

Pursue Jesus

Several years ago Madison was trying to pursue me. But I was busy! I had to get the grass cut. Madison was only 5 years old, and if you've ever met Madi... the girl can talk! And love to have conversations with her but at that time it just wasn't convenient for me.

Our youngest at the time was Alaina and she was just a baby. Laura had taken her into town and left Haylie and Madison with me. I was already at the point if I waited any longer to cut the grass I would need a bailer to clean up after I was done. So I head to the backyard with my little push mower to get started and I left Madi and Haylie in the front yard to play.

This job was going take me about an hour and half. I got couple rows cut when Madi comes running out to me to talk. Of course I can't hear her because the mower is going. I shut it down and ask her what she needs. And she just wants to talk, "Hey dad, it's really hot. Where did mom go? I wanted to go with her." That type of conversation. I told her I couldn't talk now because I needed to get this done before it got dark and that she needed to run of and play. Please don't interrupt me till I'm done.

About 5 minutes go by and she comes running back out to me. "Hey Dad!" as she yells over the lawnmower. So I shut it down and again. "What!" – I am not always the most patient person. "Dad, can we play with water and squirt guns?" "I don't care, leave me alone right now!"

She runs off to play with Haylie (who's only 3 at the time) with some squirt guns and the hose. I thought that would keep them busy for the rest of my night as I tried to finish the yard work. But I was way wrong! The did love playing with the water but after another 5 minutes of cutting the grass Madi comes running back to me. "Hey Dad!"

At this time I'm getting mad. I'm thinking that something better really wrong, I cannot keep taking a break every 5 minutes to talk. It's hot, there's work to get done; I'm being interrupted for the 3rd time in less than 15 minutes... it's starting to get ridiculous!

So I shut off the mower, "What?!". See, Madi had a situation unfolding in the front yard that she didn't know how to respond to but she knew her daddy could take care of it. So she said what she had to say, "Daddy, Haylie doesn't have any clothes on!" Oh man! Let's get this situation taken care of.

Madison was pursuing me. At first it was just for interaction, for conversation. But then it came to a point where she had a problem and she had no idea how to take care of it on her own. So she comes running to her daddy – who is busy and needs to get things done –

but she knows he can control this situation and properly restore things the way that they are supposed to be.

Today we are going to be looking into Matthew 9 and we will see some individuals who also have some difficulties in their lives. If you've been here for the past several weeks as Thad has been walking through the book of Matthew you would have heard that Jesus has been really busy in chapters 8 and 9 doing some incredible miracles.

So far we have seen Jesus cleanse a man with leprosy, remove the paralysis of the Centurion's servant while being a great distance away. Jesus took away the fever of Peter's mother-in-law, he also calmed the sea while riding in a boat with the disciples during a great storm. He cast out the demons of some men as he entered the country of the Gadarenes and allowed them to enter into a herd of pigs. And there are several other miracles as well; a total of 10 miracles in chapters 8 & 9.

There is a similarity in all of these situations. Each one has an individual or a group of people that has a problem, a pain, a disease and they have run out of options. They don't know where else to turn. The difficulty in their life is something that they cannot handle or take care of on their own. And that's where the Hero of the story steps.

The One who is powerful enough to tackle all obstacles that comes His way. As we pick it up in Matthew 9:27, we find Jesus traveling and heading to a house. So follow along with me as I read 27-34.

2 Stories

I. Jesus Heals Two Blind Men

1. Blindness

i. A common disability in this time period

- Blindness was common in ancient times, as it still is in most underdeveloped parts of the world. The fact that Jesus healed more cases of blindness than any other kinds of diseases reflects its commonness. Unsanitary conditions, infectious organisms, blowing sand, accident, war, malnutrition, and excessive heat all combined to make blindness a constant danger. Many infants were born blind because of various diseases suffered by the mother during pregnancy.¹
- I couldn't imagine not being able to see. Now I don't believe that there is anyone in here that is completely blind. Some of you may be thinking if you take away my coke-bottle glasses I would be pretty blind!

ii. Can we relate?

a. We all suffer

- While although you may not be physically blind, I am confident that you have struggles somewhere in your life. That each and every one of you has faced pain

¹ MacArthur commentary pg. 89

either in your past, or maybe you're going through a rough time right now or there is difficulty on the road ahead. It's a harsh reality that ever since Adam took a bite of that forbidden fruit in the garden and therefore inviting sin into the world that we have all faced and will continue to endure suffering until Jesus comes again.

b. Suffering creates in us desperation!

