

THE BOOK OF MATTHEW

Lesson 30, Chapter 8 and 9

We are in the midst of several miracle stories of Jesus. The first involved cleansing a man who had **Tzara'at**. The second was healing a house slave of his infirmities (at the request of a Roman army officer), without Christ even being present with the sick person. The third was healing Peter's mother in law. The fourth we'll continue to discuss today, which is Christ compelling the storm and the sea to quiet. The fifth will be about demon possession.

Before we get there I must say something. These miracles did not, and do not, in general change the minds of staunch non-Believers. Among the Jews of the early 1st century healings occurred (and were expected) when a **Tzadik**, a Holy Man, came along (as rare as that was). So Yeshua's miracles didn't change many, if any, minds and cause His Jewish countrymen to accept Him as their divine Messiah. When we have our ears and eyes closed, and carry around hearts of stone, no amount of miracles and wonders will turn us to God. This is why when we read about the End of Days in Revelation, with all the amazing and terrifying signs, chaos and cataclysms (happenings foretold in the Bible that can be nothing else but divinely caused) there is no accompanying world-wide revival. We aren't rewarded as we read of the global destruction by being told that millions and millions of non-Believers will turn to God as result. Rather, the majority will shake their fists towards Heaven and curse Him. As it turns out, the purpose of these divine signs and miracles was, and will be, as Matthew says in chapter 8 verse 17 concerning Yeshua's wondrous deeds:

^{CJB} **Matthew 8:17** *This was done to fulfill what had been spoken through the prophet Yesha'yahu....*

Yeshua's miracles of healing and cleansing were done because the Father keeps His promises. The proof of it is the relative few over the centuries who have accepted Yeshua as God's Son as compared to the countless billions of earthlings that have come and gone into the darkness over the centuries, despite His display of awesome miracles, His undeniable resurrection, and the detailed fulfillment of many ancient prophecies. Was it Christ's miracles that convinced you to trust Him? It certainly wasn't for me. It was that God did a work in me.... while I was completely unaware.... preparing me, and then telling me the truth. Those signs and miracles we read about in the Bible certainly are faith affirming; but they are not what we have faith in, nor are they what leads us to faith. These were done because God is faithful to His Word even when His people aren't. Nothing has changed. And as we read a little more about the sudden storm on the Sea of Galilee, we'll find that Jesus' actions and words that immediately subdued that storm are not what convinced His Disciples that He was far more than a miracle worker. Rather, it simply jarred them and caused them to be astonished, affirming in them that they had hitched their wagons to an incomparable Master.

Let's re-read a few verses in Matthew chapter 8.

RE-READ MATTHEW CHAPTER 8:23 - end

We left off last week with the knowledge that as the storm that suddenly erupted on the Sea of Galilee began tossing the small fishing vessel that He and His disciples were in, Christ was asleep as the others in the boat with him were afraid and in panic mode. While we could probably read-in some highly spiritual elements and make good allegorical use of the fact that Yeshua was asleep in the tempest, I'm not sure that is Matthew's intent. When we go back to verses 16 - 22 we find that Yeshua had spent the entire day healing and dealing with large crowds of people pressing in all about Him. He was a human being, and subject to getting tired just as with the rest of us. I can't escape the obvious that one of the reasons He got into the boat was as a practical means to escape the demands of the endless crowds, and secondly because He was mentally, emotionally, and physically exhausted. The Book of Mark contains the same story, but it adds a bit different perspective.

^{CJB} **Mark 4:35-41** ³⁵ *That day, when evening had come, Yeshua said to them, "Let's cross to the other side of the lake."* ³⁶ *So, leaving the crowd behind, they took him just as he was, in the boat; and there were other boats with*

him. ³⁷ A furious windstorm arose, and the waves broke over the boat, so that it was close to being swamped. ³⁸ But he was in the stern on a cushion, asleep. They woke him and said to him, "Rabbi, doesn't it matter to you that we're about to be killed?" ³⁹ He awoke, rebuked the wind and said to the waves, "Quiet! Be still!" The wind subsided, and there was a dead calm. ⁴⁰ He said to them, "Why are you afraid? Have you no trust even now?" ⁴¹ But they were terrified and asked each other, "Who can this be, that even the wind and the waves obey him?"

So, Yeshua laid down in that cramped little boat on top of a cushion and immediately fell off to sleep. As the waves grew and the boat began to be tossed around, it was not sufficient in itself to awaken Him. But, the panicking Disciples (probably a bit reluctantly) roused Him.

Did they waken Him thinking He would calm the storm? Nothing we have read would indicate that they thought He had such powers. Rather, He was their Master and leader, and it was only natural that as their situation appeared to be growing more and more dire, He certainly had to be made aware of it. And yet, it is too obvious a matter to bypass that Christ's Disciples were devoted to Him such that they followed Him and obeyed Him in whatever capacity and situation. And so when things got out of control, they quickly turned to Him not knowing what else to do. Yet devotion and trust are two different things. It was typical for disciples to be devoted and loyal to their Master. But trusting in them to the point of releasing their cares to him and even discounting the outcomes of their own lives was another matter. Therefore when Yeshua awakens and sees the situation, He chastises His Disciples and tells them that they have no trust (in Him). Mark adds two words to Christ's chastisement that don't appear in either Matthew's or Luke's version: "even now". Even now. "Even now" implies that the things that He taught His Disciples and the miracles He had performed in their presence ought to have elicited more of their trust; but it hadn't. Christ was none too happy about that.

We should always notice the frankness of the Gospel accounts concerning the 12 Disciples; nothing is papered over. These men are ordinary. They have their weaknesses and frailties, and their rather small level of faith at this moment (at least it is small in Christ's eyes) is among their human flaws. This takes us back to the beginning of our lesson. As much as one might reason and expect that it should, it would **not** be His astounding miracles, even ordering the storm to abate, that reveals Yeshua as the Messiah or that He is God incarnate and thus

bring about complete trust in Him. It would be two things that makes those hand-picked Jewish disciples true Believers: the Spirit of God preparing them (which is what we are witnessing in progress) and then Yeshua telling them the truth about who He is (this hasn't happened yet in Matthew) and them accepting it.

I doubt that any of the Jewish **Tzadik** miracle workers that suddenly appeared in the years before Yeshua calmed waves and stopped storms (there is no record of such a thing). So this was an aspect of Christ that the disciples had never seen before or even imagined. No doubt the image of Jonah had to have been conjured up in their minds as later they thought about what they had experienced; although the circumstances were not identical. We're left to understand in every Gospel version of this event that clearly the Disciples had no explanation for Christ's power and command over nature. Quickly the narrative turns to what happened immediately after the incident of the storm.

The boat arrives on the other side of the Lake, in the territory of the Gadarenes. There is a bit of a scholarly disagreement over who these people might have been, some suggesting they were the Gerasenes and not the Gadarenes. There is a problem with either choice. The former were residents of a city located about 30 miles from the Lake. The latter was associated with a city located nearer to the Lake, but still over 6 miles away. Therefore some scholars think that it was neither. Instead it was the people of Gergesa because indeed it was a lakeside village. The other disagreement is whether or not these people were Jews (or better, Israelites). There is nothing historically recorded that seems to be able to clear up this matter. Names of people and places change over the centuries with alarming regularity, and so we can only speculate. I choose not to speculate about the name of the people because their exact name is not the point of the story. I do agree that whether or not they were Israelites matters significantly, but again, we can't be certain. Samaria, for instance (a region on the west bank of the Jordan) was a mixed population of gentiles, Jews, Jews married to gentiles, and even some number of other non-Jewish Israelites that had long ago married gentiles and remained in the area. So it is not impossible that the territory Jesus landed in was similarly populated especially because it was on the east side of the Jordan River, outside of the Holy Land.

Even so, the involvement of pigs in the story of demon possession tells me that gentiles were present because the idea of Jews or leftover Israelites raising herds of pigs is just too farfetched. Thus we begin with two unnamed men of unnamed origin that come out of some burial caves where they were living in

order to confront Yeshua. These men were controlled by (possessed by) demons and they were so fearsome and unhinged that a road traveling by their area was avoided.

Let's talk about the mere concept of demon possession because within the Church the subject is controversial and shunned by many who believe that such a thing doesn't exist. Like so many other subjects in the Bible (the opening of the Red Sea, even Jesus rising from the dead), demon possession is immediately latched onto, declared as suspect, and dismissed by scientists, anthropologists and psychiatrists. Rather they say that these supposed demon possessed people were actually mental patients, because long before the medical field advanced to its present stage the only explanation that the ancients had for the bizarre behavior of some people was demon possession. Therefore the same people depicted in our story could have been treated with psychiatry and medications had it been available.

And yet I know reliable people who have personally dealt with demon possession, and although I have witnessed but one case of it, there is not a doubt in my mind that it is quite real and still relevant for our era. So while I believe that no doubt mental illness existed among some in Christ's day, that doesn't preclude the existence of demon possession in others. So our story in Matthew (that also appears in Mark 5 and Luke 8) is not about the mentally ill but rather it's about the demon possessed. There are slight differences in this story among the 3 Synoptic Gospels, such as there being 1 possessed person in two of the accounts and two persons in Matthew's. The number of possessed plays no real role in the event; the issue is that they ARE possessed by demons (unclean spirits) and it has caused them to be violent and uncontrollable. How they got that way in the first place is beyond the scope of the story.

The mention of the possessed men living in a burial cave is important in Matthew's story because it speaks to them wallowing in a ritually unclean state in every way imaginable. A burial cave is an inherently unclean place because a dead body is there. There is little more ritually impure thing in the Jewish religion than a corpse and death. Yet these men were, with little doubt, gentiles and not Jews. Living in a cave that was not also used for burial wasn't unusual; and for pagans, living in burial caves was in some cases not seen as necessarily gross or wrong.....especially for cultures where their religion involved ancestor worship. Caves to this day form good housing in some cultures, as it did in Yeshua's day. Even in Grenada, Spain there are still people who have turned caves into

housing. So once the men became demon possessed, and made unclean, then it could do them no more harm to live in a burial cave. Besides; who is to say that they saw themselves as unclean in God's eyes? You see, that is one of the big dangers in gentile Christianity disavowing The Torah of Moses and thus knowing nothing about it. Just because a Christian doesn't KNOW he or she is unclean or breaking God's commands doesn't mean in God's eyes they aren't. Ignorance of God's laws and of one's own spiritual status doesn't excuse it.

What is fascinating is that these demon possessed men came out of their caves and screamed at Christ; not disrespectfully but rather in fear. They wanted to know why He was here, at this time, and not at the appointed time (which they thought would be at a later date). They called Him Son of God and wondered if He was here to torture them sooner than scheduled. So here we see that these demons know the real identity of Yeshua, even though the 12 Disciples don't. The demons understand that He is divine and that there is an appointed time for them to be dealt with and tormented, and that the timing of it coincides with Jesus being present on earth. These demons know a lot about Christ and their destiny; but evidently they don't know everything.

I'll pause here to address something important; clearly the New Testament identifies that there are 2 latter days or End Times. If you want a more extensive understanding of this go to my study of the Book of Daniel. But the short version is this: the 1st latter days was that era leading up to and including the 1st coming of Christ. The 2nd latter days will be the era leading up to and including the 2nd coming of Christ (we may well even be living in that era). The people of Christ's time knew only of the 1st latter days and had no expectation of a 2nd. Thus when Yeshua spoke of the Kingdom of God, and of certain things that will happen at the End, the Jews that heard Him thought He was speaking about this happening nearly immediately. For Jews the appearance of the Messiah was concretely associated with the arrival of the End Times. And for them the judgment of demons was also directly tied to the End Times. This is why we see Peter, Paul, and several other New Testament Believers so passionate about getting the message of salvation out; they felt a pressing urgency because they totally believed that the End was imminent and would happen in their lifetimes because the Messiah had come. For them promise and theory became fact and reality.

Thus when I read the story of these demoniacs who are in terror and surprised at Jesus's appearance, it tells me that they, too, know nothing of 2 latter days and 2 appearances of Christ on earth; they only knew of 1..... a later one. So they were

confused. What they did seem to know is that at a divinely preset time, coincidental with the appearance of the Son of God, the condition of their existence as evil, unclean beings would be forever changed. Torment and darkness is their eternal future. However, that time was not yet and just like human beings do, they wanted every last second of existence they could have. Rather than Yeshua judging them and sentencing them to torment (which is what they fear is about to happen, but relieved when it doesn't) the demons plead with Him that they be relocated to another and different unclean place as a kind of interim or partial judgment: inside pigs. And yet, from a Torah perspective pigs are not inherently unclean animals. Rather they are only prohibited as being used for food. Even so, in Christ's day pigs were (by Jewish Tradition) considered inherently unclean, even to touch. Remember who is writing this Gospel and who he is writing it to. Matthew is a learned Believing Jew and his Gospel is being written to Jews. So there is a huge hint in Christ's response to the demons that the Day of Judgment, the End of Days, is not here yet but it will come some unknown time later and judgment that includes the sphere of spiritual evil will be part of that judgment.

Upon receiving permission to leave the men's bodies and move to the pigs, the now demon possessed herd rushes towards the Lake and drowns. By no means does this intend that the demons have drowned. One must ask what this rush towards the water and mass suicide means? Is it just the demons' desire to harm and kill pigs? Can demons actually inhabit the body of animals and control them? The suggestion of it is certainly present in the narrative. I don't really have all the answers to this dilemma but this much is certain: in God's economy, water is a ritually purifying element for land creatures. Even inanimate pots having ritually impure contents in them can be cleansed by being immersed in water. So since the matter of ritual impurity is such a focus in this story of demon possession then surely the pigs running headlong into water must signal a real danger to these unclean demons.

In any case the pigs die, and so in another sense the demons are right back into an unclean space.... where they belong. In other words, this story is built upon an irony, perhaps a paradox. Christ allows the unclean spirits to go into the unclean pigs that then run into a source of cleanness, water, only to drown and then have the unclean spirits right back in the unclean corpses of the pigs. Due to their aversion to both gentiles and pigs I suspect that Jews reading this would have found this story to be pretty comical.

Interestingly Matthew doesn't tell us what happened to the men that had been possessed by these demons but were now freed. No doubt it is because for him they are not the issue. The issue is Christ's command over the spirit world... including the demonic spirit world... as well as the demons fully understanding Yeshua's identity and their ultimate destiny of judgment as tied to His presence. Likely it was also because these men were gentiles, making them of little interest to Jews, except that it put gentiles in the unfavorable light that Jews generally viewed them. Even so Mark does tell us that as Christ gets ready to board the boat and depart, the now exorcised men ask Him if they can come with Him; He says no. They need to go back to their own people (gentiles) and tell them how merciful "The Lord" has been to them. Yeshua is not referring to Himself but rather to His Father. I suspect that in the original Hebrew that Matthew penned His Gospel the word was not the Greek *kurios* (lord) but rather *Yehoveh*, God's name because that fits the context so much better.

The men who had tended the now dead pigs (around 2000 of them according to Mark, a sizeable and valuable bunch of animals) go running into their town to tell everyone what happened. The townspeople come out, upset, and insist that Christ leaves, no doubt because pigs represented a big part of the local economy and they didn't want to risk losing their own herds to this mysterious Jewish man's abilities.

Before we leave chapter 8 I want to address something that is perhaps of interest only to me: why did Jesus go to these particular people on the west side of the Lake? Did He intentionally choose this place, knowing beforehand that He was to go there to have this confrontation with the demons? We have no clue, except to perhaps think about it logically. In Capernaum Jesus boarded a small fishing boat to get out into the Lake to escape the crowds. He was exhausted from a very long day, fell asleep in the boat, and in the meantime a storm blew up. He was awakened, spoke to the storm, and it quieted down. But by now the boat had been pushed along, not controlled by its rudder but rather by the direction of the fierce wind and waves to the southeast corner of the Sea of Galilee. It was by God's providence that they landed where they did, not by intention.

Folks we can use this adventure as an analogy and a story of encouragement. I know for a fact that many of us have been blown, at times rudderless, on the winds and waves of life to the place where we are today. Some of that journey may have been, maybe it still is, uncomfortable if not terrifying. If we belong to the Lord, however, then unbeknown to us and according to His providence, it was

He who controlled those winds and waves of our lives to land us right where we belong; right where He wanted us. And now that we're here we are to embrace the mission and purpose that we never set sail for, and thank Him.

Let's move on to chapter 9.

READ MATTHEW CHAPTER 9 all

We have in chapter 9 another series of miracles performed by Christ, the addition of a new disciple, and some God-principles renewed. We're told that Yeshua and His Disciples returned to the other side of the Lake to what Matthew calls "His town" (no doubt it was Capernaum from where they originally set out). There a paralyzed man was brought to Yeshua in hopes of him being healed. The Gospel of Mark adds some important information to the story.

