

GREATER THAN

"GREATER THAN OUR UNBELIEF"

MATTHEW 9:27-38

This Week's Core Competency

Trinity – I believe the God of the Bible is the only true God—Father, Son, and Holy Spirit.

2 Corinthians 13:14, *May the grace of the Lord Jesus Christ, and the love of God, and the fellowship of the Holy Spirit be with you all.*

Jesus is frequently called the "Son of David" in the Synoptic Gospels—nine times in Matthew (1:1; 9:27; 12:23; 15:22; 20:30, 31; 21:9, 15; 22:42), three times in Mark (10:47, 48; 12:35), and one time in Luke (3:31). Commentators agree that this title carries messianic implications. One writes: "The title 'Son of David' refers to the royal figure of 2 Sam 7:12-16 whose kingdom would have no end, i.e., the Messiah" (Donald A. Hagner, *Word Biblical Commentary*, vol. 33a, *Matthew 1-13*, 253). Here are Nathan's words to David cited in that passage: "The LORD declares to you that the LORD himself will establish a house for you: When your days are over and you rest with your ancestors, I will raise up your offspring to succeed you, your own flesh and blood, and I will establish his kingdom. He is the one who will build a house for my Name, and I will establish the throne of his kingdom forever. I will be his father, and he will be my son. When he does wrong, I will punish him with a rod wielded by men, with floggings inflicted by human hands. But

The blind receive sight, the lame walk, those who have leprosy are cured, the deaf hear, the dead are raised, and the good news is preached to the poor.

– Jesus

my love will never be taken away from him, as I took it away from Saul, whom I removed from before you. Your house and your kingdom will endure forever before me; your throne will be established forever."

The fact that the Son of David is the Messiah is confirmed by Jesus in his discussion with the Pharisees regarding the identity of the Christ recorded in Matthew 22:41-45. Jesus opens the discussion with a question: "What do you think about the Christ? Whose son is he?" (v. 42a) Without hesitation, they respond, "The Son of David" (v. 42b). And with that the identification is made; the Son of David is the Christ, i.e., the Messiah.

But Jesus doesn't stop there. He goes on to ask a second question with more profound implications: "How is it then that David, speaking by the Spirit, calls him 'Lord?'" in Psalm 110:1, which reads:

"The Lord (God) says to my Lord (Christ):
'Sit at my right hand
until I make your enemies
a footstool for your feet.'"

And then he asks a concluding third question: "If then David calls him 'Lord,' how can he be his son?" Jesus' point, of course, is that David calls his son, the Messiah, "Lord" suggesting that the Christ is the Lord God. Matthew concludes his account of the discussion noting simply: "No one could say a word in reply, and from that day on no one dared to ask him any more questions" (v. 46).

When John's disciples come to Jesus with the question, "Are you the one who was to come, or should we expect someone else?" Jesus replies,

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"Go back and report to John what you hear and see: The *blind receive sight*, the lame walk, those who have leprosy are cured, *the deaf hear*, the dead are raised, and the good news is preached to the poor" (Mt 24:3, 4-5). On the evidentiary value of Jesus' miracles, especially restoring sight to the blind, one commentator explains: "The messianic age promised to bring healing to the blind (Isa. 29:18; 35:5; 42:7), which Jesus told John the Baptist was one of the signs that he indeed was the expected Coming One (Matt. 11:2-6). The Old Testament records no healing of blindness, and none of Jesus' followers is ever recorded to have given sight to the blind. But Jesus' healing of the blind is one of his most frequent miracles (9:27-31; 12:22-23; 15:30-31; 20:30-34; 21:14-15)" (Michael J. Wilkins, *The NIV Application Commentary: Matthew*, 372).

Matthew 9:27-34 records that Jesus restored the sight of two blind men and immediately afterward exorcised a demon from a deaf-mute restoring his ability to speak. Ironically, the blind men see what the sighted overlook, that Jesus is the Son of David. These two miracles round out Matthew's presentation of ten miracle stories in chapters 8 and 9, which confirm that Jesus is truly "the one who was to come," the promised Messiah.

day **1** ENCOUNTER – read God's word to put yourself in touch with him.

Matthew 9:27-38

27 As Jesus went on from there, two blind men followed him, calling out, "Have mercy on us, Son of David!"

28 When he had gone indoors, the blind men came to him, and he asked them, "Do you believe that I am able to do this?"

"Yes, Lord," they replied.

29 Then he touched their eyes and said, "According to your faith will it be done to you"; 30 and their sight was restored. Jesus warned them sternly, "See that no one knows about this." 31 But they went out and spread the news about him all over that region.

32 While they were going out, a man who was demon-possessed and could not talk was brought to Jesus. 33 And when the demon was driven out, the man who had been mute spoke. The crowd was amazed and said, "Nothing like this has ever been seen in Israel."

34 But the Pharisees said, "It is by the prince of demons that he drives out demons."

35 Jesus went through all the towns and villages, teaching in their synagogues, proclaiming the good news of the kingdom and healing every disease and sickness. 36 When he saw the crowds, he had compassion on them, because they were harassed and helpless, like sheep without a shepherd. 37 Then he said to his disciples, "The harvest is plentiful but the workers are few. 38 Ask the Lord of the harvest, therefore, to send out workers into his harvest field."

Cf., another translation

27 As Jesus went on from there, two blind men followed him, shouting, "Have mercy on us, Son of David!" 28 When he went into the house, the blind men came to him. Jesus said to them, "Do you believe that I am able to do this?" They said to him, "Yes, Lord." 29 Then he touched their eyes saying, "Let it be done for you according to your faith." 30 And their eyes were opened. Then Jesus sternly warned them, "See that no one knows about this." 31 But they went out and spread the news about him throughout that entire region.

32 As they were going away, a man who could not talk and was demon-possessed was brought to him. 33 After the demon was cast out, the man who had been mute spoke. The crowds were amazed and said, "Never has anything like this been seen in Israel!" 34 But the Pharisees said, "By the ruler of demons he casts out demons."

35 Then Jesus went throughout all the towns and villages, teaching in their synagogues, preaching the good news of the kingdom, and healing every kind of disease and sickness. 36 When he saw the crowds, he had compassion on them because they were bewildered and helpless, like sheep without a shepherd. 37 Then he said to his disciples, "The harvest is plentiful, but the workers are few. 38 Therefore ask the Lord of the harvest to send out workers into his harvest." (NET)

EXAMINE – what the passage says before you decide what it means.

- * Circle "blind" in v. 27.
- * Underline "Son of David" in v. 27.
- * Highlight Jesus' question in v. 28.
- * Bracket "according to your faith" in v. 29.
- * Box "but" indicating *contrast* in vv. 31, 34, 37.
- * Underline "sight was restored" in v. 30.
- * Box "and" indicating *conjunction* in v. 32.
- * Underline "mute spoke" in v. 33.
- * In the margin next to v. 35 write, "Cf., 4:23-25."
- * Box "Like" indicating *comparison* in v. 36.

day **2** **EXPLORE** – the answer to these questions to better understand what the passage means.

Consult the explanation of the message and the notes to follow if you need help.

1. "As Jesus went on from *there*" (v. 27). Where?
2. What did the two blind men think of Jesus given how they addressed him?
3. To *what* do "mercy" (v. 27) and "this" (v. 28) refer?
4. Why would Jesus bother asking and Matthew bother recording his question in verse 28?
5. Again, Jesus heals directly by *touch* (cf., 8:3, 15; 9:20, 25). Why?
6. Put what "According to your faith will it be done to you" means in your own words.
7. The men couldn't possibly obey Jesus' stern warning, could they?
8. Explain the *conjunction* ("and") in verse 32.
9. Explain the *contrast* ("but") in verse 34.
10. Discussion: Talk about the contemporary relevance of Jesus' request in verse 38.

day 3 **EXAMINE** – an explanation of the message to better understand the meaning of the passage.

Matthew 9:38 marks the end of that section of the First Gospel that begins in 4:23. Commenting on 9:35-38, one writer explains: "A major section of the Gospel has been completed with the preceding narrative, the tenth miracle of chaps. 8-9. There will be more healing narratives in Matthew (the next is in 12:9-14), but for the time being Matthew turns to other concerns. The present passage [vv. 35-38] together with the opening verses of chap. 10 (10:1-4) is a transition and preparation for the second major teaching discourse (the remainder of chap. 10). Thus, the first part of the present passage (v 35) can be seen to serve as a summarizing inclusio in relation to 4:23-25. In between these two miracle summary passages, Matthew has given examples of the powerful, authoritative words (chaps. 5-7) and deeds (chaps. 8-9) of the Messiah" (Hagner, 258).

Matthew 9:27-34 contains two miracle stories: the first about the healing of two blind men (vv. 27-31), and the second about the healing of a demon-possessed mute (vv. 32-34). Following his account of the second miracle, Matthew records the response of the crowd to what Jesus did. "The crowd was amazed," he says, quoting them saying, "Nothing like this has ever been seen in Israel" (v. 33). On the unprecedented nature of Jesus' miracles, especially the restoration of sight, one commentator writes: "There are no miracles of the giving of sight in the Old Testament, nor in the New after the Gospels (the restoration of sight to Saul of Tarsus, Acts 9:17-18, is not of the same order). But in Jesus' ministry there are more miracles of the giving of sight than of any other single category. The giving of sight is a divine activity (Exod. 4:11; Ps. 146:8), and it has messianic significance (Isa 29:18; 35:5; 42:7)" (Leon Morris, *The Gospel According to Matthew*, 233).

As the first story goes, two blind men follow Jesus calling out "Have mercy on us, Son of David!" (v. 27). Evidently they believe him to be the Messiah, and consequently, they ask him for a messianic miracle (Isa 35:5-6). They enter "into the house" (NET) after him, where he asks them, "Do you believe that I am able to do this?" Curiously, while neither the men nor Jesus explicitly mention it, it's obvious that the ability to see again is the "mercy" they want him to have on them. To call attention to the relevance of faith, Jesus questions them regarding his ability to do the remarkable thing they ask. Their straightforward answer, "Yes,

Lord" confirms the obvious. Ironically, it is the blind who see clearly by faith that Jesus is the Messiah. And because they believe that he is able to restore their sight, he does in fact do so with the gentle touch of his hand. That touch would leave no doubt in their minds as to the source of their healing. He then tells them to keep what he had done to themselves, but they do not—perhaps could not. The miracle would be obvious to anyone who knew them. What's more, in the words of one commentator, "the news of such wonderful deeds is simply too good to be kept a secret" (Hagner, 254).

In the second story, a demon-possessed mute is brought to Jesus. Matthew makes it clear that the man's inability to speak is symptomatic of his condition. After Jesus exorcises the demon, the man's ability to speak is restored. Together, the exorcism of the demon and the concurrent healing of the man's muteness constitute incontrovertible proof that Jesus is the Messiah. When Jesus later heals a demoniac who is both blind and mute, the people are astonished and rightly ask, "Could this be the Son of David?" (12:22-23) But the Pharisees will have none of it. "It is by the prince of demons that he drives out demons," they say—a charge they repeat later that Jesus refutes (12:22f.).

In the summary paragraph that concludes this section of Matthew's Gospel, Jesus displays his compassion for spiritually needy crowds who wander aimlessly *like* sheep without a shepherd. Then he changes figures to refer to "the harvest." Although Matthew uses "harvest" elsewhere to refer to final judgment (13:24-34, 36-43; cf., Rev 14:14-20), here he refers to missionary outreach. On a pastoral note, one expositor writes: "Not only did Jesus heal; He also taught and preached. But He could not do the work alone—He needed other to help Him. He requested that His disciples pray that God would provide the needed workers. It was not long before the disciples themselves were involved in the ministry of preaching, teaching, and healing (see Matt. 10). In the same way, when we pray as He commanded, we will see what He saw, feel what He felt, and do what He did. God will multiply our lives as we share in the great harvest that is already ripe (John 4:34-38)" (Warren W. Wiersbe, "Matthew," in *The Bible Exposition Commentary*, 1:36).

The Message of the Passage

Jesus, who restored sight to the blind and speech to the mute to confirm that he is the Messiah, tells us to ask the Lord of the harvest to send out workers into his harvest.

day **4** **EMBRACE** – how God spoke to you in his word.

Our desire is to not be merely hearers of the word, but doers of the word as James teaches in James 1:22. Reflect on 3 "living questions" to apply what you have learned this week.

- **Journal your answers to the following living questions:**

–How is God making himself known to you?

–How does God want to change you?

–How is God calling you to change your world?

“Greater Than Our Unbelief”
(Use the space below for Sunday’s message notes)

notes **N** STUDY – the commentaries to answer the questions.

v. 27 **blind** "Blindness was one of the grimmest maladies in the ancient world and was considered to be only a little less serious than being dead. Nonetheless, it was quite common" (Wilkins, 372). "To be blind in that culture was to be a social outcast. Blindness was frequently regarded as the judgment of God (Gen 19:11; Exod 4:11; Deut 28:28f.; b. aabb. 108b-9a; cf. John 9:2), and it put serious religious limitations upon the blind (Lev 21:20; 2 Sam 5:8b; cf. 1 QM 7:4-5)" (Hagner, 253).

v. 27 **Son of David** "'Son of David' points to the Messiah's necessary lineage and royal role (see 2 Sam 7:11b-16). The classic Intertestamental illustration of the messianic Son of David appears in Pss Sol 17:21-18:7—a righteous warrior-king who establishes God's rule in Israel" (Craig L. Blomberg, Matthew, NAC, 52).

v. 28 **able** "By bringing the blind men indoors, He [Jesus] heightened their faith, since it involved waiting longer for a cure. Jesus' question furthered this aim (v. 28). It also clarified that their cries for help came from confidence in Him, rather than just out of desperation, and it focused their faith on Jesus specifically, and not only God generally" (Thomas L. Constable, "notes on Matthew," 2016 ed., 176, www.soniclight.com). "Jesus does not heal the blind men immediately, in order to provide the opportunity to ask about their faith . . . Since the blind men had already revealed their faith in their cry for mercy, the question takes on a didactic character (cf. too v 29), calling attention to the importance of faith" (Hagner, 254).

v. 29 **according to** "The fact of faith is in view here, not the quantity" (254). "The meaning is not 'the more faith, the better the result'" (Morris, 234). "'According to your faith' does not mean 'in proportion to your faith' but 'because you believed' (cf. v. 22)" (Constable, 176).

v. 30 **sight was restored** "Isaiah described the blessings that would be brought by Messiah: 'Then will the eyes of the blind be opened and the ears of the deaf unstopped. Then will the lame leap like a deer, and the tongue of the dumb shout for joy' (Isa. 35:5-6). In demonstrating His messianic authority, Jesus frequently performed miracles in the realms of which Isaiah had spoken. For example, He did so when confronted by two blind men. Their petition was significant: 'Have mercy on us, Son of David!' (Matt. 9:27). Since 'Son of David' was a messianic title, these men were revealing that they had heard Christ's presentation of Himself as Messiah and were appealing to Him for a messianic miracle" (J. Dwight Pentecost, *The Words and Works of Jesus*, 225). "Matthew has a story very similar to this one in 20:29-34 (with parallels in Mark 10:46-52; Luke 18:35-43). In both of Matthew's stories the blind men cried out, 'Have mercy on us, Son of David,' in both Jesus touched their eyes, and in both their eyes were opened. But this story is located in Galilee, while the later one takes place near Jericho; here the men follow Jesus whereas there they sit by the way. In the later story people told the blind men that Jesus was passing and then rebuked them for crying out, Jesus called the blind men to him (here they follow him into the house), he asked what they wanted (here he questions them about their faith), and the story ends with the blind men following him (here with them spreading the story throughout the region). It seems plain enough that Matthew regarded the two stories as distinct, and that it is the later one that is paralleled in the other Synoptists" (Morris, 233).

v. 33 **mute spoke** "Demon possession takes a variety of external forms. In the case of the two demoniacs in the area of the Gadarenes, the manifestation produced violent behavior that threatened people (8:28). Here the phenomenon in some way prohibits the man from speaking (see also 12:22). The exorcism of the demon and the concurrent healing of muteness is a most powerful demonstration that the kingdom of heaven has finally arrived" (Wilkins, 374). "The conclusion, 'never has anything like this been seen in Israel' (cf. Mark 2:12), must refer not to demon exorcism, which was performed by others (cf. 12:27), but to the miracle of the cure of the man's inability to speak (cf. 15:31). The conclusion to be drawn is that something remarkably new, indeed something eschatological (cf. 12:28), is happening in Israel: the Messiah has come to Israel and with him signs of his messianic kingdom" (Hagner, 257).

v. 36 **harassed . . . like** "The translations employ a variety of expressions" 'worried and helpless' (GNB); 'harassed and helpless' (NRSV, REB, NIV); 'distressed and downcast' (NASB); 'harassed and dejected' (JB). The imagery is that of shepherdless sheep, sheep wounded and torn either by hostile animals or by thornbushes and the like, and then prostrate and helpless . . . This picture of people completely without resource is rounded off by explicitly likening them to sheep without a shepherd, and expression used of the Old Testament people of God (Num. 27:17; 1 Kings 22:17; 2 Chron. 18:16; Zech. 10:2). Sheep are defenseless animals. Without a shepherd they are vulnerable to any attack. Even without predators they are in trouble if they have not shepherd, for they are not good foragers. They need a shepherd to lead them in green pastures and beside still waters (Ps 23:2). Goats manage very well by themselves, but sheep do not" (Morris, 239).

Family Talk

Encouragement from one parent's heart to another

In 1865, the United States Secret Service was created to identify and eliminate counterfeit currency. They are charged with the protection of our country's financial integrity. The Secret Service trains its agents to identify counterfeit currency by intensely studying real currency. They are so familiar with each coin and bill that they can immediately spot a fake when they see it. As parents, we have the same responsibility to train our kids to recognize counterfeit faith immediately when they encounter it. How do we do that? By immersing them in genuine faith. Our kids must have a strong faith foundation. This foundation is built when we, as parents, live out our faith intentionally and authentically. We must also teach them to go to God's Word as the absolute authority in life. We must lead them into a saving relationship with Jesus and then disciple them in their faith journey. We need to be ready to challenge the ideas of culture with the truth of scripture. Our kids need to know that they are designed by God for a special purpose. The blind men in our story this week were able to confidently answer "Yes, we believe!" when Jesus asked. This kind of believing faith brought sight to the blind men. It will bring clarity and wisdom to your kids when they encounter a culture with a contradictory message. Be diligent, parent, as you train your little one!

What Does The Bible Say

Weekly Verse: Read Matthew 9:27-38

1. What question did Jesus ask the blind men who were following Him?
2. How did they answer?
3. What happened to them?

What Do You Think

1. What do you think would have happened if the men said they didn't believe?
2. Do you believe Jesus can help you with your problems? If not, ask Him to help you believe.

What R U Going To Do

Throughout this series you have been memorizing Psalm 23. Write the Psalm on a piece of paper and circle everything the Lord does for you when you trust Him as your Shepherd.

Core Comp

Trinity - I believe the God of the Bible is the only true God - Father, Son and Holy Spirit.

