

After the Amen (4): According to Your Faith

(Matthew 9:27-34)

I. Introduction

- A. Jeffrey Hamilton tells this great old “true story” about faith healer Ernest Angley
1. He calls Angley “*a bit flamboyant in putting on a show.*” What an understatement!
 - a. That’s like saying Republicans & Democrats recently had “*a bit of a disagreement*” (*I saw Angley grab a man’s tongue in order to heal his lost sense of taste... Physician, heal thyself!*)
 - b. So Angley was healing man who was very hard of hearing. *OK, so I’m interested!*
 - c. He stuck a finger in each ear, twisted it around, hopped around, shouted, “*Heal!*”
 - 1) And he pronounced him healed. And he shouted in man’s face “*Hallelujah!*”
 - 2) Man looked with quizzical expression and replied, “*Not bad. How are you?*”
 2. *Is that a true story?* The late columnist Lewis Grizzard says this is truly a true story—
 - a. A healer named Brother Roy Dodd Hembree came his hometown with tent ministry.
 - 1) Inez Pickett, an old maid school-teacher, has been plagued with kidney issues
 - 2) She came to tent be healed; Roy Dodd did his schtick and said she was healed
 - b. Problem: Miss Inez began to rejoice so exuberantly that she fell off the platform
 - c. And this wasn’t a bit funny— she actually broke her leg! Grizzard picks the story—
“Somebody call an ambulance,” said the first one to reach her. “No need for that; just get Brother Roy Dodd to heal her.” However, Brother Roy Dodd declined. “I don’t do broken bones,” he said, “just vital organs.”
- B. Modern faith-healers are absolutely nothing like the miracle stories we read in the Bible
1. We can quickly count off the dissimilarities between what we read and what we see
 - a. **First**, *no pay for play*. No one in Bible takes money (“*silver or gold have I none*”)
 - b. **Second**, *no healing services*. Healings were “*on the way*” or “*prelude to preaching*”
 - c. **Third**, healing were *instantaneous*. Healed people didn’t just start to improve a bit!
 - d. **Fourth**, *no internal organs*. Healing miracles in the Bible were obvious miracles
 - 1) What did Jesus consider a healing miracle (**Matt 11:4-5**). No internal organs!
 - 2) Point was to show God’s power! Restoring someone’s taste might be helpful...
 2. **Caution:** Bible tells us about how powerful God **IS**, not how powerful He **WAS!**
 - a. Sometimes in discounting faith-healers, we leave impression God isn’t doing much
 - b. A favorite excuse of faith-healers for their failing, “*You didn’t have enough faith*”
 - 1) As we conclude *After the Amen*, we run into healing stories in **Matthew 9**
 - 2) Jesus tells some people that they will be healed “*according to your faith.*”
 3. Is there something to be said of God working in us according to our faith? Let’s look.

