

## Matthew 9E

- We're nearing the end of our 4-month journey through the 10 miracles that Matthew recorded from Jesus' time in the Galilee
  - We've reached the final group of three miracles
    - These three miracles illustrate Jesus' restorative ministry...how Jesus came to restore all things
    - Circumstances that were once considered lost and beyond hope, become new again by faith in Jesus
  - Which reminds us of the important distinction we discovered last week in this final group of miracles
    - This final group of three miracles all share a characteristic that the prior two groups didn't: *faith*
    - For these miracles, Jesus makes faith in Him a prerequisite to receiving His mercy
    - In the past, Jesus healed everyone without regard for their faith, but now, He puts faith first
- By that change, we're seeing evidence of how Matthew has assembled together events that took place at different points in Jesus' ministry
  - Because there was a point in Jesus' ministry when everything changed
    - Something happened that caused Jesus to alter His entire approach to ministry
    - One of those changes was the requirement for faith
    - Where before, Jesus openly offered Himself to anyone and everyone in the crowds, suddenly Jesus made faith in Him a prerequisite
  - The event that prompted this change takes place in Chapter 12
    - In fact, as we'll see, Chapter 12 is the pivotal chapter in Matthew's gospel
    - When we get there, we'll study it carefully to understand its significance

- But for now, we only need to understand how that moment impacted the various groups of miracles that Matthew included in Chapters 8 & 9
  - Faith was not required for the first two groups of miracles Matthew records
  - Which tells us these events took place during the months *prior* to the events of Chapter 12
  - On the other hand, the miracles in this third group prominently feature faith as part of the moment – and Jesus asked that these miracles be kept secret
  - Which tells us these miracles took place sometime *after* the events of Chapter 12
- So part of what we need to resolve tonight, is why Matthew wanted to end his treatment of Jesus' miracles with a group focused on faith
  - And then we had that puzzle from last week...the relationship between the first two miracles in this group...I called them a miracle within a miracle
    - Matthew's first miracle in this group involved Jairus, the synagogue official, who requested Jesus come heal His daughter
    - But before that story even got going, Jesus is interrupted by a woman who needed healing for constant bleeding
    - We studied Jesus' healing of that woman last week, which means we're moving back to Jairus' daughter this week
    - And as we do, we'll try to understand why these two situations were intertwined in this way
  - And because they are so intertwined, let's re-read the part we covered last week, as we move into the second half of the story

**[Matt. 9:18](#)** While He was saying these things to them, a synagogue official came and bowed down before Him, and said, "My daughter has just died; but come and lay Your hand on her, and she will live."

**[Matt. 9:19](#)** Jesus got up and began to follow him, and so did His disciples.

**[Matt. 9:20](#)** And a woman who had been suffering from a hemorrhage for twelve years, came up behind Him and touched the fringe of His cloak;

**[Matt. 9:21](#)** for she was saying to herself, "If I only touch His garment, I will get well."

[Matt. 9:22](#) But Jesus turning and seeing her said, “Daughter, take courage; your faith has made you well.” At once the woman was made well.

- Having looked at this section last week, we’re familiar with what’s going on
  - The man responsible for enforcing proper worship practices at the local synagogue kneels down to worship before Jesus
    - He’s taken a huge risk by demonstrating his faith in Jesus in this way, and he does this to appeal to Jesus to heal his dying daughter
    - The text records the man said his girl had already died, but as we saw last week, Matthew condenses the events of the story
    - Mark told us that when the father left his daughter, she was still alive, though near death
    - So at the time he meets Jesus, the father believes there is still time to save his daughter from dying
  - But just as Jesus sets out, this other woman comes up behind Him to secretly touch the hem of His cloak, so she may be healed
    - She did this because she believed Jesus was Messiah
    - She knew from Malachi 4 that the Messiah was promised to have healing in His “wings”
    - “Wings” is a reference to the corners of a man’s shawl
    - So in simple faith, the woman concluded she could be healed by touching the hem of his clothing
  - Jesus immediately sensed His power leaving Him, which was the work of the Holy Spirit, and by that power, she has been healed
    - So Jesus turns around to learn who had been healed and as He sees her, Jesus confirms to her that her faith made her well
    - She acted in faith, believing the Word of God concerning the Messiah
    - And on the basis of that faith, the Holy Spirit healed the woman

- Ironically, her faith in the promises of the Word of God gave fulfillment to the very Scripture that had inspired her to act in the first place
- As we ended last week, I suggested that the woman's experience was designed by God to prepare Jairus for the test of faith he would soon experience
  - And in fact, the first part of that test began immediately as the woman was healed
    - Once again, we don't see the action as clearly in Matthew's account, but in Mark, we read this:

[Mark 5:34](#) And He said to her, "Daughter, your faith has made you well; go in peace and be healed of your affliction."

