

Sermons on Matthew

Sleeping in Christ

Matthew 9:18-26

With Study Questions

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While He spoke these things to them, behold, a ruler came and worshiped Him, saying, “_My daughter has just died, but come and lay Your hand on her and she will live.”⁻¹⁹⁻ So Jesus arose and followed him, and so *did* His __disciples.⁻²⁰⁻ __And suddenly, a woman who had a flow of blood for twelve years came from behind and __touched the hem of His garment.⁻²¹⁻ For she said to herself, “_If only I may touch His garment, I shall be made well.”⁻²²⁻ But Jesus turned around, and when He saw her He said, “_Be of good cheer, daughter; __your faith has made you well.” And the woman was made well from that hour.⁻²³⁻ __When Jesus came into the ruler’s house, and saw __the flute players and the noisy crowd wailing,⁻²⁴⁻ He said to them, __“_Make room, for the girl is not dead, but sleeping.” And they ridiculed Him.⁻²⁵⁻ But when the crowd was put outside, He went in and __took her by the hand, and the girl arose.⁻²⁶⁻ And the __report of this went out into all that land. (Matthew 9:18-26)

Review of Matthew

In Matthew we’ve read of the genealogy and birth of King Jesus. We saw Him worshiped by the wise men and persecuted by an evil king. He was baptized by John and tempted by the devil. He began to preach and heal, and His fame spread.

Jesus gave the wonderful and powerful Sermon on the Mount where He spoke of the nature of His kingdom and its true inhabitants. He challenged His listeners to be salt and light and obey the law of God; not merely outwardly, but inwardly. He taught that our religious pursuits should not be done to impress men but to honor God. He taught us how to pray. We learned that Christians should not be double minded but have only one true and ultimate Master.

Jesus taught that members of His kingdom ought not worry nor engage in improper judgments. God’s people should ask, seek and knock, expecting good things from God. He challenges His listeners to enter the narrow gate and beware of false prophets; not every one saying ‘Lord, Lord’ will enter heaven. The wise man builds His house on the rock which Jesus equated with His own teachings.

After the Sermon on the Mount Jesus began to heal. He didn’t heal merely the elite but lepers, gentiles, the demon-possessed, and outcasts. People naturally wanted to follow Him but He would challenge their

desires by stating the difficulty of such a journey. We read in Matthew the power Jesus has over illness, defilement, nature, and the devil himself.

Yet when Jesus forgives sinners, His detractors rebuke Him. Jesus is criticized for the company He keeps, His behavior, and the behavior of His followers. There are those who come to Christ from every station in life: sick and healthy, young and old, rich and destitute. And there are those from the same stations in life who will find every excuse to reject Him. There was no shortage of evidence pointing to the veracity of the claims made by Jesus. But the simple reality is that one must quit denying that readily apparent truth—that Jesus Christ is the Son of God and man’s only hope for life eternal.

Jairus’ Daughter

The works of Christ now escalate. Until now He has not raised the dead. But here we will see that man’s greatest and final enemy is no obstacle to the power of Christ.

While He spoke these things to them, behold, a ruler came and worshiped Him, saying, “_My daughter has just died, but come and lay Your hand on her and she will live._” (Matthew 9:18)

Reverence for Jesus

This ruler who comes to Jesus (we learn from Mark and Luke his name is Jairus) is the highest ranking religious official in Capernaum. Unlike Nicodemus who came at night with veiled questions, this man prostrates himself before Jesus. This, no doubt, would have set his entire religious community against him. But as Matthew Henry states, “They that would receive mercy from Christ must give honour to Christ.”¹

Tragedy Led to Jesus

But this man was desperate. His twelve year old daughter had died.² It would be natural to think that he was grasping for straws here, and Jesus just happened to be available. Desperation can bring out the foolishness in people. This is seen in supposed cures offered in third world countries for

¹Henry, M. (1996, c1991). *Matthew Henry's commentary on the whole Bible : Complete and unabridged in one volume* (Mt 9:18). Peabody: Hendrickson.

² We learn from Mark and Luke that when Jairus began his journey to Jesus, his daughter was not yet dead but dying. He received the message that she had died. This did not stop him from trusting in the power of Christ.

incurable diseases. People spend their life savings to avail themselves of these unverified panaceas.

We also see the elderly 'all of the sudden' getting religious. But not all who have tragedies go to Jesus. Nor do all the elderly. And the fact that there are some who come to Christ, not in faith but in desperation, looking for voodoo, is not a good argument against those who faithfully come to Christ in their time of need. Tragedy is a legitimate motivator. It heightens the awareness of our own weakness, and God will often graciously use this to draw us to Him.

