

Matthew's Gospel

Jesus Changes People - Matthew 9:1-34.

[New King James Version of the Scriptures used unless otherwise stated.]

In Matthew 8 we see the power of Jesus over sickness, over creation and over demons. We are about to discover in Matthew 9 how the transforming power of Jesus changes lives. We will go through the chapter to verse 34 and look at the change that takes place in each individual life. We will look at the influence of others. We will investigate how the change takes place, who is involved and in what way were they changed. We will also consider how Jesus changes lives today. Jesus was physically amongst the people then, but now He is in heaven. How can He still change lives? To get a fuller understanding of Matthew 9 you can also read Mark 2, Mark 5, Luke 5 and Luke 8 where the writers will give you a different viewpoint of the same instances.

Jesus heals the paralytic man vv.1-8.

Jesus had just returned to His own city Capernaum and within a few days word got around that He was in a certain house. Many people went along to see Him, so Jesus preached the word to them. The house was crammed with people, so it was impossible for the friends of the paralytic man to carry him to Jesus. But the friends had faith. They believed that if they could just get their friend to Jesus, He would heal him. They arrived at the house where Jesus was and saw the crowd outside. However, this did not deter them. They were determined, so they climbed up the building and uncovered the roof to allow them to lower their friend down to the feet of Jesus. The friends had remarkable faith and action in bringing the paralytic man to Jesus. Jesus saw their faith and He turned to the paralytic man and said, 'Son, your sins are forgiven you.' This is interesting, I am sure they thought He would make him walk again first. Here was a man who was powerless to help himself. Jesus knew this man's heart; he knew he was a sinner just like you and me. He needed salvation through the forgiveness of sin. Jesus dealt with his sins before He addressed his bodily weakness. It is our sins that will keep us from heaven. It is our sins that will send us into eternal torment without Christ. Jesus changed this man from the inside out. He gave him a new heart, a new life, a new hope, a purpose to his life and then He healed his body.

Afterwards Jesus told him to, 'Arise, take up your bed, and go to your house.' He got up and did what Jesus said. The multitudes around were amazed, they marvelled and glorified God. What a wonderful change took place in this man's life in one encounter with the Saviour. This man had good friends who carried him to Jesus. They were men of faith. They believed in Jesus. They wanted their friend to be healed. Jesus honoured their faith. Jesus will honour your faith if you have the same desire as these men to bring your friends to Jesus. Pray for them, invite them to church, be a real friend when they need it! On the downside of this incident, we see that the scribes judged Jesus according to their thoughts of the law. They tried to put the disciples off. Don't be put off by others, be determined in your quest to win souls for Jesus.

Jesus calls Matthew v.9.

Matthew was a tax collector. He worked for the Romans and was hated by most Jews. Matthew was sitting in his tax booth which was probably on the main highway where he waited to take levies from farmers and traders when Jesus passed by. Jesus knew Matthew's heart. He knew Matthew had faith. Jesus simply turned to him and said, 'Follow Me.' Matthew without any hesitation arose and never questioned what the cost would be to follow Jesus. His response changed his life forever. He would become a disciple of Jesus. He would walk with Jesus, and he would be involved in great miracles. He would learn the wonders of the blessed person of the Son of Man. He would see first-hand the pathway Jesus took to the cross of Calvary. He would see the Saviour die on the cross. He would witness the resurrection and ascension of Jesus. He wrote the Gospel of Matthew some 20 years later. Matthew's life was changed forever.

Dear friend, you may have heard the Saviour call! How did you respond? He may not call again! If you have heard His voice the Bible says, 'Do not harden your hearts' (Hebrews 3 vv.7-8). You will never regret taking the decision to follow Jesus. Step out in faith now and follow Him.

No change in the hearts of the Pharisees vv. 10-17.

The Pharisees were very self-righteous men. They continually tried to trip Jesus up according to their view of the Jewish law. They picked the wrong Man to criticise. This was God in flesh they were dealing with, Emanuel (God with us). The perfect holy Son of God. The Pharisees were not happy that Jesus was sitting at a table with tax collectors and sinners. They would never be defiled by doing such a thing. They asked the disciples why their teacher ate with tax collectors and sinners. Jesus heard them say this and He turned to them to explain why. 'If you are well, you don't need a doctor, it is only when you are sick.' 'Go and think about that', He told them! Jesus continued to say that He had not come to call the righteous, but sinners to repentance. Jesus saw right into the hearts of these self-righteous Pharisees.

A self-righteous person finds it hard to admit that they are a sinner, that they have done anything wrong. They think that they are good enough in themselves and often tend to criticise others. Dear friend, you may think you are an upright, do-good sort of person and I will not say anything about doing good deeds, but I can assure you this falls short of God's standards. You are a sinner who needs to be saved by the grace of God. The only way of salvation is found through the Lord Jesus Christ who paid the penalty of your sins on the cross of Calvary. He has paid the price because you are as helpless as the paralytic man, you can do nothing for yourself. Jesus went on to explain to the Pharisees that they needed to have new hearts. When Jesus enters your heart the blackness of sin is washed away by His blood and you are made as white as snow. He gives you a new life and changes you from the inside out. You are born again and by living this new life (helped by God) your life changes on the outside as features of Jesus are seen in you. You have a new nature, and you are under new management. The Pharisees had hard hearts and were not prepared to respond to the love and grace of Jesus. Dear friend, humble yourself under the mighty hand of God and grasp the salvation that is being freely offered to you. You need to allow Jesus to change you, it's your choice! Open your heart's door today and invite Him in.

The lives of two women changed forever vv. 18-26.

The first woman we read about is the daughter of a ruler of the synagogue named Jairus. Jairus went out to meet Jesus and as he approached Him, he bowed down and worshipped Him. I imagine that he fell to his knees at the feet of Jesus. This man had faith and he was prepared to show it in front of anyone who was watching. His daughter had died, but he believed that if Jesus came to his house and touched her, she would be brought back from the dead. Jesus got up and followed the ruler and so did His disciples. Crowds often lined the streets and followed Jesus wherever He went because they wanted to see the miracles He performed.

As Jesus was walking to the ruler's house a woman who had a flow of blood for twelve years reached forward and touched the hem of His garment. This woman had suffered so much and spent everything she had on doctors, but they could not help her in fact she was getting worse. But the Great Physician could! She believed that even in a crowd of people if she could only touch the coat of Jesus she would be healed. This was remarkable faith! It is interesting to note that Jesus felt the touch of this woman even when many others may have been jostling Him in the crowd. Immediately the woman touched the garment of Jesus she was healed. Jesus feeling that power had gone out from Him asked, 'Who touched Me?' (See Luke 8:45). He looked at the woman who came forward and fell at His feet and He said to her, 'Be of good cheer, daughter; your faith has made you well.' Jesus continued his journey to the ruler's house where the mourning had begun. There was a great commotion with flute players and a noisy crowd wailing and weeping. Jesus told them to move out of the way as the girl was not dead, she was just sleeping. The mourners laughed at Jesus. Jesus went into the place where she lay with her mum and dad, and He took their daughter who was only 12 years old by the hand and said, 'Little girl, I say to you, arise' (See Mark 5: vv.38-41). The girl arose and walked. The story of what happened quickly spread around the area.

Once more we have the faith and concern of one person for another. Jairus knew that his daughter was dead, she was past the help of any doctor. However, he believed that the only One who could bring her back to life was Jesus. He and his wife had the joy of being in the presence of Jesus when He took their daughter's hand. What a joy it must have been for Jairus and his wife. I am sure this had a great impact on their lives. The daughter too had a life changing experience. She was dead but now she was living. I am sure this girl was ever thankful to Jesus for what He did for her.

Dear friend, it will be a life changing experience if you have faith in Jesus. You are dead in your trespasses and sins but by faith in Christ you will be made alive unto God. You will then have a living personal relationship with God. Your family also need Jesus. Why not bring Jesus into your home and allow Him to bless your children. The woman who had tried everything to be cured and was at her wits end reached forward in amazing faith and touched the Saviour. Dear friend, Jesus is passing your way today, reach out and touch Him or He may walk by, and you may never have that opportunity again. Often it is when you have tried to find satisfaction, joy or peace elsewhere without success, that you turn to the Saviour. He is waiting for you to bless you no matter how bad you feel you are.

Two blind men see, and a demon is cast out vv. 27-34.

As Jesus left the scene at Jarius's house which had turned from sorrow to amazement and joy, two blind men followed Him. They cried out, 'Son of David, have mercy on us!' When Jesus came to a certain house the blind men went in too. Jesus said to them, 'Do you believe that I am able to do this?' The men had no doubt whatsoever the Lord could make them see again and they replied, 'Yes Lord.' The Lord touched their eyes and said, 'According to your faith let it be to you.' Their eyes were opened, and they saw Jesus. If they had been blind from birth then the first face they saw was their Saviour. What a wonderful sight! Jesus warned them not to tell anyone, but they could not help but speak about the One who had made them see. Their lives had been changed forever.

Please be aware that Satan is at work in the world today blinding the minds of men, so they do not see Jesus (See 2 Cor.4:4). If you are not a believer, you are blind to God's saving grace, the work of Calvary, and the salvation that is found in Christ alone. Dear friend, Jesus will make those blind eyes of yours to see the beauty and wonder of the Saviour, who loves you and who gave Himself for you. Allow the Lord Jesus to touch your eyes today and you will never stop telling others about Jesus.

Another man was brought to Jesus who was mute and demon-possessed! We read in other parts of the Bible that demon-possessed men self-harmed. They lived in graveyards, and they were controlled by Satan. Satan has no power when it comes to the Son of God. Jesus cast out the demon from the man and he began to speak. He had been set free. He was released from the bondage of sin and Satan. That's what salvation does for you and me today. We are set free! Praise God! The chains are gone, and we have freedom in Christ. Satan is a defeated foe; he is the prince and the power of the air just now, but a time is coming when he will be cast into the lake of fire. When the multitudes saw these things, they marvelled at the miracles Jesus did.

Let me remind you of the wonderful hymn Amazing Grace.

Amazing grace how sweet the sound
That saved a wretch like me
I once was lost, but now I'm found
Was blind, but now I see

'Twas grace that taught my heart to fear
And grace my fears relieved
How precious did that grace appear
The hour I first believed

My chains are gone, I've been set free
My God, my Saviour has ransomed me
And like a flood His mercy reigns
Unending love
Amazing grace

J. Newton (1725-1807)

Dear friends, Jesus Christ is now living in heaven. He came to earth as a Man to display the goodness and the love of God. He showed God's love to us in giving up His life in death for your sins and mine. He went back to heaven, and He sent the Holy Spirit into the world to, 'Convict the world of sin, and of righteousness and of judgement' (John 16:8). The day that we live in is called the day of grace. God is reaching out to you in mercy offering you free salvation through Jesus Christ His Son. If you confess your sins and believe that Jesus died and rose again you will be saved for time and for eternity. You will be set free from the bondage of sin, your eyes will be opened, you will have new life through Jesus. Jesus doesn't need to be here in person to bless you, but you must come to Him in faith. May God bless you, Amen!

Thank you for listening to the Truth for Today talk on Jesus Changes People, Talk number T1286.

Please Note:

We encourage you to use this transcript for your personal or group Bible studies. This material should not, however, be used in any publications without the express permission from Truth for Today, whose contact details can be found on page 1.