

Christ's Greatest Miracle

2024.06.02 Morning Sermon in Matthew 9:1–8

¹ So He got into a boat, crossed over, and came to His own city. 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 And at once some of the scribes said within themselves, “This Man blasphemes!”

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.

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

Main idea: Our greatest need (forgiveness of sins) becomes Christ's greatest miracle, by which He shows that He is God Who came into the world to save us from our sins.

Introduction: Jesus comes to His own city (cf. 4:13). The reception is like by Gerasa (8:34, 13:57). What reception does He have from you?

1. **Our Greatest Need** (What paralytics really need most, v1–2)
 1. Expectation by calling him “paralytic” is healing, v2a
 2. Result is forgiveness, for all of them (“their” faith). But specifically addresses the paralytic to show that even for him, this is what was most needed, v2b
 3. Whatever else you need, or think you need, this is what you need most.
2. **Christ's Greatest Miracle** (What it takes to forgive, v3–5)
 1. It would have been blasphemy if Jesus wasn't God. (cf. Mk 2:7; cf. Num 12:11–13)
 2. Which is less falsifiable to say? “sins are forgiven you”
 3. Which is harder to say truthfully? “sins are forgiven you”
 1. To say, “sins are forgiven you,” it already has cost the incarnation. God the Son has become the Son of Man.
 2. To say, “sins are forgiven you,” it will cost the cross and propitiation.
 4. There is no other one, no other way, and no possible additional help to your forgiveness.

3. **Christ's Great Identity** (A divine Person, even on earth, even in His human nature, v6–8)

1. Jesus declared that He was showing His power to forgive. He did so by demonstrating the power to heal. He was not showing that a man could indeed forgive, but that even as a true man, truly on earth, He is one divine Person.
2. They glorified God for giving men power to forgive and heal. They could see that He is a man; it seems that they failed to conclude that Jesus is God.
3. God has not given to mere men the ability to forgive sin. He Himself has come to forgive and completely heal. Are you glorifying Him for this?

Conclusion: What do you see in yourself? What is your greatest need? And what do you see in Jesus? What is His greatest power for you?

(The following is a machine-generated transcription. Please be aware of—and patient with—transcribing errors. If there is something confusing or obviously erroneous, you are invited to listen to the audio recording via hopewellarp.org)

Matthew 9 verses 1 through 8, these are God's words. So he got into a boat crossed over and came to his own City. 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. And at, once some of the scribes said within themselves, This man, blasphemes But Jesus knowing their thoughts said. Why do you think evil? In your hearts. For which is easier to say. Your sins are forgiven you. Or to say, Arise and walk. 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. And Heroes. And departed to his house. Now, when the multitudes saw it, They marveled. And glorified God. Who had given such power. To. Amen, thus ends this reading of God's inspired. And Aaron twerk.

Rejoice that he adds his Blessing to it. By exercising his saving power. Through. Please be seated.

Turned out to be a pretty short trip across the lake. You remember there had been the multitudes that were Gathering and The Lord Jesus. Given instruction to depart and then there was that brief interlude before he got into the boat. Where we heard about the cost of following him and not being confident in ourselves or proud in ourselves to think that we would by virtue of our sincerity.

And how much we mean it that thereby we would be able to follow him wherever he goes. But then, He did go. And, He when he had come to the other side, there had met him, the two demon-possessed men. Um, In last week's portion and having given command over the created world, over the physical world, on the way on the boat and demonstrated himself to be the Lord Jehovah, and whom the Psalms at least four times that we considered Describe as calming the the ocean and commanding the winds and the waves Uh, he also demonstrated his great power.

Over even the spiritual realm that which is invisible. But the reason that he's getting into the boat, In verse 1 and coming back to his own City, where this had taken place, Um, in chapter 9. Is because you remember how the people of the city responded? To Jesus coming and Jesus, having power, even over the spiritual realm, they were more willing.

To have demons. Afflicting men among them than to have Christ there. And his terrifying power in his life disrupting. Power. And so it was a short trip. And it describes here, and it's probably Capernaum. If you look at chapter 4 and verse 13, it could be Nazareth. Uh, he had moved from one to the other.

So either of them would Would qualify as his own City, but the description is his own City and it makes to ring in our ears. What John says, in John chapter 1 He came to his own. And his own received him, not. So he's been turned away. He's been rejected at Garris.

The region of the garages. And now he comes to his own City, and The reception that he That he gets in. Our passage is also a rejection. And so even as Matthew, By the Holy Spirit presenting to us. Who we are and who Christ is. He's also putting to us, isn't he?

The question? How will we respond? To who we are and to who Christ is As he shows us what our greatest need is. And as he shows us, what Christ's greatest miracle is. And as he shows us, what Christ's great identity is. How will you respond? Because there are those who responded to displays of Christ's power.

By rejecting him. By saying that's too disruptive to our life. Or. That just does not fit. With the way that we think about things, And so rejecting, the Lord Jesus. And make no mistake just as much as Christ is. Proclaimed in the casting out of the demons and just as much as Christ is proclaimed.

In healing, paralytics and pronouncing, forgiveness of sins. He's proclaimed to you. In the preaching of his word. And so you are to respond to him. If you have never responded to him before, if you've never heard him proclaimed before, You are to respond to him. If you are a Believer and have walked with him a long time, And know him as your Redeemer.

Still. You are to respond to him. And so what reception will the Lord Jesus have from you? As you hear now, first about your greatest need or our greatest need Or what the paralytic really needed the most. In verses one through two. As you hear about Christ's greatest miracle.

Or what it takes to forgive. In verses 3, through 5. And as you hear about, Christ's great identity. Christ's great identity. That even on Earth, even in his human nature, he is still God. One Divine person. There is not a human Christ and a Divine Christ. There is one Christ who is fully God and fully man.

So our greatest need Christ's greatest miracle. And Christ's great identity. First then our greatest need when they when verse 2 identifies him as a paralytic, it's setting us up to expect that he needs to be healed of his paralysis and that this is what Christ is going to do is to heal him of his paralysis.

If verse 2 said then behold they brought to him or behold there came to him a sinner. Then we would say ah we know what that one needs, he needs forgiveness of sins. But the scripture pulls us in because we each have the things that we think we need.

The most from the Lord. I need a job. I need a wife. I need a husband. I need education for my children. I need my health back. I need a better house. I need a house at all. I need a country. That is not losing its mind. Where the one who becomes righteous makes himself a prey.

Like I heard about in Isaiah 59 at church, this past Lord's Day. I, And you fill in the blank. I need things. To be better between myself and my spouse. I need things to be better between myself and my parents. I need. That. Diagnostic tests that I had late this past week to come back.

Clear, when I get the call on Monday. Many things that we think of as our greatest need And so the scripture here sets us up to consider what is the great need of this man who is lying on the bed? And it does so by calling him a paralytic.

Then behold, they brought to him a paralytic, lying on a bed. Matthew is, is very brief in this Mark and Luke in their account, describe the effort that they have to go through. To there's no room for the man on the stretcher and they go up onto the roof and they dig.

A hole in the roof and let him down. And And all of that. Matthew just calls him a paralytic. And says, when Jesus saw their faith, He said to the paralytics, son. Be of good cheer. What are we expecting? You're healed. In fact, we could back up Uh, just a moment.

When Jesus saw their faith, we're expecting it to say. He said to them Because he saw the faith of all of them. And the faith that he saw is not just that they are really Earnest and really sincere and they wanted to hear Jesus the way. That those remember who were at the bottom of the mountain.

At the beginning of Matthew 5, they saw that Jesus was assuming the preaching position by sitting down. Posture that he would take when he was going to preach in the synagogue against not saying. When he saw that, they really, really wanted to hear the sermon. So you know, this I'm not sure which is bigger going up a mountain to hear him or probably digging through the roof.