Since Jesus was always quick to expose hypocrisy, it is safe to assume that Jairus came to Jesus with genuine faith.

So Jesus arose and followed him, and so *did* His __disciples (Matthew 9:19).

Teacher/Comforter

Notice the willing transitions of the Master Shepherd. He readily moves from being an instructor (Matthew 9:18) to tending a bedside. This is not always an easy transition to make. Pastors (Christians) must maintain a willingness to argue for the truth of God's word without neglecting the tenderness requisite to a gentle bedside manner.

Some of us are wired toward one way and therefore neglect the other. We may even say it's not our *gift*. But if all we do is hug and never speak, we may merely be carpeting our neighbor's pathway to perdition. Merely speaking, on the other hand, without kindheartedness is like lining the pews with glass and barbed wire; the discomfort makes the message hard to hear. If Jesus is our model, we must be willing to make every effort to both argue for the truth, and at the same time be gentle and kind.

The disciples followed. What an internship! Those who would soon teach what Jesus taught would observe what Jesus did. There is great worth in learning from those who go before us.

The Woman

__And suddenly, a woman who had a flow of blood for twelve years came from behind and __touched the hem of His garment. ⁻²¹⁻ For she said to herself, " __If only I may touch His garment, I shall be made well. " ⁻²²⁻ But Jesus turned around, and when He saw her He said, " __Be of good cheer, daughter; __your faith has made you

well. " And the woman was made well from that hour. (Matthew 9:20-22)

Tenuous Faith

In the midst of the account of Jairus' daughter we read of this woman who had been hemorrhaging for twelve years. This condition left her physically ill, financially destitute (Luke 8:43), and ceremonially unclean (Leviticus 15:19). Perhaps all these things caused her to be very hesitant in approaching Jesus. She requested no audience with Jesus. She merely wished to touch the hem of His garment, trusting that somehow that would be sufficient to heal her, which it was.

It seems the woman would have chosen to remain anonymous. We learn in Luke that it took a while for her to confess that it was she who had touched the hem of Christ's garment (Luke 8:47). Her faith seemed to lack confidence and boldness.

Nonetheless it was a "conscious, voluntary, dependent touch of faith."³ This was sufficient to receive not only the healing but also the commendation of Jesus as well. God accepts our faith as an instrument of redemption, even though it is weak and imperfect; for it is not the faith itself which is the basis of our hope and salvation but the object of our faith—Jesus. A loving parent will no less extend provision to a needy child approaching with fear and hesitancy than a child who comes with bold confidence. For in all this it is not the faith of the child which produces healing, but the love and grace of the parent.

Greater Light

But Jesus would not allow her to slip into obscurity. He would give her greater light, and impart more knowledge. There was more purpose to the healings of Christ than merely to grant the temporary comforts often granted (at least in our day) by normal physicians. How sad and hopeless it would be for someone to be healed by Jesus, only to later die in their sins. The healings of Jesus were signs of something much greater.

The blind man who Jesus healed knew little of the Christ who granted him sight (John 9:25). But after being cast out of the synagogue for confessing what little he did know, Jesus found him and taught him.

³Jamieson, R., Fausset, A. R., & Brown, D. (1997). *A commentary, critical and explanatory, on the Old and New Testaments*. On spine: Critical and explanatory commentary. (Mk 5:31). Oak Harbor, WA: Logos Research Systems, Inc.

Jesus heard that they had cast him out; and when He had found him, He said to him, “Do you believe in the Son of God?”⁻³⁶⁻ He answered and said, “Who is He, Lord, that I may believe in Him?”⁻³⁷⁻ And Jesus said to him, “You have both seen Him and it is He who is talking with you.”⁻³⁸⁻ Then he said, “Lord, I believe!” And he worshiped Him. (John 9:35-38)

Jesus would not let this “daughter” go without granting her a much richer blessing. Heaven forbid she exit the scene thinking she was healed by a magic garment, or even an indifferent deity. Jesus both encourages and informs her. “Be of good cheer, daughter; your faith has made you well.” (Matthew 9:22b)

Faith

This woman now had great cause to be cheerful. *Cheerful* is a word which could also be translated *courageous*. This woman was not to be cheerful simply because she was well; she was to be cheerful/courageous because her faith had made her well.

Let us not mistake these words of Christ as mere pleasantries. When Jesus tells someone to be courageous or cheerful it was because they had genuine and sufficient reason to be courageous.

So why should she be encouraged that her *faith* made her well? She is encouraged that her faith has made her well because if she had been made well by some magical garment or pharmaceutical it would merely be a temporary remedy.

