

The Heart of the Harvest

Matthew 9

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Using This Study

❶ EXAMINE His Word

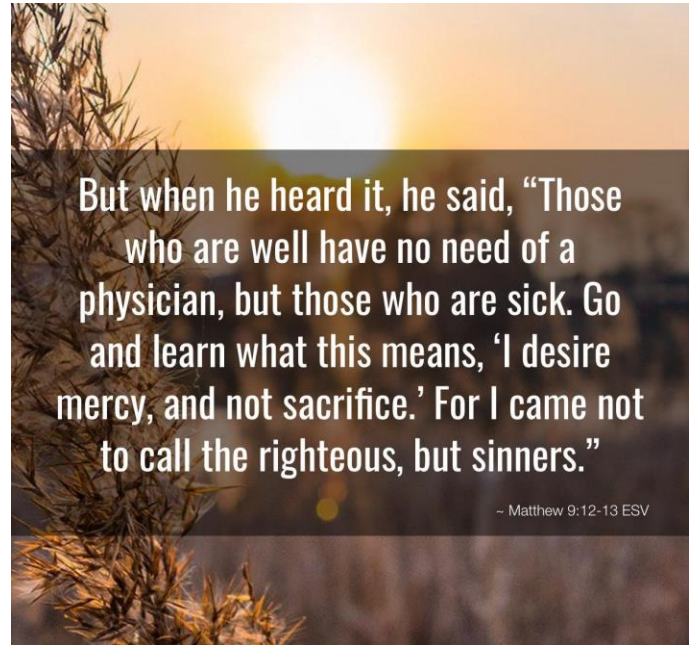
What does God SAY? Open your time with prayer. The words God uses to communicate matters, so go back and pay close attention to the details that are emphasized or repeated in the passage.

❷ EXPLORE His Word

What does God MEAN? Asking questions of the text helps surface how the details relate to the message God wants to communicate.

❸ EMBRACE His Word

Why does it MATTER to me? Embrace God by responding to what you discover in His word in faith and obedience.



Matthew chapter 9 has a few different sections that may be familiar to many Christians. This week we want to look at the way that these sections all fit together to give us a big picture of what the author is trying to communicate. It starts with Jesus healing the Paralytic. It then talks about the calling of Matthew and eating with tax collectors. In the middle is the transitional passage on new and old wine skins. Then the chapter moves to four more healings including raising a girl from the dead and healing the blind and mute. The chapter closes with Jesus telling His disciples that the harvest is great but the workers are few. These all tie together to give us a complete picture of how forgiveness and spiritual healing are at the heart of the harvest.

Healing and Forgiving a Paralytic

9 After getting into a boat he crossed to the other side and came to his own town. ²Just then some people brought to him a paralytic lying on a stretcher. When Jesus saw their faith, he said to the paralytic, "Have courage, son! Your sins are forgiven." ³Then some of the experts in the law said to themselves, "This man is blaspheming!" ⁴When Jesus perceived their thoughts he said, "Why do you respond with evil in your hearts? ⁵Which is easier, to say, 'Your sins are forgiven' or to say, 'Stand up and walk'? ⁶But so that you may know that the Son of Man has authority on earth to forgive sins"—then he said to the paralytic—"Stand up, take your stretcher, and go home." ⁷And he stood up and went home. ⁸When the crowd saw this, they were afraid and honored God who had given such authority to men.

The Call of Matthew; Eating with Sinners

⁹As Jesus went on from there, he saw a man named Matthew sitting at the tax booth. "Follow me," he said to him. And he got up and followed him. ¹⁰As Jesus was having a meal in Matthew's house, many tax collectors and sinners came and ate with Jesus and his disciples. ¹¹When the Pharisees saw this

they said to his disciples, "Why does your teacher eat with tax collectors and sinners?" ¹²When Jesus heard this he said, "Those who are healthy don't need a physician, but those who are sick do. ¹³Go and learn what this saying means: '***I want mercy and not sacrifice.***' For I did not come to call the righteous, but sinners."

The Superiority of the New

¹⁴Then John's disciples came to Jesus and asked, "Why do we and the Pharisees fast often, but your disciples don't fast?" ¹⁵Jesus said to them, "The wedding guests cannot mourn while the bridegroom is with them, can they? But the days are coming when the bridegroom will be taken from them, and then they will fast. ¹⁶No one sews a patch of unshrunk cloth on an old garment, because the patch will pull away from the garment and the tear will be worse. ¹⁷And no one pours new wine into old wineskins; otherwise the skins burst and the wine is spilled out and the skins are destroyed. Instead they put new wine into new wineskins and both are preserved."

Restoration and Healing

¹⁸As he was saying these things, a ruler came, bowed low before him, and said, "My daughter has just died, but come and lay your hand on her and she will live." ¹⁹Jesus and his disciples got up and followed him. ²⁰But a woman who

had been suffering from a hemorrhage for twelve years came up behind him and touched the edge of his cloak. ²¹ For she kept saying to herself, "If only I touch his cloak, I will be healed." ²² But when Jesus turned and saw her he said, "Have courage, daughter! Your faith has made you well." And the woman was healed from that hour. ²³ When Jesus entered the ruler's house and saw the flute players and the disorderly crowd, ²⁴ he said, "Go away, for the girl is not dead but asleep." And they began making fun of him. ²⁵ But when the crowd had been put outside, he went in and gently took her by the hand, and the girl got up. ²⁶ And the news of this spread throughout that region.

Healing the Blind and Mute

²⁷ As Jesus went on from there, two blind men followed him, shouting, "Have mercy on us, Son of David!" ²⁸ When he went into the house, the blind men came to him. 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, "Let it be done for you according to your faith." ³⁰ And their eyes were opened. Then Jesus sternly warned them, "See that no one

knows about this." ³¹ But they went out and spread the news about him throughout that entire region.

³² As they were going away, a man who could not talk and was demon-possessed was brought to him. ³³ After the demon was cast out, the man who had been mute spoke. The crowds were amazed and said, "Never has anything like this been seen in Israel!" ³⁴ But the Pharisees said, "By the ruler of demons he casts out demons."

Workers for the Harvest

³⁵ Then Jesus went throughout all the towns and villages, teaching in their synagogues, preaching the good news of the kingdom, and healing every kind of disease and sickness. ³⁶ When he saw the crowds, he had compassion on them because they were bewildered and helpless, like sheep without a shepherd. ³⁷ Then he said to his disciples, "The harvest is plentiful, but the workers are few. ³⁸ Therefore ask the Lord of the harvest to send out workers into his harvest."

🕯 EXAMINE His Word (Observation) (For personal preparation)

What does God SAY? Prayerfully note significant details and terms emphasized in the foregoing passage.

1. Who is involved in the text? Author, audience, main characters.

2. Where and when is this taking place? Geography and timeline.
3. What actions are carried out or commanded? Look for the verbs.
4. Is there anything repeated?
5. What is emphasized?
6. Is there anything in these passages that is related to other areas of scripture?
7. Are there things to be noted that are alike or unlike such as similes and metaphors?

2 EXPLORE His Word (Interpretation) (For Community Group discussion)
What does God MEAN?

8. Why did Jesus tell the paralytic that his sins are forgiven before He Healed him?
9. Why did Jesus eat with people that He knew others considered sinful?

10. What does the new wine and the old wine represent?

11. What does Jesus demonstrate by raising the girl from the dead?

12. Why does Jesus heal the blind men?

③ **EMBRACE His Word (Application)** (For Community Group discussion)

Why does this MATTER to me?

13. How is the forgiveness in the beginning of the chapter related to the workers in the harvest at the end of the chapter?

14. What does the New Covenant mean to us?

15. How does the idea of desiring mercy not sacrifice relate to us?

Summarize your thoughts on the passage

Write about what God wants you to **KNOW**, to **FEEL**, and to **DO**...

SERMON NOTES