



World Christian Fellowship

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Jesus Ministry & Response!

Matthew 9:33-35

Matthew 9:33-35, *And when the demon was cast out, the mute spoke. And the multitudes marvelled, saying, "It was never seen like this in Israel!" ³⁴But the Pharisees said, "He casts out demons by the ruler of the demons." ³⁵Then Jesus went about all the cities and villages, teaching in their synagogues, preaching the gospel of the kingdom, and healing every sickness and every disease among the people.*

Jesus is this dividing line.

Matthew makes that abundantly clear in chapters 8 and 9.

Matthew wants to do for us is to help us to understand that Christ is who He is and that a decision must be made.

The problem with humanity is this. Humanity stands at the crossroads and all the signposts have fallen.

But for Matthew they haven't fallen, and he puts them up very clearly.

Matthew calls upon us to make a right choice!

To choose life,

To choose righteousness,

To choose godliness,

To choose to believe.

That is what Matthew wants us to do.

Matthew presents in chapters 8 and 9, irrefutable evidence that Christ is the Son of God, the Messiah, and the Saviour.

This is the narrow way.

Enter this way.

This is the way of faith in Christ.

In order to convince us that Christ is who He claims to be, Matthew records in chapters 8 and 9, nine miracles.

Miracles beyond the capacity of any human being, not only to do, but even to fathom. They are not the full scope of all His miracles but are only samples.

John 20:30-31, *And truly Jesus did many other signs in the presence of His disciples, which are not written in this book; ³¹but these are written that you may believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God, and that believing you may have life in His name.*

John 21:25, *And there are also many other things that Jesus did, which if they were written one by one, I suppose that even the world itself could not contain the books that would be written. Amen.*

These are just sample miracles of the uncountable miracles that He did.

Matthew gives nine miracles, and he divides them into sections of three each, and after each section of three, he has a response section.

How did people respond to these miracles?

First the miracles regarding His power over disease.

- He healed a leper.
- He healed a centurion's servant of paralysis.
- He healed Peter's mother-in-law of fever.

Second set of miracles.

- He stilled the storm, calming the waves and the sea.
- He dealt by casting out a legion of demons.
- He healed the paralytic and forgiving his sins.

Third set of miracles.

- He raised the dead. Jairus daughter.
- He healed 2 blind persons.
- He healed the deaf and dumb.

Matthew 4:23, *And Jesus went about all Galilee, teaching in their synagogues, preaching the gospel of the kingdom, and healing all kinds of sickness and all kinds of disease among the people.*

V 35, *Then Jesus went about all the cities and villages, teaching in their synagogues, preaching the gospel of the kingdom, and healing every sickness and every disease among the people.*

A bracket to put a context around the Sermon on the Mount and all these miracles that He had done. This was the essence of His Galilean ministry.

These cities and villages as those of Galilee, the northern part, the country, the fertile area, the area where the food was grown, so much of it.

Josephus, the historian tells us that, at the time of Jesus, there were probably over 204 towns and villages.

The difference between a city and a village was a wall.

If you had a wall, you were a city.

If you didn't have a wall, you were a village.

Little villages didn't fortify themselves, but cities did.

Galilee area is about a seventy-by-forty-mile area including approximately 200 or 205 or four towns.



The cities are numerous, and the multitude of villages everywhere crowded with men, owing to the fertility of the soil. The smallest of them contains above fifteen thousand inhabitants.

Simple mathematics will tell you then, that there were **three million people** that Jesus could have reached in just the area of Galilee as He mingled.

Three things we want to focus on in **verse 35**.

1. Teaching in the synagogues,
2. Preaching the gospel of the kingdom, and
3. Healing every sickness and every disease.

Three elements of the ministry of Jesus.

1. Teaching in their synagogues.

What does this involve?

Wherever there were Jewish people, there was a synagogue, a gathering-together place. That was the centre of Jewish community life.

It was like a church.

It was a town hall.

It was the local court.

It was everything. It was where the Jewish people met together in the community.

Now the synagogue was a kind of a late addition to Judaism. It didn't come around until the Babylonian captivity.

All their worship had been focused on the temple. But when they were taken out of their country and the temple was destroyed and they went into Babylon for those seventy years, wherever there were little groups of Jewish people, they met together.

They assembled and formed these little synagogues or assemblies. Since they have never rebuilt their temple, they have them to this day.

Every city has a Jewish "temple." They call it a temple, but it isn't the temple. There's only one place the temples can be. It is a synagogue.

In all the cities of the world where Jewish people are, wherever you get ten men together, you can have a synagogue.

In the time of our Lord in Galilee, there were synagogues in all the little towns and villages.

Location:

They were usually built on a hill or, if there wasn't a hill, they were built at least on the highest spot.

If there weren't any high spots, they would build them by a river.

Very often, they left the top open, as the temple had been, so they could see out, see God's creation, and look up to heaven, as was part of their worship.

They identified their synagogue normally by a great, tall pole that shot right up into the air much like the steeple on a New England church marks each little town.

So, you could always tell where the synagogue was.

Any Jew who was a stranger in town could just follow his way to the pole and know he would be at the place.

Service days:

Every Sabbath they would meet for worship.

They also had a special worship on the **2nd and 5th day** of every week.

They met for every feast.

They would meet for every festival.

They would meet for every high holy day.

Order of Service:

Their service was very simple.

They began with thanksgivings or blessings, much as we might begin by singing our praises.

They would speak of blessing of the Lord and thankfulness for what He had done.

Followed by a prayer.

The prayer was concluded by a responding amen from the congregation.

Then a prescribed reader would stand up and read the law of Moses, one of the five books of Moses, the Pentateuch.

It would be read in Hebrew, the original language of its writing, and then translated by the translator into Aramaic, which was the common speech of the day.

Then followed by the reading of a passage from one of the prophets, which also would be read in Hebrew and translated by the translator into Aramaic.

After reading of the Pentateuch and the prophets there would be a sermon or an exhortation.

Followed by a benediction and a final amen from the people. The Jews always thought of the synagogue as a place of teaching, a place of instruction.

They came together to learn. We have the remnants of that today. The Yiddish word for synagogue is SCHUL, much like our word school.

They saw the synagogue as a teaching place. They also saw it as a court of law.

As they were in occupied countries from time to time in their history, of course, they would have to have jurisdiction granted to them by the occupying government.

But when that was granted to them, they would exercise whatever authority they had in their synagogues.

For example, our Lord said, the day would come when they will scourge you in their synagogues. They would render the verdict and even carry out the punishment right in the synagogue.

The synagogues became public schools for the training of boys in the Talmud.

The synagogues also became theological schools.

Administration:

Their affairs were administered by ten elders of the synagogue.

3 were called the rulers of the synagogue.

They acted as the judges.

4th was called the angel of the assembly, which is a leader of the others.

5th was the interpreter who translated the Hebrew into the Aramaic.

6th ran the theological school.

They had divisions of responsibility as elders.

Purpose:

Synagogues were mainly for the detailed reading and exposition of Scripture.

They came together for the reading and the exposition of the Scripture.

In **Acts 17**, apostle Paul found his way to the little town of Berea, and he went there into the synagogue of the Jews. He gave them the Word, and they received the Word with all

readiness of mind and searched the Scriptures daily whether these things were so.

In other words, a synagogue was for searching of the Scriptures.

Sermon:

Now when the sermon was given on any given day, it could be given by any leading member of the congregation who has the knowledgeable in the Scripture.

He would stand up and give the sermon.

But if there happened to be a visiting dignitary or a visiting rabbi, it was proper and customary to let that rabbi preach and give the sermon. This was what was called the freedom of the synagogue.

The Lord had something to do with setting this up, because He had a few itinerant preachers that were going to come through the Jewish culture. He wanted to make sure they had had the right platforms.

Jesus and Paul used this to the full extent. Because of what was known as the freedom of the synagogue, they always had access to preaching and teaching in the synagogue.

Now the mode of teaching in a synagogue was exposition of Scripture.

- Read it,
- explain it, and
- apply it.

Nehemiah 8:8, *So they read distinctly from the book, in the Law of God; and they gave the sense, and helped them to understand the reading.*

Why do you just teach the Bible?

This is so different than what we see in other churches.

But this is not anything new. This is the way it's always been and always should be.

Where you read the Scripture and you explain the Scripture. That is what they did in the synagogue.

That is what they did as far back as Nehemiah when they read and gave the sense of it.

Now the Master of doing this was our Lord.

Luke 4:15-21, *And He taught in their synagogues, being glorified by all. ¹⁶So He came to Nazareth, where He had been brought up. And as His custom was, He went into the synagogue on the Sabbath day, and stood up to read. ¹⁷And He*

was handed the book of the prophet Isaiah. And when He had opened the book, He found the place where it was written: ¹⁸ "The Spirit of the Lord is upon Me, Because He has anointed Me To preach the gospel to the poor; He has sent Me ¹⁹ to heal the brokenhearted, To proclaim liberty to the captives And recovery of sight to the blind, To set at liberty those who are oppressed; ²⁰ To proclaim the acceptable year of the Lord." ²¹ Then He closed the book, and gave it back to the attendant and sat down. And the eyes of all who were in the synagogue were fixed on Him. ²² And He began to say to them, "Today this Scripture is fulfilled in your hearing." ²³ So all bore witness to Him, and marvelled at the gracious words which proceeded out of His mouth. And they said, "Is this not Joseph's son?"

Jesus taught in the synagogues.

How?

By expositing the Word of God.

In His case, it was direct application.

They didn't like His interpretation at all and tried to kill Him for it. But this was only one incident.

The reason I believe in expository preaching is because that's the kind Jesus did! I believe that is still the thrust for God's people when they gather together.

2. Preaching the gospel of the kingdom.

V 35, *Then Jesus went about all the cities and villages, teaching in their synagogues, preaching the gospel of the kingdom, and healing every sickness and every disease among the people.*

What does it mean that He was preaching?

Greek word, *'kērussō,'* means to herald, to make a public announcement, to make a proclamation.

Jesus was teaching in the synagogues, but He was also out on the street corners, on the hillsides, by the sea, in the houses, along the roadway, in the fields, and everywhere.

He was preaching the gospel of the kingdom.

Here was the more evangelistic, the thrust to those who were outside the religious environment.

His message was always the same good news.

Good news about the kingdom.

The Jews had waited so long for the kingdom, so long, and now the good news, the kingdom.

But this was not the exposition of the Old Testament, as He was doing in the synagogue. This was the proclamation of the New Testament.

This was the unfolding of the mysteries which had been hidden from people and times in the past.

This was the new covenant, the new revelation, the proclamation and always the kingdom.

Blessed are those who are poor in spirit for theirs is the kingdom. Seek first the kingdom.

When you pray, pray, "Your kingdom come."

Not just a future kingdom.

When He was preaching the kingdom, He was calling people to believe in Himself. The moment anyone believes in Christ, he enters the kingdom.

Translated from the kingdom of darkness to the kingdom of His dear Son. It's an instant transaction.

You are in the kingdom if you are a Christian.

Christ is the King.

He rules my life.

I am His subject.

He feeds me with the resources of His unlimited riches.

The kingdom can be entered now. That's why He talked about a narrow gate. It refers to the rule of Christ and the reign of Christ here and now as well as then and there.

Jesus was preaching the kingdom that was available to all who would believe and receive. Kingdom were numerous blessings.

Our Lord in a two-fold ministry.

- Teaching the exposition of the Old Testament, giving it its proper place, speaking of its fulfilment.
- Proclaiming the new covenant, the mysteries, the unfolding of revelation that had never been known before, in His proclamation.

Even today the exposition of the Word of God and you must go out into the highways and byways to proclaim the message of the gospel of the kingdom.

3. Healing every sickness and diseases.

V 35, Then Jesus went about all the cities and villages, teaching in their synagogues, preaching the gospel of the kingdom, and healing every sickness and every disease among the people.

Both speaking ministries were verified by the miracles.

That was only a way to affirm the validity of the first two.

Jesus dragged glory with Him, and He affirmed His message by His miracles. He proved that the kingdom was at hand.

Why?

Because all those miracles He did were samples of what the Messiah was to do when the kingdom came, and there was no way to refute them.

Do you know that the Pharisees never denied His miracles?

They only denied the source of them because they were undeniable. They were literally overwhelming.

Response of the people:

We have already seen some responses.

The first three miracles that Matthew gave us in chapter 8 had a response.

Men followed and said, "We want to follow You, Lord."

But because they loved personal comfort, personal riches, personal relationships, they turned their back and walked away.

They illustrate one response, a sort of a superficial interest. Sort of a momentary response, a fascination that really has no true root to it.

Matthew is giving us categories of response.

In the second three miracles, there was a response as well.

The first response was the conversion of Matthew.

The second response was the irritation of the Pharisees.

The third was the confusion of the disciples of John the Baptist.

There are many people who are fascinated with Jesus.

They start out wanting to follow, but because they love personal comfort, personal riches, things, relationships in their lives they are not willing to give up, they back out.

Then there are people like Matthew who really believe, and who go out and bring all their tax collector, prostitute friends to believe also.

Then there are people like the Pharisees who just get irritated at what Jesus says, because He confronts their status quo.

Then there are people like followers of John the Baptist, who all their life have been in one religious system, and they are very confused about this new thing that they are hearing.

To the third set of miracles and the third set of responses.

- The multitude marvelled.
- The religionists rejected.

They said He did it by the power of Satan.

They couldn't deny that He did it. They just denied the source was God.

Two more kinds of responses.

Both these kinds of responses are wrong.

Both end up in hell forever.

These hating, rejecting people that blasphemed said He was of Satan, and then the multitude that marvelled and followed and said, "Hosanna?"

Yes, because that's not the proper response.

The proper response is to believe and to receive Christ, not just to be fascinated by Him. That's inadequate.

Matthew has given us a good picture of responses to Christ.

When our Lord was a small baby just about 40 days old, He was taken by His mother and by Joseph to the temple. Because it was required that she offer an offering of purification after giving birth to a child.

While they were in the temple, they had occasion to meet with Simeon. Simeon was an old man who had all his life long been waiting for the arrival of the Messiah, and now he had the privilege of seeing the Messiah.

Luke 2:30-35, *For my eyes have seen Your salvation*

³¹ Which You have prepared before the face of all peoples,

³² A light to bring revelation to the Gentiles,

And the glory of Your people Israel.” ³³ And Joseph and His mother marvelled at those things which were spoken of Him. ³⁴ Then Simeon blessed them, and said to Mary His mother, “Behold, this Child is destined for the fall and rising of many in Israel, and for a sign which will be spoken against ³⁵ (yes, a sword will pierce through your own soul also), that the thoughts of many hearts may be revealed.”

It's always been that way in God's economy.

- There are those who are planted like the tree by the river of waters that bring forth fruit.
- There are those who are the chaff.

- There are the godly and
- There are the ungodly.

- There are the righteous and
- The unrighteous.

Only two categories.

- ✓ There are saints,
- ✓ There are sinners.

Now Mary knew that it was characteristic of God.

- to receive some and
- refuse others,

- to bless some and
- curse others,

- to show strength to some by gathering them in and
- to scatter others,

- to pull down the exalted and
- to lift up the humble,

- to fill the hungry and
- to send away the full.

In other words, there would always be this dividing line between those whom God blessed and those whom God cursed.

On the one hand, there are the arrogant, the rich, the mighty.
On the other, the poor, the hungry, and the humble.

So Mary knew this because she knew theology. She knew the Old Testament. It was confirmed to her by Simeon that her Child would be the very crux of this.

When Jesus came, and when He spoke, He affirmed this.

Luke 6:20-23, *Then He lifted up His eyes toward His disciples, and said: "Blessed are you poor, For yours is the kingdom of God. ²¹Blessed are you who hunger now, For you shall be filled. Blessed are you who weep now, For you shall laugh. ²²Blessed are you when men hate you, And when they exclude you, And revile you, and cast out your name as evil, For the Son of Man's sake. ²³Rejoice in that day and leap for joy! For indeed your reward is great in heaven, For in like manner their fathers did to the prophets.*

There are the blessed and the cursed, and woe means to curse. So, Jesus affirmed again a dividing line.

Blessed and cursed.

Our Lord said in Matthew 7.

- Those who enter the narrow gate and are blessed.
- Those who enter the broad gate and are damned.

- There are those who build their house upon the rock, and it stands in judgment.
- There are those who build their house on the sand, and it collapses.

