**"The Transformative Power and Authority of Jesus."**

**Matthew 9:1–17 (NKJV)**

***The Paralytic is Forgiven***

***9*** So He got into a boat, crossed over, and came to His own city. 2Then behold, they brought to Him a paralytic lying on a bed. When Jesus saw their faith, He said to the paralytic, “Son, be of good cheer; your sins are forgiven you.”

3And at once some of the scribes said within themselves, “This Man blasphemes!”

4But Jesus, knowing their thoughts, said, “Why do you think evil in your hearts? 5For which is easier, to say, ‘*Your* sins are forgiven you,’ or to say, ‘Arise and walk’? 6But that you may know that the Son of Man has power on earth to forgive sins”—then He said to the paralytic, “Arise, take up your bed, and go to your house.” 7And he arose and departed to his house.

8Now when the multitudes saw *it,* they marveled and glorified God, who had given such power to men.

***Matthew is Called***

9As Jesus passed on from there, He saw a man named Matthew sitting at the tax office. And He said to him, “Follow Me.” So he arose and followed Him.

***The Disciples Eat with Sinners***

10Now it happened, as Jesus sat at the table in the house, *that* behold, many tax collectors and sinners came and sat down with Him and His disciples. 11And when the Pharisees saw *it,* they said to His disciples, “Why does your Teacher eat with tax collectors and sinners?”

12When Jesus heard *that,* He said to them, “Those who are well have no need of a physician, but those who are sick. 13But go and learn what *this* means: *‘I desire mercy and not sacrifice.’* For I did not come to call the righteous, but sinners, to repentance.”

14Then the disciples of John came to Him, saying, “Why do we and the Pharisees fast often, but Your disciples do not fast?”

15And Jesus said to them, “Can the friends of the bridegroom mourn as long as the bridegroom is with them? But the days will come when the bridegroom will be taken away from them, and then they will fast. 16No one puts a piece of unshrunk cloth on an old garment; for the patch pulls away from the garment, and the tear is made worse. 17Nor do they put new wine into old wineskins, or else the wineskins break, the wine is spilled, and the wineskins are ruined. But they put new wine into new wineskins, and both are preserved.”

**Introduction for Matthew 9:1-17**

In Matthew 9:1-17, we witness a series of powerful events where Jesus reveals His divine authority and the radical newness of His message. In this passage, Jesus demonstrates His power to forgive sins, heal the sick, and call the most unlikely individuals—showing that His ministry is one of both spiritual and physical transformation. He not only challenges the religious leaders of the time, but He also introduces a new way of living, rooted in grace and mercy, which cannot be confined to the old ways of legalism and ritual.

As we journey through this section of Scripture, we will see how Jesus’ authority extends beyond human expectations, how He invites sinners into a relationship of discipleship, and how He is inaugurating a new covenant that changes everything. Whether it is through healing a paralytic, calling a tax collector, or explaining the newness of His Kingdom, Jesus is demonstrating that He is both the **Son of God** and the **Savior of the world**. This passage asks us to consider how we, too, will respond to the power and authority of Jesus in our own lives.

A powerful theme throughout Matthew 9:1-17 is **"The Transformative Power and Authority of Jesus."** This theme connects several key aspects of the passage:

1. **Authority to Forgive and Heal (Verses 1-8)** – Jesus demonstrates His divine authority to forgive sins and heal physical ailments, showing that He has power over both the spiritual and physical realms. This highlights His role not just as a healer, but as the one who brings deep, spiritual transformation.
2. **The Call to Follow (Verses 9-13)** – Jesus calls Matthew, a tax collector and considered a sinner, into a life of discipleship. Here, we see the transformative power of Jesus’ invitation, where He doesn’t just invite believers to follow outward rules but to undergo a life-changing journey of repentance and grace. Jesus calls sinners, not the self-righteous, showing that He seeks to transform lives, no matter how broken they are.
3. **The New Way of Living (Verses 14-17)** – Jesus introduces the idea of a new spiritual paradigm that can't be contained in old religious forms. The metaphors of unshrunk cloth and new wine point to the transformative power of the new covenant of grace, replacing the old system of legalism and sacrifice with a relationship based on mercy, grace, and spiritual renewal.

**Matthew 9:1-8: The Power and Authority of Jesus**

Jesus, after crossing the sea, arrived back in His own city, likely Capernaum. He returned to familiar ground, where people knew Him, but He had more to reveal. His goal was not only to perform miracles but to show something even more profound: that He is the Son of God, fully divine and fully human.

**Verse 1: Jesus Arrives in His City**

*9 :1” So He got into a boat, crossed over, and came to His own city.”*

The scene opens with Jesus crossing the sea and arriving in His own city. He had been traveling, teaching, healing, and now returns to a place where He is familiar, but with an important purpose—to reveal who He truly is.

**Verse 2: A Paralytic Is Brought to Jesus**

"And they brought to Him a paralytic lying on a bed. Seeing their faith, Jesus said to the paralytic, 'Take courage, son; your sins are forgiven'" (JEN).

The people brought this man to Jesus, seeking physical healing. They wanted their friend to walk again. But Jesus, seeing their faith, went beyond their expectations. Instead of immediately healing the man's body, He addressed the deeper need: **forgiveness of sins**. Jesus says, "Take courage, son; your sins are forgiven."

This is a pivotal moment. The man’s greatest need wasn’t physical healing, though that was important. His greatest need, like ours, was spiritual healing—**the forgiveness of sins**. Jesus was teaching that the most important thing for any person is the condition of their soul. **The soul matters above all else.**

**Verse 3: The Scribes’ Accusation**

"And some of the scribes said to themselves, 'This fellow blasphemes'" (JEN).

The scribes understood the gravity of what Jesus was saying. Only God can forgive sins, and here was Jesus, claiming to do just that. In their eyes, this was blasphemy, an offense against God. But in reality, Jesus was revealing His divine nature. They recognized what He was claiming—He was not just a teacher or a healer. **He was declaring Himself to be God.**

**Verse 4: Jesus Knows Their Thoughts**

"And Jesus, knowing their thoughts, said, 'Why are you thinking evil in your hearts?'" (JEN).

Jesus, knowing the very thoughts of the scribes, confronted them. This is another demonstration of His divinity. **God knows everything**—including our hidden thoughts and motives. There is no hiding from Him. Jesus exposed the evil in their hearts by asking, “Why are you thinking this way?” They had hearts filled with skepticism and malice, refusing to see who Jesus really was.

**Verse 5: Which Is Easier?**

"Which is easier, to say, 'Your sins are forgiven,' or to say, 'Get up, and walk'?" (JEN).

Jesus posed this question to challenge their thinking. Forgiving sins and healing a paralytic both require divine power. It may seem easier to say, “Your sins are forgiven,” because no one can see the immediate proof. But healing a paralyzed man is something everyone can witness. Jesus was about to demonstrate that He had the power to do both—showing that His authority extends to both the physical and spiritual realms.

**Verse 6: Jesus Demonstrates His Authority**

"But so that you may know that the Son of Man has authority on earth to forgive sins," He said to the paralytic, "Get up, pick up your bed, and go home" (JEN).

To prove His authority over sin, Jesus commanded the paralyzed man to rise and walk. He not only declared forgiveness but provided physical healing as a visible confirmation. This miracle was undeniable proof that Jesus had divine authority, not just over the body but over the soul. He revealed Himself as the “Son of Man,” a title referring to the Messiah, prophesied in Daniel 7:13-14, who would come with everlasting authority.

**Verse 7: The Man Is Healed**

"And he got up and went home" (JEN).

With a word from Jesus, the paralyzed man was healed. He stood up, picked up his bed, and walked home. This miraculous act was a clear demonstration of Jesus’ power—He not only forgives sins but also heals broken bodies. **He has authority over both the physical and the spiritual realms.**

**Verse 8: The Response of the Crowd**

"But when the crowd saw this, they were awestruck and glorified God, who had given such authority to men" (JEN).

The crowd was amazed. They glorified God for what they had witnessed. They recognized that this was no ordinary man. This was divine power in action. Jesus’ authority to forgive sins and heal sickness demonstrated that He was the one they had been waiting for—the Messiah, the Son of God.

