

## OPENING PRAYER

Proper 28<sup>1</sup>

Blessed Lord, who caused all holy Scriptures to be written  
for our learning:  
Grant us so to hear them, read, mark, learn,  
and inwardly digest them,  
that we may embrace and ever hold fast  
the blessed hope of everlasting life,  
which you have given us in our Savior Jesus Christ;  
who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit,  
one God, for ever and ever. Amen.

## MATTHEW 9<sup>2</sup>

9 1 And after getting into a boat he crossed the sea and came to his own town.

Jesus Heals a Paralytic

2 And some people were carrying to him a paralyzed man lying on a stretcher. When Jesus saw their faith, he said to the paralytic, "Take heart, child; your sins are forgiven." 3 Then some of the scribes said to themselves, "This man is blaspheming." 4 But Jesus, perceiving their thoughts, said, "Why do you think evil in your hearts? 5 For which is easier: to say, 'Your sins are forgiven,' or to say, 'Stand up and walk'? 6 But so that you may know that the Son of Man has authority on earth to forgive sins"—he then said to the paralytic—"Stand up, take your bed, and go to your home." 7 And he stood up and went to his home. 8 When the crowds saw it, they were filled with awe, and they glorified God, who had given such authority to human beings.

The Call of Matthew

9 As Jesus was walking along, he saw a man called Matthew sitting at the tax-collection station, and he said to him, "Follow me." And he got up and followed him.

10 And as he sat at dinner[a] in the house, many tax collectors and sinners came and were sitting[b] with Jesus and his disciples. 11 When the Pharisees saw this, they said to his disciples, "Why does your teacher eat with tax collectors and sinners?" 12 But when he heard this, he said, "Those who are well have no need of a physician, but those who are sick. 13 Go and learn what this means, 'I desire mercy, not sacrifice.' For I have not come to call the righteous but sinners."

The Question about Fasting

14 Then the disciples of John came to him, saying, "Why do we and the Pharisees fast often,[c] but your disciples do not fast?" 15 And Jesus said to them, "The wedding attendants cannot mourn as long as the bridegroom is with them, can they? The days will come when the bridegroom is taken away from them, and then they will fast. 16 No one sews a piece of unshrunk cloth on an old cloak, for the patch pulls away from the cloak, and a worse tear is made. 17 Neither is new wine put into old wineskins; otherwise, the skins burst, and the wine is spilled, and the skins are ruined, but new wine is put into fresh wineskins, and so both are preserved."

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<sup>1</sup> Episcopal Book of Common Prayer pp.236

<sup>2</sup> All Bible quotations and footnotes are from Biblegateway.com, New Revised Standard Version Updated Edition (NRSVUE) Copyright © 2021 National Council of Churches of Christ in the United States of America. Used by permission. All rights reserved worldwide.

### A Girl Restored to Life and a Woman Healed

18 While he was saying these things to them, suddenly a leader came in and knelt before him, saying, "My daughter has just died, but come and lay your hand on her, and she will live." 19 And Jesus got up and followed him, with his disciples. 20 Then suddenly a woman who had been suffering from a flow of blood for twelve years came up behind him and touched the fringe of his cloak, 21 for she was saying to herself, "If I only touch his cloak, I will be made well." 22 Jesus turned, and seeing her he said, "Take heart, daughter; your faith has made you well." And the woman was made well from that moment. 23 When Jesus came to the leader's house and saw the flute players and the crowd making a commotion, 24 he said, "Go away, for the girl is not dead but sleeping." And they laughed at him. 25 But when the crowd had been put outside, he went in and took her by the hand, and the girl got up. 26 And the report of this spread through all of that district.

### Jesus Heals Two Blind Men

27 As Jesus went on from there, two blind men followed him, crying loudly, "Have mercy on us, Son of David!" 28 When he entered the house, the blind men came to him, and Jesus said to them, "Do you have faith that I can do this?" They said to him, "Yes, Lord." 29 Then he touched their eyes and said, "According to your faith, let it be done to you." 30 And their eyes were opened. Then Jesus sternly ordered them, "See that no one knows of this." 31 But they went away and spread the news about him through all of that district.