- There are those who try to hold onto their life and lose it.
- There are those who lose their life and in so losing it, they find it.

All the way through the gospel record we find that He offers Himself as a dividing line.

Matthew 10:32-33, *“Therefore whoever confesses Me before men, him I will also confess before My Father who is in heaven. ³³But whoever denies Me before men, him I will also deny before My Father who is in heaven.*

- If you identify yourself with Jesus Christ, God will identify you as well, as His own.
- If you deny Jesus Christ, then Christ will deny you before the Father.

Matthew 10:34-39, *“Do not think that I came to bring peace on earth. I did not come to bring peace but a sword. ³⁵For I have come to ‘set a man against his father, a daughter against her mother, and a daughter-in-law against her mother-in-*

law';³⁶ and 'a man's enemies will be those of his own household.'³⁷ He who loves father or mother more than Me is not worthy of Me. And he who loves son or daughter more than Me is not worthy of Me.³⁸ And he who does not take his cross and follow after Me is not worthy of Me.³⁹ He who finds his life will lose it, and he who loses his life for My sake will find it.

The Parable of the Two Sons

Matthew 21:28-32

A man had two sons. He came to the first and said, "Go work in the vineyard." The son said, "I will," and didn't, and afterward repented and did.

He said to the second, "Go," and he said, "I will," and didn't go. Which of the two did the will of his father? They said, "The first one." Jesus said unto them, "Verily, I say unto you that tax collectors and harlots go into the kingdom of God before you."

- The first son was irreligious. He lived a life of disobedience to his father, but he repented and went.
- The second son the pretence of religion. He pretended to obey, pretended to be submissive, but he didn't go.
- Son number one, who said no and repented, was the tax collector and the publican and the sinner.
- Son number two, who said, "I will," but didn't was the Pharisee and the hypocrite and the religionist.

Jesus said the tax collectors and the harlots would go into the kingdom before the religionists would.

Again, there's a dividing line.

- It isn't the ones who are religious and the ones who are irreligious.
- It is the ones who obey the will of the Father.

The will of the Father is expressed in this, "The Father spoke from Heaven and said, 'This is My beloved Son. Hear Him.'" Christ becomes the demarcation line.

The apostle Paul picks up this same concept that the entire human race is divided into two categories.

- Believers and
- Unbelievers.

- Heaven-bound souls and
- Hell-bound souls.

- Blessed and
- Cursed.

- Rewarded and
- Condemned.

The dividing line is their faith or lack of faith in the Lord Jesus Christ.

Conclusion

2 Corinthians 2:14-16, *Now thanks be to God who always leads us in triumph in Christ, and through us diffuses the fragrance of His knowledge in every place. ¹⁵For we are to God the fragrance of Christ among those who are being saved and among those who are perishing. ¹⁶To the one we are the aroma of death leading to death, and to the other the aroma of life leading to life. And who is sufficient for these things?*

There is a certain fragrance that a Christian has, a certain savour, a certain flavour, a certain radiating representation of God.

We touch the world, as it were, with the fragrance of God.

We are a sweet savour of Christ in them that are saved and in them that perish.

There are those two categories:

- The saved and
- The Pershing.

We who are Christians live and preach the gospel, are radiating that reality to the saved and the perishing.

To the perishing, it is a fragrance of death unto death.

For one, there are people who say, “I want to be Your disciple. I am going to follow, but I have got this personal comfort. I have got these personal riches. I have got these personal relationships, and I don’t think I better come now.”

- There are those like Matthew who come immediately.
- There are those tax collectors and sinners who, overburdened with their sins, come rushing to Christ.
- There are those angry, irritated religionists who start out being irritated and then become blasphemers and ultimately become murderers.
- There are the confused like the disciples of John the Baptist, who just can’t figure out how come they didn’t know about this and why is this different than what they have known.
- Maybe they have been raised in another religion, and they are trying to figure it out.
- There is that great mass of humanity who don’t fit into any of those categories.

- There are others who say Jesus is so nice. Christmas and Easter, wonderful. They are just happy to stand at arm's length and watch the supernatural Jesus do His thing. Ultimately, they stand with the crucifiers, screaming for His blood.

Where you make your choice, for Jesus is set for the rise and the fall of many.