^{CJB} **Mark 2:1-5** *¹ After a while, Yeshua returned to K'far-Nachum. The word spread that he was back, ² and so many people gathered around the house that there was no longer any room, not even in front of the door. While he was preaching the message to them, ³ four men came to him carrying a paralyzed man. ⁴ They could not get near Yeshua because of the crowd, so they stripped the roof over the place where he was, made an opening, and lowered the stretcher with the paralytic lying on it. ⁵ Seeing their trust, Yeshua said to the paralyzed man, "Son, your sins are forgiven."*

Perhaps the main addition has to do with **how** the paralyzed man was brought to Jesus. Four men who must have cared deeply for him went so far as to cut an area through the roof of the house where Yeshua was and then lowered the man down. We're told that they did this because the house was so crowded. We don't know whose house He was in; perhaps it was Peter's. One can only imagine the crowds that anxiously waited for this miracle healer to return with the hope that somehow they might get near enough to get Yeshua's attention and have their afflictions cured.

Many years ago I heard a Pastor speak about this in a message he entitled "The Stretcher Bearers". It made such an impact upon me that I want to share just a bit of it with you. In this story we have a very ill man that could not help himself because he was unable to move. However 4 men who cared enough.... no doubt close friends or family..... each took a corner of a stretcher and did what had to be done. The human reality is that it is kind of rewarding if not exciting to be a

stretcher bearer. To be a stretcher bearer one has to have the health and strength to do it. It means that as a stretcher bearer your health, and probably your life, is in some kind of good order. Not everyone wants to bother to be a stretcher bearer; but Christ has taught us that we all should be. That is how we love our neighbor.

An old adage is that it is easier to give than to receive. So true. But it is also easier to carry the corner of a stretcher than to be laying on it. As a stretcher bearer we still have some control; as for the passenger, life has become somewhat out of control. Nobody wants to be the person on the stretcher because it means some tragedy, accident or illness has unfolded upon us. Especially men are wired to be stretcher bearers; but we're not wired to be on that stretcher. It hurts our pride, our ego, and makes us feel impotent. So the real story is not about the bearers of the stretcher, it's about the man that is on it. And Matthew being Matthew he focuses not on the carriers....he doesn't even mention them... but the victim.

The harsh reality is that while most Believers don't mind being a stretcher bearer it is nearly devastating to have to give up our independence and become the one who needs to be carried. The even harsher reality is that at some point probably all of us will be on that stretcher. Will we have those around us who want to pick up a corner and lift us up? How will we react? Might we be grateful to be carried? Or will we be in denial and bitter? Will we shake our fist at God, angry because we've been such a faithful stretcher bearer for others, so we think that we don't deserve to be the one that now needs help? Or will we bend to God's will and allow ourselves to grow in faith as a result?

The thing I've learned that has been most valuable to me having been both the carried and the carrier is this: as the one on the stretcher we should never take away the blessing of the bearers by being bitter, ungrateful, angry, or ashamed. We should never try to shoo them away and declare that we don't need their help when in fact everyone can see that we do. If we're the Lord's, and we're in need of being carried, then God has placed us there for a reason. Maybe it is because one or all of those carrying our stretcher needs a blessing. Often it is for us to learn humility. There is little more humbling.... especially to a male.... of having to be carried.

So whoever this paralyzed man was that was being carried to Jesus, even let down through a ceiling, he was not in the happiest of positions. As a paralytic in

the 1st century, he was in control of nothing. His future was bleak. In his humbled state this afflicted man received from Yeshua exactly what he needed to, and could, hear: forgiveness from the sin that he was full of. And yet, was atonement what the man or his 4 friends were looking to Christ for? No; it was healing. So now after our speaking to the principle of the stretcher bearer, we find this challenging matter of sin being coupled with infirmity.

Biblically, what is the connection between sin and illness? Yeshua didn't say "arise and walk" to the paralyzed man. He didn't say "be healed". He said "have courage, son, your sins are forgiven". It is interesting that in only one other place in the New Testament do we find Yeshua directly forgiving the sins of a particular person. In Luke 7 we read this:

CJB Luke 7:44-48 ⁴⁴ *Then, turning to the woman, he said to Shim'on, "Do you see this woman? I came into your house- you didn't give me water for my feet, but this woman has washed my feet with her tears and dried them with her hair!"* ⁴⁵ *You didn't give me a kiss; but from the time I arrived, this woman has not stopped kissing my feet!* ⁴⁶ *You didn't put oil on my head, but this woman poured perfume on my feet!* ⁴⁷ *Because of this, I tell you that her sins- which are many!- have been forgiven, because she loved much. But someone who has been forgiven only a little loves only a little."* ⁴⁸ *Then he said to her, "Your sins have been forgiven."*

In the case of the paralyzed man are we to conclude that it was sin that caused this man's condition? And if that is the case, then what Jesus did was to address the underlying cause of this man's disability (sin) as opposed to the disability itself. No doubt in that era sin and physical affliction were connected. There was another important incident whereby Yeshu connected sin and sickness.

CJB John 5:5-14 ⁵ *One man was there who had been ill for thirty-eight years.* ⁶ *Yeshua, seeing this man and knowing that he had been there a long time, said to him, "Do you want to be healed?"* ⁷ *The sick man answered, "I have no one to put me in the pool when the water is disturbed; and while I'm trying to get there, someone goes in ahead of me."* ⁸ *Yeshua said to him, "Get up, pick up your mat and walk!"* ⁹ *Immediately the man was healed, and he picked up his mat and walked. Now that day was Shabbat,* ¹⁰ *so the Judeans said to the man who had been healed, "It's Shabbat! It's against Torah for you to carry your mat!"* ¹¹ *But he answered them, "The man who healed me- he's the one who told me, 'Pick up your mat and walk.'"* ¹² *They*

asked him, "Who is the man who told you to pick it up and walk?"¹³ But the man who had been healed didn't know who it was, because Yeshua had slipped away into the crowd.¹⁴ Afterwards Yeshua found him in the Temple court and said to him, "See, you are well! Now stop sinning, or something worse may happen to you!"

To this point it certainly sounds like Yeshua is instructing that sin causes infirmities and sickness. And we have many people and denominations that take hold of this and make it a doctrine that if one is sick or disabled then it was because of some sin or another that this person committed, so until they confess that sin and are forgiven they have no hope of being healed. Unfortunately, this also labels that person as an especially egregious sinner and Believers tend to accuse that person of causing their own illness.

Despite what Christ has said thus far about sin and sickness, we also read this in John.

CJB ***John 9:1-3¹ As Yeshua passed along, he saw a man blind from birth.² His talmidim asked him, "Rabbi, who sinned- this man or his parents- to cause him to be born blind?"³ Yeshua answered, "His blindness is due neither to his sin nor to that of his parents; it happened so that God's power might be seen at work in him.***

The Early Church Fathers had different takes on sin and sickness with Hilary of Poitiers in the 4th century probably coming closest to a middle ground. In his commentary on Matthew 9 and the man on the stretcher he says:

The paralytic is a descendant of the original man, Adam. In on person, Christ, all of the sins of Adam are forgiven..... we do not believe the paralytic committed any sin that resulted in his illness, especially since the Lord said elsewhere that blindness from birth had no been contracted from someone's sin or that of his parents.

So, this is our dilemma. Is sin and sickness directly connected or is there no connection or is there a connection sometimes? Or are we to look at it more like Hilary in that what causes illness is the sin nature that we all inherit from Adam, as opposed to sins of breaking the Law of Moses? If so, why do staunch, faithful Believers get sick?

In the end I cannot provide a simple answer. Assuming that Christ was not merely mouthing words in order to play into the traditions and customs of His Jewish culture, then it is undeniable that He indeed drew a direct link between sin and sickness. Even so, it seems to be on an almost case by case basis such that only God knows when a person is ill due to sin, and when he or she isn't. Perhaps the only thing that we can do.... and maybe that is the lesson.... is to not suppose that we are in a position to make that judgment about an ill person. Rather, not knowing the source of their infirmity, we pray for them asking both for forgiveness of sins and for their healing. This seems to be what James is saying at the end of his letter.

CJB James 5:13-16 ¹³ *Is someone among you in trouble? He should pray. Is someone feeling good? He should sing songs of praise.* ¹⁴ *Is someone among you ill? He should call for the elders of the congregation. They will pray for him and rub olive oil on him in the name of the Lord.* ¹⁵ *The prayer offered with trust will heal the one who is ill- the Lord will restore his health; and if he has committed sins, he will be forgiven.* ¹⁶ *Therefore, openly acknowledge your sins to one another, and pray for each other, so that you may be healed. The prayer of a righteous person is powerful and effective.*

We'll continue in Matthew chapter 9 next week.