### Jesus Heals One Who Was Mute

32 After they had gone away, a demon-possessed man who was mute was brought to him. 33 And when the demon had been cast out, the one who had been mute spoke, and the crowds were amazed and said, "Never has anything like this been seen in Israel." 34 But the Pharisees were saying, "By the ruler of the demons he casts out the demons."

### The Harvest Is Great, the Laborers Few

35 Then Jesus went about all the cities and villages, teaching in their synagogues and proclaiming the good news of the kingdom and curing every disease and every sickness. 36 When he saw the crowds, he had compassion for them because they were harassed and helpless, like sheep without a shepherd. 37 Then he said to his disciples, "The harvest is plentiful, but the laborers are few; 38 therefore ask the Lord of the harvest to send out laborers into his harvest."

### Footnotes

9.10 Gk *reclined*

9.10 Gk *were reclining*

9.14 Other ancient authorities (manuscripts) lack *often*

## OVERVIEW<sup>3</sup>

### 9:1-8 Jesus Heals a Paralytic

Jesus sees and responds to the faith of the people who bring the man sick with palsy to Jesus. The story presupposes that the illness has a spiritual cause (a demon has made the man deaf and dumb.) Jesus forgives the man's sins and by doing so has gotten to the root cause of the man's paralysis. The scribes object on the grounds that Jesus has spoken evil (blasphemy) because he has done what only God can do. Jesus however asks if it is easier to pronounce forgiveness or tell the man to get up and walk? Because on the latter can be objectively proven. So he makes the man able to walk and leaves the question hanging over whether he, as the Son of Man with derived divine power, can forgive sins as well.

### 9:9-13 The Call of Matthew

The Pharisees denigrate Jesus by asking how he can eat with tax collectors and sinners. Those who have removed themselves from the covenant because of apostasy (an act of refusing to continue to follow, obey, or recognize a religious faith)<sup>4</sup>.

Jesus responds with a proverb (the sick needing a physician), a scripture (Hos 6:6 "For I desire steadfast love and not sacrifice, the knowledge of God rather than burnt offerings"), which may also resemble the appeal in Ch. 8 to Isa 53 as bringing about physical healing by the Suffering Servant's death, and a declaration about his mission (in which the "righteous" are apparently the "self-righteous"). Saying "Go, learn what this means" implies that Jesus has correctly interpreted the OT and the Pharisees have not.

### 9:14-17 The Question about Fasting

JohnBap's disciples ask Jesus why his disciples do not fast like they and the Pharisees do – every Monday and Thursday in addition to the day of atonement when all Jews fast – because Jesus and his disciples do fast on that day. Jesus declares that guests should not fast at a wedding celebration, implying that the Messiah is present, and it is like a celebration while he is here. When the Messiah is gone then there will be fasting.

Jesus then adds a paradoxical parable, the new patches on the old wineskins, making the implicit subject the relationship between the old and the new. But there is also continuity, "so both are preserved". Jesus' message and the kingdom of God not only bring the new but fulfil Judaism: the past is not abandoned but fulfilled. The treasures are both old and new (Matthew 13:51-2).

In a larger context Matthew presents JohnBap in the following chapters:

Chapter 3:1-17 "Repent, for the kingdom of heaven has come near."

14 John would have prevented him, saying, "I need to be baptized by you, and do you come to me?" 15 But Jesus answered him, "Let it be so now, for it is proper for us in this way to fulfill all righteousness."

Chapter 9:14-17 "17 Neither is new wine put into old wineskins"

Chapter 11:2-18 "11 Truly I tell you, among those born of women no one has arisen greater than John the Baptist, yet the least in the kingdom of heaven is greater than he."

Chapter 14:1-12 1 At that time Herod the ruler heard reports about Jesus, 2 and he said to his servants, "This is John the Baptist; he has been raised from the dead, and for this reason these powers are at work in him."

