



Coptic Orthodox Diocese of the Southern United States



# The Holy Gospel According to St. Matthew

## Chapter 9

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# Introduction

In this Chapter We Will Focus on:

- Jesus' power to forgive sins
- His willingness to eat with sinners
- His compassion for the lost



# An Overview

- Chapter 9 is all about people seeing Jesus work
- One of the most interesting things to note about all of the miracles in Chapters 8 and 9 is the lack of any sort of pattern or style
- We see all sorts of different miracles performed in lots of different ways
- Miracles are mostly used as validation of Jesus as God
- Only God Himself has the power to perform such miracles
- Jesus uses this power on people to demonstrate who He is
- It also shows the love and compassion Jesus has for us
- It is not just about eternal salvation, but also that He loves us, and wants the best for us here in this lifetime



# An Overview

- Back in Capernaum, Jesus' ministry in Galilee continued with both forgiving and healing a paralytic (1-8)
- The call of Matthew the tax collector to be a disciple (9-17)
- Jesus raise the ruler's dead daughter & the healing of a woman with a flow along the way (18-26)
- The healing of two blind men and a man who was both mute and demon-possessed (27-34)
- Jesus went about the region, teaching and healing, moved with compassion for the multitudes that came to Him (35-38)
- Chapter 9 ends with Jesus requesting that prayers be made to God for more Christian workers

# Jesus Forgives and Heals a Paralytic (9:1-8)



- Jesus agreed to the request of the people of Gadara and returned to His own city Matthew 8:34
- Capernaum, so called because, after leaving Nazareth, He made Capernaum His Galilean home
- We can read the story of the paralytic in Luke 5:17-26 with more details
- St. Matthew gives a more abbreviated story with the emphasis on Jesus forgiving their sins

# Jesus Forgives and Heals a Paralytic (9:1-8)



- Remember the purpose of the gospel according to St. Matthew is to present Jesus as the promised Messiah to Israel
- It was not St. Matthew's purpose to give a detailed account of every aspect of everything that Jesus did
- A helpless paralytic, unable even to walk, but anxious to be brought to the great Healer
- These men, who understood Jesus had the power, and had enough love and care for the man who was a paralytic, that they went to all of this trouble



# Jesus Forgives and Heals a Paralytic (9:1-8)



- Possibly the paralytic had brought his sickness upon himself by means of his sins; but was now repentant
- Christ goes to the source of the disease, which is sin and then heals the body of the paralytic person
- This appears to have been founded on Psalm 103:3, *Who forgives all your iniquities, Who heals all your diseases*
- Here pardon precedes health
- Scribes were the educated class, the official expounders and interpreters of the Scriptures, the theologians, and, indeed, the soul of Israel

# Jesus Forgives and Heals a Paralytic (9:1-8)



- Whenever the word blasphemy is used in reference to God, it simply signifies, to speak immorally of His nature, or attributes, or works
- This was the beginning of the opposition that ended with the cross
- On the same accusation of blasphemy, now first made, the Sanhedrin condemned Him to death (Matthew 26:65)
- In telling them what the thoughts of their hearts were, (for they had expressed nothing publicly), Jesus gave them the fullest proof of His power to forgive sins



# Jesus Forgives and Heals a Paralytic (9:1-8)



- He called their thoughts “evil” to not think that Jesus was God
- That is an example of “blasphemy of the Holy Spirit”, (Mark 3:29; Luke 12:10)
- The only unforgivable sin in the bible is to continually deny Jesus as God
- The important thing to understand about this whole story is that Jesus healed this man to demonstrate that Jesus has the authority to forgive sins
- Remember that the paralytic is going to die again one day

# Jesus Forgives and Heals a Paralytic (9:1-8)



- The forgiveness of sins, assuming he became a follower of Jesus lasts for eternity
- Jesus wanted to tell them that if He can do the most difficult, then He can do the easier
- External miracles are the proofs of internal ones
- In this story we see three miracles
  1. The remission of the poor man's sins
  2. The judgment of the secret thoughts of the scribes
  3. The restoring of the paralytic, in an instant, to perfect soundness

