

Sent: Wednesday, November 20, 2019 3:59 PM  
Subject: Last Nite's MOB Study on Matthew 9

"Then He (Jesus) said to His disciples, "The harvest is plentiful, but the workers are few. Therefore, beseech the Lord of the harvest to send out workers into the harvest!" (Matthew 9:37-38)

As we heard last nite, Matthew 9 "takes it all to another level"!

After the Sermon on the Mount (in Matthew 5-7), the crowds that had been following Jesus on the shores of the Sea of Galilee were amazed at His teachings, because "He was teaching as one having authority, and not as the scribes! And then, in Matthew 8, after "coming down from the mountain," He demonstrated that authority--and validated His Messiahship--through the amazing miracles He performed; miracles that showed not only His great compassion for all kinds of people (including the so-called "least of these"), but His divine power to heal people with all kinds of diseases, and power over nature itself, by "rebuking the winds" and "calming the sea"--as well His power over the demonic world! Hard to beat that!

But what happens in Matthew 9 goes even further! Pastor Jesse, last nite, described Matthew 9 as showing "what happens when one has an encounter (a personal encounter) with Jesus"! He said it actually "represents everyone in the world of people" who come to Him--"dead in sin," and "spiritually blind" and, by faith alone, experience "stunning reversals," and are made "whole"! (The "good news" of the Gospel!)

Matthew begins here with the story of a paralytic man who, according to Luke's account, was brought to Him by people who were so determined to get him to Jesus that, because of the crowd, they actually had to make a "hole in the roof" to lower him in a stretcher in front of Jesus! Jesus' response was shocking! Verse 2 says that Jesus, "seeing their faith" (the faith of those who brought him!), said: "Son, your sins are forgiven"! Blasphemy! the scribes and Pharisees "reasoned"! "Who can forgive sins but God alone?" (Again, according to Luke's account)! But Jesus, knowing their thoughts, asked: "Which is easier, to say, "Your sins are forgiven," or to say, "Get up and walk"? And then, even more shockingly (to them!), He added; "But so that you may know that the Son of Man (the Messianic title, from Daniel 7:13) has authority on earth to forgive sin"! At which point the paralytic man got up and walked! Wow!

Jesus, not only claiming to be the Messiah, but God Incarnate! With authority to forgive sin! (Foreshadowing the Gospel message of salvation--through the redemptive work of Christ on the cross, and faith in Him alone!)

It's at this point in Matthew 9, interestingly, that Matthew chooses to place his own story of how he came to become a believer and follower of Jesus! (Vs. 9-13) And, among other things, the "great" celebration (again, according to Luke's account)--with other "tax collectors and sinners" and Jesus Himself with them! Again, much to the chagrin (and lack of spiritual understanding) of the Pharisees! To which Jesus made another stunning--and all-important theological--proclamation: "I did not come to call the righteous, but sinners!" What more can we say! (And that's the message of the Gospel!)

Well, there's much more to be said about Matthew 9, although none to match what has already been said--and established about the reason for Jesus coming into the "world of people"!

There's the question about why Jesus and His disciples weren't "fasting"! And the answer Jesus gives relates again to the reason why His followers can (and should) celebrate, rather than mourn at this point in time--and that is because the "Bridegroom" (Jesus) was present with them! It was a time to rejoice--in the presence of Jesus, the Bridegroom! Which is reason for us as well! (And another reason for noting that Matthew 9 really does "take it all to another level"!

Then, in verses 18-26, the account of the two women--the 12-year old daughter of the "synagogue official" (Jairus) who was sick and dying, and the woman who had been suffering from a hemorrhage for 12 years. What's surprising is that a synagogue official would actually bow down before Jesus and apparently believe in his heart that Jesus could heal his daughter! Turns out that Jesus responded but, while going to Jairus' house, was interrupted by the "outcast" woman with the blood issue! She "touched the fringe of His garment" and Jesus was so "touched" by her faith that He immediately healed her! Then, He was notified, that (perhaps because of the delay) Jairus' daughter had already died! And a funeral ceremony was already in progress when Jesus arrived--which Jesus broke up (which only God can do!) and "took the girl by the hand" and restored her to life! (A clear picture of the "new life" Jesus gives to those who trust Him!)

Our lesson is not complete! Two blind men call out for Jesus to "have mercy" on them! And when they said they believed that Jesus could give them sight, Jesus "touched" their eyes and they were "opened"! Dr. Constable notes what an irony it was that "two physically blind men saw who Jesus was more clearly than most of their seeing contemporaries"!

Then a mute man, who was also demon-possessed, was brought to Jesus--and Jesus first cast out the demons and, lo and behold, the mute man could speak!

Well, that's it for the miracles in Matthew 9! How would the Pharisees react? Throngs of people were following Jesus! Interesting that when the Pharisees could no longer deny the authenticity of the miracles, they would stoop to ascribing it to demonic, rather than, divine power! They just couldn't "see"! How sad!

Matthew 9 closes with Jesus, in verses 35-38, "seeing the people and feeling compassion for them, because they were distressed and dispirited, like sheep without a shepherd! And so, He said to His disciples, "The harvest is plentiful, but the workers are few. Therefore, beseech the Lord of the harvest to send out workers into His harvest!"

We've reached another level in our study of Matthew! Pastor Jesse challenged us to pray like this--and not to be surprised if we "see the field" and "feel the burden" and actually just might be the ones who will be called to "go"!

Men, may God bless you in the week ahead as you take it to another level!

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