**Conclusion: Jesus—The God-Man**

In this passage, we see Jesus revealing both His divinity and His humanity. He demonstrates that He has authority to forgive sins and to heal the sick, proving that He is the **Son of God**. This dual nature, truly God and truly man, is what we call the **hypostatic union**.

Jesus didn’t just come to heal physical bodies—He came to heal souls. The greatest need of every human being is the forgiveness of sins, and Jesus has the power to meet that need. He came not only as a healer but as a Savior. As the crowd marveled and glorified God, let us also recognize the power and authority of Jesus and give Him the glory He deserves.

He is indeed **the God of the universe**—the one who has authority over all things, both seen and unseen. Will you acknowledge Him as the Lord of your life, the one with the power to forgive and heal?

**Matthew 9:9-13: The Call to Follow Christ**

**Introduction**

In this passage from Matthew 9:9-13, we witness the personal calling of Matthew, the tax collector, to follow Jesus. This moment reflects the nature of God's call to all people—a call to salvation, discipleship, and surrender. Let’s dive into this transformative encounter between Jesus and Matthew and see what it means for our own lives.

**Verse 9: Jesus Calls Matthew**

“As Jesus went on from there, He saw a man called Matthew sitting in the tax collector’s booth, and He said to him, ‘Follow Me.’ And he got up and followed Him” (JEN).

Here, Matthew is describing his own calling. Jesus approached him while he was at his tax booth, a place where Matthew likely had earned a reputation for being a collaborator with the Romans and possibly a dishonest man in the eyes of his fellow Jews. Yet, Jesus, seeing beyond Matthew’s profession and sin, invited him into a life of discipleship. He simply said, "Follow Me."

This is how God works in every heart. Salvation begins with a call—God comes to us, convicts us through His Holy Spirit, and invites us to follow Him. Just as Jesus called Matthew, He calls us out of our old lives and into something new, something transformational. **Salvation is a call to discipleship.**

**Salvation is Discipleship**

It’s essential to understand that salvation is not just about believing in Christ but about following Him. **Salvation is discipleship**. When Jesus calls someone to follow Him, it is not a mere invitation to believe in His existence but to surrender one's life to Him. Salvation involves submission—repenting of our sins and turning from our old ways. We cannot separate salvation from discipleship.

When you follow Jesus, you are not just acknowledging Him as Lord in name but surrendering your entire life, including your will, desires, and lifestyle. It’s a decisive turning from sin and self to follow Christ.

**Repentance and Self-Denial**

Jesus’ call to follow Him is a call to repentance. To repent means to turn away from our sins, to change our thinking, and to follow the ways of Christ. This repentance is not just a one-time decision but an ongoing attitude of surrender. In Luke 9:23, Jesus says, "If anyone desires to come after Me, let him deny himself, take up his cross daily, and follow Me." This means daily choosing to die to your own desires and to follow God's will.

To deny yourself is to say no to your own plans and ambitions and instead to live for God's purposes. Taking up your cross is to live with the mindset of sacrifice and submission, where you continually die to self and live for Christ. This is the cost of following Jesus, and it is a call to salvation.

**Verse 10: Jesus Dines with Sinners**

“Then it happened that as Jesus was reclining at the table in the house, many tax collectors and sinners came and were dining with Jesus and His disciples” (JEN).

After Matthew begins following Jesus, he invites others—his fellow tax collectors and sinners—to dine with Jesus. Jesus did not isolate Himself from those considered sinners; rather, He sought them out. Why? Because He came to save the lost. Jesus was intentional in associating with people who needed to hear the good news of the Gospel. He didn’t come to affirm their sin but to call them out of it, into a new life.

**Verse 11: The Pharisees’ Objection**

“When the Pharisees saw this, they said to His disciples, ‘Why is your Teacher eating with tax collectors and sinners?’” (JEN).

The Pharisees couldn’t understand why Jesus, a rabbi, would spend time with tax collectors and sinners. In their minds, righteous people should avoid those who were considered unclean. But Jesus wasn’t associating with them to approve of their lifestyle; He was there to bring them into the kingdom. He was showing the Pharisees—and us—that **righteousness comes not from avoiding sinners, but from transforming them**.

We must be careful, however, not to compromise by adopting the ways of the world. Jesus wasn’t conforming to their sinful behaviors; He was leading them to repentance. When we engage with those far from God, we must ensure we are influencing them for Christ, not being influenced by their sinful ways.

