

Matthew 20-04-19b

We're ready now to resume our study in Matthew chapter 9, and at verse 27 we have another in this selection of miracles that Matthew has chosen to record in this chapter. We saw it open with, of course, the letting down of the paralyzed man through the roof. We had the calling of Matthew the tax collector.

We saw the question about fasting, then the miracle of Jairus' daughter being raised. As I say, the one case in Matthew where you have a raising from the dead, and so those details that are attached to it by Matthew are extremely significant, and we made an attempt to reflect on that in our first session. Now we pick up at verse 27, where in your New King James it says, When Jesus departed from there, two blind men followed Him, crying out and saying, Son of David, have mercy on us.

When He had come into the house, the blind men came to Him. And Jesus said to them, Do you believe that I am able to do this? They said to Him, Yes, Lord. Then He touched their eyes, saying, According to your faith, let it be to you.

And their eyes were opened, and Jesus sternly warned them, saying, See that no one knows it. But when they had departed, they spread the news about Him in all that country. Not for the first time, people's excitement gets the better of them.

But first of all, having been sensitized, I hope, by what we saw in the first session, notice that when Jesus departed from there, this is directly connected to what precedes. It's not a matter of adjusting things for thematic reasons and moving something up from the later career of Jesus or back from the past. This is directly afterward.

It's connected in the same way or similarly to the preceding two that we just saw. Jesus departed from there, and blind men follow Him. So this is all on the same day.

It's part of the same sequence. And they cry out and say, Son of David, have mercy on us. Son of David is a very significant phrase.

There's been some scholarship to suggest that it wasn't in common use at the time and that to use it had great messianic overtones. It is quoted in the, there's a pseudepigraphical book called the Psalms of Solomon. And so it is not necessarily found elsewhere in the scriptures.

It's somewhat of a rare appellation. The Psalms of Solomon is not inspired. And it's something of a synonym for Messiah.

So why do these blind men cry out and use this term instead of some other that they could use? In Matthew 21, verse 9, we saw this on Thursday night. The crowds are going to put tree branches in the road and throw their garments before Him and shout, Hosanna to the Son of David. Blessed is he who comes in the name of the Lord.

In the next chapter, Matthew 22, verses 41 through 45, you remember the bracket that we saw Thursday night. There is a question that is put to Jesus. Should we pay taxes to Caesar or not? And it's a question of authority.

And then at the end, there's a question that is put to Jesus at the beginning of that section. And at the end, Jesus puts a question to them. And that question is, what is your opinion of the Christ? Whose son is he? And he goes on to make a point out of the Christ being the son of David.

And if he is David's son, how can David call him Lord? Remember that? Well, this is the first instance of son of David occurring in this gospel. And it's going to be significant later on. Now, when you go back to the birth narrative, in the message that in Matthew is given by the angel, Joseph, in chapter 1, verse 20, has an angel of the Lord appear to him in a dream saying, Joseph, son of David.

Joseph, son of David. This is establishing the legal line of descendancy for the Lord Jesus to also be son of David. Do not be afraid to take Mary, your wife.

She will bring forth a son. You shall call his name Jesus. He will save his people from their sins.

We just saw the faith that brings about forgiveness of sins, the faith that makes one well. This was done to fulfill what was spoken by the Lord through the prophet saying, the virgin shall be with child and bear a son. They shall call his name Emmanuel, which is translated God with us.

Mary gives birth and in verse 25 of chapter 1, she brought forth her firstborn son and he called his name Yeshua. Interesting that in verse 23, his name is Emmanuel, but the angel says, call his name Yeshua, Jesus. He will save his people from their sins.

And this of course is what Joshua means is the one who saves. So this son of David theme is going to run through the gospel of Matthew starting at the beginning. It's going to be mentioned again at the conclusion that pregnant question that Jesus asks.

And you have these blind men saying son of David. So if I said, okay, close your books, we've got a pop quiz. What is the significance here of the blind men saying and addressing Jesus as son of David? What do they view him as? What would you say? Son of David is the Messiah, right? You are the Christ, right? So they're saying son of David heir to the throne.

What throne? The throne of his father, David. This is the throne of Israel, right? There is a kingdom. And when you have a kingdom, you have a king.

And so they are recognizing him as king. Now this, I can't emphasize too strongly. This comes directly after the sandwich miracle, which speaks dispensationally, right? And you

have Jairus and his daughter.

And then there is an interruption. And you have the dealing with the woman. And then there is the return to Jairus and the raising of his daughter.

When Jesus departs from there, the two blind men cry out and say son of David. So if you were going to continue to think dispensationally, after the resurrection of Old Testament saints, and you have people talking to the son of David, conceptually speaking, what part of history would you be in? Millennial kingdom, right? Bear that in mind now as we go through this. These are two blind men recognizing Jesus as the son of David.

When he had come into the house. What house? This has been a great subject of conjecture. In one place Jesus says the son of man has not where to lay his head.

But in other cases, it says he took up residence at Capernaum. So was he staying with friends? Was he staying at the house of Peter with his mother-in-law? Did he have a room in the back? The house isn't identified as belonging to Jesus or to whom it belongs. But Jesus ignored.

These guys follow him for some distance and continually cry out, say, son of David, have mercy on us. Son of David, have mercy on us. And he ignores them.

Now in our day of sensitivity to the alternately abled, am I saying that right? The alternately abled. This is very insensitive. Here are these blind guys tapping along, blind people following, guiding on the sound, trying not to run into things, tripping over people's trash cans and such.

Trying to follow Jesus through the streets back to the house. When he had come into the house, he went inside. So the blind men came in.

He doesn't talk to them until they come into the house. Important point. He doesn't talk to them in the streets.

He ignores them in the streets. He talks to them in the house. So Jesus says, do you believe that I am able to do this? What was at the center of Matthew's previous story? The woman believed and it was her faith that made her well.

If I touch his garment, I will be made well. She believed, doesn't say she believed in God, doesn't say she believed a promise. She believed that touching Jesus, she would be made well.

And Jesus said, your faith has done that. Now he says, do you believe that I am able to do this? Are you like the woman we just saw less than an hour ago? Are you of similar faith to her? Right? Think dispensationally now. This is part of why I have suggested in the past that ultimately saving faith is in the Lord Jesus.

Many times people say, well, Old Testament saints were saved because they believed in Jesus in prospect. I think they were blind in prospect. They trusted God and their salvation was based on Hebrews 11.6. The one who comes to the father must believe that he is and that he is a rewarder in a general and somewhat unfocused sense of those who diligently seek him.

You'll find in a lot of evangelical teaching and circles that people say, well, they had to have personal faith in Jesus Christ. No one comes to the father but by Jesus. He says that in John 14.6. So Old Testament saints, Abraham and Moses and Caleb and all those guys, Daniel and Hananiah, Mishaël, Azariah, anybody you want to name had to have personal faith in Jesus.

They were looking forward and they personally believed in the coming Savior. I suggest to you that Hebrews 11.6 applies to Old Testament saints. And when you go to Daniel 12, those who sleep in the dust of the earth are going to awake.

Those who had that general faith in God are going to be raised. But they're like these blind men. And so the question becomes when they are now in the millennial kingdom and they are addressing the son of David, the question is, do you believe that I am able to restore you, to give you sight, to give you that full functionality that goes with the removal of sin and the restoration that this represents? Do you believe that I am able to do this? Notice they said to him, yes, Lord.

Yes, Lord. Notice they don't say yes, son of David. They don't say yes, Jesus.

They don't just say yes. They say yes, Lord. What do we know about this appellation of Lord? Many will come to me in that day and say, Lord, Lord.

And he repeats it twice. Many will come to me that day and say, Lord, Lord. And then he says they will say, Lord, Lord, in your name did we not do this, that, and the other.

And Lord is actually repeated in that context four times. We'll see it in an upcoming chapter of Matthew. So they say, yes, Lord.

So he touched their eyes saying, according to your faith, let it be to you. According to your faith. Be of good cheer, daughter.

Be encouraged. Your faith has made you well according to your faith. Now, should we conclude from this that faith is required for healing? How many miracles have we seen where faith is not made an issue? We saw this in Matthew 8, 28 with the demon-possessed men, the two demon-possessed men.

There's no indication that they expressed faith. Now, they do run and fall at Jesus' feet, but there's no overexpression of faith. We're going to see coming up in Matthew chapter 11, verses 20 through 24, that Jesus, remember he's going to rebuke.

You remember this from your general knowledge. He began to rebuke the cities in which most of his mighty works had been done. I'm reading Matthew 11, 20.

Rebuke the cities where most of his mighty works had been done because they did not repent. Woe to you, Chorazin. Woe to you, Bethsaida.

If the mighty works which were done in you had been done in Tyre and Sidon, they would have repented long ago in sackcloth and ashes. I say to you, it will be more tolerable for Tyre and Sidon in the day of judgment than for you. And you, Capernaum, this is where he is right now, who are exalted to heaven will be brought down to Hades.

For if the mighty works which were done in you had been done in these other places, so mighty works are being done without faith. Now, there are times when faith is an issue. Elizabeth is reminding me that Jeroboam, when his hand gets withered in the Old Testament as a sign, his withered hand is restored.

But, of course, he was not exactly your prime example of faith. And so there are times when faith is an issue and times when it isn't. And it's interesting to figure out why does Jesus sometimes make an issue of that.

You remember, even at the beginning of this chapter, when Jesus saw their faith, he said to the paralytic, in Matthew's account and in this section, faith is an issue. Jesus sees the faith of the men letting down the paralytic and, of course, his faith as well. It is according to the daughter's faith that she is made well.

But interestingly, when it comes to Jairus in verse 18, you have the same thing. My daughter has just died, but come and lay your hand on her and she will live. He believes this.

Jesus doesn't explicitly call out the relationship to his faith, but he says, I know if you come and lay your hand on her, she will live. So in this section of Matthew, particularly, faith is an issue. According to your faith, let it be to you.

And their eyes were opened, which indicates they do have faith. Very interesting. According to you, if they had no faith, according to your faith, let it be to you.

And they walked away still blind. Not the case. Their eyes were opened and Jesus sternly warned them, saying, See, no one knows.

It's even shorter in Greek and it was probably even shorter in Aramaic. It's three words in Greek and you can say it in two words in Aramaic. See that no one knows.

But when they had departed, they spread the news about him in all that country. What is your Old Testament paradigm regularly repeated from their days during the nine plagues and then the Passover going out of Egypt? What is the constant pattern? They will

believe God, but that faith does not sustain itself and convert itself into obedience. They are disobedient.

No sooner have the Ten Commandments been given, than a guy goes out and picks up sticks and has to be stoned for doing so on the Sabbath. They believe and celebrate the deliverance of God. Miriam sings her song, dancing with timbrels, and the horse and his rider have been drowned in the sea and so on.

But just a couple of days later, they're grumbling and complaining. Where are the leeks and garlicks of Egypt? They believe and they are delivered. They trust and march out.

But their faith has no legs, if I can put it that way. The faith does not convert itself the way James will talk about. I will show you my faith by my works.

These men believe and they receive that deliverance, but it doesn't translate into obedience. This is a really serious problem. How often do we hear and understand the Word of God? And we assent to it.

We believe it. We trust and are cleansed from all unrighteousness. We recognize the wonderful grace by which God forgives our sins, heals our nature, fills in the gaps, overcomes our innate corruption, gives us more grace.

And yet, when it comes to the point of obedience, we're like these guys. This, in the dispensational context, would speak, would suggest, in my mind, maybe in my mind alone, that Israel resurrected has the same kind of attitude as Israel in the wilderness, as Israel in the land, as Israel in the United Kingdom, as Israel in the divided kingdom, as Judah in the southern kingdom. Momentary restoration, momentary, we found the scroll of the book, we're restoring the temple.

But when it comes to translating faith into obedience, I hear, I understand, I assent, I believe. And on the basis of that faith, I am granted grace from God, but I don't parlay, I don't convert, I don't walk forward in that faith in obedience. This is why the Exodus generation dropped in the wilderness.

They trusted God enough for coming out of the land, but not enough to go into the new land. It did not translate to obedience. The Lord Jesus is the object of faith.

Turn back to chapter 7, verse 21. I just alluded to this. Not everyone who says to me, Lord, Lord, shall enter the kingdom of heaven, but what? Saying, Lord, Lord, is what these blind men have done.

Son of David, you're the Lord. He who does the will of my Father in heaven. Many will say to me in that day, Lord, Lord, have we not prophesied in your name, cast out demons in your name, done many wonders in your name? The Lord has many names.

One of them is Son of David. One of them is Yeshua. One of them is Emmanuel.

I will declare to them, I never knew you. Depart from me, you who practice disobedience. As long as you're in chapter 7, it's never a bad idea to go back up to verse 13 and 14.

Enter by the narrow gate. Wide is the gate and broad is the way that leads to destruction. There are many who go in by it.

Narrow is the gate and narrow is the way which leads to life and there are few who find it. There are many who can have saving faith. Many who can have recognition faith.

Who's got the faith that translates into obedience? And this is going to be a regular problem for the Lord Jesus where after a stern warning, they decide they've got a better idea. It's interesting, this word for stern warning, you find it in Mark chapter 1. I have to look these up. I've got limited space on my screen here for obvious reasons.

You go to Mark chapter 1 verse 43. After the leper comes to Jesus, if you are willing, you can make me clean. Jesus says, I am willing, be cleansed.

Jesus stretched out his hand and touched him and he was cleansed. Then look at verse 43. He strictly warned him, the very same thing we have in our passage.

Strictly warned him, sent him away at once and said, see that you say nothing to anyone. We think how can it be a bad thing to talk about Jesus? How could it ever possibly be a bad thing to celebrate what Jesus has done? There are times when we should not. This is one of them.

He strictly warned him and sent him away and said, see that you say nothing to anyone. Go your way, show yourself to the priest. Verse 45.

He went out and began to proclaim it freely and to spread the matter so that Jesus could no longer openly enter the city. Too narrow a view. Too limited an understanding.

How can it be a bad thing? Well, you don't recognize unintended consequences of disobedience. There is a way that seems right to a man. That doesn't make it right.

As I said in the introduction in the first session, in this area, in this portion that we're looking at this morning, obedience, paying attention to what the Lord Jesus says and not just believing it, but acting on it is critical. This is the emphasis that Matthew is presenting us in this section of his gospel. Jesus sternly warned them.

If you go to Mark 14, verse 5, we reviewed this again on Friday night, the breaking of the alabaster perfume bottle and something that 300 denarii, this is nearly a year's wages. If you think about minimum wage, let's say somebody supposedly, maybe a yearly wage for a laborer might be \$25,000 a year, something along those lines. This would be something along the lines of an \$18,000 to \$20,000 bottle of perfume.

It is really a lot. This would be like a huge investment. These alabaster bottles of perfume were sealed and once you broke it, that's it.

There's no putting the cap back on and saying, well, I only used an ounce. They were sealed shut and they were broken to be opened. So it's no deposit, no return.

But when she did this and they said, well, it might have been sold for more than 300 denarii and given to the poor, they criticized her sharply. It's this same verb. It is a huge sense of negative disappointment, if you will.

Most interesting, if I say John 11, what do you say? And Jesus wept. What is the context in John 11? It's one of those chapters we just know, right? The love chapter, the faith chapter. John 11 is the Lazarus chapter, right? Well, this verb occurs twice in John 11 and you'll never figure out where looking at the English.

Elizabeth mentioned John 11, 35 in English, the shortest verse in the Bible, not the shortest verse in Greek. But when Jesus came to the town and was in the place where Martha met him in John 11, 30, the Jews who were with her in the house comforting her when they saw that Mary rose up quickly and went out following her saying she is going to the tomb to weep there. Then when Mary came where Jesus was and saw him, she fell down at his feet saying to him the very same thing Martha said earlier in the chapter.