- Why are we desperate? It's because we have little to no control over our affliction or condition. We have run out of options.

iii. These men were also desperate! While the people of Israel may have had concern for those who were blind. There was very little that anyone could do anything for them.

2. Jesus' compassion

- Jesus has great compassion for the sick and afflicted
- Chapters 8-9 contain 10 miracles
- "Mercy"
 - pity

He was the most merciful human being who ever lived. He reached out to the sick and healed them. He reached out to the crippled and gave them legs to walk. He healed the eyes of the blind, the ears of the deaf, and the mouths of the dumb. He found prostitutes and tax collectors and those that were debauched and drunken, and He drew them into the circle of His love and redeemed them and set them on their feet.

He took the lonely and made them feel loved. He took little children and gathered them into His arms and loved them. Never was there a person on the face of the earth with the mercy of this One.²

3. The men call him "Son of David"

- First time this is mentioned in Matthew
- Physically blind but their eyes to spiritual things were wide open.
- "Son of David"
 - Another way of saying Messiah
 - This is the One who was promised back in 2 Samuel 7 when God told the prophet Nathan to go and speak these words to King David.

¹²When your days are fulfilled and you lie down with your fathers, I will raise up your offspring after you, who shall come from your body, and I will establish his kingdom. ¹³He shall build a house for my name, and I will establish the throne of his kingdom forever.

c. This is significant

- Where we are hearing just another title for Jesus, these men are publically broadcasting that Jesus is the Christ – Perceptive and Very Dangerous. ³

4. Jesus waited until inside the house

- Whose house?

² MacArthur commentary pg. 91

³ The Christbook

- a. Some suggest it was His own house – “foxes have holes, and birds of the air have nests, but the Son of Man has nowhere to lay his head”
 - b. But more likely one of Jesus’ disciples
 - ii. This was not typical of Jesus
 - a. Usually when people who pursued Him with faith, he would immediately respond. Jesus was never too busy or preoccupied to show mercy to those who were pursuing Him.
 - b. Why not this time? 3 possibilities
 - 1) Modesty – to have a little bit of privacy
 - 2) Test their faith – Jesus is always moved by faith
 - 3) Perhaps the best reason is because they called Him, “the Son of David.” If people were certain that He was the Messiah, they just might rush in to crown Him as a political King and hope that he would lead them to overthrowing Rome or that a great division would arise leading to His premature death on the cross – and it wasn’t time for that.
 - 5. A question of Faith
 - i. Jesus is always impressed by faith
 - ii. They didn’t just have an good impression from Jesus. They believe what they had heard about Jesus. Obviously, they never saw any of the miracles that He had done before... but they had enough about Him and perhaps they had heard Him speak before
 - iii. But they believed beyond a shadow of a doubt that Jesus was the Messiah and He could remove their blindness.
 - 6. They believe
 - i. Call Jesus Lord – I do believe that it was a belief beyond the physical healing of their eyes but a belief that brings spiritual healing to their soul.
 - ii. More than a title – you’re just some guy, you’re my Lord, my Savior.
 - 7. Jesus touches their eyes
 - i. Some really cool things
 - a. Jesus touches their eyes – He doesn’t just say some words. But here are some eyes that have more than likely been destroyed by some bacteria or disease. And Jesus touches them to restore sight.
 - b. They have not seen anything, the first things their eyes see is Jesus Christ. How awesome is that?
- Here is the One who is the image of the invisible God
 - Here is the One who ranked above all creation.

- Here is the One who created EVERYTHING in heaven and on earth, the things that are visible and invisible – everything was created through this One and before this One and this is the One who holds all things together.
- Here is the One who would eventually reconcile all things to Himself and make peace by the blood of His cross.
- Here is Jesus Christ, the Son of David, the Messiah
- And He is the One their restored eyes see first. Before they see a sunset, or a mountain scene or anything else, they get to look into the eyes of their Savior.

c. I can't wait for the day for my day to stand before my Savior and these men probably able to say "Thank You" I can't wait to say my "Thank You" to my Savior and for my faith to be transitioned into sight.

