



The Son of Man (9:1 – 31)

Son of Man
Matthew 9:1 – 8

Jesus called himself *'the Son of Man'* thirty-one times in Matthew's gospel alone. To ignorant onlookers, it was a normal way of saying *human* but to those in the know, it meant Jesus was King and the emperor Tiberius was not.

When the Roman Empire was at its height the prophet Daniel saw a new king with a different kind of empire;-

"In my vision at night I looked, and there before me was one like a son of man, coming with the clouds of heaven. He approached the Ancient of Days and was led into his presence. He was given authority, glory and sovereign power; all nations and peoples of every language worshiped him. His dominion is an everlasting dominion that will not pass away, and his kingdom is one that will never be destroyed." Daniel 7 vs. 13 – 14

Jesus slowly reveals the meaning of Son of Man as wielding authority to heal and forgive.

- Jesus' claims become more and more ridiculous for anyone other than God.
- Little by little Jesus revealed what *'the Son of Man'* meant and it got him killed.
- Jesus reveals His divinity through the authority of His teaching, in miracles and supremely through His resurrection.
- In Matthew 9 vs. 1 – 8, Jesus speaks with such clarity that even the thick-skinned scribes understand that he is claiming to be God.
- Jesus sees that the primary need of the paralysed man is forgiveness of sins not healing.
- The scribes are furious; they grasped that the *'Son of Man'* was a code name to conceal Jesus' claim to be God in human flesh.

❖ C.S. Lewis puts it concisely:

'One part of the claim tends to slip past us unnoticed because we have heard it so often that we no longer see what it amounts to. I mean the claim to forgive sins: any sins. Now unless the speaker is God, this is really so preposterous as to be comic. We can all understand how a man forgives offences against himself. You tread on my toe and I forgive you, you steal my money and I forgive you. But what should we make of a man, himself unrobed and untrodden on, who announced that he forgave you for treading on other men's toes and stealing other men's money?... yet this is what Jesus did... He unhesitatingly behaved as if he was the party chiefly concerned, the person chiefly offended in all offences. This makes sense only if he really was the God whose laws are broken and whose love is wounded in every sin... you can shut him up for a fool, you can spit at him as a demon or you can fall at his feet and call him Lord and God. But let us not come with any patronizing nonsense about his being a great human teacher. He has not left that open to us. He did not intend to.'

Jesus is the Son of Man. Look beneath the code.

Friend of Sinners
Matthew 9:10 – 13

- Jesus was surrounded by sinners who loved him and wanted to follow him.
 - ❖ Often Christians shun sinners – the house of salvation, too heavily disguised for those who need it most.
- The Pharisees put their faith in separatism → they wanted to be righteous so avoided unrighteous company and devoted themselves to prayer, fasting, and almsgiving.
 - ❖ Therefore, the more they pursued righteousness, the more they hated sinners and so became less like God.
- In contrast, Jesus pursued the Gospel of love which leaves ninety-nine righteous sheep to find the one lost sheep.
 - ❖ Love gets involved in dirty mess of broken lives because the Gospel is for sinners not those too proud to feel any need of a Saviour.
- Priests put faith in cleanliness → went to great lengths to ensure that they touched nothing that would make them ceremonially unclean.
 - ❖ They hoped to impress God with purity – ignored a dying man in the Parable of the Good Samaritan.
- Jesus was the opposite as he touched those in need and even offered to enter a gentile's house.
 - Through the Gospel infection now works the other way round to what the priests thought.
- The Gospel can be reduced to a call for separatism and we would not want to mix with sinners.
- The Gospel can also be reduced to introspective church meetings and Christian cliques, so that we are too busy to share life with 'sinners'.
 - ❖ Hosea 6 vs. 6 → God wants his people to *love mercy* more than moralism or busyness.
 - ❖ Called to admit that they themselves are sinners therefore should accept true Gospel of grace.
 - ❖ Gospel by which we are saved is also Gospel through which we save others.
 - ❖ It's the Gospel that stops us from being Pharisees or priests, making us true followers of Jesus, the '*friend of sinners*'.
 - There is a Pharisee and priest lurking in each of us but if we keep our eyes on the Gospel we can drive them out.

Only when sinners see our conviction that the Gospel is for them, will they start to believe it too.

Faith

Matthew 9:18 – 31

Matthew doesn't tell us her name; neither does he tell us explicitly why she had faith to receive healing. He tells us that she touched the edge of his garment because she was convinced that through this she would be healed, but doesn't tell us why she believed so strongly.

- ❖ Malachi 4 vs. 2 – *'the sun of righteousness will rise with healing in its rays.'*
 - The Messiah = *'the sun of righteousness'* because he would bring light to creation by dying like the setting sun and rising again like the breaking of dawn.
- ❖ The Messiah's *wings* are his sunrays not the tassels on his robe.
- ❖ Therefore no one could seriously argue that this meant Jesus would heal if they touched his tassels. But the woman understood it this way and believed it, i.e. acting in faith.
- Jesus was not angry and didn't attempt to show her the real meaning of Malachi 4, but was delighted by her faith, received her as a daughter and healed her.
- God prizes flawed steps of faith above orthodox unbelief.
- Jesus loves raw faith – even flawed faith – and rushes to meet it with his power.
 - ❖ If we believe in the power of God it can bring healing and a blessing.
 - ❖ However, if doctrine is better than our faith in God's power, it can become a curse.

Faith is one of the hallmarks of Kingdom lifestyle, and of all who follow in the footsteps of Jesus the King.

'If you have faith and do not doubt... you will receive whatever you ask for in prayer'.

Matthew 21 vs.21 – 22