**Verse 12: Jesus’ Response**

“But when Jesus heard this, He said, ‘It is not those who are healthy who need a physician, but those who are sick’” (JEN).

Jesus makes it clear that His mission is to reach the spiritually sick. The Pharisees, in their self-righteousness, thought they were spiritually healthy and didn’t need Jesus. But the reality was the opposite—they were in desperate need of spiritual healing, yet they refused to acknowledge it. **Jesus came for those who recognize their brokenness, who know they need a Savior.**

**Verse 13: The Heart of Jesus’ Mission**

“But go and learn what this means: ‘I desire compassion, and not sacrifice,’ for I did not come to call the righteous, but sinners” (JEN).

Jesus quotes Hosea 6:6, emphasizing that God desires mercy and compassion over ritual sacrifice. The Pharisees were focused on outward religious practices, but they lacked compassion for the very people Jesus came to save. Jesus came to call **sinners**, those who knew they needed help, not those who thought they were righteous. The Pharisees didn’t see their need for Jesus because they believed their religious observances made them right with God. But Jesus came to show that **it’s not about religious performance—it’s about recognizing our need for God’s mercy and grace.**

**Application: Recognizing Our Need for Christ**

Do you know that you need Christ? Have you recognized your own need for salvation? We must never get to the point where we think we’ve outgrown the Gospel or that we are spiritually self-sufficient. We need Jesus’ grace and mercy every single day. Just as He called Matthew, He is calling you.

The call of Christ is a call to follow Him, to repent of your sins, to deny yourself, take up your cross, and live a life of obedience to Him. The moment you surrender your life to Christ, you enter into eternal life—a life that begins now, where you walk in the abundant life He offers.

**Conclusion**

In Matthew 9, we see the heart of Jesus: He calls sinners, not the self-righteous. He dines with those who know they need forgiveness, and He offers mercy to those who will follow Him. As He called Matthew, He calls each of us today to follow Him wholeheartedly, to deny ourselves, and to take up our cross. Will you respond to His call? Will you be a disciple, not just in name but in action, by surrendering your life fully to Him?

Just as Matthew left everything to follow Jesus, so must we be willing to leave behind our old ways and follow Him. Jesus is calling you today—will you follow Him?

**Matthew 9:14-17: Jesus' Teaching on Fasting and the New Way of Living**

In verses 14 through 17 of Matthew 9, we see a shift in the conversation as Jesus is questioned about fasting.

**Verse 14 says**, “Then the disciples of John came to Him, saying, ‘Why do we and the Pharisees fast often, but Your disciples do not fast?’” (JEN).

John's disciples are curious and perhaps a little puzzled. They’re asking why they and the Pharisees practice fasting regularly, while Jesus’ disciples do not seem to follow the same discipline. The underlying question is one we’ve all asked in some form: **Why do we have to do certain things when others don't?**

**Verse 15: Jesus’ Response and the Metaphor of the Bridegroom**

Jesus responds with a metaphor in **verse 15**: “And Jesus said to them, ‘Can the friends of the bridegroom mourn as long as the bridegroom is with them? But the days will come when the bridegroom will be taken away from them, and then they will fast’” (JEN).

In this metaphor, Jesus likens Himself to a bridegroom, and His disciples to the friends of the bridegroom. When the bridegroom is present at the wedding, it’s a time of celebration, not mourning. Jesus is saying that while He is physically present with His disciples, it’s a time of joy and learning, not a time for fasting or mourning. However, **He points to a future time when He will be taken away** (referring to His death and ascension). At that point, His disciples will fast, grieve, and adopt spiritual disciplines in a new way.

**The Timing of Spiritual Practices**

Jesus is emphasizing that **timing is important** when it comes to spiritual practices. There is a time for celebration and a time for fasting, and His disciples were living in a season of joy because they were in the direct presence of Jesus, the Bridegroom. But when He departs, then fasting and other practices would become more appropriate.

**Verses 16-17: The Metaphors of Unshrunk Cloth and New Wine**

Jesus continues in **verse 16:** “No one puts a piece of unshrunk cloth on an old garment, for the patch pulls away from the garment, and the tear is made worse” (JEN).

