

Matthew 20-04-26a

Good morning. Welcome to the Sunday morning services at Grace and Truth Bible Church. We're going to continue our study in the Gospel of Matthew, picking up in chapter 9, verse 32.

And I want to wish you all a very pleasant spring morning. I hope your weather is as beautiful wherever you may be as it is here. And we have a very interesting study before us this morning.

Our Thursday night investigations have been addressing angels, their role down through history. And we've reached the point where we are looking both at their involvement in the end times, their involvement in our current times. And of course, there are both the elect and the fallen angels.

There are both God's obedient angels and those disobedient and angels known as demons. And coincidentally, our passage this morning in Matthew 9, 32 and following deals with a demon who had possessed a man and caused him to lose the capacity for speech in connection with what we saw last time in the healing of the two blind men. This is going to be quite fraught with significance beyond the physical miracle itself, its place in the chapter, its connection to the other events of this day is going to be something we'll take a close look at.

But let's begin, as we always do, by asking God's blessing on our fellowship and our study, and we'll get started. Father, we thank you for this day. We thank you for the opportunity to spend time together in fellowship and in the study of your word.

We pray that as our attention focuses on the Lord Jesus, on his words and on his works in this portion of your word, that God, the Holy Spirit, will be our teacher, will clarify and bring to our hearts not only an understanding of what happens, but its pertinence and applicability in our present time so that we can bear the fruit of the Spirit, that we can walk in love, that we can sustain and grow our faith, and that we can develop our hope and our expectation for the soon return of the Lord Jesus to take us to himself and to enter us into that next phase of your plan and purpose for which we hope to be prepared and to be qualified to enter into inheritance, to enter into function and reflecting your glory, not only in this age, but also in the age to come. We pray these things in Jesus' name. Amen.

Turning our attention to the 32nd verse of Matthew 9, we'll see our primary passage here. As they went out, behold, they brought to him a man, mute and demon-possessed. And when the demon was cast out, the mute spoke.

And the multitudes marveled, saying, It was never seen like this in Israel. But the Pharisees said, He casts out demons by the ruler of demons. That's our passage.

There might've been a time when having only three verses to talk about would have been daunting, but I am going to be struggling to fit everything into our two sessions this morning from these three verses, because this is an opportunity for us to, as I said, address the function of demons, both in Jesus' day, in the early days of the church age, in these closing days of the church age, and then ultimately, which we probably won't see till Thursday night, their role in the tribulation and their ultimate locking away for the duration of the millennial kingdom. Let's first of all, think about this in terms of its context. I mentioned last time that this is a long and busy day for the Lord Jesus.

The chapter begins with Jesus getting into a boat, crossing over and coming to his own city. And they bring him the paralytic who is let down through the roof. In verse nine, Jesus passed on from there and saw Matthew, the tax collector and says to him, arise.

And he does. And he follows that Jesus sits at table in the house. Many tax collectors and centers came and sat down with him and his disciples.

Then the disciples of John came to him evidently in that same setting in verse 14, asking him the question about fasting. In verse 18, while he spoke these things, Jairus, the ruler of the synagogue comes to him. It's possible that this was the next day if the meal at Matthew's was an evening meal, but it's also possible that it was the midday meal.

And it looks to me like this is all in the same day. So Jesus goes to follow Jairus to address the issue with his daughter. And then you have the woman with the issue of blood.

And we've seen the significance of this particular incident in all of the gospel accounts. The woman with the issue of blood is healed after Jesus has spoken with Jairus, but before he arrives at the house to go to the upper room and take the girl by the hand. And that interruption, that death of the little girl that's detailed in the other gospels is significant in terms of foreshadowing the intercalation.

I-N-T-E-R-C-A-L-A-T-I-O-N. C-A-L-A is in the middle of inter and ation. Intercalation, it is the insertion.

It is the interruption of the age of Israel when it still has seven years left to run. And this is pictured in the interruption of Jesus on his way to raise the dead for Israel. Jairus, the ruler of the synagogue, the woman with the issue of blood strongly suggests the church.

Husbands love your wives as Christ loved the church and gave himself for it. And they have had the 12-year age of the girl and the 12 years of affliction for the woman speaks of the common problem of sin. It doesn't matter how righteous Israel tries to be under the law.

By the law comes the knowledge of sin, and by the works of the law no flesh shall be justified. So the interruption of this girl's life at the age of 12, 12 being the number of

Israel, speaks of the impossibility of coming to maturity and function without this wages of sin leading to death problem being addressed. And so the problem of the girl and the problem of this woman with the issue of blood are both solved in the same day at the same time by the same Lord Jesus.

But this arrangement speaks of the future of Israel not coming to pass, the fulfillment of the Old Testament covenants not being in view until God finishes what he is doing with the church. And so we have this beautiful dispensational picture of the Messiah on the way to address Israel's problem. The girl in the other gospels is ill, and then while Jesus is addressing the woman's issue of blood, and it's a surprise, it's a mystery, even Jesus himself has to look around in the crowd and ask, who touched me? And in his humanity you get the notion that Jesus did not access his omniscience, the deity side of his capabilities, but it reminds us that the church and its part in God's plan was a mystery not revealed.

Paul is going to be the apostle that is going to be given the mission of explaining and elaborating the church age. Then after she is well, suddenly the rest of the story of Jairus and his daughter takes place, and this is going to be the addressing of the mourners and the cacophony that takes place in the upper room, and everyone thinks the girl is actually dead. Jesus says, no, she's sleeping, and he takes her by the hand.

Remember Jairus said, if you will come and lay your hand on her in her illness, she will be made well. Well, he takes her by the hand and raises her up, and it's a picture of Daniel 12, 1 and 2. Many who sleep in the dust of the earth will awake, and this is going to be the beginning of the millennial kingdom, and the girl, he says in other gospels, give her something to eat. She walks around.

She's like the dry bones in Ezekiel's valley that are restored to life and function and given breath, and this, of course, is the fulfillment and the initial phase of God's covenant restoration of Israel and fulfillment of all of those promises, the Davidic covenant, the Abrahamic covenant, all of the land promises, everything that God promised them is fulfilled. Well, it's a beautiful picture. Jairus, we've talked about it before.

You could just go on endlessly looking at the details and the warp and the woof of that fabric stretching back into the Old Testament and forward into the future, but as Jesus, verse 27 now, this is what we looked at last time, when Jesus departed from there, same day, two blind men followed him, crying out and saying, son of David, have mercy on us, and when he had come into the house, the blind men came to him, coming into the house, suggests to me, and I don't want to be guilty of fanciful or, is there a word that you can tack on, a suffix for fanciful, fancifulality, fancifulness? As I don't want to go into a sort of mystical kind of interpretation here, but when Jesus enters into the house, why are we given this detail? Why does he not speak to these men until he is in the house?

They are blind. Jesus talks about blindness in Israel. He has that famous conversation we've revisited many times where the Pharisees say, are we blind also? And he says, if you were blind, you would have no sin, but because you insist on saying, we see your sin remains and the opportunity for Israel in the millennial kingdom, when Jesus enters into the house, when he sits on the throne of his father, David, that's, that's the house.

It's the house of Israel. It's the fulfillment of Israel dwelling in the land, flowing with milk and honey with peace and rest on every side. And I, it suggests to me that this is a continuation of the chronological suggestion that begins with Jairus.

And, there's a possibility that even before that, with the paralytic and, and, and what Jesus says about the friends of the bridegroom and the wineskins and the garment, that this is, is part of the setup for this picture, but son of David, the sons of David prop the prophets allude several times to the fact that they will rule Israel in the coming kingdom. And Jesus of course, is the son of David capital S and he and the other sons of David are both said to rule. So addressing him as son of David is fraught with, with a further meaning in this regard, but they're blind to blind men.

Do you believe that I am able to do this? They said to him, yes, Lord, he touched them, touched their eyes. Once again, this contact, Jesus is present. And of course, Jesus will be physically present in the millennial kingdom.

His second coming, his feet touched the Mount of Olives. It splits. It provides a way of escape.

A river flows. There is the visible presence of the Lord Jesus and the other sons of David in Israel for the duration of the millennial kingdom. So he is present to touch.

He touches their eyes and says, according to your faith, let it be to you. And we don't have time to turn there, but if you remember the sheep and goats judgment, we'll see this upcoming in Matthew, but what is the basis of the judgment in the millennial kingdom? According to your faith, let it be to you. Their, their eyes are going to be opened.

When the sleeping old Testament saints open their eyes, they are going to see the Lord Jesus. And it is going to be according to their faith that they are rewarded according to their faith, that they have opportunity according to their faith, that they have privilege. And according to their faith, that they will be judged at the end of the age.

I've mentioned before that, uh, faith is the substance of things hoped for and the evidence of things not seen. Right. This is Hebrews 11 and the millennial age is the age of seeing he, there is not a lot of occasion for faith because you're, you're in the age of fulfillment.

It's not hope. It's not promise. It's not expectation.

It's not, I see him now, but not near it's not Job. I know that someday I will see my redeemer, even though the worms eat my flesh with my own eyes, I will see him. That's an expectation.

That's faith and hope and love for God expressed in sustaining and growing that faith. And that hope in the age of the millennium, it's all open and visible. It is the time of sight.

According to your faith, let it be to you. This is where old Testament saints will begin. You can imagine that Caleb and Joshua and Daniel and Hananiah and Mishael and Azariah and Benaiah, the son of Jehoiada and, and so many of the other, uh, I feel like somebody at an award ceremony saying, you know, I'd like to thank the following people.

And you're afraid of leaving someone out. There's so many wonderful old Testament saints. They are going to have privilege and opportunity and, and potential for service in the millennial kingdom, according to their faith, the faith that they had in their, uh, earthly lives and people who grow up, there's going to be many children.

Jesus is going to resurrect the infants in my view. And these are the lambs that are in his arms pictured in Isaiah. When he returns, they're going to come to maturity early in the millennial kingdom and live for hundreds of years as it was in the, uh, days of the patriarchs and earlier where people had long lives.

If you die at the age of a hundred, he was just a baby. They'll say he was just a youth. And so according to their faith, it will be to them according to their obedience.

Did you, there, there will still be problems to be addressed. There will still be naked. There will still be sickness.

They will still be hungry. And Jesus says in the, uh, course of the sheep and goats judgment, uh, the goats are going to be judged because if you have not done it to the least of these, my brethren, you have not done it to me. If you have done it, the sheep who take opportunity to serve and to express their faith and their confidence in God, looking forward, perhaps in faith to the kingdom of the father, because it is a time of testing.

It is a time of opportunity where they will have the Holy spirit, which they did not have in the old Testament day. God says in that age, he will pour out his spirit on all flesh. So they will have the enablement that we have now.

And we are held accountable because we have the spirit and we have the word. They will be caught up. They will catch up and have the same opportunity to demonstrate their faith and their obedience, their love for God and love for one another in the millennial kingdom.

And this will be the basis of their judgment at the end of the age. Will they go forward into the eternal kingdom of the father where outcomes are no longer distinguished by, were you Israel or were you church? The four sides of the new Jerusalem have got gates named after both the tribes and the apostles indicating that there is a common future for faithful believers who love God and love one another who take the opportunities for obedience and for laying hold of righteousness by faith and earn a place. And I said, earn, it is earned.

Everything is of grace, but by faith and patience, we inherit the promises. And this is something we decide, something we choose. We choose it now in this age.

Israel was limited. It was a demonstration and God is going to reward them by bringing them back and pouring out his spirit on them and giving them the chance for a thousand years to do what they manifestly were unable to do as a demonstration to them, to us and to the angels that without contact with God, without enablement and the active spirit of God, we can do nothing. Jesus said without me, you can do nothing.

And it is the spirit of Christ, the Holy Spirit, the spirit of God that gives us the enablement. Human flesh cannot see God, but with the position we have in Christ and with the future enablement they will receive in the spirit. That's what's going to happen.

So as you look at these who are given their sight in Matthew nine, 27 through 31, their eyes were opened. Jesus sternly warned them. And I showed you the passages where, uh, this, this is really a, a sort of a sharp rebuke.

It's the same verb that was used when Mary broke the alabaster perfume bottle and there went a year's wages for an anointing and people criticized sharply. And he said, see, no one knows it's it's three words in Greek. It may have only been two in Aramaic, which I'm sure is the language.

This, this sharp instruction was given. Jesus delivers these words with a frown. So when they had departed, they spread the news about him and all that country.

It's a simple command and it is a, a command to refrain from doing a thing. He didn't say, go climb the Mount of Olives and build a monument. He didn't say, make a long journey, go on a pilgrimage.

This was a command for self-control, curb your enthusiasm, control your tongue. It's a simple command. I have often imagined that God may have done extraordinary things in this age, and we don't know about it because believers who have had those experiences, seen those things, been in that position, were instructed not to talk about it and they were faithful and obedient.

