

What Kind of Man Is This? The Right One

From the Series, "The King and I – Matthew Tells Us About the King of the Universe"

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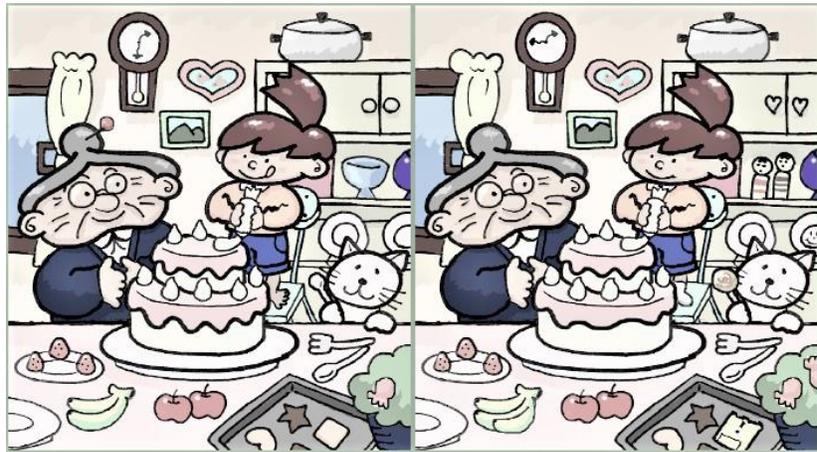
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Introduction

People have all kinds of things they do when they have a little free time. Some folks are attracted to games that make their minds work a bit. For example, some people like crossword puzzles. Others play games like Sudoku.

I ran into something a while back for people who like to play these kinds of games":



"Spot the Difference." In these puzzles, you see two pictures. There are minor differences between the two, and your job is to find them. In some cases, an artist draws the pictures, and purposely draws some things the same and some things different. For example, in the picture above, the clock on the left has a different time than the clock on the right. With modern technology, we can now take a picture of something, and then use computer programs to make minor differences.

Lots of people consider these puzzles to be fun. But they can be more than fun. Knowing how to watch for similarities and differences in things can be very useful. For example, let's say you want to buy a diamond or some other precious gem. However, you find out that there are some unscrupulous people out there who make fake diamonds. Those fake diamonds look like diamonds in many ways. But in other ways, very important ways, they're different. Wouldn't it be great if you knew what to look for? If you're looking at a number of different gems, wouldn't it be great if you knew how to find the right one?

Today, we're going to learn that Jesus is: The right one.

In the text we're studying, we're going to meet some people who need Jesus to help them:

- I. We'll meet two blind men.
- II. We'll meet a man who could not speak.
- III. We'll see an accusation against Jesus.
- IV. Then, we'll talk about what this means for us today.

Before we get into our text for today, we need to ask a question: In the last few sessions, we've seen people come to Jesus who need to be healed.

- We saw a leper.
- We saw a man who was paralyzed.
- We saw two men who were demon possessed.
- In our last session, we saw a woman who had a bleeding problem and a dead girl.

In every case, Jesus responded to hurting people with an amazing miracle.

- He healed.
- He cast out demons.
- He raised someone from the dead.

Today we'll meet some hurting people. Here's a spoiler alert: Jesus is going to meet these situations with a miracle. So, we need to ask? What more can he do? As a practical matter, why does Matthew tell us the same type of story more than once? Writing books in those days was difficult. Everything was written by hand. And the materials you could write on were very expensive and not easy to come by for the average person. Today, you go to the office supply store, and you buy a ream of paper. It's not very expensive. You put it into your printer and send over something from the word-processor on your computer. It's not hard at all.

But in those days, writing was hard. So, why does Matthew take the time to tell the same type of story more than once when telling the story once is hard enough?

Well, obviously he had a reason. Here's how we find out what that reason is: We look at each story and we ask two questions: 1) What is different about the story? 2) What about it is similar to other stories. It's kind of like those games we talked about in a few minutes ago - Only, it's much more important.

Having said all that, let's begin.

I. Two Blind Men

We'll look first at the story of two blind men who come to Jesus for help.

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. (Matthew 9:27-28)

What's happening here? Jesus has just visited the home of Jairus, who was a synagogue leader. While he was there, he raised this man's daughter from the dead. Now, he's on his way back to his home base in the town of Capernaum. He has a crowd of people following him around. In the crowd, there are two blind men.

A. The condition of the men.

The first thing we learn is the condition of these men. They're blind. Many of the people listening have heard stories from the Bible. So, they know that Jesus can heal people who are blind. However, in Matthew's book, this is the first time someone with this condition came to Jesus. So, Matthew's readers may not have known anything about this yet. At this point, the fact that these men are blind is unique for Matthew.

B. Their Request

The next thing we see is the request that these men had for Jesus. We'll find that this request was unique for several reasons.

We see that the men were "calling out". The word in the original language is a strong one. These men were passionately crying out. They were loud. They were intense. Surely everyone in the crowd heard them. It's interesting - This is unique. Prior to this time in Matthew's book, people politely requested help. These men were yelling at the top of their lungs.

Next, we see that the men were asking for mercy. It's important to understand that these men showed humility. This was not a demand. It was certainly not a complaint. This was a request for mercy. "Mercy" says, "I don't deserve anything - Please help me anyway." So, these men were humble.

The story could have ended there. Recall though that many people in Israel in that day knew the Scripture. What we call the book of Psalms was a hymn book that people sang from on every sabbath. So, at one point, everyone sang the following words from a Psalm written by King David.

1 Have mercy on me, O God,
according to your unfailing love;
according to your great compassion
blot out my transgressions.
2 Wash away all my iniquity
and cleanse me from my sin.
(Psalm 51:1-2)

Because the two men used these words, "Have mercy on us", we can say that they might have also been asking for forgiveness.

So, these men ask Jesus for mercy. Up to this time, no one has specifically made this kind of request.

C. To Whom

Next, we see who these men thought they were addressing. They referred to Jesus as “Son of David.” “Son of David” was a title that meant “Messiah”. Everyone who looked for the coming King knew that he would be a descendent of King David. Matthew starts his book with a genealogy. In that genealogy, Matthew traces the lineage of Jesus. It goes back to King David, and before that, to Abraham. This is the first time that someone refers to Jesus with this title. Apparently, word was getting out that Jesus was qualified to be the great King, the Messiah, because he was a son of David.

So, we’ve met these two men.

- They’re blind.
- They make a special request.
- They make it in a loud, intense way.
- They make it to someone they call “Son of David.”

How does Jesus respond to them?

D. The Response of Jesus

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. (Matthew 9:28)

Picture this: Jesus performed a miracle at the home of Jairus. Now it’s time to walk back to his home base. We don’t know how far away it was, but it was a good walk. Jesus walks along for a considerable period of time with these two men following. They’re yelling at the top of their lungs. They did this for the entire walk. They’re blind – it had to be hard to keep up with the crowd. So, they’re working really hard to make their request.

When Jesus gets to his destination, he goes inside. And the two men get in somehow. So, Jesus has waited this whole time to respond to the men. Now, they’ve all stepped into the house. Finally, Jesus responds to them. And when he responds, he asks them a question: “Do you believe that I am able to do this?”

This is important: Jesus has not asked anyone this question before. When he healed a leper, the leper said, “If you are willing, you can make me clean.” And Jesus said, “I am willing”, and he healed the man. (Matthew 8:1-3)

When Jesus met a centurion with a sick servant, he asked, “do you want me to come?” The centurion said that he didn’t feel worthy to have Jesus come into his home. All Jesus had to do, according to the centurion, was give the word, and the servant would be healed. Jesus marveled at this man’s faith, and he healed his servant from a distance. (Matthew 8:5-8)

At one point, Jesus was teaching in a crowded room, and a man was brought who was paralyzed. The room was so crowded he couldn't get in. So, his friends who brought him went up to the roof, made a hole, and lowered their friend on ropes. When Jesus saw this, he was impressed by their faith. And he healed the young man. (Matthew 9:1-8)

In our last session, we saw a woman who had a bleeding problem for 12 years. She snuck up behind Jesus figuring if she could just touch his cloak, she would be healed. And she was. Jesus told her she was healed because of her faith. (Matthew 9:20-22)

Here are two men who just walked a long way, yelling at the tops of their lungs. Surely, they believed something was there for them. But to them, Jesus says, "Hang on a minute - Let's make sure. Do you believe that I am able to do this?" The two men think for a minute, and they say, "Yes, Lord."

Why did Jesus make these men wait even for a minute? We don't know for sure. One thing we do know: **God has a unique plan for everyone.** Here's something that Paul says about this:

We have different gifts, according to the grace given to each of us. (Romans 12:6)

Paul said that God gives everyone gifts. He gives a different set to everyone. This is all according to his grace. God is sovereign and all-knowing. He knows what is best for each person as an individual. When the leper and the centurion and the paralytic and the woman with the bleeding problem came, he did what was right for them. For the two blind men, they needed a little more - Just a little bit of a push. They needed to be certain in their faith. Then, they were ready.

Let's see who this ends:

29 Then he touched their eyes and said, "According to your faith let 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. (Matthew 9:29-31)

These men had faith, but it was not perfect faith. Jesus tells them that no one should know about their healing. We're told that he warned them sternly. The word for "sternly" is a very strong word. Jesus made it clear that no one was to know. There were times when Jesus did miracles in public. There were times when the miracles were private. Jesus had his reasons for either situation. This miracle was supposed to be private - And he meant it.

Sadly, the two men couldn't contain themselves and they ran all over telling what happened. This is forgivable, but let's be clear: It was still disobedience. These men did not have perfect faith or perfect obedience. You know what? Jesus healed them anyway.

So, we can see that there were a number of unique features to this miracle. Now that we see that, let's look at the next situation.

II. A man who couldn't speak

We meet a man who could not speak:

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." (Matthew 9:32-33)

This man had a handicap, but he didn't have it for normal reasons. It was not a physical disability - He had a problem with demon possession.

One of the things we've discussed in this series is what it would take to heal someone. Today, this man would have to be examined and hooked up to machines and fed different kinds of medications to find out what was wrong. Those tools weren't available back in the days of Jesus. Fortunately, Jesus didn't need those tools. If there was a medical reason, Jesus would have known right away - And he could heal.

But this was different: this involved dark forces. Again, Jesus knew right away. And fortunately for the victim, Jesus knew what to do. He drove the spirit out. When he did, the man was able to speak right away.

This story goes fast – it's just a few sentences. From Matthew's perspective, one thing that stands out is the reaction of the crowd. The crowd was amazed and said, "Nothing like this has ever been seen in Israel."

We learned in our last session that people in Israel knew about the great prophets of their faith. - Men like the prophet Elijah. There were miracles associated with these men. Jesus had miracles, too, but they were very different.

We started with the game called "Spot the difference". Players look at two things and see what's different. The people in the crowd recalled what was written about the prophets. Then, they watched Jesus. Jesus did more miracles, and more powerful miracles than all the prophets before him. And he didn't pray to God to ask for help. He gave the command, and incredible things happened.

The story could end here were it not for a tragic twist. Let's see what happens next.

III. An Accusation

The Pharisees come along and accuse Jesus of something horrible.

But the Pharisees said, "It is by the prince of demons that he drives out demons."
(Matthew 9:34)

As I said, this is a horrible accusation. They're saying that Jesus is an agent of the Devil. Did they have any evidence for this accusation? No. None. They were making it up. Why? They made up a horrible lie because they didn't like Jesus. Jesus had the audacity to criticize them. They thought they were wonderful. Surely when the Messiah came, or so they thought, he would love them. He wouldn't dislike them or anything they were doing. Therefore, in their minds, Jesus must have had a suspicious source of his power.

In the days of Jesus, the people of Israel were looking for their Messiah, the great King. In terms of our discussion today, the Pharisees were saying that Jesus was not him. In other words, he was the wrong one. Getting back to our introduction, it's like saying people were waiting for a diamond when they waited for the Messiah. But the Pharisees said Jesus was a fake.

Jesus will answer this charge at a later time, and we'll give his answer more attention then. In the meantime, let's just say this would cause a lot of confusion. Like we said, wouldn't it be great if you could tell a real diamond from a fake?

Well, fortunately, many of the people of that day knew what to do. ***They had the Scriptures.*** Many of them knew the Scriptures well. The people of that day knew that the Scripture predicted the Messiah. They knew that Jesus fulfilled the predictions. The Scriptures talked about prophets like Elijah. The people knew that Jesus did more than the prophets. The Scriptures were the key to telling the real thing.

What kind of man is this? What kind of man is Jesus? He's the right one. He was the right one, and the crowds knew it.

IV. What does this mean for us today?

So, what does this mean for us today? As always, there are lots of practical applications. Let's focus on two.

A. Choices

First, all of us are presented with choices in life. We're presented with situations where there is more than one way to go. There is more than one path. How do we choose the right one?

The first choice is your faith. Should you be a Christian or a Jew, A Muslim or a Buddhist? Or perhaps something else among countless choices? Friends, Jesus is the right one. We spend a lot of time in our church talking about why. Come talk to us. We want you to know that you're on the right path. There will be important links at the end of this article.

After that, you need to know the Scriptures. You need to know the Bible. That's what helped the people in Jesus' day - That's how they recognized him. If you don't know your Bible well, your life will be filled with bad choices.

And once you know your Bible, you must obey. If you know your Bible, but don't obey when it comes time, your life will be filled with bad choices.

B. Unique paths

The next thing we need to look at is the unique path that God has for you. Jesus is your first step, but once you've decided to follow him, God will place you on your own unique path.

Why did God give an immediate miracle to the leper, the Centurion, and the woman who had the bleeding problem, and then, make the two blind men follow along yelling at the top of their lungs for what may have been hours? We don't know. We only know that God had a unique path for each of those people.

When we have problems and we pray, sometimes God grants a miracle. Often times he does not. Why? Because God has a unique path for each of us. Friends, God knows you personally. He knows everything about you. He knows what makes you unique. He knows what makes you special. And he loves you. That's why he designed a special plan for you.

When I was a young Christian, someone shared with me one of the most important Bible verses that I know:

5 Trust in the Lord with all your heart
and lean not on your own understanding;
6 in all your ways submit to him,
and he will make your paths straight.
(Proverbs 3:5-6)

Let's pull this all together.

Conclusion

Some people enjoy games like “spot the difference”. Those games are fun, but as we’ve learned, they can help us with an important skill: Sometimes we need to look at things to see what makes them unique.

We all go through life looking for answers. When we do, we may need to look at different possibilities. Some are authentic, some are fake. Wouldn’t it be great to know how to find the right one?

What kind of man is this? What kind of man is Jesus? Today we’ve learned that he’s the right one. When you’re looking for help, start with Jesus. Start with God’s Word, the Bible. Trust God. Obey him. Trust in his wisdom when you face the unique path that he has for you.

Let’s pray that God will help us all to find the right one.

Thanks for reading! Here are some helpful links:

Trinity Church
www.TrinityTeaneck.org

Phil’s Site
PhilBrainerd.com

To learn how to begin a new life with Jesus Christ, visit Billy Graham’s site:

PeaceWithGod.net