

“Welcome to the Trauma Center”

Matthew 9v1-12

Scripture Ref: Matt 18:11; Hos 6:6

1. **Note – first hint of resistance by the religious leaders – the mood is changing**

Just Dropping In

9:1 So He got into a boat, crossed over, and came to His own city.

2. **The gospel of Mark gives us more data, telling us that Jesus had crossed back over to His base city, Capernaum, and had set up camp in a house where He was teaching and ministering**
 - a. **And there are so many people in and around the house that you cant even get near the place**
 - b. **And a group of four men bring one of their friends who appears to be stricken with cerebral palsy.**
 - c. **There is no way to get their friend into the house, so they come up with a plan – they get the guy up onto the roof, remove some of the roof panels, and drop they guy into the room where Jesus is!**
 - d. **Can you picture this? You’re sitting in a room with Jesus, and all of a sudden you hear a noise from the roof, and suddenly some guy is being lowered into the room on a rope!**
 - e. **Talk about determination!**

2 Then behold, they brought to Him a paralytic lying on a bed. When Jesus saw their faith, He said to the paralytic, "Son, be of good cheer; your sins are forgiven you."

3. **Now, I am thinking that this is not what these men wanted to hear.**
 - a. ***“We went through all this trouble to get Simeon in here, and Jesus tells him his sins are forgiven?? Where is the healing!?”***
 - b. **It may sound odd that Jesus would say this – but perhaps there is an explanation.**

The Destruction of Sin

4. **We can’t say for certain, but tradition tells us that this man’s condition was a result of his sinful lifestyle.**
 - a. **It’s something that you don’t see too often from the media outlets of the world– the long-term results of sin.**

- b. The alcohol commercials always show young buffed guys with six-packs (abs that is!) with beautiful girls having a blast.
 - c. Funny they don't show the guys who were living in the woods behind our church, or the guy lying in hospital bed with liver and kidney failure from years of alcohol use (its not a pretty site).
5. There are also many people who are crippled emotionally and spiritually from the guilt of the sins over the course of their lives.
- a. They think "I've gone too far, I've done too much."
 - b. Maybe this guy thought that himself. Perhaps he felt like he had lived for the moment, made poor choices, and that he deserved to be in the condition that he was in.
 - c. Maybe that was why Jesus was astounded at the faith of his four friends, instead of his faith!
6. And so when they brought this man in, Jesus went right to the heart of the problem, and He forgave the man's sins.
- a. There was no rationalization, "Oh I know you had a good heart," or "you had a hard childhood," or "you just got with the wrong crowd."
 - b. There's no need for any of that, because God will FORGIVE the sinner – plain and simple!
7. I personally think that people spend waaayyy too much time and energy trying to rationalize and explain away what they do,
- a. Moving the discussion from 'right and wrong' to 'toleration and acceptance.'
 - b. As opposed to just coming to God and saying "lord forgive me."
8. Recently I have been in a blog-o-sphere discussion with a good friend of our family who went into a homosexual lifestyle about three years ago.
- a. And I found that most of the debate centered around human rights, being accepted, loving others. These are important aspects of live, to be sure.
 - b. But it skirts around the real heart of the matter – it's not about human rights or accepting each other, its about being right with God.
 - c. And if we're not, we don't need to make up all these rationalizations, just come to Jesus and ask Him to forgive your sin, to heal you, to cleanse you!
9. But not everyone wants to hear that...

3 And at once some of the scribes said within themselves, "This Man blasphemes!"

10. In other words, God is the only one who can forgive sin, and so Jesus must be claiming to be God!

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 you,' or to say, 'Arise and walk'? 6 But that you may know that the Son of Man has power on earth to forgive sins" -- then He said to the paralytic, "Arise, take up your bed, and go to your house." 7 And he arose and departed to his house.

11. Interesting debate – which is easier? Hey, doctors can heal, only God can forgive sin!

8 Now when the multitudes saw it, they marveled and glorified God, who had given such power to men.

12. Note – the people glorified God, which is as it should be
a. We often glorify the one who God works through

A man living in Taiwan was in love with a certain lady, and in his pursuit to win her, he wrote her seven hundred love letters in one year – two each day! Sixty times he proposed to her. The letters worked, she finally agreed to a marriage proposal... from the mailman!

- b. Sometimes we are like the lady, God loves us and sends us wonderful gifts... and we exalt the mailman!**
- c. When you are used by the Lord, people will often exalt you.**
- d. Our goal should be to do what Jesus did – turn all the attention to our Heavenly Father who is the giver of the gifts!**

I'm the Tax Man

(for all you Beatles fans!)

9 As Jesus passed on from there, He saw a man named Matthew sitting at the tax office. And He said to him, "Follow Me." So he arose and followed Him.

