
The application...

1. How has this incident helped you realize the authority Jesus possesses?
2. How has this incident confirmed the identity of Jesus? Who is Jesus? So then what is the right response to Jesus?
3. Despite the paralyzed man's obvious need to walk, Jesus sees the man's greatest need – that of the forgiveness of sin. So if this is Jesus' priority, how can you ensure that it's your priority too?
4. Jesus calls the unrighteous (and the self-righteous!) to find forgiveness and follow Him. How does this define His mission? And how would this compare with the expectations many people have of Jesus?
5. Those who know the forgiveness of sin Jesus offers know the real need of fellow sinners. So, like Jesus, how can you best associate with sinners who desperately need forgiveness that Jesus alone can offer?

The King's authority

Studies in Matthew's Gospel 8-10



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The King's authority to forgive sin *Matthew 9: 1-13*

Matthew has furnished conclusive evidence to prove that Jesus has authority over sickness; He showed this by healing the sick. He has authority over the created order too; He showed this by calming the wind and the waves. And Jesus has authority over demons as well; He proved this by driving demons out of two demon-possessed men. So who is Jesus?

The story...

Matthew continues his gospel account recording that Jesus has returned to His hometown on the other side of the lake.

Jesus then encounters a man in a really desperate physical condition; fortunately he has friends who take him to Jesus (1-2).

1. What expectation do the paralyzed man's friends have by bringing him to Jesus?
2. Why does Jesus commend the paralyzed man's friends?

3. Why is Jesus' pronouncement so unbelievably startling? And why does Jesus focus on forgiving sin? What does this indicate?

The Jewish religious leaders hear Jesus' words and immediately take exception to what He says (3).

4. Why do the Jewish religious leaders accuse Jesus of blasphemy? What does this reveal?
5. Who rightly has the prerogative to forgive sin?

Jesus responds directly to the criticism. However, He is confronted with a man who everybody can see can't walk (4-7).

6. What does it indicate that Jesus knows the evil thoughts of these Jewish religious leaders?
7. How does Jesus prove His authority to forgive sin?
8. Who is Jesus claiming to be?
9. How is the paralytic man restored? How are all Jesus' words validated for all to see?

The crowds are completely awestruck by what they've seen; for in full view of everybody the paralyzed man walks. And this phenomenal miracle Jesus performed cannot be denied – the walking man is proof thereof (8).

10. What conclusion do the crowds reach?

Having shown His authority, Jesus calls Matthew to follow Him (9-13).

11. Why is Matthew such an unlikely character for Jesus to invite to follow Him?
12. Why does Matthew follow Jesus? How does this align with responses made to Jesus so far?
13. Why does Jesus keep company with the unrighteous? How does this define His mission?

The conclusion...

The authority of Jesus is simply unquestionable. And He has proven this conclusively by healing the paralyzed man. But, according to Jesus, the paralyzed man's greatest need wasn't to walk; it was to have his sins forgiven – and Jesus alone has the divine prerogative to forgive. And He will secure the forgiveness of sin by His death on the cross. So have you asked Jesus to forgive your sins too? Are you persuaded that humanity's greatest need is the forgiveness of sin?