

# ***“EVERY-day Is Christ-mas!”***

*(The Gospel 101)*

Matthew 9:1-8

December 21, 2025

**INTRO:** *What’s the best Christmas message you’ve heard?*

**(Why is it so hard to remember in detail?)**

(Because Christmas has been overtaken by commercialism & pageantry – consumerism & the show!)

***How would you define & describe Christmas?***

How would you define the concept of “good news?”

- Define “**good**” and then define “**news**.”
- Next, put those two biblically defined terms together...
- What happens if you add the definite article “**The**?”

## **PRAYER**

**CONTEXT:** Christmas message

Matthew → **MESSIAH** → Miracles → Me

**BIG IDEA:** EVERYday is CHRISTmas!  
(THAT IS GOSPEL 101)

## **PREVIEW:**

1. Christ
2. Christianity
3. Christmas

TEXT:

Matthew 9:1-8

# I. CHRIST

Matthew 9:1-8 (ESV)

<sup>1</sup>And getting into a boat he crossed over and came to his own city. <sup>2</sup>And behold, some people brought to him a paralytic, lying on a bed. And when Jesus saw their faith, he said to the paralytic, “Take heart, my son; your sins are forgiven.” <sup>3</sup>And behold, some of the scribes said to themselves, “This man is blaspheming.” <sup>4</sup>But Jesus, knowing their thoughts, said, “Why do you think evil in your hearts? <sup>5</sup>For which is easier, to say, ‘Your sins are forgiven,’ or to say, ‘Rise and walk’? <sup>6</sup>But that you may know that the Son of Man has authority on earth to forgive sins”—he then said to the paralytic—“Rise, pick up your bed and go home.” <sup>7</sup>And he rose and went home. <sup>8</sup>When the crowds saw it, they were afraid, and they glorified God, who had given such authority to men.

*v.1 And getting into a boat he/Christ crossed over and came to his/Christ's own city.*

= **Don't miss the mission!**

- Divine design...
- Ditch the crowd...
- Disciple the Christ-followers... in storms.
- Deliver the disciples & demon-possessed.
- Demonstrate His sovereign/providential plan!

= **He came back to His own... city...**

- See His missional principle of identifying with...
- Foreshadows His coming back for His people...
- *Christ's with-ness is His witness & should be ours!*

## II. CHRISTIANITY

**FULL BIBLICAL CONTEXT:** Matt. 9:1-8; Mark 2:1-12; Luke 5:17-26  
(Harmonized per "One Perfect Life" by John MacArthur)

***So, after some days***

- Jesus did more & stayed longer than some think.

***He got into a boat, crossed over, and came to His own city***

- Jesus claimed AND still claims a people...
- Jesus laid claim to a city... (not Bethlehem or Nazareth).

***And again***

- Jesus was & is repeatedly on mission.
- *"Again"* is one of the Bible's "biggest" words...

***He entered Capernaum***

- Don't miss the important "IN" vs. "around."
- Discipleship requires more than a "drive by."

***Now it happened on a certain day***

- See the biblical, missional, & historical **certainty!**

***as He was teaching***

- See that Jesus was not just talking...
- Jesus “***was teaching***” – ALWAYS discipling!

***there were Pharisees and Scribes / teachers  
of the law sitting by***

- Teachers who won't be taught by The Teacher & His Word, will, & way(s) are NOT to be trusted!
- **Not everyone in a class is there to learn...**

***who had come out of every town of  
Galilee, Judea, and Jerusalem***

- See that Christ's witness, ministry, & mission was already salting people locally & regionally...
- He was blueprinting & building the foundation of what would become His global, Gospel FAMILY.

***And it was heard that He was in the house***

- See that Jesus was already captivating...
- Jesus was being tracked and/or “followed.”
- Jesus caused a reaction wherever He was/went.

### *Immediately,*

- Jesus consistently caused, created & called for immediate responses...
- *"Immediately"* is one of Mark's signature words.

### *many gathered together*

- See the stereotypical crowding/mob mentality that brings mob-rules & false confidences...

### *so that*

- Don't miss the "cause and affect" attached to the "so that" clauses...

### *there was no longer room to receive them,*

- Don't miss the dangerous & destructive lesson embedded in this travesty...
- **THE FICKLE CROWDED OUT THE FAITHFUL!**
- The **fickle** put forth a horrible vs. holy witness.

### *not even near the door*

- **Fickle followers can fill a faithless crowd...**
- Don't miss the point...
- **ANY building can be filled without faith.**

### ***And He preached the word to them.***

- See BOTH His consistent Preaching AND...
- Christ's concentration on His Word, will, & ways.
- **Christians should do what Christ did!**
- Christian worship defines Christian fellowship... **BUT**, today, cultural fellowship is defining cultural worship.
- *Pageantry, showmen, & commercialism are poison!*

### ***And the power***

- Note that it is not “a” power but “THE” power.“
- It's not just THE power it's HIS power! (Acts 1:8)

### ***of the Lord***

- The power's Source is THE Lord vs. any man.

### ***was present to heal them***

- This is a HUGE theological truth/divine doctrine.
- Wherever Jesus Christ is... His POWER, promises, purposes, priority, & people are as well!
- **Matthew 28:18-20 & Acts 1:8 & 2 Peter 1:3 & Philippians 4:13**

### ***Then behold,***

- Hear Almighty God saying: **“Pay attention!**
- Listen up! - 2 Timothy 3:16-17; Titus 2:15

***four men brought on a bed***

- Don't miss the witness here!
- 4 Christ-like, faithful, 'no matter what' servants!

***a man who was paralyzed***

- Christ-likeness touches the untouchables...
- Christ-likeness loves the unlovely...
- Christ-likeness carries the crippled...

***whom they sought to bring in and  
lay before Him/Jesus***

- Christ is both their blueprint and bullseye!
- Who and/or what are you seeking?
- For whom/what are you seeking?

***And when they could not find how they might bring  
him in, because of the crowd, they went up on the  
housetop & they uncovered the roof where He was.***

- Stop and think for minute...
- This is NOT an account of Santa on the roof...
- How inspirational are these friends???
- Christ-like love carries the load...
- Romans 5:8 & Hebrews 12:1ff
- This is yet another paralleling portrait of Christ's  
'no matter what' commitment & compassion!

- Ask yourself if you would be willing to lift... to carry... to tear through with 2 hands... to lower down & risk falling in... &/or being arrested...
- All so that somebody else who is broken may have an opportunity to be with Jesus...

***So, when they had broken through,***

- One of the greatest testimonies & witnesses of Christ is our power to passionately persevere.
- We press on through trials, storms, walls, roofs, and anything else that comes between the Christian/Church and an exuberant “Yes LORD!”

***they let him down with “his bed through the tiling into the midst before Jesus.***

- Note again the persevering power, promise, priorities, passion, & purpose...
- These TRUE friends weren't bringing the paralytic to the group, they brought him to God!
- ...not to “church” but to Christ!
- ...not just for hope but for healing!
- Try to picture this happening in your mind's eye!

***When Jesus saw their faith,***

- Faith is NOT a mere intangible unseen reality...
- That's the corrupt's & coward's rationalization...



- God & His Word say here that *faith can be seen*.
- While we can't see all faith & we can be deceived by fake faith at times...
- It is also true that our ***real faith can & should be seen by the world!***
- **BE** "witnesses" & "fruit" & "love," etc. 1 John 3:8...
- **How VISIBLE is your faith?**
- How DEEP is that which is visible?

***"Son,***

- Don't miss this term of ***eternal endearment!***...
- It reminds me of Ananias' first words to the notorious enemy of The Church... the infamous Christian killer... Saul who heard: "Brother!"
- It reminds me of the day that I heard Christ in my heart saying: "Do you see now?"
- Are you ready to surrender to victory?"

***be of good cheer;***

- What a declaration, a command, &  **blessing.**
- This is the God of all creation declaring, commanding, and blessing His hearers...
- The Messiah who has come to rescue His missionaries out of their messes, says to the paralytic, friends, and to ALL in His family - be of good cheer... be strong and courageous!
- **We are to BE His Church & The family of God!**
- Amen! AND... don't miss that first word: ***"BE!"***

***your sins are forgiven you.”***

- There it is friends... the best of the best...
- Jesus just did a number of mind-blowing things...
  1. He **DECLARED**...
    - a. The GOSPEL!
    - b. You're FORGIVEN!
    - c. No longer guilty!
  2. He **DIAGRAMED**...
    - a. Come to Me.
    - b. Receive My grace by faith.
    - c. Go, show, and tell!
  3. He **DECIDED**... (**Author & Authority**)
  4. He **DELIVERED**... (He delivers His disciples!)
  5. He **DID IT!**
    - a. By grace alone
    - b. Thru faith alone
    - c. In Christ alone
    - d. Per God's Word alone
    - e. For God's Glory alone

**Let that sink in...**

All of eternity will be divided  
by which side of that truth you're on...

***And at once***

- It's stunning to see how fast evil attacks good...
- God's enemies often out maneuver His people...
- If only God's people were proactive vs. reactive...

***some of the scribes and the Pharisees  
were sitting there and reasoning in their hearts,***

- Wolves, vipers, goats, hogs, & dogs may get away with things when it comes to you and me... BUT NEVER when it comes to God...
- **CHRIST SEES & KNOW THE HEARTS OF MEN!**
- ALL their reasoning is rubbish... or worse.
- **"Reason is the Devil's whore!"** – Martin Luther

***"Why does this Man speak blasphemies like this?"***

- Don't disconnect these guys from those around us today who take offense or raise arguments against God's Word, will, & ways...
- Per 2 Timothy 3:16-17 they are calling God a liar and/or rejecting the Almighty's authorship & subsequent authority!

***Who can forgive sins but God alone?"***

- This is one of eternity's most critical questions...
- Here's the backbone & foundation to a number of eternity's most pressing & important questions...
  - Is there a God?
  - Who is and is not God?
  - How do you know/believe...?
  - Why do we exist?
  - What's wrong with me & the world?
  - So what? and Now what?

- Most importantly, Jesus The Christ is The Answer
- AND... Jesus is The only Answer!
- **Let all that sink in...**
  - This passage is really DEEP!
  - This passage is declaring: “Jesus is LORD!”

### ***But when Jesus,***

- **Note:** If only more people & problems would humble themselves and bring the situation they are facing under the loving & trusting submission of the One true, living God – His name is Jesus – they would know His miraculous, life-saving & sending graces that usher true Christians into the blessings of eternal life.
- Ephesians 2:1-10... **emphasize** v.4a: ***“But God”***

### ***knowing their thoughts,***

- This is another multi-faceted & far-reaching way of declaring: “Jesus is LORD!”
- There are “***predictable knowings***” of *thoughts...*
- Then there is **God’s KNOWING** of our thoughts.

### ***perceived in His spirit*** ***that they reasoned thus within themselves,***

- This is another multi-faceted & very far-reaching way of declaring: “Jesus is LORD!”

*He answered and said to them,*

- Think about this... Some of us KNOW what I'm talking about... Others of you will realize later...
- SOMETIMES GOD ANSWERS US WHEN WE DON'T THINK HE OR ANYONE ELSE CAN HEAR US QUESTIONING HIM!"

*“Why do you think evil, reasoning about these things in your hearts?”*

- Here we go AGAIN...
- The Lord Jesus Christ is once again miraculously:
  - Confronting
  - Condemning
  - Convicting
  - Correcting
  - Confirming His LORDship

*For which is easier, to say to the paralytic, ‘Your sins are forgiven you,’ or to say, ‘Arise, take up your bed and walk’?*

- Notice: sometimes the LORD disregards our questions – see the women at the well in John 4...
- Other times He answers our prayers – even some of the bad ones to reveal His mercy – see Gideon asking God for extra, extra assurance...

- *There are times like this when He answers our silent questions with really LOUD and contemplative replies....*
- **Do YOU realize our LORD is sovereign and omni everything good?**
- I want to encourage & exhort all of us to take God at His Word!
- **Confess & repent of any & all unbelief...**
- Trust His Word & deeds with our words & deeds!
- *Stop looking for proof & start living as proof!*

***But (so) that you may know***

- See the declared purpose for what is to follow...
- ***“so that”*** is Christ telling us that truth, fruit, and proof are divinely intended...
- ***“so that”*** FAITH can be established, thru which THE GOSPEL may penetrate & transform hearts & eternities!

***that the Son of Man has power on earth to forgive sins”***

- Again Jesus is Self-identifying as **The Messiah!**
- His ***“power on earth”*** came with Him from heaven
- His identity/power serve ***His Messianic purpose***
- ***Only God can forgive sins...***
- **He is declaring that He is God!**
- He’s prepping them for His miraculous proof.

***then He said to the paralytic, “I say to you, arise,***

- Then Jesus opened His mouth & spoke...
- Feel the tension!
- **Try to imagine being there as:**
  - The paralytic
  - The 4 friends
  - The true believers in the crowd
  - The skeptical fence-walkers
  - The mocking scoffers, Pharisees, & Scribes...
- If you’ve never heard & then seen Jesus miraculously before... I pray that will change.
- *You are hearing & seeing Jesus miraculously now!*
- If you are a Christian, He’s said the same to you...

***take up your bed, and go to your house.”***

- Don’t miss the marriage of grace & responsibility
- **Saving faith embraces miraculous grace...**
- Go BE the witness & missionary for God’s glory!
- **See mission starting locally** – literally at home.
- Jesus is commanding a miraculous mission!
- Stated differently: miracle **Messiah** mission!
- Try to imagine the atmosphere & murmuring...

**Immediately he rose up before them,**

- ***Immediately*** is a key word & witness here...
- Jesus commands, empowers & miracles happen!
- The paralytic’s ***“rose up”*** is also key... ***“jump up”***

- Jesus is right in their faces... no excuses left!
- **Stop... try to imagine being the healed man.**
- Stop here & try to imagine being the 4 friends...
- ***Now place yourself in the crowd...***
- **How would you be?**
- Per 2 Timothy 3:16-17... **BE that way NOW!**

***took up the bed he had been lying on & departed  
in the presence of them all to his own house,***

- Transforming miracles create faithfully obedient missionaries!
- ***The first order of business in deliverance is faithful obedience!***
- He didn't obey to get healed; he obeyed because he was healed!
- Notice his witnessing to ALL here AND at home...
- See Jesus' pattern of sending people home first!

***glorifying God.***

- **EVERYTHING we do is to glorify God!**
- Don't ever forget... 1 Corinthians 10:31
- The purpose of man/mankind is to glorify God!
- ***Miraculously healed souls help to glorify God!***

***Now when the multitudes saw it,  
they were all amazed, and they marveled***



- Learn the difference between amused & amazed
- Learn the difference between biblical & cultural
- Learn... between miracle & mechanical
- **Jesus miraculously eliminated their excuses...**
- God's Word, will, & ways destroy sinful excuses!
- **When were you last amazed &/or marveled?**
- What/Who amazed you & put you in awe?

### ***and glorified God,***

- ***Miraculous & missional ministry glorifies God!***
- We glorify God regardless of how others respond.
- **God glorifying witness sows missional seeds!**
- Our worst realities can lead to the most glory...
  - David's failures led to Psalm 51
  - Paul's conversion & his testimony
  - *"It is well with my soul"* (the love lyrics)
  - "Nate Saint's son & his murderer united..."

### ***who had given such power to men.***

- Christ is the portrait of God-given power!
- Christians are the witnesses to God-given power.
- The "man" Jesus is always our standard Bearer & heavenly exemplifier...
- You will receive loving power when My Holy Spirit comes upon you! – Acts 1:8 & John 17:20ff

***And [they] were filled with fear,***

- ***Being filled with biblical fear is the foundation of being filled with biblical & missional faith!***
- See the grace, Gospel, and glory of God again on unified display.
- Note the ***“filled”*** is what replaces the fickle...
- ***Partial anything leads to fickle in everything!***
- Missional fear is reverent awe vs. fright & feeling scared.
- ***Any & all irreverence reveals a lack of knowing the true LORD.***
- ***To truly know Christ is to reverently fear Him.***

***saying, “We never saw anything like this!”***

- Magicians & slight of hand can trick us...
- Satan, demons, wolves & goats can deceive us...
- ***But when God moves miraculously, it's a truly unique blessing.***
- ***Salvation is not required to be awed by God.***
- Spend time thinking thru the Head, Heart, & Hands dynamic when God moves miraculously...
- ***“Wow!” is exciting, worshipping is essential!***
- ***Not being able to explain Him is one thing, exalting Him is another.***

***We have seen strange/extraordinary things today!”***  
***(Luke 5:26)***

No greater under-statement  
has ever been said...

- Miraculous Messianic encounters = extraordinary!
- To “KNOW” the LORD is to be changed by Him...
- Unchanged claims of knowing the LORD are lies.

### III. CHRIST-MAS

#### CHRIST-MAS IS MISSION:

So, after some days, He got into a boat, crossed over, and came to His own city. And again He entered Capernaum.

#### CHRIST-MAS IS TEACHING:

Now it happened on a certain day, as He was teaching, that there were Pharisees and teachers of the law sitting by, who had come out of every town of Galilee, Judea, and Jerusalem.

#### CHRIST-MAS IS CROWDED:

And it was heard that He was in the house. Immediately many gathered together, so that there was no longer room to receive them, not even near the door.

#### CHRIST-MAS IS WORD-STRONG:

And He preached the word to them. And the power of the Lord was present to heal them.

**CHRIST-MAS IS SERVING:** The greatest human gift to give...

Then **behold**, four men brought on a bed a man who was paralyzed, whom they sought to bring in and lay before Him.

**CHRIST-MAS IS MESSY:**

And when they could not find how they might bring him in, because of the crowd, they went up on the housetop and they uncovered the roof where He was. So, when **they had broken through**,

**CHRIST-MAS IS CHRIST-TIME:**

they let him down... into the midst before Jesus.

**CHRIST-MAS IS FAITH FILLED:**

**When Jesus saw their faith,**

**CHRIST-MAS IS LOVING:**

He said, **Son,**

**CHRIST-MAS IS GOOD CHEER:**

**be of good cheer;**

**CHRIST-MAS IS GOOD NEWS:**

**your sins are forgiven you."**

### CHRIST-MAS IS A TEST:

And at once some of the scribes and the Pharisees were sitting there and **reasoning in their hearts**,

### CHRIST-MAS IS DOUBTED: Beware grumbling Grinches...

“Why does this Man speak blasphemies like this?”

### CHRIST-MAS IS DISTINCT:

Who can forgive sins but God alone?”

### CHRIST-MAS IS HEART BASED: He knows who's naughty/nice

But when Jesus, knowing their thoughts, perceived in His spirit that they reasoned thus within themselves, He answered and said to them, “Why do you think evil, reasoning about these things in your hearts?”

### CHRIST-MAS IS PREP WORK:

For which is easier, to say to the paralytic, ‘Your sins are forgiven you,’ or to say, ‘Arise, take up your bed and walk’?

### CHRIST-MAS IS YOUR PROOF: God's guarantee!

But that you may know

### CHRIST-MAS IS HIS GIFT: God's power/forgiveness

that the Son of Man  
has power on earth to forgive sins”

**CHRIST-MAS IS TO RISE:** Hear the JOY of Christ-mas  
then He said to the paralytic, “I say to you, arise,

**CHRIST-MAS IS MISSION:**  
take up your bed, and go to your house.”

**CHRIST-MAS IS FAITHFUL:**  
Immediately he rose up before them, took up the bed  
he had been lying on, and departed **in the presence of**  
**them all** to his own house,

**CHRIST-MAS IS FOR GOD:**  
glorifying God.

**CHRIST-MAS IS SHOCKING:**  
Now when **the multitudes saw it,**  
**they were all amazed,** and **they marveled**

- Christmas is missionally shocking... ask a leper
- Christmas is missionally shocking... ask a servant
- Christmas is missionally shocking... ask Lazarus
- Christmas is missionally shocking... ask Zacchaeus
- Christmas is missionally shocking... ask Peter

- Christmas is missionally shocking... ask Saul/Paul
- Christmas is missionally shocking... ask Lydia
- Christmas is missionally shocking... ask Mary Mag
- Christmas is missionally shocking... ask our Moses
- Christmas is missionally shocking... ask our Rob's
- Christmas is missionally shocking... ask our Doug
- Christmas is missionally shocking... ask our Jeff
- Christmas is missionally shocking... ask me (please)
- Christmas is missionally shocking... ask Cat-own



**CHRIST-MAS IS FROM US:**  
**and glorified God,**

**CHRIST-MAS IS FOR US:**  
**who had given such power to men.**

## CHRIST-MAS IS FEAR FILLED:

And [they] were filled with fear,

## CHRIST-MAS IS UNIQUE:

saying, “We never saw anything like this!

## CHRIST-MAS IS STRANGE THINGS!:

**We have seen strange things today!”**

(Luke 5:26)

### DEFINITION:

Strange things (“paradoxos” / see paradox) means:

“the unanticipated nature of  
divine activity manifested  
supremely in Jesus Christ.

Luke’s single use crystallizes a recurring biblical theme: **God breaks into human history with acts that upend assumptions, compel worship, and authenticate His saving purpose.** The term calls believers to live in expectant faith, confident that the God who once elicited cries of amazement continues to perform “remarkable things today.”



**REVIEW:**

Praise God,  
*Christ AND Christ-mas are  
miraculous, Messianic, & missional!*  
(mMm)

EVERYday is CHRISTmas!  
(THAT IS GOSPEL 101)

**CLOSE:**

**ALWAYS REMEMBER... NEVER FORGET:**

Christ, Christianity, & Christmas are unified  
all day, EVERY-day!

**Isaiah 9:6-7**

*For unto us a child is born, to us a son is given; and the government shall be upon his shoulders, and his name shall be called Wonderful Counselor, Mighty God, Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace. Of the increase/greatness of his government and of peace there will be no end, on the throne of David and over his kingdom, to establish it and to uphold it with justice and with righteousness from this time forth and forevermore. The zeal of the LORD of hosts will do/accomplish this.*

**True Christmas** (Christ's mass/day) **celebrations are centered on the uniquely unlike-ness & loving with-ness witness of *Emanuel – God with us!***

*While **THE** greatest Christmas Gift is Christ...  
Our greatest gift to give is to bring Christ to another.  
OR bring the other(s) to the true Christ of Christmas.*

May we NEVER AGAIN lose the Person of Christ  
in/to the **PAGEANTRY OF CHRISTMAS...**

Since we KNOW...  
**EVERYday is CHRISTmas!**  
(That's Gospel 101)

May ALL who witness us worshipping Christ say:  
***“We have seen strange things today.”***

## **PRAYER**

**WORSHIP:**

*Make Room In Your Heart*

## STUDY NOTES:

### Matthew 9:1-8 (NASB)

#### *A Paralytic Healed*

<sup>1</sup> Getting into a boat, Jesus crossed over *the sea* and came to His own city.

<sup>2</sup> And they brought to Him a paralytic lying on a bed. **Seeing their faith**, Jesus said to the paralytic, **“Take courage**, son; **your sins are forgiven**.” <sup>3</sup> And some of the scribes said to themselves, “This *fellow* blasphemes.” <sup>4</sup> And **Jesus knowing their thoughts** said, **“Why are you thinking evil in your hearts?”** <sup>5</sup> Which is easier, to say, ‘Your sins are forgiven,’ or to say, ‘Get up, and walk’? <sup>6</sup> But **so that you may know that the Son of Man has authority on earth to forgive sins**—then **He said to the paralytic**, **“Get up, pick up your bed and go home.”** <sup>7</sup> And **he got up and went home**. <sup>8</sup> But when the crowds saw *this*, they were awestruck, and glorified God, **who had given such authority to men**.

## One Perfect Life (Gospels harmonized)

### 41. Jesus Heals and Forgives a Paralytic

Matt. 9:1–8; Mark 2:1–12; Luke 5:17–26

MT So MK **after some days** MT He got into a boat, crossed over, and came to **His own city**. MK And again He entered **Capernaum**.

LK Now it happened on a certain day, as He was teaching, that there were **PHARISEES AND TEACHERS OF THE LAW SITTING BY, WHO HAD COME OUT OF EVERY TOWN OF GALILEE, JUDEA, AND JERUSALEM.** MK And it was heard that He was in the house. **Immediately many gathered together**, so that **there was no longer room to receive them**, not even near the door.

And He preached the word to them.

LK **And the power of the Lord was present to heal them.**

MT Then **behold**, MK **four men** LK **brought** on a bed **a man** who was paralyzed, whom they sought to bring in and lay before Him. LK And when they could not find how they might bring him in, because of the crowd, they went up on the housetop and MK **they uncovered the roof where He was. So when they had broken through, they** LK **let him down** with “his bed **through the tiling into the midst before Jesus.**

MT **When Jesus saw their faith,** **He said to the paralytic, “Son, be of good cheer; your sins are forgiven you.”** And **at once** MK **SOME OF THE SCRIBES LK AND THE PHARISEES MK WERE SITTING THERE AND REASONING IN THEIR HEARTS, “WHY DOES THIS MAN SPEAK JBLASPHEMIES LIKE THIS? Who can forgive sins but God alone?”**

LK But **when Jesus, MT knowing their thoughts,** MK perceived in His spirit that they reasoned thus within themselves, LK He answered and **said to them,** MT **“Why do you think evil,** LK reasoning MK about these things MT **in your hearts?**

**For which is easier, to say MK to the paralytic, MT ‘Your sins are forgiven you,’ or to say, ‘Arise, MK take up your bed MT 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, LK “I say to you, **arise,** take up your bed, and go to your house.”

**Immediately, he rose up**

before them, MK took up the bed LK he had been lying on, **AND DEPARTED MK IN THE PRESENCE OF THEM ALL** LK to his own house, **glorifying God.**

MT Now when **the multitudes** saw it, LK they **were all amazed,** and MT **they marveled AND glorified God,**

who had given such power to men.

LK And [they] were filled with fear, MK saying, **“We never saw anything like this!”** LK **We have seen strange things today!”**

## MacArthur Commentary:

### Jesus’ Power over Sin (9:1–8)

And getting into a boat, He crossed over, and came to His own city. And behold, they were bringing to Him a paralytic, lying on a bed; and Jesus seeing their faith said to the paralytic, “Take courage, My son, your sins are forgiven.” And behold, some of the scribes said to themselves, “This fellow blasphemes.” And Jesus knowing their thoughts said, “Why are you thinking evil in your hearts? For which is easier, to say, ‘Your sins are forgiven,’ or to say, ‘Rise, and walk’? But in order that you may know that the Son of Man has authority on earth to forgive sins”—then He said to the paralytic—“Rise, take up your bed, and go home.” And he rose, and went home. But when the multitudes saw this, they were filled with awe, and glorified God, who had given such authority to men. (9:1–8)

The most distinctive message of Christianity is the reality that **sin can be forgiven**. That is the heart and lifeblood of the gospel, that men can be freed from sin and its consequences. **THE CHRISTIAN FAITH HAS MANY TRUTHS, VALUES, AND VIRTUES, EACH OF WHICH HAS COUNTLESS APPLICATIONS IN THE LIVES OF BELIEVERS. BUT ITS SUPREME, OVERARCHING GOOD NEWS IS THAT SINFUL MAN CAN BE FULLY CLEANSED**

**AND BROUGHT INTO ETERNAL FELLOWSHIP WITH HOLY GOD.** That is the message of Matthew 9:1–8.

**Matthew has been focusing on various miracles of the Lord, all of which are meant to demonstrate Jesus' divinity.** Even more specifically, they precisely and completely fulfilled the Old Testament prophecies of the Messiah's kingdom work. **The miracles recorded by Matthew under the inspiration of the Holy Spirit therefore have a uniquely Jewish and Old Testament character and significance.**

Concerning the natural realm, the Old Testament prophesied that the Messiah would have power over the curse in the physical world. Isaiah predicted there would be in His reign an abundance of rain and crops not known since the Fall (Isa. 30:23–24) and that one day even the wilderness would blossom profusely, as waters break forth and the scorched land and thirsty ground become pools and springs of water (35:1–2, 7; cf. 41:17–18; 51:3; 55:13; Ezek. 36:29–38, Joel 3:18). Animals which had been natural enemies of man and of other animals would no longer destroy or devour, and human longevity would increase so that a person who died at a hundred years of age would be considered to have died young. By the stilling of the storm (Matt. 8:23–27) Jesus gave a foretaste of His eventual taming of the entire natural world.

Concerning the supernatural realm, the Old Testament speaks of Satan and his evil forces who have so long oppressed and persecuted God's people (Dan. 7:24–27; 8:23–25; 11:36–12:3; Zech. 3:1–2) and who the Messiah would have to conquer before His righteous kingdom could be established on earth. By resisting Satan's temptations and casting out his demon servants (Matt. 8:28–34) Jesus proved His power was superior to Satan's.

Concerning the spiritual realm, the Old Testament tells us that Messiah's kingdom will be marked by forgiveness and redemption (Isa. 33:24; 40:1–2; 44:21–22; Ezek. 36). By His forgiveness of the paralytic recorded in this passage and many others Jesus further demonstrated power that is reserved to God alone and that Scripture had prophesied would characterize the Messiah.

