

Matt 9:18-38

Clint Le Page

Main Point – Jesus can save and heal people - believe it and pray for it!

- In terms of what's coming up, we'll finish Matt 9 today, Neil will preach on Pentecost next week, then Lord willing begin a series on Daniel 1-7. In mid-July Andy will preach through Matt 10.

I recently saw a comic with two dogs saying something funny, and I thought of my family's two dogs(**SLIDE**).

We have Bagel our beagle-cross on the right and our puppy Chai, the Chihuahua-cross on the left.

And as they sat there waiting and wanting me to give them some of what, I imagined(**SLIDE**) older Bagel saying to young Chai,

“One of their years equals around two of our months, that's why it takes them so long to learn anything.” ☺

Like when we want food.-----

Are you a slow learner?-----

Sometimes I am.-----

I can be slow to learn that especially with my family, I need to talk less.

I keep trying to share my advice or opinion, when I should listen.-----

But I think I'm not alone in being a slow learner ☺

Many people seem slow to learn that you shouldn't drink then drive, or that the 10-12hr days we put into our job won't make me happy, or my next purchase won't truly satisfy me.-----

Or from our passage today, really believing that God loves me when I'm in pain, really knowing that Christ can help and does care for me when I'm suffering.

In this too we can struggle to know that.-----

Over the last few weeks, in Matthew 8&9 we've repeatedly read eyewitness testimony of Jesus' power.(**SLIDE**)

His total authority over sickness n' disease, over nature n' the storm, over evil.

Last week we saw Jesus' authority to forgive sins.-----

And maybe because we're slow learners, or to really drive home and reinforce Jesus' power and compassion, and help us believe; we now see him bring new sight for the blind, new health for the sick, new speech for the mute and new life for the dead.-----

I hope you won't switch off, thinking, I know-all-this; but I pray we'll know we need to hear it again; because we forget, and we doubt.-----

So let's open our ears, eyes and hearts, to see,(**SLIDE**)

Firstly, Jesus' power and compassion.

In **v18**, a leader, Mark's Gospel tells us he's a synagogue ruler named Jairus, he comes to Jesus, kneels before him and says,

“My daughter has just died. But come and put your hand on her, and she will live.”

And WHY did Jesus get up and go with him?

Because he is able to do something about it, and he is compassionate; he cares.---

Jesus is on his way to help this man's daughter when, “Just then a woman who had been subject to bleeding for twelve years came up behind him and touched the edge of his cloak.”-----

Maybe you or I get annoyed by interruptions, but Jesus doesn't.

The interruptions are springboards for great words or marvelous miracles, which reveal his power, wisdom and love.

Jesus has true compassion.

Back in **9v2** Jesus had said to a paralysed man, ‘Take heart son, your sins are forgiven’.

Now in **v22**, he turns to this woman and says, “Take heart, daughter, your faith has healed you.”-----

This woman endured bleeding, some chronic menstrual disorder, for 12 years.

And for a Jewish woman that meant 12 years of being ceremonially unclean, and contaminating anyone and anything she touches.-----[Lev13.33]
 But this woman is so desperate, in such distress, she sneaks up to Jesus and hopes to secretly touch just the edge of his cloak.-----
 And she came to the one man who cannot be made unclean by her.-----
 As we saw with the leper, Jesus doesn't get unclean, he makes them clean.-----
 Jesus notices her, he encourages her, and he heals her.-----

In **v23**, when Jesus gets to the ruler's house, he doesn't have time for the pipe players and noisy crowd.

You see back then even poor families were expected to hire professional musicians and mourners who'd weep and wail loudly.

But it was Insincere.-----

Jesus says to them, "Go away.---- The girl is not dead but asleep."

The crowd laugh at him.

The word describes scornful laughter; laughing in his face, thinking, 'Don't be stupid'.---

Jesus didn't mean the girl really was asleep, for she was dead.

But by sleep Jesus means, her state is temporary.

Like we wake up from sleep, she will wake up from death.-----

And when he goes in and takes hold of her hand what happens?-----

She got up; she rose from death.

Here we see Jesus' powerful touch, and his tenderness.-----

This is Jesus' first resurrection miracle.

He brought someone back from the dead.

Jesus has power over death, and let's not be blazé about that- it's huge!.-----

Then we see the third healing miracle, from **v27**.

Two blind men follow him, calling out, "Have mercy on us, Son of David!"

And Never was there a person on earth with mercy like him.--- Jesus cared.-----

By 'mercy' they're not asking for Jesus to just 'feel sorry' for them, they're appealing for Jesus to help their wretched suffering; help practically.-----

He, touches their eyes, speaks to them and restores their sight.

So Jesus's compassionate touch and powerful word have been combined again to bring healing.

Why did Jesus so frequently **touch** the people he healed; many of whom were undoubtedly unattractive, unclean, unhealthy, unsanitary?----

He could have just spoken a word. But he chose not to.-----

For his mission was not to eradicate disease, it was a ministry to people; some of whom had disease.

He wanted people one by one to feel his love and warmth.

And for many, especially the excluded, love involves touch, as many Mums & nurses know.--

Briefly in **v32**: As they leave the house, a **demon-possessed mute man**, who has an evil spirit stopping him speaking, is brought to Jesus.

And Jesus, in our 4th miracle, just drives out, kicks out the demon, and the mute man spoke.-
 Amazing, incomparable power.-----

But Jesus' compassion is also incomparable.-----

v36 he has **compassion** on the harassed and helpless crowds.-----

This word compassion describes a deep emotion of being moved in your guts, stirred deep down inside, such that you respond.

You feel something, then do something to help.-----

The needs of people moved Jesus to feel compassion, and to heal powerfully.-----

And it's been one after another, hasn't it, bang bang bang bang – to ram home to us, slow learners, that **Jesus is powerful, and he really does care.**-----

Are you convinced?-----

Do you believe Jesus cares, that he feels compassion for you, in your suffering?-----The Bible says he does:

1Pet5,(SLIDE) 'Cast all your anxiety on him because he cares for you.'

Yes, he may not end your suffering or difficulty now.

He wants to end it and he will end it, but he may want you to wait.

And let's not forget Jesus suffered all the way to death didn't he?-----

And your Lord Jesus is with you, by His Spirit.

He is with you, to comfort you and sustain you, and give you strength to endure.-----

A few years ago at the Mens Convention **Ben Pakula**, who writes music for kids, performed.

In one song he sings,(**SLIDE**) 'Sometimes I feel really sick,

my nose runs my throat aches and my head feels thick,

but I know the Lord, he wants me feeling healthy...

Some folks say you've just got to pray,

have faith in God and he will take your problems away,

but I know, the Lord, he says this life will be tough... (**SLIDE**)

some things the Lord will give us and some things he wont,

but we know the Lord will do what's best for us...

Perfect peace, perfect health, sharing in abundant wealth, no more death and no more sin, no more pain and suffering, perfect life is found in Christ, though we will have it in the future, when Jesus Christ returns.-----

Waiting is for our good, and we don't always understand why.

But know for sure, Jesus is powerful to help you; if not heal then strengthen you; for he cares for you, child of God.-----

Second Point is, Believe.(SLIDE)

Here we'll notice that faith repeatedly, comes before healing, and salvation; but not everyone responds to Jesus in faith.-----

Back in **v18** when the ruler comes to Jesus, what did he say?

"My daughter has just died. But come and put your hand on her, and she will live."

This is amazing, because it's likely that Jesus hadn't yet raised anyone from the dead.

So Jairus isn't coming to Jesus cos he's heard Jesus has raised others, he just has

confidence, complete confidence that Jesus can.-----

Faith is confidence in Jesus and his power.

As I highlighted from ch8, faith isn't being sure that Jesus will heal now, it's complete confidence that he can, if he wants to.-----

And in **v21**,this poor woman suffering bleeding for 12 years, in embarrassment and shame she creeps up behind Jesus.

Almost superstitiously she thinks, "If I only touch his cloak, I will be healed".-----

She didn't know much about the KoG, but she knew enough to come to Jesus.

The seed of faith existed in her heart, for Jesus says, "your faith has healed you." And the

woman was healed at that moment.-----

Please also know the Greek word for healed is also the **word for 'saved'**.

'Your faith has healed you', could equally mean, 'Your faith has saved you'.-----

The same word is used in **Matt 1.21**, when Mary's told, 'you will give birth to a son, and you are to give him the name Jesus, because he will save his people from their sins.'

So this hemorrhaging woman was healed, but was she also saved?---

I believe so - her faith healed her body, and **saved her soul**.-----

She was saved from her suffering and from her sin.-----

Faith is like a bucket that is let down into the fountain of God's grace,

without which we could never draw the water of life from the wells of salvation.

The wells are deep and in ourselves we cannot reach the water.

Faith itself doesn't save, but through faith, the water of life from Christ, comes to us.---

So without faith we have no salvation.-----

Through Jesus alone, and faith in him alone, can we find forgiveness.----
 You see, the benefits of the Kingdom flow to those who look to Jesus for the solution to their problems.

That's not always experienced now, as Ben Pakula sang, we often have to wait.

The woman waited 12 years, even the **two blind men** had to wait.-----

They kept calling out, "Have mercy on us, Son of David!"-----

Jesus didn't respond to their cries immediately.

He tested their faith and determination, which proved the sincerity of their faith.----

1 Pet 1.7 says that too.

And who is it they ask for help from?-----

The 'Son of David', refers back to God's promise to King David in **2 Sam7**, where God said, one of David's descendants would rule on the throne forever.

It's a way of speaking of the Messiah, God's promised King.-----

In the OT never was a blind person healed. But **Isa 35 and 42** promised that when God came, the Messiah came, he would heal the blind.-----

So these blind men saw better than most others who Jesus was.☺

When they persevere in coming to Jesus and enter the house, Jesus asks,

"Do you believe that I am able to do this?"-----

Again, Jesus wants an explicit testimony of faith, whether from the leper, the centurion, the ruler, or these blind men.

And with complete confidence that Jesus is able to heal their blindness, he touches them, speaks and restores their sight.

Again, their faith likely brought them salvation as well as their sight.-----

Jesus warns them sternly, not to tell others, likely to avoid misguided enthusiasm, n' people misunderstanding his Messiahship.----

So we've seen individual needy people respond to Jesus in faith.

What about the onlookers?----

In **v33** Jesus heals the demon possessed mute man, and they respond with amazement.

Like when you see someone at a circus do a great stunt or **magical feat** you think, Wow how'd they do that, Isn't that amazing.

But just as you leave the circus, this crowd of people leave Jesus, unchanged, and unsaved.-----

Then the **Pharisses in v34**, they also, don't believe n' put their faith in Jesus.

In fact they do the opposite, they claim that Jesus by the power of Satan, is casting out demons.

That's a grievous lie, and terrible sin.

How wrong they are... Jesus isn't aiding Satan by his healings.

No, by his healings, preaching, dying and rising, he bruises Satan's head.

Gen 3.15, Jesus will crush Satan's head.-----

It's possible to see miracle after miracle and explain it as Satan's work, or a freak of nature.

People think, If God just showed me he was real, I'd believe;

or 'If only I'd been there and seen Jesus do this, I'd believe'.-----

No. Crowds of people were there and they didn't believe.

The didn't believe Jesus was Lord, and King, and worthy of their submission and allegiance, and trust.-----

The human heart is capable of profound resistance, hardness and self-deception.

No matter how obvious or convincing, some people don't believe.

But do you?-----

Do you believe Jesus can save you from your sins?-----

And believe he can heal you if he wishes?-----

Believe he is able to, and with compassion he wants to.

And if he doesn't yet, it's cos he's using it for a greater purpose, for your good and the glory of God in the end.-----

Will you trust him?-----

Jesus' compassion for physical suffering was great, yet his compassion for lost souls was greater.

Our Final Point is, To Pray.-----

Do you remember the **story of Jonah**, how at the end, after Jonah had preached to the 120,000 in Nineveh and they all repented, do you remember how Jonah left the city angry, so angry he could die?----- And what did God say?-----**(SLIDE)**

'should I not have concern for the great city of Nineveh, in which there are more than a hundred and twenty thousand people who cannot tell their right hand from their left'.

[Jonah4.11]

Like that in **Matt 9.36**,**(SLIDE)** 'When [Jesus] saw the crowds, he had compassion on them, because they were harassed and helpless (or distressed and downcast) like sheep without a shepherd.'-----

Jesus cares about people because God cares, and it's in God's nature to care.-----

And it wasn't just the Jews in Palestine who were like **sheep without a shepherd**.

People today are too – people are trying to find their identity, and security and significance, in their gender or sexuality, or their LGBTI identity;

others are finding their identity in materialism, or pleasure; their work, or friends or kids.

Millions of people in our country are harassed by many things, helpless to save themselves, helpless when it comes to trying to find their identity outside of their creator God.

Many are distressed, downcast, and depressed.

They are like sheep without a shepherd.-----

In **Ezek 34** God promised a time is coming when, 'I myself will search for my sheep and look after them'.(v11).

And 600 years later Jesus came, as the true and Good Shepherd.-----

People need Jesus, to find salvation in him; and their hope and identity in HIM.-----

And that task of millions of people hearing about him so they can trust in him, is so great he will send out his representatives to accomplish it:

V37, 'he said to his disciples,**(SLIDE)** "The **harvest is plentiful** but the workers are few. ³⁸Ask the Lord of the harvest, therefore, to send out workers into his harvest field."---

This is workers going out to gather in a soul harvest.-----

So workers need to go out to gather God's elect into Christ's Kingdom; the many people who will respond to the Gospel of Jesus in faith.-----

But the evangelists, preachers and everyday disciples who'll share the Gospel, they are few; and many more workers are needed.

Especially to reach the unreached peoples of the world, who don't have Christians living and working near them.-----

So Jesus says, therefore **ask** the Lord of the harvest, pray and ask God to send out workers.-----

It points to chapter 10, Jesus sending out his disciples; but it's still a call and command for us.

Do you Pray and ask God to send out, throw out, push out workers into his harvest?

Will you pray that God will send many more speakers of the Gospel out to tell others?

Will you pray?-----

Pray for workers for overseas, and for universities and towns here, for other language groups and new suburbs in Melbourne.-----

Now we can pray regularly for the salvation of a loved one, a neighbour, a friend or workmate, and pray God will send someone to speak of Christ to them.

But when we pray from our heart our concern can't stop with prayer, we cannot help becoming open to being that someone ourselves.-----

I'm convinced that we can't pray for others salvation and keep them at arm's length.

But when we sincerely plead with the Lord to send someone to witness to them, we may even place ourselves at his disposal, to become one of his workers.-----

Are we willing to answer our own prayers, and say, like Isaiah, 'Here I am Lord, send me'?---
I think of people like Matt n' Kate, or Nat n' Warwick Short, going and wanting the Muslim Fulani people of West Africa to know Jesus.----

Maybe God wants you to go overseas? Or to go next door? Or invite your neighbour next door to your home for a meal.-----

For Jesus no longer wants us to keep the message about him quiet.-----

V30 and staying quiet doesn't apply to us, Matt **28v18** does(SLIDE)-

"All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me. Therefore go and make disciples of all nations".

The powerful Jesus says, Go and speak.-----

People need to hear of the love of Jesus, and power of Jesus to save.-----

But too often we do not care. We don't go out on mission, and we don't talk to our friend or colleague, cos we are too comfortable.

Maybe we are too similar to those who don't know Christ, and it'd be embarrassing to speak to them.----

Or Are we too ignorant of the good news to share it naturally?-----

Are we too terrified of what people might say?-----

Or Are we too insulated in our Christian ghetto, and only hang-out with Christians?---

Jesus had compassion, Jesus cares.

Brothers and sisters... be like Christ!-----

Matthew has now completed his stunning overview of Jesus' miracles.

Today we've seen him raise the dead, heal a woman with a chronic haemorrhage, give sight to the blind and enable the dumb to speak.

Each of these people was in torment – a distraught father, an unclean woman living in misery for 12 yrs, two men locked in a world of perpetual darkness and a man in captivity to Satan, unable to speak. Jesus ends their torment.

Jesus has unparalleled authority. He speaks and his broken creation is made right.

More than that, he's a man of compassion whose heart is deeply moved by the brokenness of peoples' lives.-----

And he wants us to place our complete trust in him.-----

The crowd around the woman would not believe and they received nothing.

The professional mourners round the girl did not believe and were ejected.

The Pharisees did not believe, and were excluded.-----

The response of faith, is the response Jesus wants from us.-----

And the response of prayer, for people lost in darkness and sin, is what Jesus wants from us.-----

So let's do that now, let's pray.