

Matthew 8:23-9:17

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[0 : 00] Now we've talked to my children in this series quite a bit about that picture in the lion, the witch and the wardrobe.! Anania is restored to what it was meant to be.

Aslan walks through the land. And what we find in the Gospels, we find this beautiful picture of God made man walking on this earth, restoring, remaking, renewing, the ice melting and the world and creation being seen for what it is.

And it's a bit like the show homes, isn't it? You know in Ealing there's loads of old places that are pulled down and the boards go round the building and they say new flats coming soon, new homes for Ealing.

And then at some point the boards are removed and there is a show flat, isn't there? Or there is a show home while the building continues. And you can go into that flat and you see you're given a picture of what one day will be the whole flat or the whole block.

It's a little picture, isn't it? It's a fortis of what it will be like to live in that flat, that block of flats when it's done. And Matthew 8 and 9 particularly is showing us that.

[1 : 40] It is showing Aslan on the move. It is showing us the show home of the new creation that will one day come. Now do you remember I did a little bit of work with you last time on the structure.

And I think it's important that you understand it. In chapter 4 and verse 23 Jesus goes through all of Galilee, the synagogues and he does three things. He teaches in the synagogues, he proclaims the gospel of the kingdom and he heals all the diseases.

And then you get another bookmark in chapter 9 and verse 35 where you get the same thing. He goes through all the cities and the villages and he teaches in the synagogues. He proclaims the gospel of the kingdom and he heals every disease.

He does miracles. He shows what life is like in the kingdom of God. So chapter 5, 6 and 7, do you remember that? They are the words, the teaching of the kingdom. And then chapter 8 and 9 you see the works of the kingdom.

And chapter 8 and 9 have got one message, one point. It is about the transforming joy of Jesus the king. It's all about what the gospel really means for the world and the people of this world.

[2 : 51] And it's a great message. It's the message of the recreation of the universe. It's a message of the reversal of the curse of sin. That pervades the whole world and every human being.

And Jesus in his works is acting out what he's already proclaimed in his word. He's acting out his authority and power over sin. And all the effects of sin.

We saw last time, two weeks ago, we saw in the first 22 verses, the tragic helplessness of sin. We saw that sin has the power to exclude helpless human beings from life as it should be.

The life that we were created for. The life with God himself in fellowship and friendship with him.

And sin has ruined that. But Jesus reverses that helplessness.

He reverses the power of sin to exclude from life as it's meant to be. We saw him bringing the outcast home right into his presence.

[3 : 52] We saw him with the unclean leper and the untouchable Gentile and the unnamed woman. But here in these next three stories, we see, if you like, another acted out word of Jesus' authority.

That Jesus coming and Jesus' kingdom destroy the terrifying hold of sin. The wonderful news that Jesus liberates men and women and boys and girls from the sin that enslaves us.

Now you and I need to understand something important here about sin. The Bible teaches that sin is not just the fruit of our rebellion against God. It's not just sins, plural.

The things that we do and the consequences of it. And the guilt that we face before God. Now it's far, far more than this. Sin, according to the Bible, is a mighty power.

It's a personal power. Sin is a power that has become a ruler in this world, the cosmos. Sin is a power that has become a ruler in this world.

[5 : 28] The hearts and minds of men and women and boys and girls. So we're not just hopeless and excluded from God. The Bible's picture is even worse. It's that we are enslaved under sin's power and dominion.

That we are ruled by a dark and a sinister force. And so Romans 6 teaches us that sin is a great power.

He describes sin there as an evil monarch. As a slave master. And as a general. As a brutal employer who pays wages.

And that is the deepest truth about sin according to the Bible. And that's what explains our world. It explains the brutality of our world.

And the inhumanity that we see. And the evil that you read about on the internet. And the evil you watch on your TV. And the horror and the wickedness.

[6 : 31] The world and its people, according to the Bible, is in slavery to the power of sin. And the power of evil. But the message of the Bible.

And the message of the kingdom. Declares that Jesus' authority. Is an authority which is over every power of darkness. And over the power of sin in this world.

And that's what Jesus is showing you here. That's what Jesus is acting out before us. His authority over the power of sin. In this world. And so Matthew chapter 8 and 9 is written very, very carefully. There are three miracles. And then there is teaching on what it means to be a disciple. And then there are another three miracles. And then there is teaching given on what it means to be a disciple. And then there are another three miracles. And teaching is given on what it means to be a disciple. And we're in the second section. I preached on these individually. And it's good to do that. But I think we want to see this morning.

[7 : 31] Matthew's big point. And so the first section is in verse 23 and following. Jesus rebukes with authority. The power of sin and evil at work in creation.

Jesus rebukes with authority. The power of sin. So let's read from verse 23. When he got into a boat. His disciples followed him.

And behold there arose a great storm on the sea. So that the boat was being swamped by the waves. But he was asleep. And they went and woke him saying.

Save us Lord. We are perishing. And he said to them. Why are you afraid are you of little faith? Then he rose. And rebuked the winds and the sea.

And there was a great calm. The men marveled. Saying what sort of man is this. That even the wind and the seas obey him. Now we all know this story very well.

[8 : 34] Most of us. But I want to believe grasped the significance of it. Because it's not just about Jesus. Power over the natural world. It's actually evidence of his power.

Over the supernatural world. The powers of evil at work in this world. In the Bible. When you read through the Old Testament. You will find that the sea. And particularly storms.

And darkness of the sea. Represent the powers of evil. And the powers of chaos in the world. So think back right to the very beginning. In the Bible.

When God created the world. When it was a formless void. Of darkness and waters. And out of that.

God called forth. Light and life and beauty. In creation. But the darkness. The waters. The storms of the sea.

[9 : 32] Are always something. That represents the enemy. And the enemies of God. That's why we sang Psalm 46. Because it speaks about not fearing.

Doesn't it? The people of faith. That even though. The mountains will trotter. And quake. And they'll fall into the surging waves. Of the sea. In Psalm 46.

It represents. Doesn't it? This raging sea. The evil powers of the world. Arrayed against God. And God's people. And if you go to the very end of the Bible. That picture of the new creation.

In Revelation 21. You will find that there is. A really interesting phrase. Isn't it? It says in the new creation. There will be no more sea. That's not something to worry about. If you like beach holidays. If you like sailing. Or you like sea fishing. It doesn't mean that there will be no swimming in the sea. In the new creation. No. What it means. Is it's saying to us.

[10 : 27] Understand. There will be no dark powers of evil. There will be nothing left in opposition. To God. And his people. It's picture language. And what is happening here.

And that's why in verse 26. Jesus rebukes the wind and the waves. Why? Because the wind and the waves. Are daring to rebel. They're daring to rebel.

Against their rightful lord and master. And God made Adam. Do you remember? He made Adam that first man. To be lord over all creation. But here at last.

On that boat. Is a true man. Is a new Adam. Who will not fall. Here at last. Waking up on that boat. Is man as he is meant to be. The true image of God. Ruling over creation. And nature is no longer enslaved. To the powers of darkness.

[11 : 25] Because Aslan is on the move. And darkness defeated. And Eden is restored. And that's what happens. In Jesus presence. That not even the powers of darkness.

Can overcome him. Not even when he's asleep. And any attempt to do so. Is met with a stern telling off. Or a boot. And there is silence. With stern authority.

Because Jesus is the lord of creation. Jesus Christ has the authority. Over the power of sin. That means doesn't it.

That one day in the new creation. There will be no more earthquakes. And there will be no more tsunamis. And there will be no more of those so called natural disasters in the new creation.

They are not natural. They are not natural to the world that God made. They can't be. And there can't be these new disasters in the new creation. Because the world will be made by true human beings.

[12 : 25] As God purposed them to be. Men and women made right and righteous in Christ. You see the gospel. In the bible.

Is never a word that says. God is going to make this world just a little bit better. God is going to make the world just a little bit better than it was before. Nothing like it.

The gospel says. In Jesus Christ. God is remaking. The whole creation. And he's driving out evil powers.

And all darkness. So let's think of the second story. In verses 28 to 34. And we see that Jesus not only rebukes with authority the power of sin.

But he removes with authority. The personality. Behind sin. That's what the story of the demons is about. Let's read it. When he came to the other side.

[13 : 23] To the country of the gatherings. Two demon possessed men met him. Coming out of the tomb. So fierce. That no one could pass that way. And behold.

They cried out. What have you to do with us? Oh son of God. Have you come here to torment us before the time? Now a herd of many pigs was feeding at some distance from them. And the demons begged him.

Saying. If you cast us out. Send us away into the herd of pigs. And he said to them. Go. So they came out. And went into the pigs. And behold. The whole herd rushed down the steep bank of the sea. And drowned in the waters.

The herdsmen fled. And going into the city. They told everything. Especially what had happened to the demon possessed men. And behold. All the city came out to meet Jesus. And when they saw him. They begged him to leave their region.

Do you see what we're being told? The Bible is very clear. That behind the power of sin. Lurks always the dark personality.

[14 : 27] The author of sin himself. The devil. The one who holds this world in darkness. And blindness. And bondage. But look again at verse 32.

Jesus has power to conquer these powers. With a word. And you notice the way in this story. That the demons have got. Haven't they? The very best theology in the gospels.

Don't you notice that again and again? In verse 29. They know who he is. He's the son of God. And they know why he'd come. And they know that the day is coming. For their destruction.

On the great day of judgment. But what's shocking for the demons. Is what we're told in verse 29.

Have you come before time? Isn't this too early? Haven't you come before the day of judgment?

Not yet. Because Jesus coming and his kingdom. Signals that the already. Has already begun. Now is the time for rescue.

[15 : 32] The rescue of human beings. From the dark powers. Of the whole of sin. And you see. That is what the gospel of Jesus does. It did then. And it does now. Doesn't it?

The truth will set you free. Free from. The bondage. Free from the terrifying hold. Of the power of sin. Because Jesus.

And his kingdom. Have authority. Over the powers of sin. In this world. And over the dark personality. Of sin. Over the evil one. Who stands. Behind it all.

He came. John said. Didn't he? To destroy the works of the devil. And I have seen. Like you have seen. People. People in this church.

Liberated from the powers of darkness. Transformed. From the terrifying hold. Of sin. That was enslaving them.

[16:29] And holding them back. Holding them back. That they maybe even weren't aware of. In bondage. And the gospel sets them free. That's what the gospel does. There's a third dimension.

Isn't there? To Jesus. Destruction of sins. Hold. And that is in verses 1 to 8. And there we see. That Jesus releases. With authority. From the penalty of sin.

He rebukes. The power of sin. He removes. The penalty of sin. And then he gloriously. Releases human beings. From the penalty of sin. And that's what this story.

About the paralytic. Is all about. Just look at verse 1. After 9. Getting into a boat. He crossed over. And he came to his own city. And behold. Some people brought to him. A paralytic. Lying on a bed. And when Jesus saw their faith.

He said to the paralytic. Take heart. My son. Your sins are forgiven. And behold. Some of the scribes. Said to themselves. This man is blaspheming. They realise.

[17:28] He's claiming to be God. But Jesus. Knowing their thoughts. Said. Why do you think evil in your hearts? For which is easier to say. Your sins are forgiven. Or to say. Rise up and walk.

But that you may know. That the son of man. Has authority on earth. To forgive sins. He then said to the paralytic. Rise. Pick up your bed. Let him go home. And he rose. Went home. And when the crowd saw it.

They were afraid. And they glorified God. Who had given such authority to man. Now when we read this story. Very often. Our whole. Emphasis.

And the focus. Of what we look at. Is on the healing of the man. And even our bible. Gives a title. To that story. Doesn't it? Jesus heals. A paralytic.

Translators of the bible. Have put that in. I think that's the wrong title. Because again. What is Jesus interested in? What is Matthew. Interested in? The whole point.

[18:27] Of the story. Is in verse 6. That Jesus. Does the visible miracle. That you can see. To show you. That he does. The invisible miracle. That you can't see.

The whole point. Is in verse 6. Jesus has the authority. On earth. To forgive sins. He has the authority. On earth. To release. Men and women. And boys and girls.

From the penalty of sin. And it's guilt. And that is. Isn't it? A far greater release. Than any paralysis. A release.

From guilt. Before God. And an eternal. Sentence of death. That is far. Far more amazing. Than. Than any cure. Of any physical illness.

And if we could get the paralytic. Back from heaven this morning. He would say the same thing. Wouldn't he? If we said to him. What was the most amazing thing. That happened on that day.

What would he say? Would he say?

[19:22] Well it was incredible. I could run the park run. The following week. I suddenly started to play squash. Of course he wouldn't. He would say. The most amazing thing.

That day. Is my sins. Were forgiven. You see. Are you getting Matthew's message. In any of these stories? Jesus Christ. Has authority.

And power. Over. Every power of sin. That enslaves humanity. He bursts the fetters. He breaks.

The terrifying. Hold of sin. At work. In your life. And in mine. He breaks. The power of cancelled sin. And sets the prisoner free. And that is the gospel.

That's what the gospel means. And that's why Matthew applies it. In verses 9 to 17. Three miracles. And then teaching on. What does it look like.

[20:18] To live as a Christian. And he gives us his own personal testimony. It's all about Matthew himself. The author. Let's read verses 9 to 17. And as Jesus passed on from there.

He saw a man called Matthew. Sitting in the tax booth. And he said to him. Follow me. Again he rose. And follows him. And as Jesus reclined at table in the house. Behold.

Many tax collectors and sinners. Came and were reclining with Jesus and his disciples. And when the Pharisees saw this. They said to his disciples. Why does your teacher eat with tax collectors and sinners? But when he heard it.

He said. Those who are well. Have no need of a physician. But those who are sick. And so go and learn what this means. I desire mercy and not sacrifice. For I came not to call the righteous but sinners.

And then the disciples of John came to him. Saying. Why do we and the Pharisees fast? And your disciples do not fast. And Jesus said to them. Can the wedding guests mourn? As long as the bridegroom is with them.

[21 : 16] The days will come. When the bridegroom is taken away from them. And they will. And then they will fast. And no one puts a piece of unshrunk cloth. On an old garment. For the patched hair is away from the garment. And a worse hair is made.

Neither is new wine put into old wineskins. If it is. The skins burst. And the wine is spilt. And the skins are destroyed. But new wine is put into fresh wineskins. And so both are preserved.

I don't know if you can spot it. But again. That is a wonderful story of liberation. Of Matthew's liberation. Out of all those who are with him. He is called out of his tax booth.

He is called out from being a slave. To the Roman occupying forces. And he is called to follow a new master. He is liberated from his isolation. As a tax collector.

And a sinner. And he is suddenly brought into fellowship. And friendship. And not fellowship and friendship. With just anybody. But verse 10 says. With the son of God himself.

[22 : 19] And fellowship with the people of God. The people of the Lord Jesus Christ. They are in his household. And he is with Jesus. And they are all in his household.

He is with Jesus. And with all of Jesus' people. All because of the victory. That Jesus has over the power of sin. And sins.

And Satan to enslave. And destroy human life. And that is why there is joy. And that is why there is feasting. At the table of Jesus.

Because it reflects. The joy of heaven. It reflects that victory feast. That we saw last time. In chapter 8. In verses 11 to 12. It is a foretaste. Of what we read about in Romans chapter 8.

Romans chapter 8. Describes the freedom. Of the children. Of God. That when Jesus returns. We will be liberated. And we will have resurrection bodies.

[23 : 22] And there will be a liberation. Of the holy universe. And this is a foretaste of that. And Matthew is telling you and I. What does it mean to be a Christian. To be a disciple. And a follower of Jesus.

It is not just that we have forgiven us of sins. And our guilt is dealt with. As wonderful as that is. But it liberates us. And sets us free. From the power of sin. Do you see what he is saying?

He is saying. When you become a Christian. It is not just that you are adding. Something new to your life. No he is saying. That when you put your trust. In the Lord Jesus.

He is giving you a whole. New life altogether. Of liberation. That is what being a Christian is. And why he speaks in verse 16 and 17.

Of a new garment. And a new wineskin. A new wine. That Jesus has not just come to do a patch up job. On humanity. He has come to make up all things new.

[24 : 23] He liberates us from sin. He gives us new clothes. The clothes of his righteousness. Nor is he coming just to give you a little bit of a new experience. Tacked onto your old life.

Like new wine and old wineskins. No he has come to give you new life altogether. And that is what Matthew is recording here. He is saying. That is my story.

That is my testimony. That is me. That is what I was once like. But look at me now. I am a new man. I am a new creation in Christ Jesus.

I have been set free. I have been transformed. By the grace and the kindness. Of God. In Christ. And so now.

I am rejoicing. With my brothers and sisters. In the presence of Jesus the bridegroom. And that is what it means. To be a Christian. It means that we are made new. We have been liberated.

[25 : 21] For a new world. And of course. People can't see that. Can they? It is plain isn't it. In this passage. That there is a vast gulf. Between the new world people.

And the old world people. In verse 10. We have the people of the new world. And they are joyful. And they are feasting. In the presence of Jesus. They are a motley crew.

Oddballs. Sinners. Tax collectors. While the men of this world. Of the old world. Well they are fasting. Verse 11. The Pharisees. Why are you feasting?

Verse 14. Why are you not fasting with us? They just cannot understand. Can they? The joy. Of the person. Who has had their sins forgiven.

And has been liberated. On the other side. Look at verse 15. There will come a time. When the people of the new world. They fast.

[26 : 24] They fast. Because Jesus returns to heaven. And they long. For his coming again. And of course. The people of this world. They don't care. About Jesus coming again.

They don't long for his coming. They are quite happy. Without Jesus. Probably a lot happier. That's so true. Isn't it? It's what we see. In the world. Again. And again.

This vast gulf. Between the people. Of the new creation. And the people. Of the old world. And we know. Don't we? We know. That we are. As Christians. Are living. In a day of fasting.

We are waiting. For the joy. Of the kingdom. To come in its fullness. When Jesus. Will come again. The people of this world. They are not longing for that. Their horizons.

Are this world. They have no longing. No future thoughts. They are taken up. With the here. And the now. And material things. With education. With advancement.

[27 : 21] Whatever it is. But the true Christian. Will recognize. That this time. Is a time. For fasting. Because we wait. Don't we? We wait. For the full salvation.

That is promised. So we are waiting. And yet. Even as we wait. And even as we fast. The Christian life.

Is one of joy. Isn't it? It's a joy. Of many forties. And so just like.

Jesus. Disciples. Had that day. In Matthew's house. We have the joy. Don't we? Today. Of fellowship. With Jesus. And his people. We have the joy.

Of seeing people. Being liberated. From sin. By this message. Of the kingdom. And the world. Can never understand it. Why are you fasting?

[28 : 17] They say. They just see. If they could look at us. This morning. A bunch of odd balls. A motley crew. Of undesirable people.

They might say. They're pathetic people. They're certainly unimpressive people. Some of them. Are deluded people. That's what the world sees. When it looks at the church. That's what they would think.

And the world. When it. Sees our joy. It thinks it's fanaticism. Doesn't it? So the child. Or the young person. That goes on camp.

This summer. And comes to know. The Lord Jesus Christ. As their saviour. And their sins forgiven. And they go home. And tell their parents. The first thing the parents say.

Well look. That's all well and good. But don't become too fanatical. Isn't that right? They see our joy. As fanaticism. They say.

[29 : 16] Well. We hope they'll just grow out of it. It'll just be a stage. Or worst of all. You might say to them. I'm thinking of changing career. The world has great needs.

I'm thinking of maybe doing missions work abroad. I'm thinking of going into full time Christian work. And you're full of joy at the prospect. But they are just full of horror. Sometimes even very religious people like us can be like that.

Even church people. Sometimes we can be like the Pharisees in this passage. Can't we? Especially when we see our very respectable church. Becoming full of undesirable people.

Tax collectors and sinners. People who bring something of the mess. Of their past. And people don't like it. People don't like real gospel liberating life.

Breaking into a church. Upsetting our patterns. Of how we usually do things. It's so easy isn't it? To be like the elder brother of Luke 15. And not want to get involved in the party.

[30 : 26] And the joy of that sort of thing. And sometimes we need to look at verse 13 don't we? And chew on it. Because Jesus is not interested in religious clutter this morning.

But he does want sacrifices. And he does love mercy. He does love mercy.

He didn't come for the righteous. The self-righteous certainly. But sinners. Yes. And he makes them new completely. It's not just a patch up job.

Not just a charity case. But gloriously new and liberated people. And because Jesus and his kingdom. Destroys the terrifying hold of sin.

