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**MATTHEW**

## Fighting for Control

Matthew 9:14-34

- I. Calling Good Evil and Evil Good
  - a. The miracles so far
    - i. Jesus has cleansed a leper, healed the centurion's servant with a word, healed Peter's mother-in-law, calmed the wind and the waves, cast out demons, and healed a paralytic
    - ii. No wonder Jesus drew such a large crowd wherever He went. Who wouldn't want to be a part of this
    - iii. Well, there were some who didn't. The response of the scribes and Pharisees
      1. This man blasphemes!
      2. They asked His disciples, "Why does your Teacher eat with tax collectors and sinners?"
  - b. In chapter 10 - the miracles continue
    - i. The dead are raised, the chronically ill are healed, the blind are given sight, and the spiritually oppressed are set free
    - ii. Just as the miracles continue, so do the accusations The Pharisees claim that Jesus "Casts out demons by the ruler of the demons"
  - c. The irony
    - i. The claim of the religious elite: This man speaks profanely of sacred things – this man dishonors God!
    - ii. Blasphemy is not just saying the wrong thing about God — it is misrepresenting His character.
      1. Jesus has cleansed, healed, forgiven, set free, given sight to the blind, strength to the weak, and life to the dead
      2. And the Pharisees? They load people with burdens, the love titles and seats of honor, they appear righteous but are full of greed, they shut the kingdom of heaven in people's faces, they devour the financial security of widows, and they travel land and sea to win one convert, and when he is won, they make him twice as much a son of hell as themselves
      3. ***Isa 5:20 Woe to those who call evil good, and good evil; Who put darkness for light, and light for darkness; Who put bitter for sweet, and sweet for bitter!***
  - d. Comes back to the issue of authority. Conflict between two authority structures
    - i. One intrinsic – meaning it belongs to a person's very nature - It is not added on, it is not earned, and it cannot be taken away.
    - ii. One is acquired or achieved – it is borrowed, won, or stolen. It depends on external factors: a title, a badge, an election, or a display of force.
      1. It can be lost - If you take away a king's crown and his throne, his acquired authority vanishes.

2. What do human's do when they feel their authority slipping through their hands?
3. They plot and plan and fight to protect it – just like Pharaoh did, just like Herod did, just like Pontius Pilate – just like the scribes and Pharisees did
- iii. No matter how hard they fight, nothing will change the reality that their authority is fragile and temporary and Jesus' authority is the foundation of the universe
  1. They arguing over the rules of a house they didn't build with the one who put it all together

***Mat 9:14 Then the disciples of John came to Him, saying, "Why do we and the Pharisees fast often, but Your disciples do not fast?" 15 And Jesus said to them, "Can the friends of the bridegroom mourn as long as the bridegroom is with them? But the days will come when the bridegroom will be taken away from them, and then they will fast. 16 No one puts a piece of unshrunk cloth on an old garment; for the patch pulls away from the garment, and the tear is made worse. 17 Nor do they put new wine into old wineskins, or else the wineskins break, the wine is spilled, and the wineskins are ruined. But they put new wine into new wineskins, and both are preserved."***

## II. New Wine, Old Wineskins

- a. John's disciples and the Pharisees are troubled by a lack of traditional fasting
  - i. Under the law, fasting was commanded only on the Day of Atonement
    1. Personal or group fasts were common "to demonstrate humility before the Lord and to lay out some special petition, sometimes out of anguish, danger, or desperation"
    2. As we saw in chapter 6 – it became a show to demonstrate one's personal piety and righteousness – desire to draw attention to themselves
      - a. Probably not the case for John's disciples – their question was probably earnest, although they lump themselves in with the Pharisees
  - ii. What were they looking for? Something familiar. A religion they could recognize. A religious system that feels comfortable.
    1. We do not like change. "If you want to make enemies, try to change something." — Woodrow Wilson
  - iii. Jesus first identifies himself as the bridegroom – which makes perfect sense
    1. ***Joh 3:25 Then there arose a dispute between some of John's disciples and the Jews about purification. 26 And they came to John and said to him, "Rabbi, He who was with you beyond the Jordan, to whom you have testified—behold, He is baptizing, and all are coming to Him!" 27 John answered and said, "A man can receive nothing unless it has been given to him from heaven. 28 You yourselves bear me witness, that I said, 'I am not the Christ,' but, 'I have been sent before Him.' 29 He who has the bride is the bridegroom; but the friend of the bridegroom, who stands and hears him, rejoices greatly because of the bridegroom's voice. Therefore this joy of mine is fulfilled.***
    2. What would John and his disciples be fasting and praying for? John announced, "The kingdom of heaven is at hand," and "One is coming after me..."

- a. Fasting and praying for Israel's repentance and readiness for the coming King and His Kingdom
  - 3. You fast when you're longing for the Bridegroom, but the Bridegroom is here. There will be a time to fast again ("when the bridegroom is taken away"), but enjoy this moment because I am here.
- b. Patchwork religion
  - i. You don't take a piece of unshrunk (new) cloth and sew it onto an old material. When the new patch gets wet and shrinks, it will pull away and make the tear even worse.
  - ii. This isn't about repairing the old system. This isn't about patching the holes or plugging up the leaks.
    - 1. People attempt to use Jesus in this way. Give me some rules for life. Give me some better habits to patch up things up.
    - 2. That is not why He came and bled and died and rose again. He didn't come to patch up your life; He came to give you a new one.
  - iii. Jesus didn't come to reform (fixing the old and broken ways); He came to transform (starting new)
- c. The new wine
  - i. New wine is still fermenting; it expands and releases gases. Old wineskins are dry and rigid (set in their ways). If you put the expanding life of new wine into a rigid, brittle skin, the skin will burst and the wine will be wasted
  - ii. The new wine is the New Covenant
    - 1. ***Jeremiah 31: 33 But this is the covenant that I will make with the house of Israel after those days, says the Lord: I will put My law in their minds, and write it on their hearts; and I will be their God, and they shall be My people. 34 No more shall every man teach his neighbor, and every man his brother, saying, 'Know the Lord,' for they all shall know Me, from the least of them to the greatest of them, says the Lord. For I will forgive their iniquity, and their sin I will remember no more.***
    - 2. ***Eze 36:25 Then I will sprinkle clean water on you, and you shall be clean; I will cleanse you from all your filthiness and from all your idols. 26 I will give you a new heart and put a new spirit within you; I will take the heart of stone out of your flesh and give you a heart of flesh. 27 I will put My Spirit within you and cause you to walk in My statutes, and you will keep My judgments and do them.***
    - 3. Joel - "I will pour out my Spirit on all flesh"
  - iii. The "New Wine" is total forgiveness of sins, a heart transformed from the inside out, and a Spirit-filled and Spirit-led walk with the living God
    - 1. That new wine will not fit into a life clinging to the Old Covenant, clinging to religion, clinging to works based righteousness
      - a. Many want renewal, but they want it on their terms
      - b. They want the world to change, but they don't want to change
    - 2. "New Skin" is a picture of a heart of faith that is flexible, humble, and responsive to the Spirit's work in our lives.

***Mat 9: 18 While He spoke these things to them, behold, a ruler came and worshiped Him, saying, "My daughter has just died, but come and lay Your hand on her and she will live." 19 So Jesus arose and followed him, and so did His disciples. 20 And suddenly, a woman who had a flow of***

*blood for twelve years came from behind and touched the hem of His garment. 21 For she said to herself, "If only I may touch His garment, I shall be made well." 22 But Jesus turned around, and when He saw her He said, "Be of good cheer, daughter; your faith has made you well." And the woman was made well from that hour. 23 When Jesus came into the ruler's house, and saw the flute players and the noisy crowd wailing, 24 He said to them, "Make room, for the girl is not dead, but sleeping." (that is what the dead are to Jesus) And they ridiculed Him. 25 But when the crowd was put outside, He went in and took her by the hand, and the girl arose. 26 And the report of this went out into all that land. 27 When Jesus departed from there, two blind men followed Him, crying out and saying, "Son of David, have mercy on us!" 28 And 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." 29 Then He touched their eyes, saying, "According to your faith let it be to you." 30 And their eyes were opened. And Jesus sternly warned them, saying, "See that no one knows it." 31 But when they had departed, they spread the news about Him in all that country. 32 As they went out, behold, they brought to Him a man, mute and demon-possessed. 33 And when the demon was cast out, the mute spoke. And the multitudes marveled, saying, "It was never seen like this in Israel!" 34 But the Pharisees said, "He casts out demons by the ruler of the demons."*

### III. Faith is Understanding

- a. Faith – is there anything more talked about and at the same time more misunderstood than faith?
  - i. What is true faith? What does it accomplish? What is the relationship between our faith and God acting? Are there different levels of faith? Does God wait for my faith before He moves?
- b. In our study in Matthew we have seen Jesus celebrate the faith of some and move according to their faith
  - i. Roman Centurion – “I have not found such great faith, not even in Israel!”
  - ii. The woman who was bleeding internally – “Be of good cheer, daughter; your faith has made you well.”
  - iii. These blind men – “According to your faith let it be to you.”
  - iv. In the case of the paralytic man Jesus moved according to the faith of his friends
  - v. Some would claim that Jesus works, or the Spirit works according to our level of our faith
    1. When our faith is at a level 6 – sorry, no miracles for you, but if you can muster it up to a 9 or a 10 and BAM! God comes through
  - vi. That is why Jesus didn't do many mighty works in His home town – because of their unbelief – right?
- c. Then we have the story of a man who had been crippled for 38 years
  - i. Jesus came across this man at the pool of Bethesda – a crowded pool where people who were desperate to be healed hung out
    1. There was a myth that if you were the first one in the water when the angels stirred them up you would be healed
  - ii. Jesus asked the man if he wanted to be made well and the man replied “of course, but I am too slow, and no one will help into the water.” Jesus said “Take up your bed and walk.” And immediately the man was healed, and he took up His bed and walked.
  - iii. Here's the problem, it was the Sabbath. As this man was walking home, the teachers of the law saw him carrying his bed. They stopped him and asked him “Is it not lawful for you to carry your bed on the Sabbath?”

1. The guy who healed me told me to.
  2. Who was it? Who healed you?
  3. But the one who was healed did not know.
- d. Before we get too far down this road of faith, we must understand this one thing
- i. God moves in any way He sees fit. He is not limited by our lack of faith and He is not controlled by our exceptional faith.
  - ii. This is His story, He is working out His plan – like He said through the prophet Isaiah – “My thoughts are not your thoughts, neither are your ways My ways. As the heavens are higher than the earth, so are my ways higher than your ways and my thoughts than your thoughts.”
  - iii. With that understanding in place – it is impossible to ignore the synergistic relationship between Jesus and the faith of a believer
    1. To ignore that is to ignore everything we have been studying in the gospels
- IV. Authentic Faith: Submitting to Authority of the King
- a. He is the true authority. Not authority achieved, or won, or stolen - His authority is intrinsic - natural authority - not acquired, cannot be lost
    - i. What the centurion understood, what the demons knew
      1. This is why Jesus was asleep in the boat – when you are the authority over all creation – you rest well
  - b. The entire trajectory of our lives is determined by what we do we the intrinsic authority of Jesus
    - i. *Col 1:16 For by Him all things were created that are in heaven and that are on earth, visible and invisible, whether thrones or dominions or principalities or powers. All things were created through Him and for Him. 17 And He is before all things, and in Him all things consist.*
    - ii. *Heb 1: 3 who being the brightness of His glory and the express image of His person, and upholding all things by the word of His power, when He had by Himself purged our sins, sat down at the right hand of the Majesty on high,*
  - c. The demons were aware of His authority, the scribes and Pharisees rejected His authority, the religious tried to negotiate with His authority
    - i. **But the reality is - this is all His** - and all the pain and brokenness we see in Matthew 8 and 9 - the disease, the demons, and the death is the 'groaning' of a fallen world that rejects or ignores or tries to diminish *His Intrinsic Authority* and attempts to claim that authority for themselves
  - d. But those who are sick and know it, those who are broken and feel it, those who are in need and cry out to Him, submit to Him, place their trust in Him
    - i. They are made whole and brought into the Kingdom of God
    - ii. His power always moves toward restoration and the good of the broken.
    - iii. The old skin, the old patch – they are our need to control – there is no room for the King when we are on the throne