



The Authority and Power of King Jesus

The Gospel
ACCORDING TO
Matthew

Part 53: Jesus, Mercy, and Faith Matthew 9:27-34

Faith is coming and clinging to Jesus for our salvation.

I. Questions About Faith

“Do you believe that I am able to do this? ‘Yes, Lord,’ they replied. Then he touched their eyes and said, ‘According to your faith will it be done for you.’” Matthew 9:28-29

This looks like faith is crucial to their healing, and it’s like the previous healing story.

“Jesus turned and saw her. ‘Take heart, daughter,’ he said, ‘your faith has healed you.’ And the woman was healed at that moment.” Matthew 9:22

These stories raise questions for us. What is the role of faith in healing? Backing up, what is the role of faith in the Christian life?

II. Jesus Looks for Faith

There is no question that Jesus is very interested in our faith. The various stories in the Gospels reveal that Jesus is often looking for faith.

A few weeks ago, I preached on the story of Jesus healing the centurion’s servant (April 21 – “Commended Faith”).

“I tell you the truth, I have not found anyone in Israel with such great faith.” Matthew 8:10

Q: Why does Jesus celebrate this man’s faith? Why is Jesus so concerned with our faith?

Faith is how we access Jesus’ salvation. Faith is how we gain access to God’s grace and power.

“For it is by grace you have been saved, through faith – and this not from yourselves, it is the gift of God – not by works, so that no one can boast.” Ephesians 2:8-9

“I have been crucified with Christ and I no longer live, but Christ lives in me. The life I live in the body, I live by faith in the Son of God, who loved me and gave himself for me...The righteous shall live by faith.” Galatians 2:20; 3:11

“Where there is faith in Jesus, there is Jesus. This is the law of the gospel...Jesus wants faith...even where faith is weak...Nothing means more to Jesus than to be trusted. Jesus loves it when people think ‘he can.’” – Dale Bruner, The Christbook Matthew 1-12, 436.

We are taught to ask Jesus to renew and strengthen our weakening faith (Mark 9:14-24; Ephesians 1:15-23; 3:14-21). Jesus is attracted to confessed weakness.

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Ex. Chart contrasting Depersonalized Faith with Personal Faith by James Sire, The Universe Next Door:

Depersonalized Faith vs Personal Faith		
by James Sire		
Sin	Breaking a rule	Betraying a relationship
Repentance	Admitting guilt	Sorrow over betrayal
Forgiveness	Cancelling a penalty	Renewing relationship
Faith	Believing a set of propositions	Committing oneself to a person
Christian life	Obeying rules	Pleasing the Lord

III. The Mysterious Relationship Between Faith & Healing

“Jesus is the Savior of the total person, body and soul. We may bring to him, therefore, all our needs, not only our spiritual ones.” – Dale Bruner, *The Christbook*, Matthew 1-12, 390.

We all probably have a story of how Jesus did not answer our prayer for healing, either for ourselves or someone we love.

Q: How do we deal with our disappointment? How do we answer the questions these experiences raise for us?

One part of the American Church has responded very simply – “You just lack the necessary faith.” This is usually the perspective of people in the movements we call “Word & Faith” or “Health & Wealth gospel.”

This approach is overly simplistic; based on false assumptions; and it ignores Scriptures like 2 Corinthians 12:1-10 where the Apostle Paul describes his experience of asking Jesus to remove a “thorn in the flesh” 3 times only to hear Jesus respond – “My grace is sufficient for you, for my power is made perfect in weakness.”

For a more detailed pastoral response, I refer you to a chapter by Sam Storms titled, “Why Doesn’t God Always Heal the Sick?” from his book titled *Tough Topics: Biblical Answers to 25 Challenging Questions*. ([See GreenwoodCC.com](http://GreenwoodCC.com) → [Resources](#) → [Miscellaneous Resources](#) → [“Why Doesn’t God Always Heal the Sick?”](#)).

“It’s hard to imagine a more difficult, confusing, and controversial topic than why God chooses not to heal in response to the intercessory pleas of his people. ... In the final analysis, virtually everything about healing remains a mystery.” – Sam Storms

Storms offers 7 possible reasons why the Lord may not respond to our prayers for healing, and I think he offers us wise counsel.

Matthew offers us 10 healing stories in chapters 8-9 of his Gospel. In 3 of the stories, there is no mention of faith at all. In one of the stories, it is the implicit faith of the paralyzed man’s friends that is mentioned. The healing stories of Jesus show us a couple of truths.

First, they often do emphasize the faith of someone. We cannot dismiss the importance of faith in these stories. But the stories defy clear formulas.

Jesus initially walks past these two blind men without healing them. It’s only after they persist and follow him to the house that he engages in a conversation with them before he heals them.

Faith is relational, not transactional. A transactional view of faith looks for formulas, but a relational view of faith presses into Jesus asking for clarity and discernment. It looks like Jesus was waiting to see if they pressed in for a conversation.

IV. Our Necessary Relational Conversion

This is exactly what most of the Pharisees did not do with Jesus (Matthew 9:34). They had their settled views and theologies, and Jesus did not fit easily into them. So, they rejected Jesus attributing evil motives to him rather than pressing into Jesus for answers.

“The reason Jesus emphasized faith is this: faith glorifies God. Faith points us away from ourselves to him. Faith turns us away from our own power and resources to his. Faith says: ‘Lord, I am nothing and you are everything. I entrust myself to your care. I cling to you alone. My confidence is in your word and character no matter what happens.’ – Sam Storms

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Recommended Resource:

See [GreenwoodCC.com → Resources → Miscellaneous Resources → Excerpts from Sam Storms' chapter: "Why Doesn't God Always Heal the Sick?"](#)

Discussion Questions:

1. Read the story in Matthew 9:27-34. What do you notice?
2. What questions does this story raise for you?
3. What have you been taught about Christian faith? How was it explained or defined for you? Was it explained in relational terms or transactional terms?
4. What do you think of Doug's definition of faith as “coming and clinging to Jesus for our salvation”?
5. A quick review of the 10 healing stories in Matthew 8-9 reveals that there is no formula for the relationship between faith and Jesus' act of healing or deliverance. What do you think may be the implications for this reality?
6. If time permits, please read the recommended chapter by Sam Storms and discuss your thoughts in response to it.