

Overcoming Negativity

Matthew 9:1-8

1 So He got into a boat, crossed over, and came to His own city. 2 Then behold, they brought to Him a paralytic lying on a bed. When Jesus saw their faith, He said to the paralytic, “Son, be of good cheer; your sins are forgiven you.”

3 And at once some of the scribes said within themselves, “This Man blasphemes!”

4 **But Jesus, knowing their thoughts, said, “Why do you think evil in your hearts?** 5 For which is easier, to say, ‘Your sins are forgiven you,’ or to say, ‘Arise and walk’? 6 But that you may know that the Son of Man has power on earth to forgive sins”—then He said to the paralytic, “Arise, take up your bed, and go to your house.” 7 And he arose and departed to his house.

8 Now when the multitudes saw it, they marveled and glorified God, who had given such power to men.

As we grow closer to Passion Week and Easter Sunday, I’ve been finding myself in The Gospels.

- **Looking at the great things Jesus did while here on earth**
- **Looking at the love and compassion He demonstrated**
- **How He went out of His way to help people**
- **All of the miracles He performed...**

And with that, if you read the full context, you will notice something else very specific...

- **How the world around Him reacted to Jesus...**

This Scripture above, Jesus healed a paralyzed man, and what was the response from the people around Him?

- **Negativity!!!**

As a matter of fact, let’s look on down in this chapter...

- **One chapter, of one Book...**
- **See how Jesus was treated for doing great things...**

9 As Jesus passed on from there, He saw a man named Matthew sitting at the tax office. And He said to him, “Follow Me.” So he arose and followed Him.

10 Now it happened, as Jesus sat at the table in the house, that behold, many tax collectors and sinners came and sat down with Him and His disciples. 11 And **when the Pharisees saw it, they said to His disciples, “Why does your Teacher eat with tax collectors and sinners?”**

12 When Jesus heard that, He said to them, “Those who are well have no need of a physician, but those who are sick. 13 But go and learn what this means: ‘I desire mercy and not sacrifice.’ For I did not come to call the righteous, but sinners, to repentance.”

- **No concern for sinners getting saved**
- **Broken people being restored**
- **Just negativity...**

14 Then the disciples of John came to Him, saying, **“Why do we and the Pharisees fast often, but Your disciples do not fast?”**

- **No comments about the great work and miracles...**
- **Just a negative remark....**

**Then, we see Jesus is on His way to raise a young girl from the dead
Along the way heals a woman who had been bleeding for 12 years!!!**

- **What does He get when He gets to the house?**

23 When Jesus came into the ruler’s house, and saw the flute players and the noisy crowd wailing, 24 He said to them, “Make room, for the girl is not dead, but sleeping.” And **they ridiculed Him**. 25 But when the crowd was put outside, He went in and took her by the hand, and the girl arose. 26 And the report of this went out into all that land.

- **Negativity!!**

But the real story is, how Jesus handled all of this negativity

- **It didn’t stop Him**
- **It didn’t even slow Him down**
- **He didn’t get discouraged by it**
- **He kept doing the work of His ministry!!**

As a matter of fact, Jesus took advantage of the negativity and made it teaching opportunities (Instructions in righteousness).

- **To make it a positive situation**

There is a Scripture that I believe wraps up how Jesus dealt with negativity:

1 Peter 3:8-9**Called to Blessing**

8 Finally, all of you be of one mind, having compassion for one another; love as brothers, be tenderhearted, be courteous; 9 **not returning evil for evil** or reviling for reviling, but on the contrary blessing, knowing that you were called to this, that you may inherit a blessing.

I say all of this to you today to point out the fact of the negativity we face every day in this world, as we go about our lives and the purpose of advancing the kingdom of God!!

And with Jesus as our example, we must learn how to cope with and handle all of this negativity....

- **Not returning evil for evil**
- **Not returning negativity with negativity**
- **But returning negativity with positivity!!!**

Understand this...

- **The only time two negatives make a positive**
- **Is in Math and Grammar**
- **Not in life!!!**
- **If you get sucked into the negativity you will only add to it**

For the sake of illustration, think of

- **Darkness is negative**
- **Light is positive**

A standard lamp cord only has two wires

- **Negative**
- **Positive**

Connect only the negative, turn the switch and you will get darkness

- **Gloom**
- **Doom**
- **Despair**

Now connect the positive side, turn on the switch...

- **Viola'**
- **Light**

So, maybe, just maybe... That's what Jesus is telling the church...

Matthew 5:14-16

14 “You are the light of the world. A city that is set on a hill cannot be hidden. 15 Nor do they light a lamp and put it under a basket, but on a lampstand, and it gives light to all who are in the house. 16 Let your light so shine before men, that they may see your good works and glorify your Father in heaven.

We have to let our light shine into the darkness in this world!!

And maybe, “Letting our light shine” means that we impart some positive into this negative world!!

We are called to be

- **Salt and light!!**
- **The leaven in the lump (positive influence)**
- **We are made to stand out...**
- **Not blend in**

We are the example for Christ to this dark, broken, and lost world!!

- **Let your light shine!!!**

So, be careful...it's so easy to get sucked into the negativity...

- **The next thing you know you are right there...**

I heard it said that Christians are:

- **Supposed to be thermostats (set's the temperature/atmosphere)**
- **Not thermometers (only measures the temperature)**

So remember....

- **We are not defined by the world around us...**
- **We are defined by the Christ within us...**

16 Let your light so shine before men, that they may see your good works and glorify your Father in heaven.

In closing:

I believe Negativity is an epidemic today, even in Christian homes and the church....

And I believe this negativity is affecting people's health and personal lives

Turn on the news, or have a conversation and talk is centered around:

- Depression
- Sickness
- Addiction
- Abortion
- Divorce

And all the medications that are available!!

- It's crazy..
- Treating the symptoms, but not curing the root

Creating more negativity...

Maybe the problem is the wrong medication...

The Bible says it best:

Proverbs 17:22

**A merry heart does good, like medicine,
But a broken spirit dries the bones.**

Jesus is calling the church today to do something...

1 Peter 2:9

9 But you are a chosen generation, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, His own special people, that you may proclaim the praises of Him who called you out of darkness into His marvelous light

Let your light shine!!!

Help put life back into dry bones!!

Closing: