

# LIFE BIBLE STUDY

## SESSION OBJECTIVE: MATTHEW 9:10-38

To determine how our *awareness* of our sin impacts our desire to follow Jesus.

## Under the Weather

When I was a little boy, no older than 7 or 8 years old, I faked being sick to skip a field trip. I know that sounds crazy. What little kid wouldn't want to go on a field trip? Wherever it was it didn't interest me, and I preferred being alone, so I hatched a plan that ended up working. I sat on the school bus on a window seat, and the



sun was already beaming down on us. I placed my forehead on the window and recoiled almost immediately because of how hot it was, and then it hit me: “If I put my forehead on here long enough and then complain about being sick, they will feel my forehead, feel the heat, and send me back inside!” It worked, and I stayed back that day feeling a sense of accomplishment for fooling an adult. Don’t worry. I’ve since repented.

Quite the opposite practice is common with regard to spiritual things. People don’t fake being sick when they are actually well. On the contrary, they pretend to be well when they are actually sick. How crazy would that be, physically speaking? How can a doctor help you if you never go see him? If you don’t acknowledge your sickness? The Scripture says that, “all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God (Rom. 3:23). The Psalmist

laments that, “there is none who does good, not even one” (Ps. 53:3). There is a sickness in everyone, and it is sin, but God has sent a Physician to make us well. The question is, are we willing to admit it?

**“It is not those who are healthy who need a physician, but those who are sick.” (Matt. 9:10)**

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## The Wrong Crowd?

Beginning in verse 10, we are told that Jesus is hanging out with a group of people that were not your average church-goers. This is actually a continuation of where we left off last week. If you remember, Jesus called Matthew who was a tax collector to follow Him, and Matthew immediately did so. In this verse, it appears that Matthew has thrown this celebratory dinner and invited his tax collector friends over to meet Jesus. This draws the ire of the Pharisees, and immediately they began to judge them. Jesus’ response casts a comparison between the Pharisees and the, “tax collectors and sinners.” Jesus, speaking figuratively, shows how illogical it would be for someone who is healthy to go to the doctor. This would make no sense. It’s the sick people who go see a doctor. In this statement, he is not only making a statement about the reality of sick and healthy people, but he is also connecting these sick and healthy people to the sinners and Pharisees. The sick are the tax collectors and sinners. They know they are broken, they don’t pretend to be anything but what they are, and so Jesus goes after them as a result of it. The healthy people are the Pharisees, but there is irony here. The Pharisees are not well, but merely think they are. The same spiritual truth applies today; Jesus does not go after those who think they have it all together. They are not ready to admit their brokenness.

## The Question of Fasting

We know that Jesus expects His followers to fast, because He taught them how to do it just a couple chapters prior (Matt. 6:16-18), but in verses 14 through 17, a question arises as to why Jesus’ disciples aren’t doing it. This does seem strange on the surface level. How can Jesus teach with the assumption that fasting will happen and yet not hold His followers accountable to do so?

His response is interpretatively tricky but actually very simple. Jesus’ whole ministry can be thought of as simply ushering in the kingdom of God. The “kingdom” is a key theme throughout Matthew’s Gospel, and every move that Jesus makes is a step towards the coming kingdom being established. With that in mind, Jesus likens His disciples to that of the best and closest men to a groom. A wedding feast is likely what Jesus had in mind, and such feasts were celebratory. It would make as much sense for the best men to mourn the exit of the groom at a wedding feast as it would Jesus’ disciples to fast. Why? Because Jesus was actively in their presence, establishing God’s kingdom! However, Jesus knew even at this point in His ministry that His mission would ultimately end in rejection, and He anticipates that by saying, “the days will come when the bridegroom is taken away from them, and then they will fast.”

Then He moves to another truth and employs two illustrations (Luke even calls them “parables”). The first one is about new patches on old clothing, and the other is new wine in old wine skins. Both of these illustrations point to the lunacy of trying to shove new practices into old ways. This illustration points to the reality of what Jesus is doing in the context of Pharisaic Judaism. The two are not compatible. Jesus’ methods and teachings do not fit into the old wineskins of what was being taught; eventually the seams would burst and the outcome would be crucifixion, and the bridegroom would be taken away. The disciples will then fast.

## More Messianic Signs

Throughout chapter 9, we see Jesus perform several more signs that indicate that He is in fact the Messiah.

**HEALING (VS.20-22; 27-31)**

Authority over sickness and infirmities is a claim that no one but God can make. Jesus first demonstrates His healing power over the woman who had been hemorrhaging for twelve years. This was likely menstrual bleeding that would not stop, and no physician had been able to help her. It's important to remember that this was not just a physical problem in losing blood, but it also made her unclean according to Leviticus 15:25-30, which prohibited her from worshipping and enjoying the community aspect of her faith since even a touch would make someone unclean. This is perhaps what motivated her to do what she did. She believed that she would be healed simply by touching Jesus' cloak. The other healing takes place with two blind men who follow Jesus into a house. They identify Him as, "the Son of David," a messianic title first introduced in the very first verse of Matthew chapter 1. There is a little word play in this passage, as Jesus says, "See that no one knows about this." The verb here is the actual verb that means, "to see." In both instances, Jesus directly connects the faith of the individuals to their healings.

**EXORCISM (VS.32-34)**

In this instance, a man who cannot speak or hear because of a demon possession is brought to Jesus. No request is made, although that doesn't mean there wasn't a request. Matthew has a way of cutting to the chase and he gives enough information to set the reader up to understand what is happening here. Jesus expels the demon, and this was no light action. The Greek word here, ἐκβάλλω, means, "to forcibly expel." Demons do not leave the people they possess easily. It's a violent dismissal. The crowds clearly were amazed as they had never seen anything like this happen. The Pharisees, on the other hand, cannot accept anything Jesus does as good, and so they attribute His power to exorcise demons as ironically demonic.

**RESURRECTION (VS.18-19; 23-26)**

Before Jesus heals or exorcises anyone in this chapter, another request is made of him. He is asked by a synagogue official to come and see his daughter who had just died. Jesus is interrupted by the woman hemorrhaging, and then finally arrives to the home of the synagogue official. In ancient times, funeral processions were carried out almost immediately. The flute players and the noisy crowd is understood to mean the professional mourners who would come to carry out such a procession. The Jewish collection of exegetical material called the Mishnah dictates that, "Even the poorest in Israel should hire not less than two flutes and one wailing woman" (Ketub. 4:4). An official such as the one in this chapter would have afforded much more. However, Jesus makes a shocking pronouncement: "Leave, for the girl has not died; she is asleep." This is seemingly so outrageous that the crowds laugh. But then more shocking, He takes her by the hand and she gets up. This news, as you would expect, spread throughout all the land. Jesus' reputation was growing, and it was growing fast.

## Study Questions

### Day One

1. Read Matthew 9:10-13. Why does Jesus eat with the tax collectors? What is the Pharisees' opinion of this? Why did Jesus come into the world (Hint: Read 1 Tim. 1:15)? What verse does Jesus reference here from the Old Testament?
2. Read Matthew 9:14-17. Why do Jesus' disciples not fast? What point are the two illustrations meant to establish? What is Jesus saying here? Why are the Pharisees' disciples compared to Jesus' disciples?

### Day Two

1. Read Matthew 8:18-19; 23-26. Why were there flute players and a noisy crowd in the home already? Where is the father of the daughter? What is the reaction of the people who saw Jesus bring this little girl back to life? Write down any details that are confusing to you and address them in class.
2. Read Matthew 9:20-22; 27-31. Put yourself in one of these two healing instances as a spectator. What would you think about Jesus? How would you feel after seeing Him do some of the things He did?

### Day Three

1. Read Matthew 9:32-34. Who brought the demon possessed man to Jesus? How is this demon possessed man different from the two in Matthew 8:28-34? What does Jesus do to this man? Where does the demon go?
2. What is the response of the crowds? Are these the same crowds that witnessed Jesus raise the little girl back to life? Use Scripture in your answers.

### Day Four

1. Read Matthew 9:35-38. What is Jesus' heart towards the people of Israel? What are they compared to? Read Psalm 23, and think about Jesus and the way He heals so many individuals. Write down the connections you make.
2. What did Jesus mean when He said, "The harvest is plentiful, but the workers are few. Therefore beseech the Lord of the harvest to send out workers into His harvest?" What is Jesus suggesting? What does this mean?

## Week 13 Discussion: The Sick Reality

Matthew 9:10-13 brings out a hard but important reality; Jesus came for sinners (1 Tim. 1:15). Our spiritual condition prior to being born-again is abysmal, and yet that is a hard pill to swallow for people. In a world that celebrates humanity and purports that we are all, "mostly good," the Bible's message that all have sinned and fall short of God's glory is not popular (Rom. 3:23). This week, discuss how this truth is paramount to your spiritual walk, and how we can communicate it in a way that is truthful yet loving.

1. Icebreaker: Do you believe all people are broken and dead in sin apart from Christ? Why or why not?
2. What areas in your life do you see your sin nature come out the most in? How do you deal with that in those moments? What kind of work have you done to address it?
3. How important is it for people to understand sin before they can understand salvation? How effective is the Gospel message apart from the knowledge of sin?
4. How can a Christian share the hard truth of sin to a non-believer in a way that is unwavering but loving?
5. How effective do you think it is to share your own shortcomings and sinful actions with other people when you share the Gospel? Why or why not?

## Takeaways:

1. Jesus does not come for those who believe they are spiritually well, but for those who are in touch with their sin.
2. Jesus has compassion on those around Him that are experiencing the ill-effects of sin.

### PRAYER REQUESTS: