

Typically we do not go to a doctor when we are healthy, but we do make an appointment when we are sick. A doctor should and must associate with those who are sick. Jesus was the ultimate doctor. He came to heal men and women who were sick. Jesus' words did not mean that the Pharisees were righteous, but revealed that the Pharisees didn't see themselves as needing a savior and having their sins forgiven. They didn't need Jesus because they followed the law and were not sinners. Jesus challenged them to reflect on God's law. God is pleased when he observes compassion in our lives, not condemnation. God is a compassionate God and desires compassion to be evident in his people. God was pleased more with a man who demonstrated compassion than a man who made all kinds of sacrifices.

# Jesus came to forgive sins.

Matthew 9:1-13

*Sermon Series: What did Jesus teach?*

Devotional Notes January 18-23, 2010

## **Monday, January 18, 2010**

*Daily theme: We need spiritual healing along with physical.*

### **Questions**

**Read Matthew 9:1-2; Mark 2:1-5**

1. How did these men display their faith?
2. Why would Jesus address the man's sins before His physical need?

### **Consider**

These five men, the four who brought the man and the man himself displayed their faith in several ways. First they came to Jesus to heal the paralytic. If they didn't believe that Jesus could help their friend they would not have gone to the trouble of carrying him to Jesus. Second, when they saw that there were so many people gathered around Jesus, they went to the roof, they made an opening and lowered their friend into the room where Jesus was. When Jesus saw the man, He did not address the man's physical condition but His spiritual one. In the first century the Jews believed that physical illnesses were a direct result of sin. This was behind the question the disciples asked of Jesus regarding the man born blind in John 9:2. So if the man was paralyzed then the conclusion was that his sin had caused his illness. By forgiving the man's sin, Jesus was removing what the man and the others believed was the cause of his condition. By doing so Jesus didn't necessarily mean that the man's condition was the result of sin in a specific sense any more than the man in John 9 was not born blind because of sin. In healing the man Jesus would prove his authority to forgive sin.

## **Tuesday, January 19, 2010**

*Daily theme: By forgiving the man's sins, Jesus claimed to be God.*

### **Questions**

**Read Matthew 9:3; Mark 2:5-7**

1. Why did the scribes conclude that Jesus was blaspheming?
2. How would Jesus' words indicate that He was God?

### **Consider**

Although Jesus had previously demonstrated that he had the power to heal; he had healed the leper, restored the centurion's servant, freed Peter's mother-in-law from her fever and healed countless others who had come to him. Jesus' healing power was not in question, but with this man Jesus revealed his authority to forgive sins. The scribes were absolutely correct in concluding that only God can forgive sins, but they were wrong to conclude that Jesus was blaspheming when he affirmed his power to forgive. By declaring that he had the authority to forgive sins, Jesus said that He could do only what God can do (Isaiah 43:25).

Since the Scribes didn't believe that Jesus was God, they were offended by his affirmation and concluded that Jesus was blaspheming. However, Jesus would only have blasphemed if He was not God. Since Jesus was God, his words merely revealed more clearly than an outright healing that he was God.

### **Wednesday, January 20, 2010**

*Daily theme: When the people observed Jesus' authority, they praised God.*

#### **Questions**

##### **Read Matthew 9:4-7**

1. How did Jesus challenge the scribes conclusion?
2. Jesus had healed others in Capernaum, why was this healing so special?

#### **Consider**

Since the vast majority of people believed that people got sick due to sin, Jesus could make the point that if he healed the man, then he also had the authority to forgive the man's sin. Since the Scribes had questioned Jesus' assertion that He could forgive sins, Jesus could make the point that his healing the man demonstrated that he did have the authority to forgive the sins. The Scribes' questioning of Jesus' affirmation made this healing unique, because it tied the healing to Jesus authority to forgive sins. During previous healings this connection was not made. The person was healed and that was that. His or her sins were not an issue. In this case, Jesus declared that the man's sins were forgiven, the Scribes questioned Jesus' authority so the healing became linked to reveal the extent of Jesus' authority. Jesus is not merely the one who heals us, he is also the judge. Only God, as judge, has authority to forgive sins, that means that Jesus not only has the authority to forgive but he is also the judge.

### **Thursday, January 21, 2010**

*Daily theme: Matthew responded immediately to Jesus' command.*

#### **Questions**

##### **Read Matthew 9:9; Luke 5:27-28**

1. For what reasons might a tax collector follow Jesus?
2. What do you think Luke meant by Levi (Matthew) leaving everything behind?

#### **Consider**

Tax collectors in the first century were considered on the level of criminals. They could not even give testimony in court because they were viewed as corrupt. The tax collectors of the first century were not like IRS agents today. The tax collectors of Jesus' day had the freedom to request a higher percentage of tax from one person than from another. They were also known to accept bribes from the wealthy and not require the rich to pay their legitimate tax. Finally the tax collectors were in effect employees of the Roman government, which was hated by the Jews. For these reasons tax collectors were viewed on the same level as criminals. We see in the response of Zaccheus, that he was well aware of his

corruption (Luke 19:8). To Jesus he confessed his sin and made restitution. If Zaccheus felt that way, it is quite possible Matthew/Levi also had struggles with his conscience when he saw Jesus. From Luke it sounds like Jesus encountered Matthew while he was at this tax booth. The picture is that Matthew got up from his booth and left it all right there. It was as if Matthew just up and quit right on the spot in order to follow Jesus. He also would have followed the other disciples example. Peter acknowledged that the disciples had left even their homes to follow Jesus (Luke 18:28-30). Jesus responded to Peter commending all those who had left home, wife and relatives for the kingdom. Since Matthew became one of the 12 like Peter, he would have left his job, his home and quite likely his family in order to follow Jesus.

### **Friday, January 22, 2010**

*Daily theme: Jesus willingly associated with those others avoided.*

#### **Questions**

##### **Read Matthew 9:10-11; Luke 5:29-30**

1. What was Levi (Matthew) trying to accomplish with his banquet?
2. Why would the Pharisees criticize Jesus for eating with tax-collectors?

#### **Consider**

Like Zaccheus would later do, it is likely that Matthew wanted to thank and honor Jesus for offering to him a new life. To do so, Matthew invited all those that he knew. Since Matthew was a tax collector, it is reasonable that the majority of those invited to his home was other tax collectors. Possibly Matthew desired for his tax collector friends and colleagues to meet Jesus and better understand his decision to follow Jesus. The Pharisees did not view the tax-collectors as individuals worthy of their attention. They were men equated with something unclean that would defile a righteous person. By associating with them, Jesus, in their sight, was making himself ceremonially unclean. In other words, Jesus was guilty by association, possibly even immoral himself. They reasoned that if he associated with such men, he must be like them, because righteous people don't associate with tax collectors and sinners.

### **Saturday, January 23, 2010**

*Daily theme: Jesus' mercy toward men prompted Him to reach out to those who recognized their need.*

#### **Questions**

##### **Read Matthew 9:12-13**

1. What did Jesus mean by the healthy not needing a physician?
2. How does Jesus' compassion relate to the righteous not needing a physician?

#### **Consider**

In response to the Pharisees' criticism of Jesus eating at Matthew's home along with tax-collectors, Jesus reminded them of a medical doctor. A medical doctor who refuses to associate with those who are sick is not much of a doctor.