

Expository Thoughts On Matthew - Matthew

9:27-37

by J.C. Ryle

Transcript

There are four lessons in this passage which deserve close attention. Let us mark them each in succession. Let us mark in the first place, that strong faith in Christ may sometimes be found where it might least have been expected. Who would have thought that two blind men would have called our Lord the "Son of David"? They could not, of course, have seen the miracles that he did: they could only know him by common report. But the eyes of their understanding were enlightened, if their bodily eyes were dark. They saw the truth which scribes and Pharisees could not see; they saw that Jesus of Nazareth was the Messiah. They believed that he was able to heal them. An example like this shows us that we must never despair of anyone's salvation merely because he lives in a position unfavorable to his soul. Grace is stronger than circumstances: the life of religion does not depend merely upon outward advantages. The Holy Spirit can give faith, and keep faith in active exercise, without book-learning, without money, and with scanty means of grace. Without the Holy Ghost a man may know all mysteries, and live in the full blaze of the Gospel, and yet be lost. We shall see many strange sights at the last day. Poor cottagers will be found to have believed in the Son of David, while rich men, full of university learning, will prove to have lived and died, like the Pharisees, in hardened unbelief. Many that are last will be first, and the first last. (Matthew Let us mark in the next place, that our Lord Jesus Christ has had great experience of disease and sickness. He went about all the cities and villages doing good. He was an eye-witness of all the ills that flesh is heir to; he saw ailments of every kind, sort and description; he was brought in contact with every form of bodily suffering. None were too loathsome for him to attend to: none were too frightful for him to cure. He was a healer of every sickness and every disease. There is much comfort to be drawn from this fact. We are each dwelling in a poor frail body. We never know how much suffering we may have to watch as we sit by the bedsides of beloved relatives and friends; we never know what racking complaint we ourselves may have to submit to before we lie down and die. But let us arm ourselves betimes with the precious thought that Jesus is specially fitted to be the sick man's friend. The great High Priest, to whom we must apply for pardon and peace with God, is eminently qualified to sympathize with an aching body, as well as to heal an ailing conscience. The eyes of Him who is King of kings often to look with pity on the diseased. The world cares little for the sick, and often keeps aloof from them; but the Lord Jesus cares especially for the sick: he is the first to visit them and say, "I stand at the door and knock." Happy are they who hear his voice and open the door. (Revelation 3:20)! Let us mark in the next place, our Lord's tender concern for neglected souls. He saw the multitudes of people when he was on earth, scattered about like sheep having no shepherd, and he was moved with compassion. He saw them

neglected by those who, for the time, ought to have been teachers. He saw them ignorant, hopeless, helpless, dying and unfit to die. The sight moved him to deep pity. That loving heart could not see such things and not feel. Now what are our feelings when we see such a sight? This is the question that should arise in our minds. There are many such to be seen on every side. There are millions of idolaters and heathen on earth—millions of deluded Mahometans—millions of superstitious Roman Catholics; there are thousands of ignorant and unconverted Protestants near our own doors. Do we feel tenderly concerned about their souls? Do we deeply pity their spiritual destitution? Do we long to see that destitution relieved? These are serious inquiries, and ought to be answered. It is easy to sneer at missions to the heathen, and those who work for them; but the man who does not feel for the souls of all unconverted people can surely not have “the mind of Christ” (1 Corinthians 2:16). Let us mark in the last place, that there is a solemn duty incumbent on all Christians who would do good to the unconverted part of the world. They are to pray for more men to be raised up to work for the conversion of souls. It seems as if it was to be a daily part of our prayers. “Pray ye the Lord of the harvest, that he would send forth labourers into His harvest.” If we know anything of prayer, let us make it a point of conscience never to forget this solemn charge of our Lord’s. Let us settle it in our minds that it is one of the surest ways of doing good and stemming evil. Personal working for souls is good; giving money is good; but praying is best of all. By prayer we reach Him, whom work and money are alike in vain. We obtain the aid of the Holy Ghost. Money can pay agents; universities can give learning; bishops may ordain; congregations may elect: but the Holy Ghost alone can make ministers of the Gospel, and raise up lay workmen in the spiritual harvest who need not be ashamed. Never, never may we forget that if we would do good to the world, our first duty is to pray!

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