

Alêtheia Christian Fellowship

March 31, 2019

“Proclivities”

9:00 ~ Fellowship.

10:00 ~ Service with the King’s Kid’s & Communion for all who are Christians

NEWS

<https://40daysforlife.com/local-campaigns/whitefish/>

No potluck next week - Resurrection Sunday Breakfast (4/21 at 8:30)

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Visit the website ~ www.myaetheia.com ~ Hear a sermon at

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- 1) Authority over Satan is easily seen in the middle story. How is it seen in the other two?
- 2) Is human faith instrumental in God’s activity on earth?
- 3) What’s the relationship between forgiveness and disease, disaster, bondage, death and eternal damnation?

How can we know what correct surrender to Jesus entails? The Bible, modified with adding or deleting, emphasizing or deemphasizing, smoothing or distorting, _____ to be a reliable basis.

Anytime we alter the _____, we become the basis.

Stay on the shore, _____ get into the boat.

MATTHEW 9:1-8 ~ ¹NASB Getting into a boat, Jesus crossed over the sea and came to His own city. ²And they brought to Him a paralytic lying on a bed. Seeing their faith,

Jesus said to the paralytic, "Take courage, son; your sins are forgiven." ³And some of the scribes said to themselves, "This fellow blasphemes." ⁴And Jesus knowing their thoughts said, "Why are you thinking evil in your hearts? ⁵"Which is easier, to say, 'Your sins are forgiven,' or to say, 'Get up, and walk'? ⁶"But so that you may know that the Son of Man has authority on earth to forgive sins"—then He said to the paralytic, "Get up, pick up your bed and go home." ⁷And he got up and went home. ⁸But when the crowds saw this, they were awestruck, and glorified God, who had given such authority to men.

The story itself is chiasmic (X), within a larger chiasmic section. Matthew presents it without extraneous detail, because He doesn't want anything to distract from _____ Jesus is, and so, the reason He must be obeyed.

Matthew is uninterested in anyone else, _____ their efforts with Jesus, "Seeing their faith."

There is always some action of faith that puts someone in the right position - some openness to Jesus and His authority, whenever He _____ in the supernatural arena.

Matthew 13:53-58, Mark 6:1-6

First, Jesus commanded him to be _____. Then he called him "_____." So, before anything else, Jesus reassured and comforted the man. Then He blew everyone's mind with, "Your sins are forgiven."

Jesus was saying you are a sinful man and for that there is a price to be paid, but I, release you from that fate. That was and still is something that only _____ can do.

Unilaterally dismissing the man's debt, as though He was the injured party, i.e. God, would rightly shock anyone, unless, it was _____.

Why do they immediately assume Jesus is other than what He claims? Why do they assume evil? Not because they had no choice, but because they had already _____.

"Which is easier, to say, 'Your sins are forgiven,' or to say, 'Get up, and walk?'" Technically, neither thing, but _____ the activity was a different story. But, was Jesus speaking hypothetically, or factually - as in what's easier to actually accomplish?

Many humans have been given the power to heal, but only God Himself, can release a person from their _____ to Him.

Fill out the other side, detach this part of the page, and place it in the offering plate or the prayer/suggestion box in the lobby or with an Elder or Deacon of the church.

God Bless You!

The Scribes knew he was paralyzed because of sin. For them, either he or his parents (John 9:2). They were _____ correct - all evil is the result of sin from the Fall onwards.

In a sense, Jesus didn't heal the paralytic man - He reached deeper down and corrected the underlying cause of his physical symptoms.

The healing was the result of, and so the proof for, the man's complete forgiveness. Jesus clearly demonstrated His personal authority to _____ sins on God's behalf.

What are you going to do with that? What are you going to do with Jesus? The answer lies where your _____ lie.

Jesus has brought forgiveness to human beings on _____ presently.

Check all that apply – detach and place in the offering or the prayer box

_____ I want to talk with the pastor about _____

_____ I want prayer for _____

_____ I want to volunteer to _____

_____ I want more information about _____

_____ Other _____

Name _____ Address _____

Phone _____ Email _____

Alêtheia ~ Matthew 9a ~ 033119

Welcome Friends

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO
MATTHEW
A CLASH OF KINGDOMS

Alêtheia Christian Fellowship

Over the last many weeks, we've seen that Jesus closed His three-chapter long Sermon on the Mount, with a call to truly follow Him.

It was shown as an urgent and wholehearted devotion to Christ above all else that was essential to true discipleship.

It is full obedience to Him... We can call that a complete and unconditional surrender to Him. It's like the song, "Yes Lord, yes Lord, yes, yes, Lord." It's redundant and it's supposed to be.

There can be no caveats, no ifs, ands, or buts, no ill-conceived grandiose statements, no delaying tactics... Only a unilateral, complete and unconditioned surrender to Jesus will do.



How can we know what correct surrender to Jesus entails? What is it that Jesus taught, what does He want from us? What is it that He commands? Only the Bible can give us any possibility of an accurate answer. Only the Bible provides an unchanging, solid, concrete, stable, reasonable basis for Who Jesus is, and what Jesus wants.

The Bible, modified with adding or deleting, with emphasizing or deemphasizing, with smoothing or distorting, ceases to be that reliable basis. Anytime we alter the Bible, even subtly, we become the basis, not the Bible. It becomes our interpretation, based upon our human proclivities.

It grieves me to my core that so many Christians cannot seem to understand this very basic concept.

I often come into contact with Christians who disagree with a straightforward Biblical doctrine and just reinterpret the relevant passages to their own liking, whether they do it on their own authority, or by appealing to some supposed expert makes no difference.

Then they claim that their ridiculous interpretation is as legitimate as any other way one would interpret Scripture. No, my friends, it's not! Please, I beg you, understand the difference between a valid Biblical interpretation and a false one.

The false ones typically arise in an attempt to make Christ's demands more palatable, or to elevate the status of the person or group with their unique

understanding, their special revelation making them superior to other ignorant Christians.

I encountered both kinds last week. I wouldn't mind that people said, I know this idea isn't really Biblical, but I believe it because of this or that. What saddens me is when they twist Scripture to deceive themselves. What saddens me even more is when others are so undiscerning that they are deceived as well.

My dear friends, Satan is actively at war with the church. That means he and his friends are doing everything in their power to deceive Christians and his oldest most time-honored technique is to call God's Word into question.

The Bible - rightly understood, is our only real hope of knowing who Jesus is, and what Jesus wants.

From the Bible, we know that there are only two possible positions, as Jesus often made clear, we either surrender to Christ, by fully submitting ourselves to Jesus' teaching, as revealed in the Bible, or we admit that we are each the god of our own personal religion.

That's really all there is to this thing. Genuine surrender to whatever Jesus would have for you, or not. Now, why would anyone do that? Why would a person so fully follow Jesus?



That's the question Matthew has been trying to answer since the close of chapter 7. Three miraculous healings hinting that Jesus should be obeyed, were followed by two examples of people not ready to obey. That was followed by three examples of Jesus confronting the kingdom and power of Satan, which will be followed by a graphic example of both the proper and the improper responses to Jesus.

But proper and improper responses are seen throughout, and we can think of that as either retaining our human proclivity, inclination and perspective that resists God and His activity, or we can yield to the Holy Spirit's work to give us an openness to God, which we could think of as a new God-centered proclivity.

It is, from our point of view, a choice. Refuse to experience God as He chooses to interact with you, or choose to take a leap of faith with Him into the unknown. Our proclivities are established through the choices we make... From our point of view.

So, you can either stay on the shore, or get into the boat. If you stay back, nothing much will change for you. If you get into the boat, you may be in for the wildest ride of your life, but you'll be in it with Jesus and you'll see Him act.

Think of Justin and Rebekah and the kids. They've had hard times, but it is in hard time that we need Jesus and that's when we see Him act.

Now, think about this... They got into the boat and things got difficult. Who is to say they wouldn't have been worse had they stayed?

They struggled so they needed Jesus. We need Jesus every bit as much in good, as we do in bad, we're all just too distracted to realize that.

Finally, does Jesus act only when we think we need Him to act, or is He constantly acting, and we just don't notice?

We begin today with that third example of Jesus' authority over Satan.