And that's why we don't know about it. It's important to observe not only the things that we are commanded to do, but to pay attention to those things we are commanded not to

do. And these men think they know better.

How could it be wrong to celebrate the son of David giving us our sight? Let me tell you my story. Let me share my testimony. It's powerful.

You'll come to believe because I'm living proof, not having the larger picture, not having the greater context. We often see a way that seems right to us, but the ends thereof are the ways of death. And just because it makes sense to us, doesn't mean it's right.

Just because it appeals. You could imagine how as initially maybe a side benefit, these men began to realize that they were quite the focus of attention. They were invited for meals and come over tonight.

I'm going to invite a crowd and you can regale us with the account. And there is a hook into the self-gratification that comes with being recognized and being listened to and being the focus of attention. It's a natural human failing.

And it's one we have to watch out for. Jesus said, don't let your desire for attention get the better of you. Why else would they tell this story? One of two things, either they enjoy the attention that they got or they have a genuine desire to celebrate the Lord Jesus.

In either case, it's wrong. Even when they're trying to celebrate the Lord Jesus. And you look at churches today that are committed to celebrating the Lord Jesus.

But if you do it in a wrong way, if you do it for wrong reasons, if you make an issue of the wrong things as you do it, it becomes a problem and not a solution. It becomes sin and not righteousness. They departed and spread the news about him in all that country.

And we know from other passages that when people did this, it worked a hardship on the Lord Jesus. It inhibited his travel. It interfered with his ministry.

It obfuscated his mission. It messed up the timing. There is a time for him to reveal himself.

He told his own mother at the wedding feast of Cana, it's not the hour for me to do something like this. And you can imagine that Jesus could have anticipated that these things would happen. It did not prevent him from performing that miracle anyway.

And it's another one of those things that Jesus absorbed and took on himself. Even knowing that we imperfectly receive blessings, he grants them anyway. Even though it may not be in the best line of God's plan and purpose, God cares for us and God responds to our requests.

It should be our goal to try to have goals and desires that are in line with God's plan and purpose. And that's why we study the word of God. Well, keep in mind now, if my

suggestion, and it's only a suggestion, if this doesn't make sense, please, this is just a Sam thing.

I've never seen or heard anybody else take this tack, so I could be completely in the weeds. I'm just saying, I'm pretty confident on the gyrus and woman with the issue of blood. That is beyond doubt in my own little hamster wheel.

I'm pretty confident on that. It suggests strongly to me that the picture is continuing here and that these blind men are suggestive of conditions and expectations in the millennial kingdom for Israel. They were blind, now they see.

He came into his own and his own received him not. They were blind. They looked right at him and largely missed him.

When they come back, they are not going to be able to help, but see him. They're going to have their sight restored. The spirit is going to be poured out on all flesh.

We won't be flesh. We will be resurrection material like the Lord Jesus. They are coming back resuscitated.

Death is possible. Sweat is possible. Sickness is possible.

There will still be problems. This is why there needs to be rulership and a rod of iron and breaking potter's vessels in pieces in the millennial kingdom. There will be resistance.

There will be uprisings. It is still going to be a human economy where there is sin, there is failure, there is the need for force, there is death, and so on. This is one of the reasons why the sacrificial system is going to continue through the millennial kingdom.

Here we have the granting of sight. There are two men. You get the idea that they have both made the same decision.

What if one of them had chosen differently? You have ten lepers. One of them comes back to give thanks when Jesus heals them. You have two thieves, one on each side of the cross.

Initially, they both mock, but then one changes his mind. Do you remember when Jesus told the story of the sons? Which is better? If the father says, go to the field, and he says, I won't go, but then he does? Or the one who says, I'll go, and then he does not? You have this opportunity for two. Both of these men depart and spread the news.

It is a dismal expectation for most of Israel, much as it is a dismal expectation for most of us. Strive to enter by the narrow gate. Wide is the gate, broad is the way that leads to destruction.

This is not the road to hell. This is the road to loss, to failure, to being outside that place

of blessing and opportunity, sharing hidden manna and white stones and new names and intimate fellowship and sitting with the Lord Jesus on His throne and the other overcomer blessings. Most of us aren't going to get there, and there's no excuse.

There's no excuse. We have free will. We've been given every provision, every opportunity.