Jesus uses the metaphor of patching an old garment with new cloth. If you sew new, unshrunk cloth onto an old garment, when the new cloth shrinks, it will tear the old garment even further.

Then in **verse 17**, He says, “Nor do they put new wine into old wineskins, or else the wineskins break, the wine is spilled, and the wineskins are ruined. But they put new wine into new wineskins, and both are preserved” (JEN).

These metaphors of the unshrunk cloth and the wineskins represent **the newness of Jesus’ teaching**. He is ushering in a new way of living—a new covenant, the age of grace.

The old ways, represented by the religious practices of the Pharisees and the laws of the Old Covenant, cannot contain the new life that Jesus is bringing.

**A New Way of Living**

Jesus is teaching that His coming brings a new era. The practices of the old law, which were heavily based on rituals and human efforts to achieve righteousness, cannot contain the new spiritual life that He is offering. The old system of laws and rituals that Israel followed cannot be patched up or added to the new way that Jesus is introducing. His kingdom is not about earning your way into heaven through rules and regulations; **it’s about grace, transformation, and a relationship with God through Him**.

Jesus is offering a **brand-new beginning**, a new way of thinking, living, and relating to God. This new covenant is about transformation from the inside out. The law and its rituals had their place, but Jesus is now offering something that cannot fit into the old structures—they were too rigid to contain the freedom, grace, and new life that He brings.

**Conclusion: The Age of Grace**

The overall message here is that **Jesus is bringing something entirely new**. He is the Bridegroom, and while He is with His disciples, they celebrate. But He also signals that a new time is coming when they will fast and engage in new spiritual practices. More importantly, His new way of life cannot be confined to the old religious structures.

Jesus is teaching that salvation cannot be earned by human effort, and it cannot be contained by old laws and rituals. His message is one of grace, transformation, and newness. Just as new wine must be placed in new wineskins, so must His followers embrace the new life He offers, leaving behind old ways of thinking and living.

**Conclusion for Matthew 9:1-17**

In Matthew 9:1-17, we see Jesus revealing His power and authority in ways that challenged and transformed those around Him. He forgave sins, healed the sick, called the outcast, and introduced a new way of relating to God that could not be contained within the old structures of religion. Jesus, fully God and fully man, came not only to heal physical bodies but to heal souls. He came to extend mercy and compassion to sinners, showing that salvation is not earned through ritual or works but through a relationship of grace.

This passage leaves us with a striking revelation: **Jesus’ authority is total—over sin, sickness, and the human heart.** His call to Matthew reminds us that no one is beyond His reach, and His teaching on new wine in new wineskins urges us to embrace the newness of life He offers. Jesus is not just a healer, not just a teacher—He is the **Lord of all** who came to establish a Kingdom built on transformation, forgiveness, and grace.

**Application for Matthew 9:1-17**

As we reflect on this passage, several key applications emerge:

1. **Recognize Your Need for Forgiveness** – Just as the paralytic’s greatest need was spiritual healing, so our deepest need is for forgiveness of sins. Have you brought your heart before Jesus, the one who has authority to forgive and transform you?
2. **Respond to Jesus’ Call** – Jesus called Matthew, a tax collector, an unlikely candidate, to follow Him. His call to discipleship is personal and transformative. Are you willing to leave behind the old and embrace the new life Jesus offers? What in your life might you need to surrender in order to follow Him fully?
3. **Embrace New Life in Christ** – The metaphors of unshrunk cloth and new wine challenge us to break free from old patterns, legalism, and empty rituals. Jesus offers a new way of living, one rooted in grace and transformation. Are you holding onto old ways of thinking or living, or are you allowing Jesus to renew your mind and heart daily?
4. **Extend Compassion, Not Judgment** – Jesus emphasized that He came to call sinners, not the self-righteous. Like Him, we are called to show mercy and compassion, not judgment, to those around us. How can you reflect the heart of Jesus by reaching out to those who are far from God, sharing the grace you have received?

In the end, Matthew 9:1-17 is a call to action: to recognize Jesus' authority, to embrace His invitation to follow, and to allow His transformative power to reshape our lives. Will you acknowledge Him as Lord and live in the fullness of the new life He offers?