If you had been here, my brother would not have died. Verse 33, this is our verse. The verb is in this verse.

Therefore, when Jesus saw her weeping and the Jews who came with her weeping, he groaned in the spirit and was troubled. Groaned in the spirit is our word. Warned him sternly.

Rebuked her sharply for breaking the alabaster. Jesus rebuked, sternly warned in the spirit. Interesting, no? What do we make of that? Jesus wept.

The Jews said see how he loved him. Some of them said could not this man who opened the eyes of the blind also have kept this man from dying? Verse 38, then Jesus again groaning in the spirit. And this is our word.

Groaning in himself. Groaning is sternly warned, sharply rebuked. Warning and rebuke in himself.

Warning and rebuke in the spirit. And was troubled. This to me, and probably only to me, I don't know if you can find anybody commenting or interpreting this passage who says this, but I will suggest it to you from my own impression.

I think this is the Lord Jesus with incredible self-control. In himself there is this kind of stern warning and sharp rebuke that he issues to the leper. And that he issues to these

blind men.

And he wants to, he in his spirit and within himself has a stern warning and a sharp rebuke for these people who are misunderstanding, misapplying. He has spoken earlier to Martha. Do you believe this? Why is Jesus weeping? He's near the close of his ministry.

This is John 11. John 12 is the Passion Week narrative, right? And after all of his teaching. And who do you think is at the grave of Lazarus with Mary and Martha? Their friends, their associates, this crowd ought to know better.

This is not the random multitudes. This is not anybody happening by when he's teaching at the seaside or assembled on the mountain. These are the confidants, the close.

Many of these are the quote unquote disciples, the larger group beyond the 12. Weeping and misunderstanding, not recognizing, not having the faith. I know that you have the power, that you are the one.

And that's why Jesus weeps. And there is a stern rebuke and warning that is bubbling up in his soul and in his spirit. And he squelches it.

And it mentions it twice. His disappointment, his wanting to make a point that he has made so many times, but he just stops. He doesn't say it.

It's within himself. It's in his spirit. The fruit of the Spirit, the culminating one in the list is what? Self-control.

He keeps that warning in his spirit. He recognizes that this isn't the time, this isn't the place, it isn't going to do any good. It will distract from the reason he has come, which is to focus attention on raising Lazarus from the dead.

But it's the same word. Jesus sternly warned them. We're back to Matthew chapter 9 here.

And as we close this morning, I just want to make one final point. See that no one knows it, but when they had departed, they spread the news about him in all that country. What's going to happen in the Millennial Kingdom with these raised Old Testament saints, many of whom are going to be like these blind men? Now, some of the Old Testament saints saw him.

Remember Balaam's prophecy? I see him now, but not near. Job said, I know that my Redeemer lives, and I will see him. Even though worms eat my flesh, I will see my Redeemer.

Daniel could see him coming. He saw the stone without hands. Joseph could see him coming in his dreams.

There were those who saw. These blind men represent so many in Israel who had the faith to recognize and understand what God was saying and to benefit from it, but not to fuel obedience. There is so much here that I wanted to cover this morning, and I'm going to save for next time.

I will simply make the point, and we'll illustrate it next time. But the number of times that Jesus is misunderstood, if you'll bear with me, I think I can cover this right quick. This goes back to when Jesus spoke in verse 24 and said, make room for the girl is not dead but sleeping, and they derisively laugh at Him.

It's important that we listen to what Jesus says. It is one thing to believe it, and it is something else to act on it. If these men had listened to what Jesus said, His stern warning, this sharp tone, same one He uses with the leper.

As I've said before, it's like slamming him up against the wall and saying you've got to say nothing to anyone. In the other Gospels, He even tells Jairus and his wife this. But there is a tendency for people to listen to Jesus without listening to Him, to listen to Him and misunderstand Him, to listen to Him and reinterpret His words.

And you have an example here in our earlier context. The girl is not dead but sleeping. They misunderstand Him.

Now, when He says she's not dead but sleeping, is He speaking literally or is He speaking in terms of outcomes? She is, in fact, dead. She's not in a coma. She's not actually just asleep.