II. According to Your Faith: THEN (Reading: [Matthew 9:27-31](#))

- A. This is an “*on the way healing*.” Jesus encounters blind men that call out for mercy.
1. Jesus healed a sick woman “*on the way*” to house of synagogue ruler ([Matt 9:20-22](#))
 - a. Now he meets these blind men “*on the way*” home from synagogue ruler’s house
 - b. They essentially follow him home; he healed them after they went inside the house
 - 1) As they followed, they called out to him, “*Have mercy on us, Son of David!*”
 - 2) Not to put too fine a point— *if you’re blind, this makes it harder to follow!*
 2. Jesus clearly here makes a connection between their faith and their healing ([9:28-29](#))
 - a. What if they said, “*No?*” Or “*Not really sure?*” Or “*Give it a go; what can it hurt?*”
 - b. Doesn’t Jesus make it clear that his healing power is given because of their faith?
 - c. Remember his astonishment on his first trip back home to Nazareth? ([Mark 6:5-6](#))
 - 1) In Mark’s gospel, this follows the raising of ruler’s daughter from the dead
 - 2) *What a contrast!* He raises the dead, but back home, nothing. Why? *No faith!*
 3. Gospels often make a connection between the faith of one healed and the healing—
 - a. We’ve seen that connection already in story of the centurion’s servant ([Matt 8:13](#))
 - b. The story of blind Bartimaeus on Jericho road is told in same way ([Mark 10:51-52](#))
 - c. One leper who came back to thank Jesus was told the same thing ([Luke 17:17-19](#))
 - d. And it’s the same when your disease is spiritual— sinful woman ([Luke 7:48-50](#))
 4. See the point? There’s a connection between the healing and the faith of one healed
- B. But not always. There’s another side of the coin as the story continues ([Matt 9:32-33](#))
1. We are pretty safe in saying that this man didn’t say too much! *He’s was mute!*
 - a. He didn’t follow Jesus around pleading, “*Have mercy on me!*” (*like the blind men*)
 - b. And he didn’t respond positively to Jesus’ faith challenge (*like the blind men*)
 2. He is mute because of a demon; he is not healed because faith made him whole
 - a. Jesus didn’t raise synagogue ruler’s daughter because of her faith. She was dead!
 - b. He raised her because he came to defeat Satan; he came to defeat the power of sin.
- C. If there’s something completely consistent here, it’s the response of Pharisees ([Matt 9:34](#))
1. Typical. They can’t point to trickery. Nothing up his sleeve. No smoke or mirrors
 - a. Faith-healer Peter Popoff caught using radios/earpiece to get messages from God!
 - b. There none of that, so they accuse Jesus of being in league with devil! Typical!
 2. In words of another blind man healed by Jesus and pressured to be quiet ([Jn 9:24-25](#))

III. According to Your Faith: TODAY

- A. Jesus told the blind men that they were healed “*according to your faith*” (**Matt 9:29**)
1. Power of healing was in Christ, but he connected his healing to who he was (**Mt 9:6**)
“*I want you to know that the Son of Man has authority on earth to forgive sins...Get up, take your mat...*”
 - a. That’s why healing in book of Acts is done “*in the name of Jesus*” (**Acts 3:6, 16**)
 - 1) Not magic word or incantation as the sons of Sceva found out (**Acts 19:15**)
 - 2) People today seem to throw out “*in the name of Jesus*” like a Harry Potter spell
 - b. It’s a theological statement; powerful things took/takes place through Jesus Christ
 2. *Is that still true today?* Do power things still happen in the name of Jesus today?
- B. Maybe the problem is that we don’t have the right kind of faith? Consider a few texts—
1. **First**, is God’s work being done in/through us “*according to our faith*” (**Rom 12:6**)
 - a. Paul warning us “don’t think too highly of ourselves.” Use sober judgment. (**12:3**)
 - 1) Imagery is of a body— we are part of the body; we have different parts to play
 - 2) We have a vested interest (*we’re a part*); we’re to use our gift to benefit body
 - b. He says we are to use our different gifts, like prophesy, “*according to our faith*”
 - 1) Effectiveness and usefulness in serving God and others depends on our faith
 - 2) The gift is from God, like the healing, but we have to have faith. *So... do we?*
 2. **Second**, are people healed/forgiven in prayer according to our faith? (**Jam 5:15**, ESV)
 - a. So is this praying for the physically sick (**5:14**) or those struggling in sin (**5:16**)
 - 1) Or is this verse acting as a bridge as James transitions from one subject to next?
 - 2) The overall point James is stressing here is the power of prayer, right
 - b. What makes prayer powerful? God? He’s powerful if we pray or not! *It’s faith!*
 - 1) This isn’t “*name it and claim it!*” Not that we believe we’ll get what we ask for
 - 2) We must believe that God is a God of power who answers prayer. *So... do we?*
 3. **Third**, are we saved through the scriptures according to our faith? (**2 Tim 3:15**)
 - a. Do you believe this book has “*power to give you wisdom so that you can be saved?*”
 - b. It only works through faith in Christ— Bible has power only as far as you believe
 - c. We’ll spend a year in “*The Story.*” Does it have power? *Only if you have faith!*
- C. Jesus have blind men in our story this deal, “*According to your faith let it be done to you*”
1. We’re about to sing “*we believe in a God who is able to bring mercy and justice to all*”
 2. God can do many things, but only in accordance with your faith. *Will you be faithful?*