But it's not saying any of those things, is it? Because there are many who make a lot of religious effort and yet are not saved. Yet, do not hope in Christ as God's atonement for their salvation. Yet, do not turn away from any hope in themselves and hope only in Christ.

So there's much that gets called Faith even in the Bible. There are many times when they refer to, when they when the word belief or faith is used to just talk about agreeing with particular truths. Or being willing to go along with Christ for a while. But in this case, we know what it means when it says Jesus saw their faith, Because he responds by saying sins are forgiven you So, you don't have to wonder, what kind of Faith is.

Is it talking about? It's talking about saving. It's talking about believing in Christ, for salvation. And it says that he saw this. For all of them. Not just for the paralytic, but also for his friends. But he addresses the paralytic. And he says, son be of good cheer. What do they think?

Do they think oh, our friend is finally going to get healed? From his paralysis. Maybe it doesn't tell us. What they thought. Perhaps, because they are believing as Jesus says, They are anticipating this. Is the Sun be of good. Cheer, your sins. Are forgiven you. Now, they were all forgiven.

If they all believed. And Jesus saw in their hearts, genuine saving. Why address just the paralytic? Well, it's because if even this paralytic's greatest need is not to regain the use of his legs. But to be forgiven his sin against almighty God, then, that is your greatest need to.

Whatever you. Today thinking was your greatest need. Your greatest need. His reconciliation with God. Fellowship with him. That he who is too holy. That his eyes would tolerate looking upon evil. Would not just tolerate looking upon you. But look upon you with approval. And acceptance. And love and favor and blessing.

Forever. Which cannot happen. So long as you are still guilty of sin before him. Your greatest need is that Jesus Christ would be your righteousness. That his obedience would be counted as if you had done it. That his sacrifice his suffering, the fullness of God's Wrath. Which you could never finish doing Because you are not a Divine person.

If you do not believe in Jesus Christ, if you do not come to be as righteous as Jesus is, because Jesus himself is your righteousness. If you do not come to be forgiven by the sacrifice of Jesus Christ. You will not suffer for a few hours, the way Jesus did.

The glory of God will express itself upon you in Fury. Forever. Yes, the Bible talks about Lake of Fire and the Bible talks about a worm that doesn't die fire that isn't clenched. Eternal, unending torture outside and inside. But we're second Thessalonians 1 takes us. When it talks about what hell is?

Is it is the display of the expression of the glory of God. Upon someone forever. The very thing which makes Heaven heaven heaven. For the believer. Is what will make hell? For the unbeliever. And completely inescapable, you won't be able to build up a tolerance. And so there is nothing that you need more than to be forgiven of your sin.

When you and I, who believe in him. When we come to him and we want to give him Thanksgiving for all that he has done. Yes. We thank him for daily bread. He teaches us to pray for daily bread. We thank him for life and health and family and we thank him for getting to live in Middle Tennessee.

This beautiful place with some of the echoes of Of Liberty, still reverberating We thank him for all sorts of things. And we ask him for all sorts of things. But our greatest needs. Your greatest need is forgiveness of sins. And the greatest thing for you to thank him for is forgiveness of sins.

This is our greatest need. In the second place. The passage teaches us Christ's greatest miracle. Christ's greatest Miracle. The. Passages and Mark and Luke, give us just a little bit more information. Uh, then verse 3 does Uh, but I think it's obvious here. At once, some of the scribes said within themselves.

This man. Blasphemes Well, why would it be blasphemy? To say your sins are forgiven you. Don't you when someone has sinned against you and done you some harm or caused some offense, and they come and they confess to you, they admit that they've sinned against you and they ask that you would forgive them.

That you would receive them back into restored friendship restored relationship, don't you sometimes say I forgive you. Well, ultimately sin is Only against God. This is something that we sing sometimes. Uh, Psalm 51 isn't Against you and you alone have. I sinned. Why? You know, something isn't sinful. Fundamentally ultimately.

Because it offended you. Because it was against you. What made it sinful is that you are made in God's image and that God's law forbids? It something is sinful because it is against God And none of us can forgive someone else's sin. In a way, that makes it no longer sin.

That makes them no longer guilty. There isn't a man on Earth. Funny pointy hat and hundreds of years of heresy. Does not give. Any. In Rome or any men in dark little booths at Rome's, satellite churches, The ability to absolve you of guilt. No, man at all. No angel.

Can take away the guilt of your sin. Only God. Can take away the guilt of sin, only God. Can forgive. I praise God. In his Providence to us in the numbers. 12 passage. Um, this this afternoon we're actually going to see Aaron go from complaining that. He's not treated with the the same level of respect and he's not listened to as much as Moses is.

It just takes a couple words from God and striking Miriam with Leprosy. And Aaron goes from that to praying to Moses. You know, Lord, let it not be held against her. Don't let her be as one. He's praying to Moses for forgiveness. But Moses isn't Jesus. He can't respond to Aaron's.

Prayer. By saying I forgive her. And she would be healed. Now, he has to pray. Jesus doesn't have to pray. For a paralytic to be forgiven. Jesus can just forgive.

And so they say within themselves, this man, blasphemes And notice Jesus, who saw the faith of the one sees the unbelief of of the other. This is something that you should know. You are not the one who is the judge. You are not the one who sees all things and who determines.

What is right? And what is wrong? When the Lord proclaims himself to you in his word, Uh he's uh you do not have the prerogative, the right, the Liberty. To decide whether or not he has shown himself well enough. You have the duty the responsibility. To believe in him and to believe what he says.

And he can see in your heart. Whether you are believing to which you will say your sins are forgiven you Or. Whether you are disbelieving. To which he will say. Why do you think evil? In your heart. You see the evil that they thought in their heart was not just Negative things about something that Jesus had said.

At the core of their responding. By thinking that this was blasphemy. Was rejecting Jesus as God. Unbelief about the person of Jesus Christ. And so if you hear the gospel preached, if you read the Bible, if you read all these things that show Christ to you. As God, the son who came to save us, Who accomplishes forgiveness of sins and who gives forgiveness of sins because no one but God can accomplish What is necessary for forgiveness and no one, but God has the authority.

To Grant that forgiveness and you read the Bible and hear it preached in saying these things. If you don't believe that, Jesus is God, if you don't respond. By receiving, what he has shown about himself and what he has caused to be written. And what he has preserved for hundreds of years.

And what now he has sent you a preacher to announce to you from. If you don't believe it, then you are thinking evil, thoughts. So, you must not listen to the gospel. With a skeptical resistant heart. This is true. You cannot give yourself faith in Jesus Christ. But he uses his word to give it to you.

He uses the preaching of his word. To give it to you.

Indeed. It is his greatest miracle. He asks them. Which is easier to say your sins are forgiven you or to say arise and walk. Now, there's Which is easier to get away with saying in front of people. And then there's, which is easier to say, truly, It is less immediately.

Falsifiable to say your sins are forgiven you. No one can prove that. That wasn't true. Then we'll find out at the Judgment. Whether that man's sins were really forgiven him and they will be Want to be marvelous. At the judgment when this paralytic. Is Vindicated before men and angels and welcomed into glory.

And the truth that Jesus told him on this day, that is recorded for us in. This passage is displayed visibly for all to see. So it is less immediately. Falsifiable to say your sins are forgiven you. We can't know if it actually happened or not. But it is actually harder.

To say, truthfully. Your sins are forgiven you.

Because in order for the man to Rise up and take up his mat and go home. All that was required was a momentary exercise of God's power in God's common Grace. As God preserves and protects Our Lives continuously. As he gives us healing from various illnesses and various injuries.

We because of the smallness of our thoughts and hearts towards God. We do not appreciate recovering from pneumonia or strep throat or whatever man has done to whatever viruses. The way that we would appreciate. A quadriplegic suddenly regained the use of arms and legs but it is no more difficult for God to do the one than the other.

All that is necessary for a rise. Take up your mat and walk is a momentary exercise of God's common Grace. In his Almighty power, but in order to truthfully, say your sins are forgiving it In order for sins, actually for to be forgiven It takes the exercise of special Grace.