When Jesus speaks, He's expecting people who ought to know to understand what He really means. When He says, there are a lot of things He says this way. In John 2, verse 20, Jesus said, you see this temple and all of its great buildings.

And He says, destroy this temple and in three days I will raise it up. Remember that? John 2, 20. And they say, it's taken 46 years to build this temple.

Will you raise it up in three days? And they did not understand that the temple He was speaking of was His body. You've got to look past. You've got to reflect.

You have to know the Lord Jesus and be thinking about what He means. John 3, verse 3. Jesus says to Nicodemus, unless one is born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God. Nicodemus says, you mean I've got to crawl back inside my mother and be born again? Not hearing what Jesus is saying, just taking the words at face value and immediately misunderstanding it.

And you go to John 4, verse 14. Whoever drinks of the water that I... Remember John 4, that's the woman at the well, another signal chapter, another landmark chapter. Whoever drinks of the water I shall give him will never thirst.

The water I shall give him will become a fountain of water springing up into everlasting life. So the woman at the well says, sir, give me this water that I may not thirst and come to this well and have to draw. She hears Jesus, but she doesn't perceive what he's saying.

Seeing, they see and do not perceive. Hearing, they hear, but they do not understand. Over and over again.

John 4, verse 32. When the disciples come and he says, I have food to eat of which you do not know. The disciples said to one another, has someone brought him something to eat? I have food to eat of which you do not know.

They hear him, but they don't understand it. Hearing, they hear, and they do not understand. Seeing, they see and do not perceive.

John 6, 51 and 52. I am the living bread, which came down from heaven. If anyone eats of this bread, he will live forever.

And the bread that I shall give is my flesh, which I give for the life of the world. Verse 52. The Jews therefore quarreled among themselves saying, how can this man give us his flesh to eat? When you stop to think about it, this happens a lot.

John 7, verse 34. You will seek me and not find me. And where I am, you cannot come.

The Jews said among themselves, where does he intend to go that we shall not find him? Does he intend to go to the dispersion among the Greeks and teach the Greeks? Hearing, not understanding. John 8, verse 51. I say to you, if anyone keeps my word, he shall never see death.

The Jews said to him, now we know you have a demon. Abraham is dead, the prophets. And you say, if anyone keeps my word, he shall never taste death.

Hearing, not understanding. This is why it is so important. I can give you many other examples.

We've just seen in John 11, go back to the beginning, when he tells, he hears that Lazarus is ill unto death. And Jesus says to his disciples, our friend Lazarus sleeps, but I go that I may wake him up. His disciples said, Lord, if he sleeps, he'll get well.

Hearing, not understanding. John 14, four. Where I go, you know, and the way you know.

And right in the next verse, Thomas says, Lord, we don't know where you're going. How can we know the way? Hearing, not understanding. Think about our Bible studies.

Think about the kind of faith that is sufficient for an immediate deliverance, an immediate dispensation of grace, but doesn't fuel us into a pattern of faithful obedience.

And we wind up doing what we think is right, what we think is beneficial. This describes the church in the modern day.

We're praising Jesus without really understanding what he means when he speaks, what he requires of us, what he asks of us, what daily Christian faith and obedience looks like. So easy to see and not perceive. So easy to hear and not understand because our hearts have grown calloused.

Otherwise, we would turn and repent and receive amazing deliverance, amazing levels of understanding, amazing levels of opportunity, something to reflect on in the hours and days ahead. But let's close here in a word of prayer. Father, we thank you for the truth of your word, the wonderful record we have that is so fulsome, so real, so three-dimensional of the Lord Jesus, his words and his works.

And in the hands of your Holy Spirit, so able to transform us and renew us and empower us and enable us to not only believe, not only to see, but to be obedient and to live a life that reflects your glory, that honors the Savior, that prepares us not only for good works and a testimony in this life, but for service and opportunity in the ages to come. We pray that God, the Holy Spirit, will minister these things to each of our hearts. May we find comfort and encouragement and challenge in them in the days ahead.

We ask it in Jesus' name.