

## Grace Downtown CG Discussion Guide

Mar 5-8, 2018

Matthew 9: 1-8

Series: Signs of the King

### Announcements:

**Mercy Team Training:** The Mercy Team shows love and hospitality to our local neighbors by hosting the Our Table dinner at 4pm on Sundays right before the worship service. To be equipped or to learn more about the mercy team, contact team leaders Tiernan Meyer ([tsmeyer9@gmail.com](mailto:tsmeyer9@gmail.com)) and Katie Thompson ([katie.thompson.09@gmail.com](mailto:katie.thompson.09@gmail.com)). Training **Sun March 11, 3:00 pm.**

**Preparation for Marriage:** In these premarital seminars, we'll look at the purpose of marriage, communication, conflict-resolution, sexual intimacy, time, money, children, and other joys and challenges experienced in marriage. The class is reserved for couples who are engaged or seriously considering engagement. Contact [marriagecare@gracedc.net](mailto:marriagecare@gracedc.net) for more info **Fri March 16- Sat March 17.**

**Faith & Work Listserv:** Are you interested in exploring how the gospel impacts your work life? Do you wonder how to live out your faith in your daily vocation? Plug into the Faith & Work ministry by joining our email listserv. Email Mazaré at [mazare@gracedc.net](mailto:mazare@gracedc.net).

**Grace Downtown is now at Chinese Community Church!** On Sunday, be sure to come to our new worship location at 500 I Street, NW.

### Introduction:

Tonight's passage brings us to Jesus interacting and ultimately healing a paralytic man who was brought to him. It also follows a flurry of miracles performed by Jesus in the days after the Sermon on the Mount to include a multitude of healings (a leper, the centurion's servant, Peter's mother-in-law and many others that were sick or possessed by demons) as well as other miraculous acts like the calming of the storm. However, the way Jesus heals the paralytic differs from many of Jesus' healings to this point.

When the friends of the paralytic man bring him to Jesus on a mat, the passage tells us that Jesus "saw their faith." But this time, instead of immediately healing the paralytic, Jesus' first response is to heal the man's sins saying, "take heart, my son, your sins are forgiven." In fact, it is not even until Jesus perceives the hearts of the scribes who are taking issue with Jesus' forgiveness of the man's sins that Jesus heals the man's paralysis, ultimately saying "Rise, pick up your bed and go home."

So, what are we to take from this? We are not told the backstory of the paralytic man - whether some sinful act led to his paralysis - and we can only assume that the chief goal of the man's friends was the healing of his condition. And yet, Jesus first focuses on the forgiveness of his sins.

Dig deep into this passage to see the heart of our Lord Jesus for both our sinful condition and our physical needs as you fellowship together this evening.

## **Read and Discuss:**

### **Read Matthew 9: 1-8 aloud together.**

1. What is the significance of Jesus entering “his own city” from verse 1? Why did he leave the other region?
2. How does faith again play a role in Jesus’s interaction with the paralytic in this passage? How else in the book of Matthew to this point has faith been called out by Jesus?
3. Knowing what you know now, put yourself in the place of the friends of the paralytic who are carrying him on the mat. Would you be disappointed for Jesus to first seem only to forgive your friend’s sins? If so, why?
4. Why does Jesus ultimately heal the paralytic? What is the purpose?
5. Why was the forgiveness of the man’s sins a miracle?
6. The scribes were said to be angry with Jesus, saying to themselves, “this man is blaspheming” when they heard him declare the paralytic’s sins forgiven. Given the preeminence of the Old Testament law at this time, were the scribes wrong to be concerned or angry? And yet Jesus asks them why they are thinking evil in their hearts. Why?
7. A “fear of the Lord” is a concept that pops up many times in scripture, and yet this is often a concept that seems foreign to us. Why is it foreign and why does the crowd’s reaction of being afraid of what they have just witnessed lead them to glorify God, “who had given such authority to men?”

### **Application:-**

1. All of us have laundry lists of needs and desires that we bring to God in our prayers. How is the fact that Jesus heals the man’s sins before he heals his paralysis instructive to us in this passage? What are Jesus’s priorities in our lives versus our own?
2. How are we often like the scribes when we see Jesus forgiving someone’s sins? And in this passage, it does not even appear that the paralytic repents in word or spirit before Jesus forgives him. Who in our lives do we struggle with Jesus’s free and limitless grace in their lives?
3. In what ways do we see God move in our lives and the lives of others that cause us to glorify God as the crowd did in verse 8? Do we have that reaction often or few and far between?
4. How can we be more like the people carrying the paralytic on a mat to Jesus with a faith that Jesus sees from verse 2b?

## **Prayer:**

... For your community group to be people that carry others on mats to Jesus with faith.

... For our hearts not to be filled with evil thoughts when we see Jesus working in the lives of those who we struggle with.

... Thank God for our new worship space and all that God might do there. For the details like the communion lines, parking, nursery drop-off and pick-up, sitting close together, etc. And for our relationship and future partnerships with the Chinese Community Church.

... For our city and our neighborhoods and our blocks and our closest neighbors. That they would come to know Jesus and that he would use each of us to carry the good news forward to them in ways big and small.