What is the matter with us that we don't want this bad enough to make it happen? There's no obstacle in our way. Jesus says, without me, you can do nothing. He also says, Paul says, with Christ, all things are possible.

With God, all things are possible. He has given us every spiritual blessing in the heavenly places. We have a heavenly citizenship.

You remember that beautiful menorah we saw in Ephesians chapter one, the seven wonderful emphasis on things we have in Christ. In Him we have, in Him, in Him. And if your first page of Ephesians is marked up like mine, every one of those in Hymns has a circle around it.

And if you haven't done it, go back and do it and read it. This is the motivation in Him. Why would you fail? Why would you end up like these blind men thinking you're doing a great thing and end up rebuked and judged and outside roasting marshmallows over your inheritance in the lake of fire, the second death for your inheritance, the second death for your opportunities, the second death for your privileges and a chance to serve and to enter into and to be a part of God's future programs.

Who knows what God is going to do in the eternal future. If you look at what he's already done, this is just a foretaste. And to, to be like the angels, can you imagine what it's like to be one of the senior angels and get to watch and be a part of how much fun does Gabriel have? How much enjoyment does Michael get in serving the seraphim and the cherubim being right there, hearing all of the commands that come from the throne? We have no concept of how fascinating and interesting and gratifying it is to see God at work.

He's a creative God. He's a moving God. He's an interested God.

He's a compassionate God. He's a forward thinking, forward looking, forward moving father in heaven. Who wouldn't want, uh, you know, people father's day and they say, Oh, here's all the wonderful things about my father.

You have someone who passes away and at the memorial service, looking back over a life. And, and, uh, if a man was married and had kids, it always impinges on, he was a great father. He did this, he did that.

He involved us. Well, we've got a heavenly father and, and put all of that exponentially

beyond imagination. Who wouldn't want to be a part of that? Well, if we want it, we know how to do it.

And that's what this encouragement is. Don't be blind. Don't think there's a right way and a right thing.

Listen to what the Lord says. They had an idea of how to celebrate him and how to honor him and how to have a self gratifying experience in the process. And it was wrong.

It was disobedient. It interfered, it obstructed, it slowed things down for the Lord Jesus and his humanity. Well, now, as we pick up this morning in verse 32, as they went out, they brought to him and notice as they went out that the blind men are no longer, they tapped their way in.

They're celebrating their way out. They're looking around and, and just as an aside, you've heard me mention this before, but you think about granting the gift of sight. How long does it take a newborn infant to build the neural network to process visual information? It's just light hitting a retina and nerves firing and sending patterns to the brain to babies are constantly wiggling around and experiencing the environment and looking at their hands.

And how long does it take us to, to build the library, to process visual information, to have depth perception and spatial awareness and, uh, interpretation of color and the two different signals from our eyes for distance judging and, and recognition of faces. And it is a hugely complex to simply flip the switch and say, the TV is on in the brain is a great oversimplification of what restoration from blindness actually involves. This miracle is just beyond comprehension.

If you look at it scientifically, if someone was born blind and all of the, all of the memory and the processing and the, the reference library that's required in your mind to interpret what comes through the lenses of your eyes and hits your retina is just extraordinary. And the Lord Jesus, when he says, according to your faith, let it be to you. And they can suddenly see this is, I think restoration of sight is just one of the most profound miracles you can imagine in the same way that when he, when the deaf could hear, uh, it would just be a cacophony of, of scary input.

But evidently when the deaf could hear, they understood speech. How, how do you build that in? That's, that's a big block of programming that just got copied and pasted right into their brain. Same thing with sight.

The senses, it takes us years to develop an understanding and a comprehension. They got it instantaneously. This is the power the Lord Jesus has.

So, and as they went out and I just, I love that phrase. I could, I could do a whole message on as they went out seeing they bring as these guys are coming out, they pass

in the hallway, a man mute and demon possessed. Well, this is where we're going to pause and take our break.

But keep in mind, as you have your snack and fill up your coffee cup, um, my suggestion about where we are in a time map, in a projected expectation of what the dispensations are going to do. And when we come back, we're going to look not only at, at the beauty of this marvelous miracle that the Lord accomplishes in these three verses and the Pharisee's reaction to it, uh, but it's cause and the resolution of that problem by the power and the word of the Lord Jesus. But, uh, let's pause here and take our break.