Matthew 9:1-8 ~ 1NASB Getting into a boat, Jesus crossed over the sea and came to His own city. 2And

they brought to Him a paralytic lying on a bed. Seeing their faith, Jesus said to the paralytic, “Take courage, son; your sins are forgiven.” 3And some of the scribes said to themselves, “This fellow blasphemes.” 4And Jesus knowing their thoughts said, “Why are you thinking evil in your hearts? 5“Which is easier, to say, ‘Your sins are forgiven,’ or to say, ‘Get up, and walk’? 6“But so that you may know that the Son of Man has authority on earth to forgive sins”—then He said to the paralytic, “Get up, pick up your bed and go home.” 7And he got up and went home. 8But when the crowds saw this, they were awestruck, and glorified God, who had given such authority to men.

Authority over Satan in calming the natural/supernatural disaster, in casting out demons and now in getting to the heart of the matter... healing physical corruption, through the forgiveness of sin.

Matthew, once again, in order to put all the emphasis on Jesus and why we should obey Him, greatly abbreviates the episode from what we see in Mark and Luke.

Matthew tells the story with just over 100 words, where Mark has nearly 200 words, and Luke has 212.

^A And they brought to Him a paralytic lying on a bed.

^B Seeing their faith, Jesus said to the paralytic, "Take courage, son; your sins are forgiven."

And some of the scribes said to themselves, "This fellow blasphemes." And Jesus knowing their thoughts said, "Why are you thinking evil in your hearts? ^C "Which is easier, to say, 'Your sins are forgiven,' or to say, 'Get up, and walk'? "But so that you may know that the Son of Man has authority on earth to forgive sins"—

^B then He said to the paralytic, "Get up, pick up your bed and go home."

^A And he got up and went home.

The story itself is chiastic, within a bigger chiastic section. What I mean is that we work in one direction with the 1 paralytic arriving, Jesus 2 talking to him and then the biggest portion which has the main focus where Jesus 3 deals with the Scribes. That starts us working back out the other direction with Jesus 2 talking to the paralytic again and then the 1 man leaving.



The way Matthew presents it, Jesus is at the center and He is the only one doing any talking. 1Matthew is not interested in the heroics of the people bringing the paralyzed man to Jesus, 2Matthew is not interested in the man or his experience. 3Matthew is not interested in what happened to the Scribes afterward. Matthew is riveted on Jesus. He only shares enough of the other stuff to move the narrative along.

It's because He doesn't want anything to distract us from Who Jesus is, so that we will know that Jesus is to be obeyed - to be followed, no matter the cost.

I recommend the same method as Matthew. Always come back to Jesus. Wherever your study of Scripture takes you, wherever your conversation with others leads, always circle back around to Jesus.

We know that Jesus entered the house in Capernaum belonging to Peter or his relatives.



From Peter's home: We are confident that it was an inner room in the family complex. That means there were likely no windows out, but several small openings and an open doorway in the wall connected to an outer room.



People were jammed in the room with Jesus and crammed up against the openings in the wall in the other room in order to see and hear Him.

Four guys brought a paralyzed man on a semi-rigid sleeping mat for Jesus to heal. There was no way of getting to Him, so these guys hoisted the man onto the roof and dug a hole through it and lowered the paralytic down in front of Jesus.



Jesus was impressed with their efforts. Matthew dispenses with all that information, summarizing with, “Seeing their faith.”

There is no indication that the paralyzed man had any faith of his own, nor is it stated that it was anyone else’s faith that had a direct effect on Jesus or the miracle. They exhibited faith by making a big effort and Jesus acknowledged that, but it is a mistake to assume it was their faith that was instrumental in the healing.

What’s certain though, is if they hadn’t done what they did, the dude would not have been in a position for

Jesus to talk with him and heal him, in that place, at that time.

There is always some action of faith that puts someone in the right position... There is always some openness to Jesus and His authority, when He acts in the supernatural arena. There always exists an inclination - a proclivity - that something miraculous is possible.

Both Matthew and Mark later record Jesus returning to His hometown of Nazareth and the people there being offended by the very idea, that "The carpenter's son," was anything special. Because of that lack of openness Jesus performed very few miracles among them (Matthew 13:53-58, Mark 6:1-6).