Memory Verse

*Psalm 23:6 - Surely goodness and love will follow me all the days of my life,
and I will dwell in the house of the Lord forever.*

KIDPIX COUPON

I memorized my verse _____, completed *Scrolls* _____, brought Bible _____, brought a friend _____.

Series Discipleship Challenge located in KidPix Store.

Child's name _____ Grade ____ Parent's signature _____

Earn 1 token by completing the PantegoKids Bible study and another token by reciting the memory verse.

Questions: Kids@pantego.org

30 CORE COMPETENCIES

10 CORE BELIEFS

Trinity 2 Corinthians 13:14

I believe the God of the Bible is the only true God - Father, Son, and Holy Spirit.

Salvation By Grace Ephesians 2:8-9

I believe a person comes into a right relationship with God by His grace, through faith in Jesus Christ.

Authority of the Bible 2 Timothy 3:16-17

I believe the Bible is the Word of God and has the right to command my belief and action.

Personal God Psalm 121:1-2

I believe God is involved in and cares about my daily life.

Identity in Christ John 1:12

I believe I am significant because of my position as a child of God.

Church Ephesians 4:15-16

I believe the church is God's primary way to accomplish His purposes on earth today.

Humanity John 3:16

I believe all people are loved by God and need Jesus Christ as their Savior.

Compassion Psalm 82:3-4

I believe God calls all Christians to show compassion to those in need.

Eternity John 14:1-4

I believe there is a heaven and a hell and that Jesus Christ is returning to judge the earth and to establish His eternal kingdom.

Stewardship 1 Timothy 6:17-19

I believe that everything I am or own belongs to God.

10 CORE PRACTICES

Worship Psalm 95:1-7

I worship God for who He is and what He has done for me.

Prayer Psalm 66:16-20

I pray to God to know Him, to lay my request before Him and to find direction for my daily life.

Bible Study Hebrews 4:12

I read the Bible to know God, the truth, and to find direction for my daily life.

Single-mindedness Matthew 6:33

I focus on God and His priorities for my life.

Spiritual Gifts Romans 12:4-6

I know and use my spiritual gifts to accomplish God's purposes.

Biblical Community Acts 2:44-47

I fellowship with other Christians to accomplish God's purposes in my life, others' lives, and in the world.

Giving Away My Time Colossians 3:17

I give away my time to fulfill God's purposes.

Giving Away My Money

2 Corinthians 8:7

I give away my money to fulfill God's purposes.

Giving Away My Faith Ephesians

6:19-20

I give away my faith to fulfill God's purposes.

Giving Away My Life Romans 12:1

I give away my life to fulfill God's purposes.

10 CORE VIRTUES

Joy John 15:11

I have inner contentment and purpose in spite of my circumstances.

Peace Philippians 4:6-7

I am free from anxiety because things are right between God, myself, and others.

Faithfulness Proverbs 3:3-4

I have established a good name with God and with others based on my long-term loyalty to those relationships.

Self-Control Titus 2:11-13

I have the power, through Christ, to control myself.

Humility Philippians 2:3, 4

I choose to esteem others above myself.

Love 1 John 4:10-12

I sacrificially and unconditionally love and forgive others.

Patience Proverbs 14:29

I take a long time to overheat and endure patiently under the unavoidable pressures of life.

Kindness/Goodness 1 Thess. 5:15

I choose to do the right things in my relationships with others.

Gentleness Philippians 4:5

I am thoughtful, considerate and calm in dealing with others.

Hope Hebrews 6:19-20

I can cope with the hardships of life and with death because of the hope I have in Jesus Christ.

About the Authors

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Wendy Hollabaugh (B.S.W. University of Texas at Arlington) is the Children's Minister at Pantego Bible Church. Wendy has over ten years of experience in Children's Ministry. She has a passion for leading families to connect with God and each other. She enjoys creating compelling environments where kids fall in love with God and His Truth. Wendy and her husband, Greg, are also involved in their own personal youth ministry as they are training their three teenagers, Hannah, Aaron and Noah.



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