

Application Guide: “Imperfect Faith in the Presence of a Perfect Savior” (Mt. 9:18-34)

March 6th, 2005: Kimber Kauffman, Senior Pastor of College Park Church, continued his series of Matthew by working through the exegesis of Matthew 9:18-34. The four healings – the ruler’s daughter, the elderly woman, two blind men, and demon-possessed mute – provide a brief glimpse of the newness that Jesus brings (v. 17). Kimber emphasized that all of these people had imperfect faith, and yet, they found healing in Christ because of *his* perfection.

1. Jesus was no respecter of persons. He was comfortable among the unclean and the outcasts just as much as he was in the house of a ruler.
 - a. As we look at the life of Christ, what is he trying to teach us about the way we place price tags on people, giving a higher value to those with a greater status or title?
 - b. How did Jesus become “all things to all people” (cf. 1 Cor. 9:21-23), and how can you imitate Christ’s example in your own spheres of influence?
2. The story in Mt. 9:18-34 includes a variety of unique characters. The ruler was a powerful man who went to Jesus as a last resort to solving his problems. The elderly woman had a superstitious understanding of God and healing. The mourners had no faith in Jesus. The blind men cared more that Jesus was going to be King of Israel than be the Savior of the world. The mute man relied on the faith of his friends to bring him to Jesus. The crowds were amazed (or entertained), but left unchanged. The Pharisees attributed Jesus work to the devil. And the disciples merely followed along and took all the events in.
 - a. Which character best reflects where you are in your walk with Christ? If you were a part of the story who would you be?
 - b. In light of where you find yourself in this story, (1) what is encouraging about the life of faith you are living and (2) how should you feel challenged to grow in your walk with Christ?
3. Pastor made an intriguing point in regards to the fact that there were many people who saw Jesus’ miracles or even touch up against him, yet walked away from the event without placing authentic faith in him.
 - a. What does this fact tell us about the nature of faith? If seeing God in the flesh doing a miracle isn’t enough to generate true faith, what is?
 - b. What about now? How many people come to church in order to see a sign from God or be entertained by religious theatrics but just walk away from the service still unchanged? What is sobering about this thought?
4. Kimber noted that, in the end, there are only two kinds of people in the world: those who think Jesus is foolishness and those who think he is wise.
 - a. How should this fact change the way you view people? How might this serve as a litmus test in evaluating advice or ideas?
 - b. What does it look like to live a life that believes Jesus is wise and the wisdom of the world is folly?
5. What is one thing you need to take away from this sermon (and discussion) and implement into your own life?