or an apostle was speaking God's message to the people. Because we believe God to be all-powerful and personally involved in this world, we believe He can and does perform miracles.

POINT 2: The Son of David responds to bold faith (Matthew 9:20-22).

Bold faith moves us _____ to Jesus, believing in His _____ and work.

? How can bold faith reveal itself in a believer's life today?

When we _____ Jesus to be Savior and Lord, we find _____ that transcends this world and this life.

? How did the woman's faith lead to more than physical healing?

POINT 3: The Son of David responds to desperate faith (Matthew 9:27-31).

The blind men in this passage were honest in their self-assessment: they needed _____ and healing from the _____.

? How do we honestly approach God with humility and still present our requests to Him in faith?

Great faith knows Jesus's _____ to do the impossible and expectantly _____ that He will act on our behalf for God's glory.

? From Day 4: God can do all things, but how are we to act when He chooses not to do what we are hoping for?

MY RESPONSE

Because we have been saved through faith in Jesus, we strive to live out our faith each day, trusting in God to supply all of our needs.

- **HEAD:** In what areas do you struggle to believe the truths of the Bible?
- **HEART:** What are ways you can humble yourself before the Lord during worship or prayer time?
- **HANDS:** How can you help someone hurting or suffering today?



Scan this QR code to access this session's Scripture passages.

VOICES from CHURCH HISTORY

"The Way, the Truth, the Life Thou art, This, this I know; to this I cleave; The sweet new language of my heart, 'Lord, I believe.' I have no doubts to bring to Thee; My doubt has fled; my faith is free."³

—Harriet McEwen Kimball (1834–1917)