This woman would eventually die. On her death bed the same faith in Christ that healed her physical ailment would deliver her into the everlasting comfort of her heavenly Father’s arms. Calvin observes,

We may here draw a comparison from the health of the body to that of the soul: for, as Christ says that the woman’s deliverance from her disease was the consequence of her *faith*, so it is certain, that we obtain by faith the forgiveness of sins, which reconciles us to God.⁴

Healing Jairus’ Daughter

⁴Calvin, J. (1998). *Calvin's Commentaries: The Harmony of the Gospels : Calvin's Commentary on Matthew, Mark, and Luke* (electronic ed.). Logos Library System; Calvin's Commentaries. Albany, OR: Ages Software.

__ When Jesus came into the ruler's house, and saw __ the flute players and the noisy crowd wailing, ⁻²⁴⁻ He said to them, __ " Make room, for the girl is not dead, but sleeping. _" And they ridiculed Him. (Matthew 9:23, 24)

Professional Mourners

As Jesus continued on His journey to heal Jairus' daughter He comes upon an interesting scene—flute players and a noisy crowd wailing. It is very possible that these people were professional mourners (Jeremiah 9:17, 18). Jairus was a man of power and influence so they may have wanted to impress him with their great outward display of sorrow.

It's been said that "The loudest grief is not always the greatest; rivers are most noisy where they run shallow."⁵ A memorial service is truly sad and pathetic when Jesus is not viewed as the consolation against grief. Again, "When *the sorrow of the world* prevails, it is difficult for Christ and his comforts to enter."⁶

Certainly this was the case here. Jesus uses the word "sleep" to describe the girl's condition, and their sorrow and wailing is immediately transformed into derisive mirth. The word "ridicule" can be understood as laughing with scorn. It makes you wonder how genuine their sorrow was if they could so immediately change their disposition.

Sleeping In Jesus

Sleep is a word often used in the Scriptures to describe the death of the faithful, and rightfully so. For those who have faith in Christ death is entering into eternal rest.

**For __if we believe that Jesus died and rose again, even so God will bring with Him __those who __sleep in Jesus.
(1 Thessalonians 4:14)**

Perhaps in this case Jesus uses the word to describe the temporary nature of the young girl's death. This crowd, being from Capernaum like Jairus, knew of Christ, His words, and His power and, at the very least,

⁵Henry, M. (1996, c1991). *Matthew Henry's commentary on the whole Bible : Complete and unabridged in one volume* (Mt 9:18). Peabody: Hendrickson.

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should have awaited His full explanation. People are quick to reject a caricature of the Christian faith which seems to them contradictory or perhaps arbitrary without fully investigating the true nature of the assertions.

Jesus did not grope with these mockers. He didn't say, "Oh wait, you don't understand." Those who have a genuine desire to learn from Christ will learn from Christ. Those who merely wish to enter into scorn and ridicule will be left to the courses of their own folly.-

The Power of Christ

But when the crowd was put outside, He went in and __took her by the hand, and the girl arose.⁻²⁶⁻ And the __report of this went out into all that land. (Matthew 9:25, 26)

The crowd was simply put outside. Jesus would not cast pearls before swine. In presenting of the things of God, one should be neither be arrogant, nor grovel. Those who by the grace of God faithfully seek God will be found by God.

How significant is this! Jesus did not do His works in a vacuum. This very public resurrection was witnessed by those who mocked Jesus. When Jesus would later be put through the kangaroo court of a trial, He was never accused of performing false miracles. Crackpots and charlatans are inevitably exposed. But no one could expose Jesus— but rather are exposed by Jesus.

In all of this, let us not miss the point. Jesus didn't promise that He would always be walking the earth, healing. He didn't promise that those who believe in Him would always be healed of their illnesses—everybody eventually dies. What He did do was reveal His power over death. And what He did promise was that whoever believed in Him, though he may die, shall live. And whoever lives and believes in Him shall never die. Do you believe this?

Questions for Study

1. What disposition did Jairus have toward Jesus (page 3)?
2. Does desperation always lead people to Jesus (page 4)?
3. Is tragedy a legitimate motivator to come to Christ (page 4)?
4. What two attributes do we see of Christ in this story (pages 4, 5)?
5. What was the condition of the woman who touched Jesus' garment (Page 5)?
6. What kind of faith did she have (pages, 5, 6)?
7. Why wouldn't Jesus let this woman slip off unnoticed (page 6)?
8. Why should this woman be cheerful because her faith had made her well (pages 6, 7)?
9. How does Jesus handle mockers (pages 7, 8)?
10. Does Jesus promise to always heal people of their illnesses (page 9)?
11. What does Jesus promise (page 9)?