[Mark 5:35](#) While He was still speaking, they came from the house of the synagogue official, saying, "Your daughter has died; why trouble the Teacher anymore?"

- Jesus told the woman her faith had made her well and as a result, she should go in peace
  - Her faith bought her to peace with God, since her debt of sin was covered
  - Furthermore, she was also healed of her physical affliction, as testimony that God had also done a spiritual work
  - But as I said last week, no one in the crowd could have detected her healing, since her condition was not visible
- Now we have the ruler standing by, watching this entire scene, probably a little impatiently
  - Time was running out for his daughter, yet here's Jesus delaying over some woman
  - But then notice Jesus calls this woman "daughter", a comment that surely caught the ruler's attention
  - After all, a father distraught over his dying daughter couldn't help but notice how the Healer takes time to cure His daughter
  - But since the woman's healing came with no visible evidence... would this man accept her testimony by faith?

- But then, as Jesus was still speaking to the woman, messengers arrived from the ruler's home with the news he dreaded to hear
  - They report his daughter has died, so there was no need to trouble the Rabbi further
    - After all, how can a healer help a person who has already died?
    - Now imagine the ruler's state of mind in that moment
    - Hearing that his daughter has died, he must have been instantly consumed with grief and despair
    - And who among us would have enough faith in that moment to think about asking Jesus for resurrection?
  - Nevertheless, the man had reason to press on, considering what he'd just witnessed...a woman healed by nothing more than touching Jesus
    - From that experience, his faith should be encouraged, and Jesus tells him so

**Mark 5:36** But Jesus, overhearing what was being spoken, said to the synagogue official, "Do not be afraid any longer, only believe."

- Jesus tells the official to believe (or trust) in Him – don't go by sight, only by faith
- So the ruler passes this test, agreeing to let Jesus go to the house, rather than giving in to his fear
  - And as they arrive, they encounter a strange scene

**Matt. 9:23** When Jesus came into the official's house, and saw the flute-players and the crowd in noisy disorder,

**Matt. 9:24** He said, "Leave; for the girl has not died, but is asleep." And they began laughing at Him.

**Matt. 9:25** But when the crowd had been sent out, He entered and took her by the hand, and the girl got up.

**Matt. 9:26** This news spread throughout all that land.

- Jesus comes to the house to find flute players and a noisy, disorderly crowd

- This scene may be bizarre to us, but it's in keeping with Jewish tradition
- Mourning death was an art form in Jewish culture
  - There would be loud, public lamenting by family and friends in the home, and even on the street, in honor of the deceased
  - In fact, family honor depended on the deceased receiving such lamentations from a sizable crowd
  - So, to help families ensure enough wailing for their deceased, mourning the dead became a professional occupation in Israel
  - Even the poorest Jewish family would pay for professional mourners to attend at the death of a loved one
- In time, these professional mourners became like Uber drivers waiting for a fare
  - They hung around homes of those in the community who were near death, ready to make themselves available for hire
  - So as this daughter died, the family did the usual thing, by hiring professional mourners who began serving immediately
  - So that by the time Jesus arrives, they were already at work, wailing loudly, tearing their clothing, and pulling at their hair in traditional Jewish signs of mourning
  - And some were even playing musical instruments, which was also a part of the mourning process in Jewish custom
- All of this combined to create the circus scene that Matthew says greeted Jesus as He arrived
  - This moment became the second test of the father's faith
    - Will he continue trusting in the woman's testimony of Jesus' power, or be overwhelmed by the mourning around him?
    - Will he believe that Jesus has the power of life over death, or will he be persuaded by the crowd that there was no hope?
  - This type of over-the-top lamenting touches on something Paul said to the church in Thessalonica

- Specifically, Paul tells us in 1 Thess. 4:13, that we should not grieve over the believer who dies, as if we have no hope
- Because their faith in Jesus means we know we will see them again very soon
- So death is a temporary separation, like sending someone away to college or on a mission trip...we mourn the separation, but not a loss
- This man could not let the crowd's hopeless wailing persuade him against believing in Jesus' power to resurrect
  - Yet we can see how different the world's mindset is regarding death, when Jesus told the mourners to leave
  - He said they're not needed anymore, because the girl isn't actually dead; she's just asleep
  - In fact, Mark says Jesus spoke it this way:

**Mark 5:39** And entering in, He said to them, "Why make a commotion and weep? The child has not died, but is asleep."

- The text says the girl had died, but Jesus says she's asleep, so we might ask, "Is Jesus lying to the crowd?"
- Elsewhere in Scripture, you may know Paul uses the word "sleep" as a euphemism for death
  - We don't literally sleep when we die, but it's a convenient metaphor, reminding us that death is not the end for a believer
  - So the Bible euphemistically calls a believer's death "sleep", because we will rise to live again
  - Interestingly, the Bible never refers to the death of *unbelievers* as sleep, only *believers*, because it's a reference to the resurrection
- Of course, the crowds don't understand the euphemism, because they didn't possess the hope of resurrection as Paul described
  - The mourners laugh at His comment, thinking Jesus was suggesting they had mistaken a sleeping girl for a dead girl
    - This detail also confirms that these were professional mourners with no personal investment in the situation

- Had they been genuine mourners upset at the girl's passing, they would have been too distraught for such levity
- But these were posers, who momentarily broke out of character to laugh at Jesus' ridiculous suggestion
- And Jesus was content to allow the crowd to remain confused, because He wanted this miracle to remain secret, at least as much as possible
  - In Mark 5:37, we're told that as Jesus and Jairus departed for his house, Jesus told the accompanying crowd they couldn't follow
  - In fact, Jesus only allowed three disciples, Peter, John and James, to join Him into the ruler's home to witness this miracle
  - Furthermore, after the miracle is complete, Mark reports Jesus instructs the family not to tell anyone about what happened
- Jesus wanted to conceal the miracle, and His desire for secrecy is also connected to the events of Chapter 12
  - Because of events we'll study later in that chapter, Jesus stopped performing miracles to gain public attention
  - He only healed the faithful and tried to keep His work secret
  - Again, the answer for why awaits us in Chapter 12
- So after the crowds were gone, Jesus gets to work in the home with only his three apostles, the girl's mother and her father present
  - Which leads to the father's third test of faith
    - As the father entered that room with Jesus, he set his eyes on his daughter's dead body for the first time
    - Imagine the emotions running through his mind and heart
    - How he must have wanted to drop down at her side, embrace her and wail – not like the professional mourners – but like someone who's truly lost somebody
  - But Jesus had just declared this girl was merely sleeping, that death wasn't the end of her story
    - So once again, he had to choose between trusting in Jesus' promises, or trusting in what he sees?

- Would he act in faith, entering the room as a father who enters to wake a sleeping child?
- Or would he break down in mourning, giving in to fear and doubt?
- As we see, the father passes his final test as he stands quietly by, while Jesus takes the child's hand, as if to help her out of bed
  - Mark tells us Jesus also spoke to the girl, telling her to get up
  - And instantly, she opens her eyes, gets out of bed and begins to walk about the room, as if she had merely been asleep
  - Mark says that the people in the room were so astonished that Jesus had to remind them to feed the girl
  - The room's surprise confirms they believed they witnessed a miracle, a dead child brought back to life
- The story of these two miracles is complete, so let's step back to consider how they relate to one another and what they teach us
  - First, we have a father who comes to the Messiah in faith, seeking to have his daughter of 12 years restored from sickness
    - Secondly, a daughter of her Father in Heaven comes to the Messiah in faith, seeking to be restored from 12 years of sickness
    - That woman had been unclean for 12 years, because of her bleeding, which barred her from participating in normal life
    - She was unclean under the Law, so anything she touched was unclean, and anyone who touched her was unclean
    - And likewise, the 12-year-old girl became unclean as she died, for dead bodies are also unclean under the Law
  - Both of these daughters were unclean and neither had reason for hope that they could be restored
    - The woman had tried everything under the sun to stop her bleeding, but nothing worked
    - And the young girl...well, dead is dead
  - So their only hope was to be restored by God

- Therefore, with faith in Jesus as the Messiah, the woman dared to touch Him, knowing she would be healed by God's power
- She did so quietly, knowing that under the Law if she touched Him, she would make Him unclean too
- So to spare Jesus that humiliation, she concluded she must come to Him secretly without announcing herself
- On the basis of her faith, Her Father in Heaven restored her by healing her through the Person of Jesus Christ
  - Instantly, she became clean before God and men
  - And at the same time, Jesus gladly took her shame
  - Nevertheless, He didn't react in anger, as she expected, but called her "daughter" and said her faith had healed her
- Similarly, that 12-year-old girl needed God...she was dead, so certainly, she was helpless apart from the Lord raising her
  - Like the woman, she couldn't approach Jesus or make an appeal for her own sake
  - She too depended on a father to save her through the power of Jesus
  - And once more, by a touch, Jesus healed her and became unclean for her sake, taking the curse for her
- Then pulling these two even closer together, we have that number...12
  - The number 12 has a symbolic meaning in Scripture...it's always used in conjunction with the government of God on earth
    - We see the number's meaning evident in details like the 12 tribes of Israel and the 12 apostles in the early Church
    - So these two women are connected by the number that represents God's government or Kingdom
  - And this fits one of Matthew's central themes of Jesus as the King over the promised Kingdom to come
    - So Matthew has recognized that these two women – and the father who bridges their two stories – form a unique picture of the Kingdom

- Together, they picture how we all enter the Kingdom
- To see that picture, let's go back to the woman's story
- Last week, I mentioned that the woman's experience with Jesus forms a picture of our own salvation moment
  - In a sense, we all encounter Jesus the way this woman did
    - We come to Him unclean, estranged from God, under condemnation for a condition we cannot cure
    - Her condition was bleeding, which made her unclean, but our condition is the impurity of our soul...our sin makes us unclean
  - Like the woman, we come to know Him first by trusting the promises found in the Word of God
    - And as we approach Him in confidence, he will heal us spiritually if only we reach out to Him
    - By the power of the Spirit, we receive healing, and then we confess publicly what God has done in our hearts
    - By our faith, we become a son or daughter of The Living God, the Bible says, and we have peace with God
  - By our faith, we also become a citizen of the future Kingdom, of Christ's government, which will rule the earth in peace
    - But since the Kingdom hasn't arrived yet, we first must spend some time here, living in faith
    - Which brings us to the father's story
- The father's story picks up immediately after the woman is healed, and carries us into the rest of the account
  - His circumstances form a picture of the second part of our salvation story...our walk of sanctification
    - As a child of God, we live by faith – not by sight, the Bible says
    - Like that father, we have bowed our knee to Jesus, we've acknowledged He is our King
    - From that point, we have a journey to make with Him as He leads us toward our resurrection

- We yearn for that journey to end, so we may receive our new life, just as that father was seeking new life for his daughter
- But that journey will test our faith along the way
  - Jesus will give us moments along our walk where we must resolve to trust in Him so we can learn what's possible by faith
  - And in each moment, we face the same choice the father faced
  - Will we follow after the world's ways, relying on what we can see, or will we live with eyes for eternity?
  - Do we trust in the Word of Christ, or become distracted and discouraged by the noise of the world?
- Running the race set before us, means passing these tests
  - And as we move through each one, the Lord is working to build our faith
  - He speaks to us in quiet moments, in His Word and in our prayer life, or in a Godly friend, encouraging us to trust Him
  - As Jesus said to the father, do not be afraid any longer, only believe
- Finally, the father's journey brought him to his daughter lying on her bed, awaiting resurrection
  - And our walk with Jesus will deliver us to our greatest hope: resurrection from death
  - That 12-year-old girl serves as a picture of the final state of our faith
  - For as the government of Christ comes to earth, His saints will join Him in resurrected bodies, as Jesus calls us up from the grave
  - Just as that girl was raised, so we too will be raised by the Father because of our faith in Jesus Christ
- Paul sums it up best in Romans

**Rom. 6:22** But now having been freed from sin and enslaved to God, you derive your benefit, resulting in sanctification, and the outcome, eternal life.

- In that one verse, we find all three steps of our faith-life, as represented by the characters in Matthew's story
  - Paul says by our faith, we are freed from sin – from our separation, our uncleanness under Law – *just like the woman*
  - As a result, we derive the benefit of sanctification – our walking with Jesus that grows our faith – *just like that father*
  - Which leads to the outcome, eternal life – which we receive at our resurrection – *just like the girl*
- The number 12 in the two stories acts as bookends, reminding us that Jesus' earthly ministry was focused on His promised Kingdom
  - Of how we become a daughter or son of the King by faith alone
  - And of how we will enter the Kingdom one day when Christ arrives to raise us up
- And there is one, final detail in Matthew's account that I especially love...for it's another reminder of what we look forward to in the Kingdom
  - The first thing that Jesus does for the girl after she's raised back to life is give her something to eat
  - Which reminds us that the very first event of the Kingdom for all saints will be the marriage supper of the Lamb
  - Jesus will feed us all with a great feast that inaugurates the Kingdom
  - As Jesus promises in Luke

**Luke 13:29** "And they will come from east and west and from north and south, and will recline at the table in the kingdom of God.

- How are you doing on your journey with Christ?
  - Have you begun your life with Christ in faith, like that woman?
    - Are you facing tests by resting in God's promises like that father?
    - Are you eagerly anticipating your resurrection and your eternal life like the young girl?

- Or maybe you're like those professional mourners
  - You're going through the motions, putting on a show
  - And you're ready to break out of your Christian character anytime you hear Jesus promising of impossible things to come
- The Word of God is calling you to learn from these examples, and I hope you will