13. One thing I like about Matthew is that he is quite humble about his calling.

- a. I think I might have played it up a little... *"I saw Jesus coming down the road, and I saw this bright light envelope Him, and I had this sense... I knew I had to follow Him..."***
- b. But no Matthew, just *"Follow Me. So he arose and followed Him"*. That's it.**

14. Almost nothing is known of Matthew prior to his calling, but he is also called Levi in the gospel's of Mark and Luke, so apparently he is a member of the tribe of Levi.

- a. In other words, Matthew should have been in the ministry, working in the temple. Instead he was a Roman tax collector.
15. Tax collectors, or publicans, were despised by the Jewish population.
- a. They were Jews who would bid on the contract to collect taxes for Rome, with the contract going to the highest bidder.
 - b. Rome had a set amount that was to be delivered, and anything over that amount would be the profit margin of the tax collector – his earnings.
 - c. So Tax collectors were known for extracting all that they could from the population, and for getting very wealthy in the process.
 - d. They were also considered sinners for interacting with the Romans, and for being greedy.
16. So this tells us a few things about Matthew...
- a. #1 - He was probably well off financially.
 - b. #2 – He was probably not a man with particularly high morals or loyalty. He was looking out for himself.
 - c. #3 – He was far away from his true calling as a Levite. We don't know what happened, or how he ended up there, but at some point he had walked away from his calling to serve the Lord in the temple.
 - d. #4 – He had a bunch of unsavory friends...

10 Now it happened, as Jesus sat at the table in the house, that behold, many tax collectors and sinners came and sat down with Him and His disciples.

17. Again I don't want to over-reach in my analysis, but once Matthew joins the crew all these other tax collectors and sinners show up for dinner...
- a. And the “religious people” don't like it one bit!

11 And when the Pharisees saw it, they said to His disciples, "Why does your Teacher eat with tax collectors and sinners?"

18. In other words, ***“what are you doing hanging out with these people? Them's sinners! If you're really holy and righteous and spiritual, you'll hang out with US, because we're the righteous and spiritual people!”***
- a. And while we can look at this and say “oh yea, those Pharisee's, that's how they are,” ...in many ways that reflects the attitude of some in the church today.
 - b. People may say *“I want to reach out to the lost...”*
 - c. But are we willing to reach out more than invite them to church, or say something at the gym, or make a passing mention of church while we're working together?

- d. Are we willing to step out a little further into their lives, find out who they are, how did they get to where they are, really reach into their lives and connect?
 - e. Or do we see the sinners, the lost, the down and out, as somehow “less than,” people we think we should minister to, but we don’t want to get too close to them?
19. If we are not careful, churches can become exclusive Country Clubs for saints, instead of Trauma Centers for the sick and dying.

Welcome to the Trauma Center

12 When Jesus heard that, He said to them, "Those who are well have no need of a physician, but those who are sick.

20. Now this is hitting right between the eyes - People who are healthy don’t need a doctor, but when you have been in a train wreck, and you’ve lost blood, and you have internal injuries, broken bones – you need a Trauma Team.
- a. And that is what the church is – not the church as some faceless institution – but the church being YOU and ME -
21. This place, this church, us all here, the purpose is NOT for us to all get together and hear me say things we all know and agree with and say “Amen”,
- a. and think in our minds *“Lord thank you that I am saved and not one of those sinners...”*, and point our fingers at the “sinners” and say *“baaaadd sinner! You better get right!”*
 - b. That a “Christian Country Club!” That’s where the “righteous and spiritual” Christians get together and socialize. And *no sinners allowed.*

Matt 18:11 For the Son of Man has come to save that which was lost.

- c. No – this is a Hospital for the sick and dying. It is a place where people who are broken and dying, who have wrecked their lives, (not just the ones who had “bad luck”) who have come to the end of themselves,
 - d. This is a place where they can find truth, healing, and life!
 - e. WE are the Trauma Physicians! You are part of the Trauma Team!
 - f. And you are in TRAINING. This is where you and I become “equipped for the job” – the job of reaching out to those sinners and lost people.
22. And THAT is what Jesus was doing – He wasn’t hanging out with the “in crowd” at the synagogue, He was spending time with the people who were lost, and in Jesus they saw the light.

a. Jesus told them:

13 But go and learn what this means: 'I desire mercy and not sacrifice.' For I did not come to call the righteous, but sinners, to repentance."

Hos 6:6 For I desire mercy and not sacrifice, And the knowledge of God more than burnt offerings.

23. What does Jesus mean by this? In Hosea it is *hesed*, the New Testament the *eleos* of God which is "God's overflowing pardoning love for sinful humanity?"

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