

ACCEPTING FORGIVENESS

Matthew 9:2-8

By Raymond White

Matthew 9:2 *Jesus ...said unto the sick of the palsy...Son, be of good cheer; thy sins are forgiven. :3 And, behold, certain of the scribes said within themselves, This man blasphemeth.*

Here's the bad news: we are sinners in need of forgiveness. **Romans 3:10** *There is none righteousness, no, not one.* Here's the good news: Jesus forgives. Isn't that great news? Well, the scribes didn't think so. Forgiveness is also an accusation which can be insulting — to those who want to be insulted. There's a marvelous saying: "A fool takes offense when none is intended."

When someone says to us, "I forgive you," our kneejerk response is, "For What? I didn't do anything!" To accept forgiveness, we must first admit guilt. And the scribes wanted no part of that. Then Jesus said —

Matthew 9:4 *Wherefore think ye evil in your hearts?*

They thought they didn't need forgiveness and that Jesus was being outrageous, even blasphemous, to offer it.

That's evil thinking. His forgiveness is not an insult, it is God's gift to mankind. And they needed to know that. So he showed them as plainly as he possibly could.

Matthew 9:5 *For whether is easier, to say, Thy sins be forgiven thee; or to say, Arise and walk?*

A fair question, particularly since they couldn't do either. But upstaging them embarrassing them in public was not what Jesus was about. He really wanted the best for them. He wanted to forgive them. But to do that he had to get them to a place where they could be forgiven. They need to believe. And so —

Matthew 9:6 *But that ye may know [he did it for the scribes] that the Son of man hath power on earth to forgive sins, (then swith he to the sick of the palsy,) Arise, take up thy bed, and go unto thine house. :7 And he arose, and departed to his house.*

His visible miracle revealed his invisible miracle. You'd think they'd line up to get forgiveness. "My gosh. This guy forgives sins and just proved it. I gotta' get some of that." But no. While God forgives, the world denies. Blind to its guilt, the world continues to declare its innocence. But still, although many deny, many believe.

Matthew 9:8 *But when the multitudes saw it, they marveled, and glorified God, which had given such power unto men.*

Each person there had a choice to make, as do each of us.