<sup>3</sup> Sources include notes from Barton and Muddiman, Biblegateway.com, Harper Collins Study Bible, NRSV Version, and notes from Eugene E. Lemcio, PhD, Emeritus Professor of New Testament, Seattle Pacific University

<sup>4</sup> Merriam-Webster

Note: does Matthew see JohnBap as the OT's last prophet, or as part of Jesus' new kingdom of heaven? Is he part of the old or the new? And what are we to make of the fact that he and Jesus proclaim repent, for the kingdom of God is near?

**9:18-26 A Girl Restored to Life and a Woman Healed**

Here Jesus heals two women. A synagogue director's daughter and a woman suffering from hemorrhaging. The stories are significantly shorter than in Mark. The theme in both cases is faith.

**Comparing the Three Synoptic Versions**

Matthew's version is the shortest and has the least embellishment. Luke stays the closer to Mark's original text. In Matthew, the daughter is already dead, the bleeding woman is under realized as a character, and the raising of the young girl from her deathbed is under developed relative to Mark and Luke. As a result the faith theme in Mark is under developed in Matthew's version of the story.

Note: It is intriguing that in Matthew the leader's daughter is already dead. Could this be because Matthew wants Jesus to be able to claim to JohnBap disciples in 11:4 "the dead are raised".<sup>5</sup> Or to be able to charter the disciples with the power to raise the dead (10:8)? Or is this a post-resurrection nuance in Matthew's thinking? The story in Mark and Luke have a stronger narrative power because the clock is running for Jesus to get to the child before she dies. This is gone in Matthew.

Mark 5:21-43	Matthew 9:18-26	Luke 8:40-56
21 When Jesus had crossed again in the boat[a] to the other side, a great crowd gathered around him, and he was by the sea. 22 Then one of the leaders of the synagogue, named Jairus, came and, when he saw him, fell at his feet 23 and pleaded with him repeatedly, "My little daughter is at the point of death. Come and lay your hands on her, so that she may be made well and live."	18 While he was saying these things to them, suddenly a leader came in and knelt before him, saying, "My daughter has just died, but come and lay your hand on her, and she will live."	40 Now when Jesus returned, the crowd welcomed him, for they were all waiting for him. 41 Just then there came a man named Jairus, a leader of the synagogue. He fell at Jesus's feet and began pleading with him to come to his house, 42 for he had an only daughter, about twelve years old, and she was dying.
24 So he went with him. And a large crowd followed him and pressed in on him. 25 Now there was a woman who had been suffering from a flow of blood for twelve years. 26 She had endured much under many physicians and had spent all that she had, and she was no better but rather grew worse. 27 She had heard about Jesus and came up behind him in the crowd and touched his cloak, 28 for she said, "If I but touch his cloak, I will be made well." 29 Immediately her flow of blood stopped, and she felt in her body that she was healed of her disease. 30 Immediately aware that power had gone forth from him, Jesus turned about in the crowd and said, "Who touched my cloak?" 31 And his disciples said to him, "You see the crowd pressing in on you; how can you say, 'Who touched me?'" 32 He looked all around to see who had done it. 33 But the woman, knowing what had happened to her, came in fear and trembling, fell down before him, and told him the whole truth. 34 He said to her, "Daughter, your faith has made you well; go in peace and be healed of your disease."	19 And Jesus got up and followed him, with his disciples. 20 Then suddenly a woman who had been suffering from a flow of blood for twelve years came up behind him and touched the fringe of his cloak, 21 for she was saying to herself, "If I only touch his cloak, I will be made well." 22 Jesus turned, and seeing her he said, "Take heart, daughter; your faith has made you well." And the woman was made well from that moment.	As he went, the crowds pressed in on him. 43 Now there was a woman who had been suffering from a flow of blood for twelve years, and though she had spent all she had on physicians,[a] no one could cure her. 44 She came up behind him and touched the fringe of his cloak, and immediately her flow of blood stopped. 45 Then Jesus asked, "Who touched me?" When they all denied it, Peter[b] said, "Master, the crowds are hemming you in and pressing against you." 46 But Jesus said, "Someone touched me, for I noticed that power had gone out from me." 47 When the woman realized that she could not remain hidden, she came trembling, and falling down before him, she declared in the presence of all the people why she had touched him and how she had been immediately healed. 48 He said to her, "Daughter, your faith has made you well; go in peace."
35 While he was still speaking, some people came from the synagogue	23 When Jesus came to the leader's house and saw the flute players and the	49 While he was still speaking, someone came from the synagogue leader's

<sup>5</sup> Eugene E. Lemcio, PhD, Emeritus Professor of New Testament, Seattle Pacific University

<p>leader's house to say, "Your daughter is dead. Why trouble the teacher any further?" 36 But overhearing[b] what they said, Jesus said to the synagogue leader, "Do not be afraid; only believe." 37 He allowed no one to follow him except Peter, James, and John, the brother of James. 38 When they came to the synagogue leader's house, he saw a commotion, people weeping and wailing loudly. 39 When he had entered, he said to them, "Why do you make a commotion and weep? The child is not dead but sleeping." 40 And they laughed at him. Then he put them all outside and took the child's father and mother and those who were with him and went in where the child was. 41 Taking her by the hand, he said to her, "Talitha koum," which means, "Little girl, get up!" 42 And immediately the girl stood up and began to walk about (she was twelve years of age). At this they were overcome with amazement. 43 He strictly ordered them that no one should know this and told them to give her something to eat.</p>	<p>crowd making a commotion, 24 he said, "Go away, for the girl is not dead but sleeping." And they laughed at him. 25 But when the crowd had been put outside, he went in and took her by the hand, and the girl got up. 26 And the report of this spread through all of that district</p>	<p>house to say, "Your daughter is dead; do not trouble the teacher any longer." 50 When Jesus heard this, he replied, "Do not be afraid. Only believe, and she will be saved." 51 When he came to the house, he did not allow anyone to enter with him, except Peter, John, and James and the child's father and mother. 52 Everyone was weeping and grieving for her, but he said, "Do not cry, for she is not dead but sleeping." 53 And they laughed at him, knowing that she was dead. 54 But taking her by the hand, he called out, "Child, get up!" 55 Her spirit returned, and she stood up at once, and he directed them to give her something to eat. 56 Her parents were astounded, but he ordered them to tell no one what had happened.</p>
<p>Footnotes 5.21 Other ancient authorities (manuscripts) lack <i>in the boat</i> 5.36 Or <i>ignoring</i>; other ancient authorities (manuscripts) read <i>hearing</i></p>		<p>Footnotes 8.43 Other ancient authorities (manuscripts) lack <i>and though she had spent all she had on physicians</i> 8.45 Other ancient authorities (manuscripts) add <i>and those who were with him</i></p>

### 9:27-31 Jesus Heals Two Blind Men

This story closely resembles Matt 20: 29-34, which may be a redactional doublet.<sup>6</sup> It prepares for Matt 11:15 which cites the Isaiah prophecy of the healing of the blind. Blindness for a 1<sup>st</sup> Century CE Jew could involve not only poverty and hardship, but also religious alienation (Lev 21:20). The blind men call Jesus the "Son of David"<sup>7</sup>. This is a messianic title (1:1) but Jesus also heals as the Son of David (12:23; 15:22; 20:30-31). This matters because Son of David with one exception is, in Jewish tradition, used of Solomon, who was renowned as a mighty healer and exorcist.<sup>9</sup>

### 9:32-34 Jesus Heals One Who Was Mute

Jesus healing a demoniac who is both deaf and dumb closes Matthew's third miracle triad. It prepares the way for 11:5 "the deaf hear"; and the crowds declaration that Jesus' ministry is like nothing in Israel's history (judges 19:20), is climatic. The Pharisees' reaction is negative and anticipates the opposition to the missionary discourse (10:25).

<sup>6</sup> "Doublets abound in Matthew: perhaps approving the Mosaic requirement for two witnesses?" Eugene E. Lemcio, PhD, Emeritus Professor of New Testament, Seattle Pacific University,

<sup>7</sup> Selected "Son of David" references in OT that apply the term to Solomon: 2 Chronicles 1:1 "Solomon son of David strengthened himself in his kingdom; the Lord his God was with him and made him exceedingly great." 2 Chronicles 35:3 "Put the holy ark in the house that Solomon son of David, king of Israel, built; you need no longer carry it on your shoulders." Proverbs 1:1 "The proverbs of Solomon son of David, king of Israel"

<sup>8</sup> Matthew uses the term "Son of David" 10 times, once in regard to Joseph (1:20), and 9 times in regard to Jesus (1:1; 9:27; 12:23; 15:22; 20:30; 20:31; 21:9; 21:15; 22:42)

<sup>9</sup> Davies, W.D., Allison, D.C., *Matthew International Critical Commentary*, Volume 2 1998, pp. 135-6 "Matthew, we cannot doubt, thought of "Son of David" as a messianic title. But there is also very definitely another side of the term in the First Gospel. Jesus several times heals as David (9:27; 12:23; 15:22; 20:30-31). This intrigues because, with one exception, *ben David* (Son of David) is always, in the OT, used of Solomon, who was later renowned as a mighty healer, exorcist, and magician. (D.C. Duling, "Solomon, Exorcism and the Son of David", HTR 68 1975) pp 235-52). Especially significant in this regard is the Testament of Solomon... Matthew, it seems reasonable to suppose, both knew the Jewish legends about Solomon's powers and probably intended to present Jesus in their light."

### **9:35-38 The Harvest Is Great, the Laborers Few**

Concludes the triad and provides a summary about Jesus' healing ministry. It closes off chapters 8-9 and opens up the discourse on the missionary discourse by equating the work of the disciples with Jesus' work. They do what he does in the missionary work of spreading the "The Good News". Later in Chapter 13, the angels will do the harvest at the last judgement<sup>10</sup>.

The passage also harkens back to 4:23 and so is an inclusion with the Sermon on the Mount. The passage makes Jesus words (chapters 5-7) and deeds (chapters 8-9) the fundamental context for understanding 10:1-42. The twelve are to preach to Israel about the kingdom of God and to heal the sick (10:1, 7-8), and so imitate Jesus. Moreover, as 5:1-7:27 gives content to the command to preach the gospel (10:7), and as 8:1-9:34 gives content to the command to heal the sick, raise the dead, cleanse lepers, and cast out demons. (10:8) Jesus' words and deeds are for the missionary example and precedent.

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<sup>10</sup> Matthew 13:41-2 "41 The Son of Man will send his angels, and they will collect out of his kingdom all causes of sin[h] and all evildoers, 42 and they will throw them into the furnace of fire, where there will be weeping and gnashing of teeth."

## REFLECTION

How do we connect to Jesus' words and deeds as examples for us today?

## CLOSING PRAYER

We thank you, heavenly Father,  
 for the witness of your apostle and evangelist,  
 Matthew, to the Gospel of Beatitude and Grace  
 which you have given us in your Son, our Savior;  
 and we pray that, after his example,  
 we may with ready wills and hearts obey  
 the calling of our Lord to follow him;  
 through Jesus Christ, who lives and reigns with you  
 and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever. Amen

*The Rev. Zoila Schoenbrun*

## GOSPEL COMPARISON<sup>11</sup>

Pericope <sup>12</sup>	Matthew	Mark	Luke	John
The Healing of the Paralytic	9:1-8	2:1-12	5:17-26	5:8-9a
The Call of Levi (Matthew)	9:9-13	2:13-17	5:27-32	
The Question about Fasting	9:14-17	2:18-22	5:33-39	
Jairus' Daughter, Woman with a Hemorrhage	9:18-26	5:21-43	8:40-56	
Two Blind Men Healed	9:27-31 20:29-34	10:46-52	18:35-43	
The Dumb Demoniac Healed	9:32-34 12:22-24	3:22	11:14-15	
The Harvest is Great	9:35-38	6:34	10:2	

<sup>11</sup> Source: <http://www.gospelparallels.com/>

<sup>12</sup> An extract from a text, especially a passage from the Bible, "a book of pericopes"

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