And it takes the exercise of special Grace by God himself, having to become a man. God cannot stop being righteous. In order to make a sinner righteous. He can never stop being himself at all. He can never. Reduce any of his perfect attributes in the slightest bit. This is why Romans 3 is so excited when it gets to the end of the chapter and it talks about God through Christ showing that he was right to forgive sins in the time, leading up to Christ because Jesus became the propitiation Jesus.

Became the that word means the one who would fully endure the wrath of God. So that there is only favor left Would be entirely propitious to someone. Take away all guilt take away all wrath. That Jesus would do that. That Jesus would be the the The righteousness of Those whom God forgives so that God could be just and the justifier of the one who has faith in Jesus Christ.

And so for for Jesus, to say your sins are forgiven you God, the Has to become the son of man. God, the son has to be whom he describes in verse 6, but that you may know that the son of man has power on Earth to forgive sins. What is he saying?

He's saying that the son of man is God himself. He's saying that this son of man who is this eschatological this last days, great and glorious. Judge that Daniel said was coming. That he has come already, he didn't come just at the last day. You remember? What the demons had said.

Have you come before the time? We know who you are. Jesus. The Son of God. Have you come before the time to torment us? No, he came before the time to save sinful men. He is going to torment, Wicked demons. They too are going to suffer the full expression of the wrath of God upon them for unending ages.

But what the son of man has come, what God, the son has come to do. Is to be able to say your sins are forgiven you. And that is not just because there's been an incarnation. No, it's going to require a crucifixion. Is going to require much more. Then Jesus, suffering the insults.

Of Jews. And Romans. And being Suffering, the miscarriage of Justice at a fraudulent trial. The most fraudulent trial there has ever been. Was the night that he was betrayed. He suffers much more. Than a Roman cross, a method of death designed to be painful and slow and public. To be.

A weapon of intimidation. No, he suffers the wrath of God. Jesus experienced on the cross. The glory of God expressing itself, fully against him. Because of second Corinthians 5, 21 tells us. God had made him. Who knew no sin on that cross. To be sin. So that those who believe in him could be the righteousness of God.

So, which is easier to say? Dear congregation. Arise. Take up your mat and go home is far easier. To say. Then your sins are forgiven. But Jesus has said both to his name.

And you who have come with all of these other needs. Is he not going to meet all of them? If you trust in him. And you're forgiven of your sin? No, it does not mean you are suddenly going to get a great job. And find a perfect spouse. There aren't any here.

It does not mean your bank account will swell and everybody's going to like you and you'll never have trouble again. Or you're even going to have less trouble. Belonging to him often comes with more trouble as he's already told us. But it does mean that you won't just be forgiven, will you?

You'll be Sanctified. At your death, your soul will be made perfect in Holiness and you immediately pass into glory. You won't be done. Because you're now, perfected Soul will wish it had a body. Which you'll get at the resurrection. And it will not be a body that needs healing.

It will be a body that Like Jesus's glorified resurrected body. The ability even to pass physically into the spiritual realm, one body in glory in its crisis.

You'll get everything. He who did not spare his own son. But gave him up for us. All Romans 8, verse 32. He who did not neglect your greatest need. But gave Christ for your forgiveness. How will he not also together with him freely? Give us all things, you know.

Like yes, my favorite verse. And then you read for the next seven verses? What some of those all things are? Nakedness death persecution. Peril sword. The attacks of demons. But it's all for you. Even if you die, even if you're accounted as sheep for the slaughter, it's for his sake that you're killed all day long.

Christ's greatest miracle is not. Not one of the great many other Miracles. That he has done, that he does even in your life, we have such a small Idea of the idea of Miracle. Christ's greatest Miracle is the Forgiveness of Sinners. The Incarnation. Substitution crucifixion. Resurrection. Of our Lord Jesus Christ.

And so, he demonstrates that he A Divine person. He says, he says that this is the reason. Verse 6, but that you may know that the son of man has power on Earth to forgive sins, then he said to the paralytic and he's not saying this, just for the sake of the, the Pharisees, Or sorry, the scribes.

Who had complained within themselves? It must be a marvelous. Assurance for the paralytic himself. I mean the man has just been forgiven of his sins but he's also just learned that his greater need. His greatest need was not the healing of his legs. It was the Forgiveness of sins.

If this man understood rightly what Jesus said, then when he went home, he's carrying his mat home. He's not saying oh I have healed of my legs. I mean, he may say that a little bit, but even more say I am forgiven of my sins. The one who healed me said he did it so that we would know that I was forgiven of my sins.

We've been studying Assurance of faith. In the Sabbath school. The last few weeks. Who had more ground for Assurance of Faith than the one? To whom Jesus had said, This was a miracle that proves that he's forgiven.

Christ declared that he was showing his power to forgive. Now, they glorify God. But notice. A couple very Um, Subtle things that Matthew tells us verse 8. Now in the multitudes saw it, they marveled. And glorified God. Who had given such power to men. It doesn't say they glorified Christ as God.

And then, Even more it says, who had given such power to men. As if it was possible, there could be another man. Who could forgive sins? Jesus, demonstrated that he is the only God man. He demonstrated that God himself had come to Earth. And that he was not just healing, but forgiven.

As the Living God.

How do you respond to the Lord Jesus? Should respond with faith, for sure. Should respond by knowing that your greatest need is forgiveness and that is greatest, Miracles coming and accomplishing the Forgiveness of sins. But do you glorify him? Do you worship Him as your God? If you respond to the creation at all and you see the evidence of the Creator and we all see it.

There are many who push down on the truth and unrighteousness. But if you see the evidence of the Creator and the creation, you have a duty to glorify him as God, you have a duty to give thanks to him as God. But if the Creator, if you're God. Has presented himself to you in the Sun in God, the son, who became a man to save you.

You must worship God as he has displayed himself to you, you must worship Jesus Christ. You must glorify him who alone has power to forgive sin. You must glorify him, who is the one? Who is always providing for you and always healing you and always doing every good thing for you.

Just as James chapter 1, tells us that God is to us a father of lights. From whom continuously comes every good and every perfect gift Jesus. In Matthew. Chapter 9 is displaying to you that he too. Is the God of Light to you. Every good thing you have comes from the man.

Healed. The paralytic that day and forgave his sin that day. Every perfect thing you have comes from the man who healed the paralytic that day and forgave his sin that day. Jesus is God. And so a right response to him isn't just Not rejecting him. Like, the people of Garris did.

A right response to him isn't just not accusing him of blasphemy or disbelieving that he is God. Like these scribes did. A right response to him is trusting in him for your salvation and worshiping him. Who came to Earth in such power. And giving him glory for that. What do you think is your greatest need?

Are you convinced of what he says? To you. In this passage about your greatest need and what do you think is Christ's greatest miracle? Of all the things that he might do for you. What is the greatest of all of them? Are you convinced that it is to forgive your sins?

Are you are you dissuaded from thinking that you can do anything to atone for your sin? If it had to be the greatest miracle, that Jesus ever did to forgive you, that he alone can do it and that he alone has done it. What do you see in Jesus?

And how are you responding to him? May he Grant by his Spirit. That we would respond with faith. And worship, let's pray.

We thank you, Lord, Jesus for your word. We thank you for coming. For not considering equality with God, something to be grasped. Humbling yourself to take the form of a bond slave. Be a found an appearance as a man and Go to death on the cross for our sakes.

We asked Lord that you would give us of your spirit. For, we cannot respond to you. In the way that this passage teaches us. Except by your Almighty power. And so give us. And count as righteous in yourself and forgive us, our sins. Cleanse us of all our unrighteousness.

Work in a sanctify us. Prepare us for Glory. Bring us at last into the fullness of our inheritance. Glorify yourself in doing all these things, we ask in your own name. Lord, Jesus. Amen.