**It was Jesus' specific, complete, and dramatic fulfillment of these and all other messianic prophecies that made His rejection by the Jews—especially that of the scribes and Pharisees, who were students of Scripture—so heinous and inexcusable.**

## Matthew's arrangement and presentation of the three sets of miracles in chapters 8 and 9 show progressive development in revealing Jesus' credentials as the divine Messiah.

First we see Him heal a leper with the touch of His hand (8:3), heal a centurion's servant without having seen the afflicted person (8:13), and then heal Peter's mother-in-law of a serious fever (8:15). Next He went beyond physical afflictions and demonstrated His authority and power over the spiritual kingdom of Satan by casting out many demons with a word (8:16), by demonstrating His power over the great natural forces by stilling the storm on Galilee (8:26), and by again demonstrating His authority over Satan by casting out a legion of demons from two possessed men of Gadara (8:32).

*In the first of the last three miracles in these two chapters Jesus ascends still higher in the drama of supernatural acts as He deals with sin, the root of all man's physical and spiritual troubles and misery as well as the cause of his separation from his Creator.*

Christ Jesus demonstrates His power to remove the pollution and guilt of sin in those who trust in Him.



The Great Physician not only can heal  
the sick, still the storm, and cast out  
demons, but can bring to the human  
soul the thing that it needs most:  
**forgiveness of sin.**

## MATTHEW MAJORS ON THE AUTHORITY OF CHRIST.

At the end of the Sermon on the Mount he reports that Jesus “was teaching them as one having authority and not as their scribes” (7:29). Those great teachings demonstrate His moral and theological authority. Throughout the book His miracles demonstrate His authority over both the natural and spirit worlds, and at the end of the book He declares, ***“All authority has been given to Me in heaven and on earth,”*** and then sends out His disciples to teach and minister in that authority (28:18–20).

IN ALL OF THOSE WAYS JESUS  
DECLARED AND DEMONSTRATED  
HIS SOVEREIGN AUTHORITY TO  
**RULE**. IN THE PRESENT PASSAGE HE  
DEMONSTRATES HIS SOVEREIGN  
AUTHORITY TO **REDEEM**.

We do not know how much time elapsed between Jesus’ healing of the two demoniacs and His **getting into a boat**, by which He **crossed over** to the west shore of the Sea of Galilee **and**

came to His own city. Matthew's concern here is not so much with the chronology or full details of Jesus' ministry as with the significance and progression of His miraculous signs.

Although Nazareth was the city of Jesus' childhood, He had been rejected by the people there, who would have thrown Him over a cliff to His death had He not passed through their midst unnoticed. From there "He went His way" a few miles east "and He came down to Capernaum, a city of Galilee" (Luke 4:29–31), as a prophet rejected in His own country (see Matt. 13:57). At this time He probably took up temporary residence with Peter, in whose home He healed Peter's mother-in-law (8:14–15). Jesus' **own city** was therefore now Capernaum (cf. Mark 2:1).

The events and teachings of Matthew 9:2–8 can be represented by six key words:

**FAITH, FORGIVENESS, FURY, FORENSIC, FORCE, AND FEAR.**

## FAITH

And behold, they were bringing to Him a paralytic, lying on a bed; and Jesus seeing their faith (9:2a)

Before He went across the Sea of Galilee to the country of the Gadarenes, Jesus had generated massive interest in His ministry, and it was partly to get away from the crowds for a while that He took the trip (8:18). It was natural, therefore, that when He returned, the news quickly spread and the crowds returned.

We learn numerous additional details about this story from Mark and Luke. As already noted, Jesus had now made Capernaum His home city and was staying in Peter's house, where Jesus "was at home" (Mark 2:1). Two-story houses were common in Palestine and it is likely that the room with the overflow crowd (see v. 2) was on the second floor, where most visiting and socializing were done. Such upper rooms were common, and it was in one of these that the Lord ate the Last Supper

with His disciples. The roof of the house was often used as a place for relaxation in the cool of the day, and frequently for sleeping on hot nights. The outside stairs were therefore usually built all the way to the roof.

Because the afflicted man's friends could not get into the crowded room where Jesus was, they carried the litter up to the top of the house and proceeded to dismantle the roof until they made enough room to lower the man into Jesus' presence (Mark

2:3–4; Luke 5:19). **It is to these four friends or relatives that *they* refers.**

Because the **paralytic** (*paralutikos*) had to be brought to Jesus **lying on a bed**, his paralysis obviously was severe, and he may well have been a quadriplegic. No wheelchairs or other such equipment were available to those who could not walk, and they had to rely on others to carry them around.

**CRIPPLES HAVE ALWAYS SUFFERED SOCIAL STIGMA AND NEGLECT, BUT IN THE JEWISH CULTURE OF JESUS' DAY THE STIGMA WAS MADE IMMEASURABLY WORSE BY THE BELIEF OF MOST JEWS THAT ALL DISEASE AND AFFLICTION WAS THE DIRECT RESULT OF SOMEONE'S SIN.**

The idea was common even in the days of Job, who may have lived as early as the time of Abraham. Eliphaz asked Job, "Who ever perished being innocent?" (Job 4:7) and Bildad said to him, "If your sons sinned against Him, then He delivered them into the power of their transgression" (8:4). The same attitude was clearly reflected in the disciples' question to Jesus as they passed a man who had been blind from birth: "Rabbi, who sinned, this man or his parents, that he should be born blind?" (John 9:1–2).

Though it is true that affliction, pain, and hardship of every sort are the result of the presence of sin in the world, they are not necessarily brought on by some specific sin of the person who is suffering. Not all sickness is chastening, but all sickness is a graphic demonstration of the destructive power at work in the world because of sin.

Like his fellow Jews, the paralytic no doubt believed his paralysis was direct punishment for his own sin or that of his parents or grandparents, and that thought must have added immensely to his suffering. In his own mind and in the minds of most of the people who saw him his paralysis was a vivid representation of his own sinfulness and of God's judgment. That belief gave crippled and diseased people even more reason to shun crowds.

But this man  
was determined to see Jesus at any cost.

*Because he associated the paralysis with his sin, his first concern was for forgiveness, which to his thinking would have automatically brought healing. And although his theology may have been erroneous, he was right in believing that his first and greatest need was spiritual.*

**BY THEIR PERSISTENCE, THE MAN AND HIS  
FOUR FRIENDS EVIDENCED THEIR STRONG  
CONVICTION THAT JESUS COULD HELP.**

They had carried the man to the house, and when they could not get into the room with Jesus, they carried the stretcher all the way up to the roof, tore the roof open, and lowered the man on his **bed** down to Jesus' feet. Jesus not only saw this outward evidence but also saw their hearts.

And *seeing their faith* by their aggressive approach to Him, the omniscient Lord also read the believing hearts of these five men just as He read

## the unbelieving hearts of the scribes who thought He was blaspheming (vv. 3–4).

Because the **paralytic** said nothing to Jesus it is possible to conclude that the paralysis had affected his vocal chords or his tongue. Or the man, despite his **faith**, may have been overcome with awe as he came face-to-face with the One who had power to heal all kinds of disease. Perhaps he now wondered if He could also heal hearts. In any case, he willingly and silently exposed himself to Jesus and to the whole crowd in all his physical, moral, and spiritual ugliness.

He was literally at Jesus' feet, and in his heart  
he threw himself on Jesus' mercy.

**HE APPROACHED THE LORD IN TRUE HUMILITY, IN  
THE POVERTY OF SPIRIT GOD REQUIRES OF THE  
SEEKING HEART (MATT. 5:3).**

Jesus sometimes healed people who had little faith and even some who had no faith, but He was especially disposed to heal those with great faith, such as this man and his friends demonstrated. **It was the kind of great faith shown by the centurion (8:10) and that would soon be shown by the man whose daughter had died (9:18).**

## **FORGIVENESS**

said to the paralytic, "Take courage, My son, your sins are forgiven." (9:2b)

***Jesus' first words to the paralytic were, Take courage, My son.*** Knowing the man's fearful heart from being overwrought with sin and now being thrust into the very presence of incarnate God, **Jesus spoke tender words of comfort and encouragement.** How thrilling it must have been to hear the holy One who knew his sin, grief, and humiliation to say **take courage.**

**Tharseō (take courage)** refers to subjective courage, that which is deep and genuine—in contrast to tolmaō, which refers to outward boldness.

Tolmaō would be characterized by gritting the teeth to help endure pain or whistling in the dark to stave off fear. It is the kind of courage that tries to master fear by sheer will power and determination. But **tharseō represents the courage that eliminates fear.**

Jesus was saying, “Don’t be afraid, because you no longer have anything to be afraid of.” It was not that the man’s fears had not been real and well founded. An unrepentant sinner is separated from God and under divine judgment. But when he repents in faith he no longer has reason to fear, because he is no longer under judgment. Knowing the paralytic’s faith, Jesus therefore said to him, **take courage.**

*Addressing the man as **My son** gave further comfort. Teknon (**son**) refers to a child of any age or sex.*

It is here translated **son** because Jesus was speaking to a man. **Son** was used in that day as it often is in our own, as a term of friendship and identity—sometimes even with a person just met.

**BECAUSE THE PARALYTIC  
REPENTANTLY IDENTIFIED HIMSELF**

# WITH JESUS, JESUS LOVINGLY IDENTIFIED HIMSELF WITH THE PARALYTIC.

But Jesus' supreme words to him were, **your sins are forgiven**. Those words represent *a divine miracle that is perhaps the greatest of all miracles and certainly the most desirable* for the recipient—holy God forgiving the sins of an unholy man.

JUST AS WITH A WORD JESUS STILLED THE  
STORM, WITH A WORD HE DISMISSED THE  
PARALYTIC'S SINS AND GAVE HIM HIS MOST  
GRACIOUS GIFT TO MEET HIS GREATEST NEED.

**Aphiēmi**, the verb behind **are forgiven**, has the basic idea of sending or driving away, of doing away with.

***“As far as the east is from the west, so far has He removed our transgressions from us,”*** David declared (Ps. 103:12). When God forgives sins He casts them “into the depths of the sea” (Mic. 7:19). Paul rejoiced that, even though he “was formerly a blasphemer and a persecutor and a violent aggressor,” he was yet “shown mercy” (1 Tim. 1:13). “It is a trustworthy statement, deserving full acceptance,” he goes on to say, “that Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners, among whom I am foremost of all” (v. 15).

When missionaries in northern Alaska were translating the Bible into the language of the Eskimos, they discovered there was no word in that language for forgiveness. After much patient listening, however, they discovered a word that means, “not being able to think about it anymore.” That word was used throughout the translation to represent forgiveness, because God's promise to repentant sinners is, “I will forgive their iniquity, and their sin I will remember no more” (Jer. 31:34).

When I was in college I was asked to visit a girl in the hospital who had been accidentally shot in the neck. The bullet severed her spinal cord and she was paralyzed from the neck down. I had

never met the girl but was told she was a cheerleader at her school and had been very active and vivacious. When I came into the hospital room she was lying on a sheepskin pad, unable to do anything but speak. After we talked a while she confessed that, if she were able, she would commit suicide, because she did not want to face a future of helplessness. I presented Christ to her and, after some questions and discussion, she received Christ as her Lord and Savior. I went back to visit her several times, and one day she said to me, “I can honestly say now that I’m glad the accident happened. Otherwise I may never have met Christ and had my sins forgiven.”

## Forgiveness of sin is God’s greatest gift because it meets man’s greatest need.

Sin is a transgression of God’s law (1 John 3:4) and defiles His image in man, staining his soul with Satan’s image (John 6:70; 8:44). Sin is hostility and rebellion against God (Lev. 26:27; 1 Tim. 1:9). It is ingratitude toward God (Josh. 2:10–12), is incurable by man himself (Jer. 13:23), affects all men (Rom. 3:23), and affects the total man (Jer. 19:9), body, mind, and spirit. It brings men under the dominion of Satan and the wrath of God (Eph. 2:2–3), and it is so persistent in the heart of man that even the regenerate person needs to continually fight against it (Rom. 7:19). It subjects man to trouble (Job 5:7), emptiness (Rom. 8:20), lack of peace (Isa. 57:21), and to eternal hell if he does not repent (2 Thess. 1:9).

Because of that bleak picture, **the best news anyone can receive is the word that his sins are forgiven.**

When Jesus spoke those words to the paralytic, He must have tasted the bitterness and agony of Calvary, knowing that the words could be effective only because He would take the man’s sins upon Himself. **Every time He forgave sin He knew and anticipated the cost.**

## FURY

**And behold, some of the scribes said to themselves, “This fellow blasphemes.” (9:3)**

Luke tells us that some Pharisees were also present with **the scribes** and that they thought within **themselves** Jesus was blaspheming by claiming to forgive sins (5:21; cf. Mark 2:7). They were right that only God can forgive sins (Isa. 43:25; Mic. 7:18–19), but because they refused to recognize Jesus’ divinity, they could only conclude that **this fellow blasphemes**.

Unlike the paralytic, those men saw no need for forgiveness, because they considered themselves already to be righteous. **THEY RESENTED JESUS’**



**OFFERING FORGIVENESS, NOT ONLY BECAUSE THEY DID NOT BELIEVE HE WAS GOD BUT ALSO BECAUSE THEY CONSIDERED IT UNJUST FOR A PERSON TO BE FORGIVEN SIMPLY BY ASKING FOR IT—INSTEAD OF BY EARNING IT, AS THEY THOUGHT THEY HAD DONE.**

The two great barriers to salvation have always been refusal to recognize the need for it and the belief that it can be earned or deserved.

These **scribes** had probably seen many miracles of Jesus and heard the testimony of others who had been healed of disease and cleansed of demons. But they refused to recognize His power as coming from God, much less that He Himself was God.

Their thinking **this fellow blasphemes** reflected the pattern of growing rejection and persecution by the Jewish leaders that led ultimately to Jesus' crucifixion. They accused Him of being immoral because they saw Him "eating with the tax-gatherers and sinners" (Matt. 9:11) and they even declared the greatest blasphemy themselves by accusing Jesus of being satanic, of casting "out the demons by the ruler of the demons" (v. 34).

**Their hearts were so hardened against Christ that every miraculous evidence of His divinity and messiahship drove them to deeper unbelief rather than to repentance.** Even His most gracious and loving words and acts drove them to greater fury against Him.

## **FORENSIC**

And Jesus knowing their thoughts said, "Why are you thinking evil in your hearts? For which is easier, to say, 'Your sins are forgiven,' or to say, 'Rise, and walk'? But in order that you may know that the Son of Man has authority on earth to forgive sins" (9:4–6a)

The word that best describes the fourth aspect of this event is forensic, which refers to discussion, debate, or argument. Because only Jesus' words were spoken aloud, we know the scribes' side of the interchange only because the Lord omnisciently revealed to us what was in their thoughts.

Jesus "did not need anyone to bear witness concerning man for He Himself knew what was in man" (John 2:25).

"The Lord looks at the heart" (1 Sam. 16:7) and knows the hearts of all men (1 Kings 8:39). He even "searches all hearts, and understands every intent of the thoughts" (1 Chron. 28:9; cf. Jer. 17:10; Ezek. 11:5). When Ananias and Sapphira tried to deceive God, Peter told them, "Why has Satan filled your heart to lie to the Holy Spirit?" (Acts 5:3).

An **evil ... heart** is a heart that plots against God (see Acts 5:3–4, 9; 8:20–22), and in saying those words to the scribes and Pharisees Jesus not only laid bare what they were **thinking** but exposed the wickedness behind the thoughts.

**IN CLAIMING TO DEFEND GOD'S HOLINESS  
THEY SHOWED THEMSELVES TO BE  
UTTERLY AGAINST IT, BECAUSE THEY WERE  
THINKING EVIL OF THE SON OF GOD WHOM  
THEY REFUSED TO ACKNOWLEDGE.**

Jesus' first argument was in the form of a rhetorical question: "For which is easier, to say, 'Your sins are forgiven,' or to say, 'Rise, and walk'?" The scribes and Pharisees had seen irrefutable evidence of Jesus' power to heal disease. "Why, therefore," He asked in effect, "do you think it impossible for Me to forgive sins? Is one easier than the other?" Sin and disease are inseparable, just as are sin and demons, sin and death, sin and disaster, and sin and the devil.

The One who brought the kingdom would have to deal with sin or else He could not deal with the rest; and the One who could deal with the rest could also deal with sin. If Jesus could not deal with sin by putting it away, He could not deal with anything else related to sin. But He could deal with both sin and its symptoms.

His opponents said nothing, but the answer was obvious: both things are equally impossible for men and both are equally possible for God.

*The point was that no one but God could either heal disease with a word or could forgive sins, and He can do both with the same divine ease.*

**Even their own distorted theology should have led the scribes and Pharisees to believe in Jesus' divinity.** If, as they believed, sickness and disease were the consequences of sin, then removing disease would be connected to dealing with the sin that caused it. In their thinking, *all* healing of disease would have to involve at least some forgiveness of sin-which by their own declaration only God can grant. They were trapped in their own theology and logic.

Jesus may have emphasized the word **say**. If so, His point was that *saying* something is always easier than *doing* it. It is also much easier to make a claim that cannot be verified than to make one that can be. The scribes and Pharisees had no visible way to verify the paralytic's forgiveness, but they were about to receive abundant evidence of his healing, which

would force the conclusion that Jesus could and did deal with sin.

**“But in order that you may know** that the Son of Man has authority on earth to forgive sins,” Jesus continued, **“I will demonstrate again My power to heal disease. You cannot see the results of My forgiveness,”** He implied, “but you can easily see the results of My healing.” So **IN ORDER THAT THEY MIGHT KNOW HE COULD FORGIVE SIN, WHICH THEY COULD NOT SEE, HE DID WHAT THEY COULD SEE—BY DEALING WITH SIN’S SYMPTOMS.**

The scribes and Pharisees knew well the Old Testament predictions that miraculous healings would accompany the Messiah when He came to earth, and **the Son of Man** (the title of His humiliation) was now about to give them a special, front-row view of one of those miracles. **If all He said were, “Your sins are forgiven,” no one could verify what happened. But to make the paralyzed man able to walk would give proof for everyone to see—just as seeing the two thousand pigs run off the cliff to their deaths gave proof that the demons had indeed gone from the two possessed men into the animals, just as Jesus gave them permission to do (8:32).**

Many individuals and groups through the centuries have claimed the power to absolve sins, but they have had no proof. Any pretender can utter the words, “Your sins are forgiven,” but only God’s divine power can both tell a paralytic to walk and then make it happen.

## FORCE

**then He said to the paralytic—“Rise, take up your bed, and go home.” And he rose, and went home. (9:6b–7)**

As far as we know, no one but Jesus spoke during the whole episode. Neither the believing paralytic and his four friends nor the unbelieving scribes and Pharisees said a word.

The scribes and Pharisees may have mumbled among themselves about the matter, and the healed man and his friends may have thanked Jesus, but we have no record of it.

As soon as Jesus **said to the paralytic—Rise, take up your bed, and go home**, that is exactly what the man did. The command to **rise** suggests that when Jesus spoke the healing had already taken place. No description of this act of healing is recorded, only the command to the paralytic to take advantage of it.

**AT JESUS' WORD, THE MAN ROSE, AND WENT HOME. MARK ADDS THAT HE "IMMEDIATELY TOOK UP THE PALLET AND WENT OUT IN THE SIGHT OF ALL" (MARK 2:12), A LIVING TESTIMONY TO JESUS' POWER BOTH TO HEAL AND TO FORGIVE SINS.**

## FEAR

But **when the multitudes saw this, they were filled with awe, and glorified God**, who had given such authority to men. (9:8)

**When the multitudes saw this**, they realized that such a miracle could only be done by God's power, and **they were filled with awe**.

*Phobeō* (**filled with awe**) is the term from which we get *phobia* and is often translated "fear."

But the most common use of it in the New Testament represents **reverential awe, not cringing fright**. It expresses the feeling of a person who is in the presence of someone infinitely superior.

*Phobeō* is used to describe the reaction of the disciples when they saw Jesus walking on the water (Matt. 14:26) and to describe the reactions of the people after the raising of the widow's son at Nain (Luke 7:16) **and after the healing of the demoniacs at Gerasa** (Luke 8:37). It is used to describe Zacharias's response to the appearance of the angel (Luke 1:12) and the spectators' response when he regained his speech (v. 65). It is used of the shepherds when they heard the angels sing (Luke 2:9), of **the guards at the garden tomb when the angels rolled the stone away** (Matt. 28:2–4), and of the women after they visited the empty tomb (v. 8). It is used to describe the feelings of the people who witnessed the signs and wonders of Pentecost (Acts 2:43) and of men in the midst of the shattering events of the last days (Luke 21:26). **It is used of the response of the people to the deaths of Ananias and Sapphira** (Acts 5:5, 11) **and to the demons overpowering the unbelieving sons of Sceva who tried to cast the demons out in Jesus' name** (19:16–17).

*In the synoptic gospels and Acts the term is never used to speak of anything other than the feeling in a person's heart when he is confronted with divine power, and it is declared to be a part of the Christian's attitude as he seeks to faithfully serve the Lord (Acts 9:31).*

Reverential **awe** of God is a part of the truly repentant life (2 Cor. 7:10–11), the chaste life (1 Pet. 3:2), the holy life (2 Cor. 7:1), and the godly life (Phil. 2:12).

**MUTUAL MINISTRY, LOVE, AND RESPECT,  
AS WELL AS POWERFUL EVANGELISM AND  
PROPER CHURCH DISCIPLINE, ARE ALL  
GROUNDED IN REVERENTIAL AWE OF THE  
LORD** (see 2 Cor. 5:11; Eph. 5:21; 1 Tim. 5:20).

*It is the substance out of which all right  
Christian worship, behavior, and  
service must come.*

The multitudes' response to the great miracle of healing and forgiveness was commendable: they **glorified God, who had given such authority to men**. We do not know how much the crowd knew about Jesus, but they knew that what He did had to have been empowered by God and that He **had given such authority to men**, since Jesus was obviously a man.

