

# THE KING OF KINGS: A STUDY OF MATTHEW

## The King's Kingdom: A Study of Matthew 8–13

### STUDY FIVE

## A Soul-Searching Walk Alongside Jesus

*Matthew 9:1–13*

*Jesus said, "I'm not here because people are healthy. I'm here because people are sick. That's why the Father sent Me on this mission called salvation."*

—Pastor Charles R. Swindoll

As we read Matthew's gospel, let's travel through the portal of our imagination and picture ourselves walking alongside Jesus. Matthew 9 opens, "Jesus climbed into a boat and went back across the lake to his own town" (Matthew 9:1). Let's climb in with Him!

We feel the boat lean as the morning breeze catches the sail and mists our faces. We hear the wooden mast creak and the water splash against the bow. As we glide across the lake, perhaps we listen to Jesus reflect on casting out demons in Gadara and the fearful Gadarenes begging Him to "go away and leave them alone" (8:34). We hear the compassion in His voice as He prays for the formerly demonized man who stayed behind to tell others about "the great things Jesus had done for him" (Mark 5:20).

After we dock in Capernaum, we sense the vibrant buzz of the town as we walk beside Jesus. The scent of the fish market, the crush of the crowd, the eager faces of people as they catch sight of Jesus, the murmurs of critics behind His back. The air tingles with anticipation! What will Jesus do next?



### PREPARE YOUR HEART

Invite the Lord to hone your senses and open your heart as you open this passage.

*Father, bring to life these events so I can experience Jesus as if I were hearing His words and seeing His actions firsthand. Stir in me a deeper love for Him and search my soul with the light of His truth. In His name, amen.*



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Committed to Excellence in Communicating Biblical Truth and Its Application

## A Soul-Searching Walk Alongside Jesus

*Matthew 9:1–13*



### TURN TO THE SCRIPTURES

Read *Matthew 9:1–13* and reflect on the scenes as if you were present. Put yourself there when Jesus forgave the man's sins and healed him, when Jesus called Matthew and dined with his "disreputable" friends, and when Jesus confronted the Pharisees on both occasions. What feelings emerge in you? What impresses you most about Jesus?

It was quite a busy day! Let's look closer at the significance of these events as they relate to Jesus' life and mission.



### Observation: Jesus with Sinners

*Searching the Scriptures* starts with observing the text to pick up all the important details the author intended us to know.<sup>1</sup> *Who* was present? *What* was said and done? *How* did people respond?

### Proof of Divine Authority—Matthew 9:1–8

According to the parallel accounts of this event in Mark 2:1–12 and Luke 5:17–26, Jesus was in a house teaching to an overflow crowd that included Pharisees and religious teachers "from every village in all Galilee and Judea, as well as from Jerusalem" (Luke 5:17). As you imagine yourself elbow-to-elbow with Jesus, look around and write down a description of those who are there (*Matthew 9:1–8*).



## A Soul-Searching Walk Alongside Jesus

*Matthew 9:1–13*

Jesus strategically arranged the sequence of events in this scene to prove a point. Write down the order of what was said and done and the reason Jesus gave for arranging the sequence.

How did the healed man and the people respond, according to Matthew's account (*Matthew 9:7–8*)? Mark's account (*Mark 2:12*)? Luke's account (*Luke 5:25–26*)?

Forgiving sins was a central component of Jesus' mission, wasn't it? Restoring souls, not simply healing bodies. It follows, then, that we find Jesus *with sinners*. We have witnessed Jesus' divine authority; now, let's watch Him display His divine mercy.

### Display of Divine Mercy—Matthew 9:9–13

Who is present in these scenes (*Matthew 9:9–13*)?



## A Soul-Searching Walk Alongside Jesus

*Matthew 9:1–13*

As a tax-collector, Matthew was considered a traitor by his fellow Jews, for he earned his bread by taking money from them, giving the Romans their due, and hoarding what he overcharged. Everyone despised him, but, seeing the emptiness in Matthew's bankrupt soul, Jesus offered His hand of mercy. Without hesitation, the scales of Matthew's heart tipped toward Jesus, and he left his business gold mine for the spiritual riches Jesus offered.

Again, picture this scene and the dinner party scene as if you are there. Write down what you hear and see. How does Jesus explain His role, and how do you see it contrasting with the law-enforcement role of the Pharisees?

Note the same word, *but*, intersects both this event (*Matthew 9:11*) and the previous event (*9:3*). Summarize the essence of the Pharisees' accusations against Jesus—which they will keep hurling at Jesus through the rest of His ministry.

*The room was filled with people we would have looked down on because of what they did for a living. But they're all having the time of their lives with Jesus.*  
—Pastor Chuck Swindoll



**A Soul-Searching Walk Alongside Jesus**

*Matthew 9:1–13*



**Interpretation: The Meaning of Forgiveness and Mercy**

Jesus spoke two phrases that stand out: “Your sins are forgiven” (Matthew 9:2) and “I want you to show mercy” (9:13).

Until this point, Jesus had spoken only about the Father forgiving sins—in the Lord’s Prayer in which we pray for the Father to “forgive us our sins” (6:12). What was Jesus saying about His authority and nature when *He forgave* the sins of the paralyzed man (9:2)?

We can’t forgive sinners like Christ did, but we can forgive those who sin against us (6:12). And we can follow Christ’s example by showing mercy toward sinners—exactly what the Pharisees refused to do.

Use the following chart to contrast Jesus’ attitude toward sinners with the Pharisees’ attitude. How did Jesus beam mercy while the Pharisees flashed condemnation? How would you feel if you were there?

The Mercy of Jesus	The Condemnation of the Pharisees

In Matthew 9:13, Jesus quoted Hosea 6:6 which originally stated, “I want you to show *steadfast love*,” the operative Hebrew word in Hosea being *hesed*. The context of this passage is a beautiful description of God restoring repentant sinners—exactly what Jesus does! Let’s take a closer look.



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*Matthew 9:1–13*



### Correlation: Restoring the Repentant from Hosea

God told His prophet Hosea to marry a woman who would be unfaithful to him to illustrate Israel's spiritual unfaithfulness. Throughout the book of Hosea, God pronounces judgment on His unfaithful people who commit spiritual adultery with idols. But the Lord, like a faithfully steadfast husband, always follows with promises of loving restoration if His people repent and return.

Read Hosea's plea to his people to return to the Lord in [Hosea 6:1–3](#). Can you imagine Matthew calling with the same urgency to his sinful friends when he invited them to his banquet with Jesus? How did Jesus model the healing restoration of God that Hosea described?

Jesus quoted Hosea 6 to the Pharisees to call them to repentance. Unfortunately, they wouldn't budge from their pedestals of superiority to seek forgiveness or show mercy. How do we respond?

*Jesus was saying, "My heart goes out to the outcasts, those who live in the muck and mire of disgrace and shame. My mission field is to reach them." —Pastor Chuck Swindoll.*



### Application: Coming to Terms with the Truth

At the heart of Matthew's passage is the contrast between the merciful Physician and the condemning Pharisees. They swished their self-righteous robes at sinners while Jesus enfolded them in His garments of grace.



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*Matthew 9:1–13*

Jesus looked past Matthew's sin to see him as a potential disciple. How about us? How do we see people whose unsavory habits put us off? What might you do to see people through the eyes of Jesus?

What else strikes you about your imagined walk with Jesus through this passage? Do you need His physician-like touch for an ailing part of your soul? In what ways? What words would you like to share with the Savior?

Remember our morning boat ride with Jesus from the beginning of this study? Let's take that sense of tranquility with us as we continue our journey with Him. And we don't have to use our imagination. He is with us each step of the way!



### A FINAL PRAYER

*Father, thank You for showing Your mercy to me through Your Son. He is the Physician of my soul who has bandaged my wounds, forgiven my sins, and restored me to wholeness in Your presence. May I share His forgiveness and mercy with those I know who need His healing touch. In His name, amen.*

#### ENDNOTE

1. To learn about Pastor Chuck Swindoll's *Searching the Scriptures* method of Bible study, go to the Web page, "[How to Study the Bible for Yourself](#)."