It's about choosing to have faith.



Jesus said three things to the paralyzed man and each one is more surprising than the previous one.

First, He commanded him to be courageous. Jesus often used this command. Stand up, gird yourself, be strong, have some faith, take courage. I'm here, it's going to be alright.

Then he called him "Son," really, child. The guy wasn't a kid, or Jesus' son. It's a tender, caring and gentle address. If you stop to think about it, the poor dude was probably really scared. His friends have ripped a hole in the roof, lowered him down and now he's face-to-face with Jesus surrounded by a throng of onlookers

probably covered in dust and debris from his entrance. He has no idea what to expect.

So, before anything else, Jesus reassured and comforted the man. Then He said the most unexpected thing, He could have said in the situation, “Your sins are forgiven.”

It wasn't, don't worry my friend, I'm going to heal you in a completely temporary physical way. The healing wasn't going to be something that would be utterly useless a few years hence. You see what I mean? What difference would the physical healing make after the dude died? The worms in that guy's tomb certainly wouldn't care whether he had been paralyzed or healed - it would make no difference to them. More importantly, it would make no difference to the guy standing on his own at Judgment if he still retained his sin. Jesus does so much more than that.



HEALING IS GOOD FOR
LIFE; FORGIVENESS LASTS
THROUGH ETERNITY.

“Your sins are forgiven.” Much can be explored in that statement. We would be wise not to read too much into it though. Matthew is not giving us many details to go off and make grand sweeping theological pronouncements.

Did Jesus save this man without any regard at all to the man’s desire or choice? Perhaps, but we cannot state that from this exchange. We can’t even be certain that Jesus intended that the man’s future sins were forgiven as well. We don’t know that the man will be in Heaven.

We only know that Jesus declared that the man’s sinfulness and its corresponding ramifications at that

moment were erased. What Jesus said was that the present sin in the man, which would encompass his past and present sin, but also his sinful proclivity - his sinfulness was forgiven, or pardoned, but really released, or let go, is more the idea.

In other words, Jesus was saying you are a sinful man and for that there is an outcome that you've earned. In this case, it is a negative earning from a salvation point of view - so it is a debt that you owe and cannot pay. Jesus said, I release you from that debt.

It may, or may not, mean that his future sin and so his life-total sinfulness would likewise be forgiven. That would depend on what he did with his freedom in relation to Jesus' finished work, which for him was yet to come.

No one has been in that situation in the last 2,000 years. When a person is forgiven by Jesus, post His Resurrection, that is a complete forgiveness. Here we can't press the situation that positively, because Christianity did not yet exist.

What we do know, without question, is that, at a minimum, Jesus declared the man sin-free at that moment.

That was, and still is, something that only Almighty God can do. In the sense clearly defined here, only the One True God, can forgive a person's sin, let alone their sinfulness.



As far as the Jewish establishment was concerned, saying what Jesus said, was identical to claiming to be God Himself. That's why the experts in Jewish Law were stunned and called it blasphemy.

It amazes me that people say Jesus never claimed to be God. Because of that, those same people say that the Scribes were technically wrong in calling this blasphemy.

Why? Because we know that at the time of Christ, the Jewish understanding of blasphemy, required the guilty party to actually name God. In other words, to say to someone, "Your sins are forgiven," wasn't blasphemy. It was merely a statement of your own feelings. It was like saying, "I forgive you for being bitter against God."

Fine. Who cares? You could say it, and even mean it, but it has nothing to do with God or the person's status before God. You're just saying that you don't hold it against them - big deal. That's in no way blasphemous.

Jesus never mentioned God. Jesus wasn't saying that God forgave the man, so what He said, cannot possibly be blasphemy. Yet, the Scribes all go there immediately. Why? How could they possibly be offended?

They knew, what liberal scholars don't. They knew what Jesus was saying was, "I forgive your sins, as

God on earth.” That’s blasphemy and would have shocked the Scribes to their core.

Unilaterally dismissing the man’s debt, as though He was the injured party, i.e. God, would rightly shock anyone to their core, unless of course, it was true.

Jesus was well aware of their horror - it wouldn’t have required omniscience to discern that!