8. Jesus gives a warning

- i. Why does Jesus do this?
- ii. Obviously some people are going to find out. But Jesus asks them to not spread the word about what He had done.
- iii. If His popularity grew it would become very difficult for Him to continue on with ministry the way that he had been doing it.
- iv. In Mark 1 Jesus had given the same warning to man that he healed from leprosy. But the man ignored Jesus warning,

45 But he went out and began to talk freely about it, and to spread the news, so that Jesus could no longer openly enter a town, but was out in desolate places, and people were coming to him from every quarter.

9. The men disobey their Lord

- v. Is this sin?
- Kids being told one thing and then run off and do the exact opposite

One commentator that I was reading this past week said that there is a possibility with our next story that the ones who brought in the demon-oppressed man was actually the two formally blind men.

II. Jesus heals the demon-oppressed

1. Someone brought the demon-oppressed man to Jesus
2. Mute/possibly deaf
 - i. Physically wounded
 - ii. Spiritually attacked!
3. A division occurred after Jesus healed this man
 - i. The crowd
 - a. Marveled
 - 1) Amazed, stunned
 - 2) You ever have one of those moments that you see something that just blows you away?
 - 3) Never has anything like this seen in Israel!

- They knew of the miracles God performed while Moses demanded to Pharaoh to release the Israelites from slavery
 - They knew how God delivered the Israelites through parting the Red Sea
 - They knew of the great miracles with Elijah and Elisha.
 - But now they are witnessing with their own eyes a divine power unequalled in the history of Israel and the rest of the world. ⁴
- b. The amazement fell short
 - You never focus on the miracle, you focus on the Messiah
 - These are the same people who eventually welcome Jesus into their city by saying, “Hosanna to the Son of David! Blessed is he who comes in the name of the Lord! Hosanna in the highest!”
 - Then a week later they would crucify Him on a tree!
- ii. The Pharisees
 - a. No one ever denied Jesus power, they only denied where it came from.
 - How could they? They witnessed him heal the lame, give sight to the blind, cast out demons and raise someone from the dead!
 - b. This doesn’t even make sense – grasping for straws
 - c. Jesus refutes this claim later in Matthew 12:25-27

“Every kingdom divided against itself is laid waste, and no city or house divided against itself will stand. And if Satan casts out Satan, he is divided against himself. How then will his kingdom stand?”
 - d. The Pharisees are doing whatever they can, hoping the people would follow their lead.

So we’ve seen 2 stories of people pursuing Jesus. There’s desperation in these people’s lives and they come seeking help from the only one who can offer it. People throughout these stories responded differently and I think we can evaluate how we respond to the Son of David, Jesus Christ. We can either Speak AGAINST Jesus, we can Speak ABOUT Jesus, or we can Speak FOR Jesus.

3 Responses to Jesus ⁵

- 1. Speaking against Jesus
 - i. The Pharisees witnessed Jesus power but were in absolute denial of His Authority
 - ii. Romans 1:19-22

⁴ MacArthur pg. 100

⁵ James M. Boice

¹⁹For what can be known about God is plain to them, because God has shown it to them. ²⁰For his invisible attributes, namely, his eternal power and divine nature, have been clearly perceived, ever since the creation of the world, in the things that have been made. So they are without excuse. ²¹For although they knew God, they did not honor him as God or give thanks to him, but they became futile in their thinking, and their foolish hearts were darkened. ²²Claiming to be wise, they became fools,²³and exchanged the glory of the immortal God for images resembling mortal man and birds and animals and creeping things.

- iii. Ecclesiastes 3:11 – eternity is set on man’s heart
- iv. The Pharisees rejected Jesus as their King. And the result of rejecting Jesus is absolutely devastating! Because Jesus you see... Jesus is not just the best way to God... is the only way to God. Those who speak against Jesus, who reject Jesus as their Savior will be separated from Him forever
- v. Hell is a very real place! Weeping and gnashing of teeth
- 2. Speaking about Jesus
 - i. This is where a lot of people fall
 - ii. The crowds were astonished
 - iii. They didn’t submit their heart to Him. They didn’t place their trust in Him as the One who is God and as the only one who can deal properly with their sin.
- 3. Speaking for Jesus
 - i. These men could not help but speak for Jesus
 - ii. I am not commending their disobedience
 - iii. But I am commending their affection for their Savior
 - iv. Where did this faith of theirs come from?
 - a. It started with desperation
 - b. Faith is never theoretical

Pursue Jesus. He is never too busy for you! He is a compassionate Savior who longs to wrap you in His arms and rescue you from your sin and to bring you into a right relationship with God.