Jesus' Authority Over Sins

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Preacher: Todd Born

[0:00] It's good to be with you this morning. It's good to be here with you guys, to bring God's word to you. Yeah, I just want to say Brittany and I! and our family, we have delighted in being here.

It's almost been a year now. We've been loving getting to know each one of you in this church and the countless ways you guys have served us and our family in this season that we've had.
So I can't thank you guys enough for that. So I hope this morning then this word will bring you great courage and it will build us up this morning.
So let's now stand together as I read the word for us. We're in Matthew chapter 9, verses 1 through 17 this morning.
If you don't have a Bible, we have some extra Bibles in the back table there. If you need a Bible, want a Bible, someone can get it to you. So would you raise your hand? Can you hand actually for us real quick?
[1:02] No? Okay. Okay, great. Great. So again, Matthew chapter 9, verses 1 through 17. And getting into a boat, he crossed over and 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. 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 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, and go home. And he rose and went home.
And when the crowd saw it, they were afraid, and they glorified God, who had given such authority to men. And as Jesus passed on from there, he saw a man called Matthew sitting at the tax booth.
[2:08] And he said to him, follow me. And he rose and followed him. And as Jesus reclined at the 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 the 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, go and learn what this means.
I desire mercy and not sacrifice. For I came not to call the righteous, but sinners. Then the disciples of John came to him saying, why do we and the Pharisees fast?
But your disciples do not fast. And Jesus said to them, can the wedding guests mourn as long as the bridegroom is with them? The days will come when the bridegroom is taken away from them and then they will fast.
No one puts a piece of unshrunk cloth on an old garment for the patch tears away from the garment and a worse tear is made. Neither is new wine put into old wineskins. If it is, the skins burst and the wine is spilled and the skins are destroyed.
[3:20] But new wine is put into fresh wineskins and so both are preserved. May the Lord add a blessing to his word. You guys can sit down.

And I'm going to pray real quick for us as we launch into this sermon. Lord, thank you. Thank you for your word. Thank you for giving us all things for life and godliness.
Thank you for your son, Jesus. Father, help us this morning to see your word. Open the eyes of our hearts, Lord, to conform us to your image, to make us more like you, to throw off our flesh and put on the new, to walk in step with your spirit.
We pray. Amen. Amen. So this morning we have these three stories, three different scenes you have most likely heard, taught on individually at different times, drawing out the small details of

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each account.
But today we are going to be looking at these three accounts together and I believe we will find that they are all more interconnected than we first realized. I want you to see that these are narrated not so much for the small details that we are accustomed to of each event but for the radical pronouncements made by Jesus to which they give rise.
[4:50] And radical they are. They are radical especially for the Jewish audience that he is speaking to here today. For the first time the kingdom of God we see Jesus that is the kingdom of God that Jesus is ushering in begins to encounter overt criticism from traditional Jewish piety.

So this morning as we walk through each of these different scenes my hope is that you will see Jesus Christ didn't come to receive our sacrifices.
He came to show mercy. He came to be our sacrifice. Again that's Jesus Christ didn't come to receive our sacrifices but he came to show mercy and he came to be our sacrifice.
sacrifice. So let let us then dive into the scene one here our first point the authority to forgive sin. In verses one through eight here we see Matthew telling his readers of his account of the healing of the paralytic man.
Jesus leaving the guardians to get into a boat to cross back over to the sea of Galilee to his hometown Capernaum where he did most of his ministry he resided at this time.
[6:06] The town that actually welcomed him compared to the guardians the guardians didn't want him they wanted him to leave but Capernaum we see people coming to him wanting to hear more from him to interact with him to meet him they wanted to hear his teaching so people are coming to Jesus they want to hear from Jesus so the story of the paralytic man often involves the description of immense crowds coming around the house and this paralytic man coming carried by his three friends and lowering him into the house ripping open the ceiling and all the dirt falling in and Jesus seeing this we usually have all of that in description but most of the time it's referenced from the gospel of Luke who gives much more detail than Matthew so this prompts the question then for us as we look at this text why?

why does Matthew leave out most of these details? and I believe that Matthew this morning today wants us to see there's an important interaction that's happening here he gets down to the specifics and the specifics here he wants us to see I believe is that Jesus has the authority to forgive sins and this is the first time in the gospel of Matthew that we actually get to see that we see Jesus doing such a thing the first time he does forgive someone an individual of their sin we have though seen that he holds a unique authoritative teaching he holds the authority over all of the cosmos healing ailments calming storms and casting out demons but one could even be a prophet sent by God and do these things Moses parted the Red Sea as we see in Exodus 14 Elijah healed the widow's son in 1 Kings but Jesus
Jesus is no ordinary man no ordinary prophet Jesus is the only one of the prophets priests kings to ever speak and act with such authority as we're seeing here today he doesn't need a staff that God gave and instructed him to use he doesn't need to ask God for the power to heal or cast out demons and now right now we're seeing that he doesn't need the temple system the Judaism temple system of sacrifice to forgive someone of their sin as he says here take heart my son and know that your sons your sins are forgiven this was not just a future forgiveness this was instantaneous your sins are forgiven the paralytic was reaping the benefits of that forgiveness immediately he did nothing though to receive it he did nothing but there's no only one way that this is possible there's only one way that it's possible for Jesus to forgive this paralytic sins which is why it doesn't sit well with the scribes who are watching this happen right before them they say this man is blaspheming because Jesus is doing only what God can do what only God alone can do and that is forgive sins as Psalm 130 verses 3 through 4 says if you oh Lord should mark iniquities oh Lord who could stand but with you there is forgiveness that you may be feared so it was clearly known that this was the prerogative of God alone no ordinary created being could do this so this so any ordinary created being that makes this claim puts himself into the creator's place here yet as we have seen have been seeing in this gospel
Jesus is no ordinary man Jesus calls them out calls these Pharisees out these scribes for their unbelieving hearts and his accusation of breaking the third commandment why do you think evil in your hearts and he responds with this rhetorical question for which is easier to say your sins are forgiven or rise and walk I mean of course between these two it is easier for one to say your sins are forgiven since divine forgiveness of sin cannot be verified or falsified on this side of heaven right

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but physical healing can be tested it is empirical the proof is in the pudding as some people will say so today one is healed but if he's healed then we can measure it we can see it but if he's not healed he's not healed we can see that so it makes that man a liar if he is not healed and it makes him be crazy so to show them that this that he actually has the power and his declaration of divine forgiveness is not just wishful thinking not just some
Disney fairy tale that he's conjuring up here no he declares then the paralytic healed and not only does he send him on his way but I find this humorous but he picks up his own bed on his way out he carries his own bed and goes home that's a pretty incredible measure of healing like he's not only just healed from being paralyzed which if you guys know in physical therapy I mean most of you know we've had church members here going through physical therapy it takes months for some minor injuries or surgeries that you go through it takes months even years to find rehabilitation but you suffer something major like being paralyzed it could take a lifetime if you are to even see progress so this guy gets up and literally carries his bed out so the crowd here has a right response they respond correctly and they have awe they have fear and they see that
[12:39] God is at work here they see that Jesus has the authority and the power to forgive sins and they bring praise to God we could go on and I could say a lot more about this passage but what Matthew wants us to take away from this event is that Jesus holds the divine authority to forgive sins Jesus begins to show the great magnitude of mercy he brings in this new kingdom he is ushering in he may heal us when we are ill but he came to fundamentally forgive us of our sins so now as we move on to this next scene this next story in verses 9 through 13 we'll see that it goes deeper than that it goes deeper still Jesus not only holds this authority but he has the desire his heart is to forgive sinners as we'll see here in point number two his heart of mercy so in this next scene

Jesus makes the next move and he's walking along and he calls Matthew he calls a tax collector and he says to this tax collector come follow me now you guys probably know a little bit about tax collectors in the Bible they were they were not the most loved people in this time during this culture in this time period you could say people probably even found them a little bit loathing repulsive they had disdain for them so even today I would say most of us probably don't enjoy tax collectors or what they represent that is the IRS taxes they're not great you know and especially saying this here in Boston of all places Bostonians can resonate it wasn't too long ago you know Bostonians tarred tax collectors right across the river here and threw a bunch of tea into the harbor to protest the oppressive regime that they felt from Britain especially from the tax collectors so the tax collectors in the
Roman Empire ones like Matthew they could assess the goods subjectively they could assess their value subjectively and they could take whatever they want they could take the extra on top of what they assess and keep it for themselves so this created an extra level of disdain for these tax collectors for the Jewish people especially when one was their own when one was their own like Matthew supporting the oppressive regime taking money from his own people and giving it to Rome so what Jesus does here is rather bold and shocking for his audience he calls Matthew a tax collector to be one of his own to be his disciple and more than that though he doesn't just call Matthew what do we see next that he does he's in
Matthew's home as we know from context from other gospels he's in Matthew's home he's in Matthew's home not just there present but with Matthew alone but he's also reclining as Jesus as Matthew says he's reclining at table he's dining he's feasting but not only with Matthew but with other tax collectors other other buddies of Matthew's that he works with with other undesirable sinners as well as one commentator said these people were the undesirable individuals of Jewish society they were most likely Jewish by upbringing but did not observe the Jewish rituals they did not go to the temple like they should they didn't observe the ordinances the rituals the forms that they should have they were unclean sinners so this gives a prime opportunity for just more tension to build for more confrontation once again with Jesus and the
Jewish leaders and this time it's the Pharisees the Pharisees now are jumping in on this they were looking in and they were seeing Jesus reclining at table eating feasting drinking with tax collectors in this home probably a lavish feast as well knowing the tax collectors with a bunch of other undesirable unclean outcast people of the town so they were probably pretty confused pretty appalled at what was going on this was pretty scandalous for Jesus to do it brought a lot of confusion so it led Jesus to ask why does your teacher eat with tax collectors and sinners why is he

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doing this this question though isn't really a wrong question to ask for the Old Testament does celebrate and encourage and even command God's people to not associate with the sinner with the unclean as
[18:02] Psalm 26 verses 4-5 says I do not sit with the men of falsehood nor do I consort with hypocrites I hate the assembly of evildoers and I will not sit with the wicked or Psalm 1-1 says blessed is the man who walks not in the counsel of the wicked nor stands in the way of sinners nor sits in the seat of scoffers but a gentle tactful response those who are well have no need of a physician but those who are sick go and learn what this means I desire mercy and not sacrifice for I came not to call the righteous but sinners Jesus is trying to take a moment here he's trying to help I believe he's trying to help the Pharisees along and help them remember what the scriptures actually teach to remember the heart of

God Pharisees you of all people should know that the Messiah comes to save sinners and in fact if you would see your own desperate need for forgiveness if you knew the scriptures as well as you claim if you let the scriptures seep down into your heart you would know this as psalm 14 verses 2-3 says the lord looks down from heaven on the children of man to see if there are any who understand who seek after God they have all turned aside together they have become corrupt there is none who does good not even one but we also see the heart of God then in psalm 86 15 but you oh lord are a god merciful and gracious slow to anger and abounding and steadfast love and faithfulness they were missing this and
Jesus was calling them out on their own self righteousness righteousness is not necessarily wrong here it should be the aim of becoming a good disciple to grow in holiness and Christ likeness and God likeness but the sort of righteousness here that Jesus has in view and he mentions here put sacrifice before mercy it is not the righteousness of the kingdom of heaven it is a self made righteousness focused on one's own performance these Pharisees these people they knew the ins and the outs of the temple sacrificial system they became more focused on the system rather than the purpose of the system the heart behind the system you Pharisees he said he he Jesus looking at the
Pharisees you Pharisees have forgotten God's heart of mercy they lost sight of God's heart and his goodness given to them in this sacrificial system in his word and they became more focused on their own performance thinking highly of themselves not seeing that they too were in need of a physician they too were sick and ultimately they could not extend compassion and service to others they lost sight of that they lost sight of mercy and thus they became a hindrance to God displaying his mercy to his people the temple of the living God and the sacrificial system was a place and a way for sinners to come and receive the forgiveness of their sins to meet with God and to know his presence now this is not to say that the system was a failure rather it was never the end goal it was never meant to be the final say so and
I believe these Pharisees probably thought that Jesus would continue this on to make this a better system a better Judaism it was a tool though used to do exactly what it was intended for to reveal the holiness of our God to reveal our complete and utter sinful depravity and yet to provide mercy to provide a way to come to commune to meet with God the temple and its sacrifices pointed to this truth that our heavenly father is completely and utterly committed to reconciling sinners to himself he is completely and utterly committed to reconciling sinners to himself so church we have a wonderful and merciful father that we do not deserve!
[23:26] to live homeboy! Jesus here wasn't just coming to indiscriminately hang out with sinners hang out with a bunch of drunks and prostitutes and tax collectors being an easy live and let live homeboy no he was fulfilling his mission as he says to call sinners and sinners were drawn to him he gladly spent time with those who were open to hearing his gospel he forgave sinners and he embraced repentant sinners as his own so please don't hear me this is not a license to just go hang out with sinners and hang out in the bars and just kick it with them no there is an intent there is a heart there is a mission that Jesus had and that was to come and to give his gospel to call them to repentance to provide a way for them to have mercy to receive mercy this is why he

God sent his only son Christ Jesus into the world as we read to leave heaven to embrace humanity into this world to be our perfect sacrifice he didn't come to condemn the world not to shake his head at us in disgust he didn't come to meet us halfway rather he went the full length to call to call us to call sinners to repentance he came to meet us right where we are in our sinful unclean state to extend the fullness of his mercy through his son Jesus by providing this pathway to repentance

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through the cross of Christ so I want to ask you have you received this mercy have you experienced it have you answered the call of
Jesus to follow him like Matthew to come and receive his great mercy if you haven't I believe God has you here today has you here for a time just as this to receive his mercy to call upon his name and to receive the forgiveness of your sins so I plead with you call upon his name come and receive his mercy and know the loving embrace of his son Jesus Christian how might we know though as well that someone knows God's mercy how do we know that we know!
God's mercy how do we know we are drawing near to the heart of God we are growing in this it's not it's not measured by how much you serve it's not how many books you read it's not about how much you do for God rather are you displaying and extending God's loving kindness to those around you to those in misery and in need to the undesirable!
sinner are you taking that same mercy that you receive and sharing it with those around you and letting it change and shape the way that you see the world around you what's what's your posture your response to a fellow Christian when they fall into sin is it a response of contempt!
[27:22] of disgust saying how could they I can't believe that person did that church Jesus draws near to those that are broken extending mercy upon mercy and he and he is committed to drawing near and reconciling sinners like you and me to himself and he wants us to extend that same mercy to one another so our attitude our posture towards others reveals our understanding of God and how God views us when we misunderstand God's mercy we tend to view him as a hard to please judge instead of a merciful loving father who runs to his children in their need so do you think

God views you with disappointment searching for the weaknesses and failures! that you have or do you see him viewing you with love with compassion drawing near to you in your weakness and in your sin through the work of Jesus see this was the seemingly radical way that Jesus was bringing that Jesus was extending and showing and it was confusing to some it was confusing to his audiences that didn't understand the scriptures it was causing tension with the Jewish leaders and even the disciples of John the Baptist which we see here in our next scene in our next point in verses 14 through 17 asking the question how then shall we live on the heels of this feast
John the Baptist disciples likely seeing or hearing about Jesus having this lavish feast with Matthew sinners and the tax collectors asking the question about fasting why do your disciples fast now it's rather fitting if you know about John the Baptist and his disciples it's rather fitting that his disciples are the ones asking this question remember John the Baptist he was wearing camel skins and while fasting eating nothing but locusts and honey in the wilderness you had to walk all the way out into the wilderness and you had to only hear John the Baptist saying repent and believe repent while he's wrapped in this camel's hair and eating locusts and honey so John the Baptist was well known by those around him for his outward religious appearances for his religious asceticism so you can perhaps see why the followers of
John the Baptist are very confused when they're seeing or hearing of Jesus their Messiah the ones that they're preparing the way for and his disciples are feasting at homes of sinners it doesn't seem like they're taking their religious practices very seriously they aren't fasting like all the other good Jewish leaders are so Jesus responding with this really well put illustration of a wedding and at this time in this culture weddings were a big celebration lasting for days they were feasts so Jesus asked do you mourn during a wedding it's kind of strange right be like Gary Chin groomsman and Andrew and Kathy's upcoming wedding showing up wearing sathcloth and ashes to their wedding not celebrating the marriage but fasting sitting in a corner restraining himself while everybody else is enjoying dancing celebrating feasting it would be a rather bizarre scene right
Jesus says yes there will be a time for fasting but now is not it look around you you're missing it read the room guys God in the flesh is walking with his people it's the dawn the beginning of a new life of the kingdom of heaven it should be a great time of great joy and celebrations you should be feasting we should be feasting right now so you're misunderstanding the times guys as Jesus is speaking to John's disciples and he goes on to say to make the illustration sink in a little bit further no one puts a piece of unshrunk cloth on an old garment for the patch tears away from the garment and a worse tear is made neither is new wine put into old wine skins if it is the skins burst and the wine is spilled!
[32:56] and the skins are destroyed but new wine is put into fresh wines skins! I'm just going to be focusing on the wine skins this morning which it's a fascinating illustration I think early on in my Christianity I had no idea what is Jesus saying and it's really fascinating and amazing I was actually

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even talking to my wife Brittany and she's just like man that's incredible I don't know if I fully understood that so it just let me get into this illustration wine skins think about leather they're made of leather when leather is new it's soft it's pliable it stretches it gives but as it ages it becomes dried out hard and brittle so and if you've ever seen somebody make wine

I grew up around my grandfather making homemade wine and homemade beer and these things so if you've ever seen like or gone to a tour and seen like wine made or bourbon an alcoholic drink made you know that it goes through a process of fermentation and even in its early stages after it's finished being made it still is going through this process of fermentation giving off gases and bubbling so so if you were to take and put new wine as it's still fresh into these old hard brittle wineskins these wineskins won't be able to expand and contract they won't be able to hold it and it'll just expand and it'll burst so and I imagine that this illustration that Jesus gives here is just one of those classic rookie mistakes that people make and you just laugh at them when they make them so it's kind of like it reminds me of when you start trying to make your own kombucha at home if you guys have ever tried that you know when you start making the process you put the tea the fruit in there and you put the scoby in there which is your bacteria which gives to the fermentation process of it and then after you put it in there you put it in a sealed bottle and then you tuck it away in this dark cabinet in your kitchen to sit and just be for a time but the classic rookie mistake is you forget about it and that fermentation has nowhere to go so you open up your cabinet and you realize kaboom like this thing just blew up in your cabinet
I have several friends that that has happened to so it is a classic rookie mistake so this is what I imagine this is kind of like so putting wine into old wineskins was probably not the way to go it was probably something that brought a lot of people laughter when someone did it but what Jesus is really getting out with these illustrations the patch the wineskins he's getting at he's he's he's wanting them to see that guys the kingdom of God he is bringing in the new covenant that's being ushered in it cannot be contained in the forms and rituals of the old new wine must be put into new wineskins he wasn't trying to Jesus wasn't coming to try and restore update or make a new more glamorous Judaism but we know what we know from earlier in Matthew chapter 5
Jesus did not come to reject or disconnect from the Old Testament scriptures but he came to fulfill these forms and rituals of the old covenant what Jesus was refusing to accept here was not scripture rather these religious practices describes the Pharisees and the disciples of John supposedly have based on scriptures they had built up and made them their own rituals their own forms so which brings me back then earlier to fasting Jesus said the days will come when the bridegroom is taken away from them and then they will fast so it is assumed that fasting will continue just as he mentioned even back in Matthew chapter 6 he did the description of how you should look when you fast but it doesn't look like what these Pharisees and these scribes are doing what their fasting looks like what their forms their rituals look like it's not an obligatory like action it's not an obligatory act where we are trying to earn favor with God rather we fast we do it knowingly we already have God's favor through
Christ Jesus we fast because we can freely fasting as many of the spiritual disciplines that we have the means of grace the habits of grace that we have reading scripture coming to church fasting praying these are all means of grace that God has given us that are meant to refocus to sharpen us to refocus our heart and our minds to God to fill our affections afresh for God himself to keep us on the path so when we physically fast when we are physically going through the spiritual disciplines that we have in this life we are doing so out of the reality that we are in a time of spiritual fasting we are in a time of spiritual fasting enjoying or sorry in spiritual feasting enjoying and celebrating that everything everything we need to be made right before God and to live a life of godliness has been abundantly provided for us in
[39:37] Christ Jesus our bread of life we Christians on this side of the cross are in the reign of God's grace we are enjoying it to the full so when we sin and we fall short in this broken world and in our sinful flesh we remember those words spoken to the paralytic take heart your sins are forgiven and we reap the benefits that have been given to us through Christ we reap the benefits of repentance and take delight in knowing God's mercy covers all our sins past present and future we get to live in the good of that as Soren Kierkegaard once said a person rests in the forgiveness of sins when the thought of

God no longer reminds him of the sin but of the fact that he is forgiven so that what is past is not remembering how much he sinned but of how much he has been forgiven friends when we sit in the

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shadow of the cross I encourage you remember to sit at the foot of the cross to sit in its shadow to know of the great mercy that has been poured out for you and for me to soak it in when we do that we will be able to extend mercy compassion and forgiveness it will change you it will transform you to live a life that is pleasing to God and you get to enjoy the forgiveness of your sins
I believe that's peak Christian maturity is when you're not dwelling on your sin oh man I sinned again I screwed up again but no looking at the cross knowing in that great mercy that you don't deserve that God has shown you and delighting in it enjoying it and seeing how much you have been forgiven because we have been forgiven of much as I wrap up and I draw our attention as we looked at these three different stories we have seen this contrast in these three different stories between the old wine as you may say and the new wine the contrast between this traditional Jewish piety and the kingdom of God my friends
Jesus has brought the new wine he has ushered in the kingdom of God and he has prepared a feast for you and for me it's the wine of the new covenant it's the blood of his life sacrificed poured out for all all who would come to him all who would believe there are no limits to who can receive his great and rich mercy let's pray father thank you thank you for your word thank you for what you've given us lord would you help us lord to be a people full of mercy and forgiveness we pray amen thank you

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