# Jesus Forgives and Heals a Paralytic (9:1-8)



- The Son of man cannot simply mean a man, or a mere man
- The true sense is determined by Daniel 7:13-14, where the phrase  
is confessedly applied to the Messiah
- He was healed by a word; it was done instantaneously; it was  
done in the most public manner
- The fact that a man, just before perfectly helpless, could now  
take up and carry his own bed or couch, proved that a divine  
"power" had been exerted; and that fact proved that He who had  
performed the miracle must also have the "power" and the  
"authority" to forgive sin

# Jesus Forgives and Heals a Paralytic (9:1-8)



- St. Matthew's point of Verse 8 is that the crowd still did not get who Jesus was
- They thought at this point that Jesus was just "some guy" who God had given special powers to perform miracles
- They were so impressed and fascinated by the paralytic getting up and walking they forgot about the part where Jesus says, *Your sins are forgiven*
- Sometimes miracles are not enough to change people

# Matthew the Tax Collector (9:9-13)



- Tax collectors were the most hated people in Israel
- They were seen as Jews who were traitors to their own people
- The tax collectors commonly cheated the people and grew in wealth, and it was encouraged and enforced by the Roman army
- Such is the modest introduction of himself that St. Matthew gives
- He was also called Levi (Luke 5:27)
- Matthew means, "Gift from God"
- Jesus sees people for the potential, not as who they currently are
- How blessed it is to be obedient to the first call of Christ - how much happiness and glory are lost by delays



# Matthew the Tax Collector (9:9-13)



- This was at a feast given to Him by St. Matthew, Luke 5:29
- This is another circumstance favorable to St. Matthew, but omitted by him, and recorded by Luke; showing also that the apostles were averse to praising themselves
- St. Matthew sought to bring his old associates to hear Christ
- The Pharisees, by asking this question, accused Christ of seeking the society of such people, and of being the companion of the wicked
- The strict Jews would not eat with Gentiles, and these classes were regarded by them on a level with the heathen (Acts 11:3, Galatians 2:12)



# Matthew the Tax Collector (9:9-13)



- They thought that He could not be Himself righteous, since He delighted in the company of abandoned people
- Those who suppose their souls to be without disease will not welcome the spiritual Physician
- This was the case with the Pharisees; they despised Christ, because they thought themselves whole; but the poor publicans and sinners felt that they wanted instruction and correction
- This is a quote from Hosea 6:6

# Matthew the Tax Collector (9:9-13)



- Jesus is speaking to the religious leaders, who knew their Old Testament well
- The Pharisees had never learned the meaning of this passage, which teaches that kind hearts and helpful deeds are more pleasing to God than outward ceremonial
- Sacrifice is right, but mercy is first in importance
- My mission in the world is to save sinners

# Jesus Is Questioned About Fasting (9:14-17)



- This narrative is found also in Mark 2:18-22; Luke 5:33-39
- The reference here is to John the Baptist
- It is probable that they had understood that John was the forerunner of the Messiah; and if such was the case, they could not account for the fact that there was such a difference between them and the disciples of Jesus
- The Pharisees fasted twice a week (Luke 18:12)
- Fasting was usually a sign of sorrow
- He was Himself the Bridegroom and still with His disciples
- As St. Chrysostom says, “calling to their mind John’s words, when he said, *He that has the bride, is the bridegroom, but the friend of the bridegroom, which stands and hears Him, rejoices greatly because of the bridegroom’s voice.*”

# Jesus Is Questioned About Fasting (9:14-17)



- Fasting was always esteemed a great virtue, witness Moses and Elias; the fasts which Samuel made the people observe in Masphat, the tears, prayers, and fasting of Ezechias, of Judith, of Achab, of the Ninivites, of Anna, the wife of Eleana, of Daniel, of David, after he had fallen into the sin of adultery
- Witness also the fasts of Anna, the prophetess, of St. John the Baptist, of Christ himself, of Cornelius the centurion
- This arrogant interrogation of St. John's disciples was highly blamable, not only for joining with the Pharisees, whom they knew their master so much condemned, but also for accusing Him falsely, who, they knew was foretold by John's own testimony, (St. Jerome)

# Jesus Is Questioned About Fasting (9:14-17)



- There will come a time when the Lord's disciples must bear the cross of affliction and purification
- For the disciple there is both a time for rejoicing in the Lord's presence and celebrating His goodness and a time for seeking the Lord with humility and fasting and for mourning over sin
- A second illustration was drawn from a well-known fact, showing also that there was "a suitability or fitness of things"
- It was not usual to take a piece of rough woolen cloth, which had never been prepared, to join to an old garment, for it would not join well with the soft, old garment, but would tear it further, and the rent would be made worse
- In Jesus' times, wine was stored in wineskins, not bottles



# Jesus Is Questioned About Fasting (9:14-17)



- New wine poured into skins was still fermenting
- The gases exerted gave pressure
- New wine skins were elastic enough to take the pressure, but old wine skins easily burst because they were hard
- So the "new" doctrines do not match with the old rites of the Pharisees
- There is a right place for the old as well as the new
- Jesus says the *kingdom of heaven is like a householder who brings out of his treasure what is new and what is old* (Matthew 13:52)



# Jesus Is Questioned About Fasting (9:14-17)



- He doesn't want us to hold rigidly to the past and to be resistant to the new work of His Holy Spirit in our lives
- He wants our minds and hearts to be like new wine skins — open and ready to receive the *new wine of the Holy Spirit*
- That whole illustration has to do with the way people misunderstood Jesus' ministry and purpose
- Jesus was “starting something new” in that His purpose was not understood by the religious Jews of that day

# A Girl Restored to Life and a Woman Healed (9:18-26)



- One of the rulers of the synagogue
- His name was Jairus (Mark 5:22; Luke 8:41)
- Matthew, Mark, and Luke all give this account
- From them we learn that the girl was twelve years old
- Our blessed Lord could have acted as well at a distance as present; but He goes to the place, to teach His disciples not to spare either their steps or their pains when the salvation of a soul is in question
- On His way to the house of Jairus another miracle took place

# A Girl Restored to Life and a Woman Healed (9:18-26)



- This woman's disease was by the Jews considered unclean Leviticus 15:25, and the woman was therefore unwilling to make personal application to Jesus, or even to touch His person
- This garment was probably the square garment which was thrown over the shoulders
- This garment was surrounded by a border or "fringe;" and this "fringe," or the loose threads hanging down, is what is meant by *the hem*
- The Jews were commanded to wear this, in order to distinguish them from other nations, Numbers 15:38-39; Deuteronomy 22:12

# A Girl Restored to Life and a Woman Healed (9:18-26)



- She firmly believed that by touch any part of His garment, she should have a cure
- Her faith, her strong confidence in Jesus, had been the means of her restoration
- Christ's power cured her
- But her faith was the condition on her part
- It was not a passive faith and led her to action
- A passive faith is a dead faith
- Jesus used an endearing appellation, calling her *daughter*, a word of tenderness and affection to give her courage
- There is no indication that the Jairus was bothered by this miracle

# A Girl Restored to Life and a Woman Healed (9:18-26)



- It was common in Jewish custom to hire “professional mourners” at a funeral
- She is not dead so as to continue under the power of death; but shall be raised from it as a person is from natural sleep
- The company of mourners was certain that the child was dead and, understanding neither the language nor the power of Jesus, laughed in mockery
- He teaches us to be no longer in dread of death, since it was reduced to the condition of a sleep
- If you believe this, why do you vainly weep? why do you afflict yourself? This the Gentiles do, who have no faith



# A Girl Restored to Life and a Woman Healed (9:18-26)



- St. Luke says that the apostles Peter, James and John, and the father and mother of the maiden were permitted to remain (Luke 8:51)
- As we learn from one of the parallel accounts, He said to her, Talitha cumi (Mark 5:41)
- This is Aramaic, the language generally spoken by the common people in Palestine at the time of Christ
- The words mean: Rise, my child
- They were immediately obeyed
- She arose, and walked
- St. Luke dwells emphatically upon the astonishment felt by the parents (Luke 8:56), but shared doubtless by the three apostles (Mark 5:42)



# A Girl Restored to Life and a Woman Healed (9:18-26)



- For though He strictly charged the parents, as the other evangelists say, that they should tell no man what was done, He not affecting the applause of men; yet it was not possible the thing should be entirely concealed; since there was such a number of people who full well knew, and were assured she had been dead: when these saw her alive, walk about, eat and drink, and converse with them, they must be persuaded of the miracle, and relate it wherever they came; so that the fame of it could not but be spread all over the country in which Capernaum was

# Two Blind Men Healed (9:27-31)



- These two men called Jesus “Son of David”
- By the Son of David the Jews meant the Messiah
- They knew that their cry should be a cry for mercy and they must be fervent
- God encourages us to persistently bring our prayer requests to Him
- Jesus demands, as condition of the blessing, that there should be an expression of faith
- Faith is the hand which takes what God offers, the spiritual organ of appropriation

# Two Blind Men Healed (9:27-31)



- Their changed condition would sufficiently tell the story without their indiscreet babbling
- They failed to obey, which they should have done, whether they understood the reason of the command or not
- Note the three great lessons about our Lord:
  - (1) He is the Life (John 11:25, 14:6). He not only breaks the bonds of mortal death, but give the soul a spiritual life
  - (2) He is the infallible Physician (Mark 2:17; Luke 5:31,32). Diseases of the body, sorrows of the heart, and sins of the soul that no man can heal, disappear at his touch
  - (3) He is the Light of the world (John 8:12). At His word sightless eyes see. At his word darkened souls are flooded with light

# A Mute Man Speaks (9:32-34)



- Some demons rendered the persons they possessed paralytic, some blind, others mute, etc.
- Christ's cures strike at the root, and remove the effect by taking away the cause
- The miracle is narrated in the briefest terms; but the effect was immediate and the restoration was complete
- Filled with wonder at the cure, the multitude declared that no prophet had ever done such wonders
- We find that the poor and the simple were more ready to acknowledge the hand of God than the rich and the educated
- With their usual stubbornness the Pharisees gave an evil explanation

# A Mute Man Speaks (9:32-34)



- What more foolish ever entered the mind of man
- Is it possible, as He afterwards says, that devils should be expelled by devils?
- They assist and strengthen, not weaken and destroy one another
- Moreover, He did not only cast out devils, but He cleansed the lepers, raised the dead, calmed the storm, forgave sins by His own power, preached the eternal felicity of heaven, and brought back man to God: all which the devil never could, never would bestow upon mankind. (St. Chrysostom, hom. xxxiii.)



# The Compassion of Jesus (9:35-38)



- Jesus visited not only the great and wealthy cities, but the poor, obscure villages; and there He preached, there He healed
- The Lord seldom looked upon a crowd of the poor, lost, human beings without being moved with tender compassion
- The Pharisees indeed were their shepherds; but they acted the part of ravenous wolves, not only neglecting to lead the people to virtue, but even hindering, as much as they could, their advancement in good; for when the admiring multitude cried out, "Never did the like appear in Israel," they immediately decried it, saying, "By the prince of devils he casteth out devils."  
(St. Chrysostom, hom. xxxiii.)



# The Compassion of Jesus (9:35-38)



- Another beautiful image
- A waving field of golden grain invites many harvesters and demands haste
- The souls who are ready to receive the truth are very numerous; but the laborers are few
- There are multitudes of scribes, Pharisees, and priests, of reverend and right reverend men; but there are few that work
- The people expected the Messiah
- They were prepared to receive the gospel; but the laborers were few
- He directed them, therefore, to pray to the Lord of the harvest to send forth reapers
- God is the owner of the great harvest of the world, and He only can send people to gather it in



# Conclusion

- What was it about the friends of the paralyzed man that impressed Jesus?
- Why do you think that Jesus said to the paralytic, “Your sins are forgiven”? Do you think this is what he and his friends were expecting?
- Why did the scribes accuse Jesus of blasphemy when He forgave the sins of the paralytic?
- Who was called to be a disciple and then gave a feast at his house?
- Why did the Pharisees rank the tax collectors with sinners?



# Conclusion

- The Pharisees do not deny Jesus has power as a healer, but in their jealousy what do they claim concerning Jesus' miracles?
- What prompted Jesus to quote Hosea 6:6, "I desire mercy, and not sacrifice"?
- What is the significance of the sheep/shepherd imagery in the Old Testament?
- In Matthew 9:16–17, what point is Jesus making about the relationship between the New Covenant and the Old in these two verses?
- What moved Jesus to call for prayer for more laborers?



# Conclusion

## For Application:

- In the miracle story in 9:18-24, there are three principal characters in addition to Jesus: the father (Jairus), the bleeding woman, and the dead girl. Describe how each person encounters Jesus and with which person do you identify most? Why?
- St. Matthew suggests that, seeing Jesus forgive the sins of the paralytic and then heal him, the crowd was afraid of the God who gives such power to men. Recall a time when God acted powerfully in your experience. What reaction toward God did the event cause in you?