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The Greatest Authority of All Authority; Matt 9:1-8

GPBC

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Introduction – In order to understand the healing ministry of Jesus, we have to view it through the lens of eternity. If eternity is not in full view, we will not clearly see and therefore not clearly understand and therefore misinterpret and misapply the healing ministry of Jesus.

III. I wear contact lenses. My contacts allow me to clearly see my surroundings and therefore clearly understand my surroundings and therefore apply that knowledge appropriately. My contacts are a huge benefit to me for example when I'm driving. Without them everything gets really fuzzy and blurred.

In the same way, if we aren't viewing the healing ministry of Jesus through eternal lenses, we're not seeing it correctly. We naturally view things with a temporal, earthly, immediate, pragmatic, very narrow scope. What good is it for me, how does it benefit me, does it work for me right here, right now. If we view Jesus' healing ministry with earthly lenses, then we only understand Jesus as able to benefit me right here, right now. And the ministry of Jesus is radically reduced to nothing more than how He can make my life more comfortable, easier, with less difficulty, and with all the earthly benefits He can give me. That is not the Jesus of the Bible. That is not the Jesus of the gospel. If the Jesus you know only exists to give you your best life now, you don't know the biblical Jesus and you don't have the saving gospel of Christ.

The Bible calls us over and over to view this life and the Bible and Jesus and God and everything through eternal lenses. The only way to keep a right understanding of the Bible and salvation and Christ and life is by always keeping eternity just one step away on the horizon! If we lose our eternal perspective, we will downplay the Bible, twist the gospel, distort Christ, and turn life upside down until everything revolves around us. Having eternity always in view keeps us hungry. Hungry for the Bible, hungry for the gospel, hungry for Christ, hungry to live this life to the glory of God!

That's Big Picture life, and the healing ministry of Jesus fits right into that Big View of life and Scripture.

- I. A Paralytic with a Deeper Disability (vv1-2)
 - a. Jesus forgave the paralytic man of his sins. That's why I titled today's message "The Greatest Authority of All Authorities." Matthew is writing to prove that Jesus is the King of all kings who rules over an eternal, spiritual kingdom. So a key word for Matthew is authority. Jesus demonstrates His eternal, divine authority when He teaches (7:28-29) and when He performs miracles (chs 8-9).
 - i. And even in our text today, Jesus claims to have the authority to forgive sins, v6. That is the greatest authority of all. All the other demonstrations of Jesus' authority are pointing to, reinforcing, proving that He, and He alone, possesses this one great authority. He can do what no one else can do – He can forgive sins and thereby make sinners righteous, make guilty sinners, not guilty, make corrupt sinners, clean, make condemned sinners, right with God."
 - ii. He forgave the paralytic man of his sins. He wiped his record of guilt and sin before God clean. In one moment, with one declaration, He reduced the vast gulf that existed between this paralytic and God to nothing.
 - iii. He gave him for more than new legs. He gave him eternal life.
 - b. Now He did so not on the basis of feeling sorry for the paralytic, not on the basis of anything good about the paralytic. He did so on the basis and presence of faith.
 - i. Romans 5:1 says we are justified by faith. Eph 2:8 says by grace we have been saved through faith.
 - ii. God's response to faith is salvation, the forgiveness of sin.
 - c. Read 2b. When Jesus saw faith, He forgave sin. Now let's not let the word "their" confuse us. Jesus did not forgive the paralytic based on the faith of the friends who brought him to Jesus. "Their" is collectively referring to the friends and the paralytic. The friends demonstrated faith in bringing the paralytic to Jesus. The paralytic demonstrated faith in wanting to be brought to Jesus.
 - d. The point is this: the object of their faith was Jesus. They believed in Jesus. They believed in the power and authority of Jesus. They believed that Jesus was the answer, that they were totally dependent on His grace and mercy.

- e. And when Jesus saw the kind of faith that says Jesus is my only hope, He rewarded that faith with the greatest of all miracles, which is not the healing of the body but the healing of the soul.
 - f. It was a greater miracle than if Jesus had only given him new legs. New legs are only good for a few more years in this life. But a new heart, a new heart is good for eternity and a new heart is promised a new pair of legs in glory that will never tire or grow old.
 - g. Jesus did not come just to reinvigorate earthly bodies that will eventually die and decay. Jesus came to recreate us body and soul and fit us for glory! Jesus is teaching the paralytic and us to view Him and life and our needs and His miracles through eternal lenses.
- II. A Lesson on the Purpose of Jesus' Miracles (vv3-6)
- a. What the scribes knew – that only God can forgive sins.
 - b. What the scribes should have known – Jesus was God here in the flesh – v4 – He knew their thoughts! He read their minds and their hearts. He knew their secret, inner thoughts and motives!
 - i. BTW – He knows our secret thoughts too!
 - c. Why do you think evil in your hearts? – If it's in our mind, it's coming from our heart. Note carefully what Jesus describes here as evil. It is evil, that is, it is anti-God, it is demonic and satanic, it is pure evil to deny that Jesus is God. To look upon the Savior, the eternal, glorious, omnipotent Son of God, especially after all that He has said and done, and think less of Him – is treacherous, heinous, horrific evil.
 - i. They were the blasphemers – not Jesus! And we are blasphemers too when we encounter Jesus and dismiss Him as nothing more than a man or a prophet or another religious figure. He is Almighty God!
 - d. “For which is easier to say...” Now we know Jesus does not mean which is these two are easier to vocalize. Anyone can say these words. What Jesus means is which of these is easier to say and by saying them make them happen!
 - e. They felt the sting of that question because neither one of those would be easy for them to say! They can't forgive sins and they can't give a paralytic new legs. That's Jesus' point. It is impossible with men. The answer is not one or the other. The answer is neither one. Anybody can say these words, but only God can make it happen!

- f. And that's why Jesus answers the question for them in v6 the way that He does – "But that you may know (with no doubt, with no excuse, the undeniable fact) But that you may know that the Son of Man (Jesus is claiming His divine nature) has authority (key word) on earth to forgive sins – PAUSE, that's what that long dash means – PAUSE – let this sink in, get what I'm saying, see what I'm doing, understand who I am, put on eternal lenses – he then said to the paralytic – "Rise, pick up your bed and go home."
- g. Now in terms of the ability and authority of Jesus to heal, what this command means is that with an immediate effect, the man will not only be healed of paralysis, but his legs will have the strength and vigor of legs that have never been paralyzed.
 - i. V7 – and he rose and went home.
- h. But what does this command mean in terms of Jesus' ability and authority to forgive sins! Jesus is making the same point Matthew made earlier in ch8. Cf v17 – By quoting Isaiah 53 Matthew was saying the One who takes your illnesses and diseases is also the One who will take your sins. That's exactly the point Jesus is making to the scribes.
- i. Why is Jesus the only one who can forgive sins? Because Jesus is the only one who takes those sins and pays for them through His sacrificial, substitutionary death. That's what it means when the Bible says He died for us.
- j. The purpose of Jesus' healing ministry is that we might know He is the Son of Man, not so that we would come to Him merely for physical, temporal, earthly needs, but that we might come to Him in faith for our deepest need.