Jesus pointedly asked them why they were harboring evil in their hearts. Why did they immediately assume that Jesus was other than what He claimed to be?

Why had they repeatedly chosen to close themselves off to God working in a new way? Why were they were so determined to resist? It wasn’t because they had no choice, it was because they had already chosen. Again, from their perspective.

Their proclivity was purely traditional, purely religious and they could not accept anything outside their normal expectation. You could say that it was impossible for them to be different. If that’s true, why the charade?

“WHICH IS EASIER, TO SAY,
‘YOUR SINS ARE FORGIVEN,’
OR TO SAY,
‘GET UP, AND WALK’?”

So, Jesus asked them a simple question arguing from the lesser to the greater. “Which is easier, to say, ‘Your sins are forgiven,’ or to say, ‘Get up, and walk’?”

Technically, neither thing is any harder to say than the other. Anyone could say the things - it's the verifying that they happened that's different. Pretty hard to verify that God won't hold a person's sins against them when they die. Most people think that's what Jesus means.

Some scholars don't like that understanding of the argument and say that Jesus was not talking hypothetically, nor was He referring to what was easier to verify. They think He was talking about the actual

accomplishing of each thing. What's easier to accomplish?

We still might say forgiving, but that's incorrect. It is actually much easier to heal someone than it is to forgive their sinfulness in this context.

Many humans have been given the power to heal, but as I already said, only God Himself, can release a person from their debt to Him, and so it is the much harder thing. It is an impossible thing, for any human to do.

When you understand it that way, it changes from an argument from the lesser to the greater to an argument from the greater to the lesser. What's the difference?

Stay with me... Jesus then said, "But so that you may know that the Son of Man has authority on earth to forgive sins," Jesus instantaneously healed the paralytic as though he was never afflicted.

That means that Jesus and the Scribes were on the same sheet of music as to the cause of the man's paralysis - at least to some extent.

They knew he was paralyzed because of sin. For them, either he or his parents were mired in sin. John 9:2, records the disciples asking Jesus in another case, “Rabbi, who sinned, this man or his parents, that he would be born blind?”

It was a common understanding of the Jews that sickness, disease, affliction, disaster, devastation, etc. was the result of sin. Well, they were right - partially. They just needed to expand their understanding to a much broader degree.

Every negative, evil, painful and difficult thing is the result of the Fall. Sin in total is what causes everything in this physical reality to be marred, ruined, and ever devolving into physical death and ultimately eternal condemnation.

The forgiveness of one’s sinfulness enables them to be set free from the results of sin.

In a very technical way, Jesus did not heal the paralytic man - He reached deeper down and corrected the underlying cause of the physical symptoms that he was experiencing.

The healing was the result of and so the proof for the man's complete forgiveness. Jesus clearly demonstrated His personal authority to forgive sins on God's behalf.

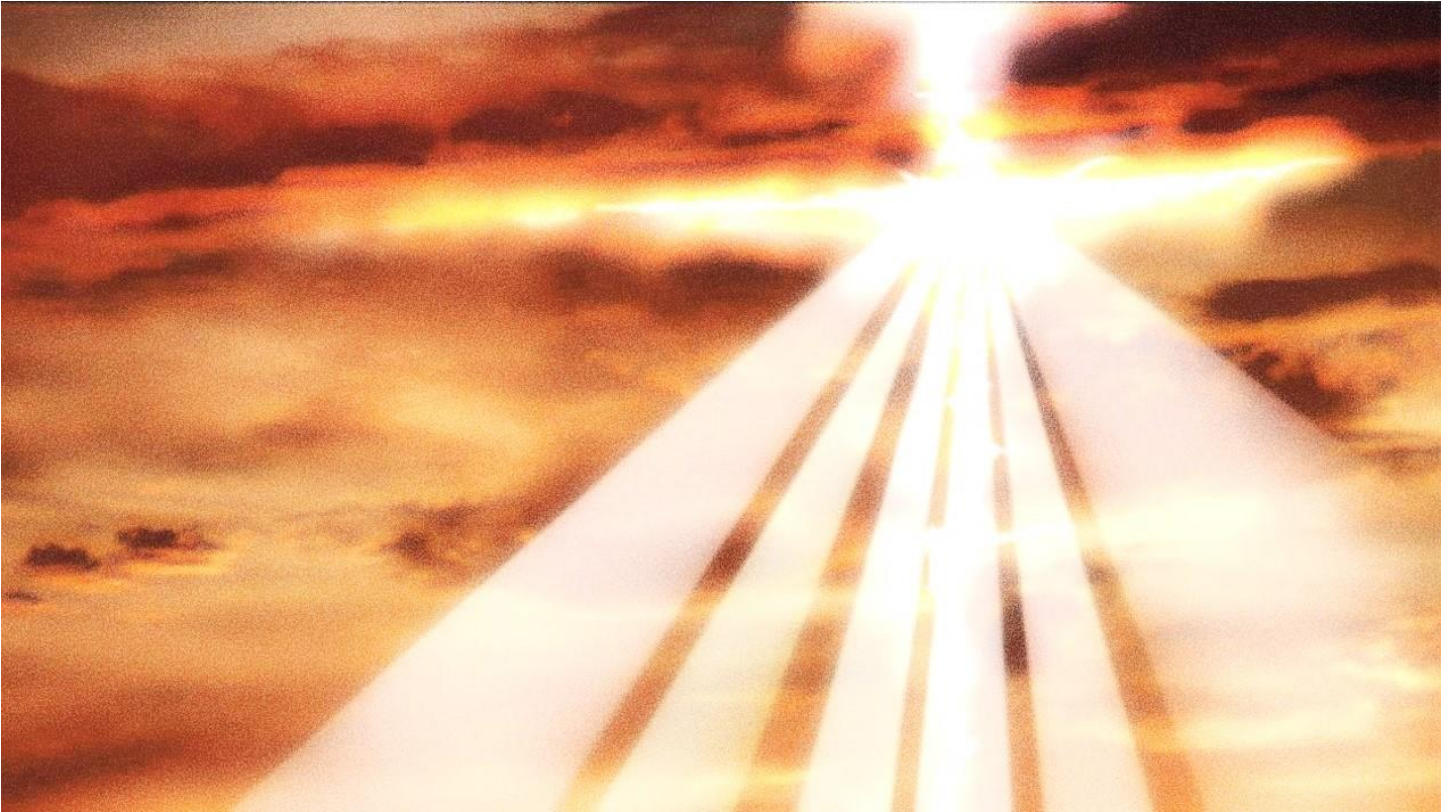
The Scribes knew that God would never heal the man if the one orchestrating the event was actively blaspheming Him in the process. The healing proved to them, and everyone else, that God had forgiven the man's sinfulness at Jesus' Word.

What are you going to do with that? What are you going to do with Jesus?

The answer lies where your proclivities lie. The Scribes and Pharisees came up with an alternative explanation. God didn't forgive the man or heal him. Jesus was an agent of Satan and it was through satanic power that the man was healed even though he was still stuck in his sins.

They came up with that charge, because their proclivities demanded an alternate explanation. Jesus will eventually answer that charge, but for now the point is that Jesus is Who Jesus is and if you're willing

to accept that, the implication is, that you'd be a fool not to wholeheartedly follow Him.



Well, many of the witnesses there did put their trust in Jesus as they exalted God for the miracle of healing, but much more for the forgiveness of sin.

Jesus said, “So that you may know that the Son of Man has authority on earth to forgive sins.” Then we see that the people “Were awestruck, and glorified God, who had given such authority to men.”

The Son of Man title is again used as a greater demonstration of Christ's divinity than of His humanity,

but more to the point here, it is His divinity in His humanity on earth.

Jesus has brought forgiveness to human beings on earth presently. That doesn't startle us because we're used to the idea, but for the people then it was mind-blowing.

The Jews believed that if they were good enough and connected to their Jewishness enough then God would one day forgive them. Of course, no one could ever be certain of their final judgement.

Forgiveness was in God's hands and God was in Heaven - you had to wait and see.

Here, they understand that God has brought forgiveness and so assurance to earth through a "Son of Man."

Their understanding at the time would have been somewhat limited, but Matthew's meaning is pregnant with anticipation because he knows where the story is going, just like the vast majority of the people hearing or reading the Gospel since then know.