If they did not realize that He was the God-Man, they at least realized He was an extraordinarily godly man.

***“strange things”***

## **3861. paradoxos** ►

### **Lexical Summary**

**paradoxos:** Unexpected, strange, wonderful

**Original Word:** παράδοξος

**Part of Speech:** Adjective

**Transliteration:** paradoxos

**Pronunciation:** pah-RAH-dok-sos

**Phonetic Spelling:** (par-ad'-ox-os)

**KJV:** strange

**NASB:** remarkable things

**Word Origin:** [from [G3844](#) (παρά - than) and [G1391](#) (δόξα - glory) (in the sense of seeming)]

1. contrary to expectation, i.e. extraordinary ("paradox")

## Strong's Exhaustive Concordance

strange.

From [para](#) and [doxa](#) (in the sense of seeming); contrary to expectation, i.e. Extraordinary ("paradox") -- strange.

see GREEK [para](#)

see GREEK [doxa](#)

## NAS Exhaustive Concordance

### Word Origin

from [para](#) and [doxa](#)

### Definition

contrary to opinion or expectation

### NASB Translation

remarkable things (1).

## Thayer's Greek Lexicon

### STRONGS NT 3861: παράδοξος

**παράδοξος**, **παράδοξον** (**παρά** contrary to (see **παρά**, IV. 2), and **δόξα** opinion; hence, equivalent to **ὁ παρά τὴν δόξαν ὢν**), **unexpected, uncommon, incredible, wonderful**: neuter plural [Luke 5:26](#) (A. V. **strange things**, cf. Trench, § 91 at the end). (Judith 13:13; Wis. 5:2 etc.; Sir. 43:25; 2 Macc. 9:24; 4 Macc. 2:14; Xenophon, Plato, Polybius, Aelian v. h. 4, 25; Lucian, dial. deor. 20, 7; 9, 2; Josephus, contra Apion 1, 10, 2; Herodian, 1, 1, 5 ((4 Bekker)).)

## Topical Lexicon

### Overview

Strong's Greek 3861 describes occurrences that defy accepted expectations and provoke reverent awe. The single New Testament use ([Luke 5:26](#)) anchors the word in the ministry of Jesus Christ, capturing the crowd's response to His authority to forgive sins and to heal. The term therefore serves as a lens through which Scripture highlights God's capacity to overturn human presuppositions and to disclose His glory in unanticipated ways.

### Biblical Setting in [Luke 5:17-26](#)

The word appears at the climax of the healing of the paralyzed man lowered through the roof. Jesus first pronounces, "Friend, your sins are forgiven" ([Luke 5:20](#)), a declaration that scandalizes the scribes and Pharisees. To authenticate His authority, Jesus commands the



paralytic to rise, and the man “went home glorifying God” ([Luke 5:25](#)). Verse 26 records the crowd’s reaction: “They were filled with awe and said, ‘We have seen remarkable things today.’” Their exclamation captures three movements:

1. Amazement that silences argument.
2. Recognition of divine intervention.
3. Worship erupting from unexpected revelation.

### **Revelation of Jesus’ Identity**

The incident shows Jesus bringing together two realms that, to human eyes, appeared separate: physical healing and forgiveness of sin. The people perceive something that surpasses all conventional categories. The “remarkable things” confirm that:

- The Son of Man holds divine prerogatives (forgiveness).
- His power operates in visible history (healing).
- God’s kingdom is actively confronting human need.

Thus the vocabulary of the extraordinary becomes a Christological witness: the One who performs such deeds cannot be confined to ordinary expectations.

### **Old Testament Echoes**

Throughout the Old Testament, God’s acts are distinguished by their unexpected, awe-inspiring character:

- “I will perform wonders never before done in any nation” ([Exodus 34:10](#)).
- “Behold, I am doing a new thing; now it springs up” ([Isaiah 43:19](#)).
- “Who has ever heard of such things?” ([Isaiah 66:8](#)).

The language of divine novelty prepares readers to recognize the fulfillment in Christ. Luke’s singular use of 3861 aligns the gospel narrative with the established pattern: the God of Israel continues to surprise His people with redemptive interventions, now embodied in His Son.

### **Paradox and the Gospel Message**

The term naturally invites reflection on the broader paradoxes at the heart of salvation:

- Strength displayed through weakness ([2 Corinthians 12:9](#)).
- Life gained through death ([John 12:24](#)).
- Glory revealed through a crucified Messiah ([1 Corinthians 1:23-25](#)).

[Luke 5:26](#) foreshadows these themes. The crowd marvels at healing, but the deeper wonder lies in authoritative forgiveness—an unseen reality made credible by visible action. The gospel itself

is the ultimate “remarkable thing,” overturning every human assumption about how God should act.

## **Historical Reception in the Early Church**

Early Christian preaching repeatedly recalled events that astonished witnesses ([Acts 2:22](#); [Acts 3:9-10](#)). Church fathers pointed to such episodes as evidence of the gospel’s power to challenge prevailing worldviews. The word for “remarkable” became emblematic of the apologetic thrust: Christianity entered the Greco-Roman world not as speculative philosophy but as public demonstration of divine power.

## **Pastoral and Ministry Applications**

### **1. Cultivating Expectation**

Congregations should anticipate that God still works beyond predictable patterns, whether in conversions, answered prayer, or providential guidance ([Ephesians 3:20](#)).

### **2. Linking Compassion with Proclamation**

Jesus addressed bodily need and spiritual need in one integrated act. Contemporary ministry that marries practical care with the message of forgiveness mirrors this pattern and invites similar astonishment.

### **3. Encouraging Testimony**

Just as the healed man and the crowd glorified God, believers today are called to recount God’s striking interventions, fostering faith in others ([Psalm 66:16](#)).

### **4. Guarding Against Familiarity**

The crowd’s amazement contrasts with the skepticism of religious leaders. Churches must beware of domestication of the miraculous and maintain humility before God’s surprising grace.

## **Homiletical Outline Suggestion**

Title: “When God Surprises”

Text: [Luke 5:17-26](#)

I. The Unmet Expectation (The need of the paralytic)

II. The Unthinkable Declaration (“Your sins are forgiven”)

III. The Unquestionable Demonstration (Rise and walk)

IV. The Uncontained Response (“We have seen remarkable things”)

V. The Unending Invitation (Anticipating God’s further wonders)

### **Key Cross-References for Study**

[Exodus 34:10](#); [Numbers 23:23](#); [Isaiah 29:14](#); [Habakkuk 1:5](#); [Matthew 9:8](#); [Mark 2:12](#); [Acts 3:10](#); [Ephesians 3:20](#); [1 Peter 1:12](#).

### **Conclusion**

Strong’s Greek 3861 accents the unanticipated nature of divine activity manifested supremely in Jesus Christ. Luke’s single use crystallizes a recurring biblical theme: God breaks into human history with acts that upend assumptions, compel worship, and authenticate His saving purpose. The term summons believers to live in expectant faith, confident that the God who once elicited cries of amazement continues to perform “remarkable things today.”

Jesus speaking on Jesus...

1. Why are you looking for Me? Don’t you know that I must be about My Father’s business? (Note: Jesus was on a business trip!)
2. (18 years of silence)
3. I have come down from heaven...

4. I have come down to do the will of My Father...
5. My Father's will is that all who look upon the Son & believe in Him will have eternal life...
6. For this purpose, I was born...
- 7.