



# Mercy Extended

JESUS SHOWS MERCY TO ALL WHO COME TO HIM IN FAITH.

**Scripture Passage: Matthew 9:10-19,23-26    Memory Verse: Matthew 9:12**

Jesus said that people who have been forgiven the most love more freely (Luke 7:36-47). We love Him because of His mercy toward us and the length to which He went to bestow mercy and forgiveness. The song “Just as I Am” touches hearts made tender by Jesus’s willingness to take us as we are and mercifully make of us something different, something better. The more we recognize our sin, the more we are grateful for the One who said to a paralytic and to us, “Your sins are forgiven” (Matt. 9:2).

Jesus demonstrated mercy by healing the sick, raising the dead, and delivering persons afflicted by demons. Perhaps more of us identify with His grace in the calling of an ostracized tax collector—and then joining the forgiven publican and his friends for a meal. When Christ saves us and calls us, He changes us and uses us as we follow Him.

As you prepare to lead this session from Matthew 9, take time to reflect on the mercy God has shown you. Ask Him to help you embrace that mercy and to help you use it as fuel for your ministry to others. Also, pray for adults in your Bible study who may be struggling to accept God and the mercy He offers so freely.



## **Weekly Podcast: Group Leader Training**

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Suffering is everywhere. Hurricanes, floods, tornadoes, and wildfires are in the news frequently. Add to that cancer, heart disease, dementia, and broken relationships. Overlooking the suffering of others is easy to do when each of us is facing our own form of suffering. We often neglect to extend compassion to others when we ourselves need compassion. Thankfully, Jesus never overlooks the suffering we face. He shows compassion and mercy to all who come to Him. (PSG, p. 77)

**In what ways can we show mercy in our everyday encounters?**



## Understand the Context (Matthew 9:9-38)

Matthew's Gospel included his personal testimony. Referring to him as Levi, Mark and Luke also relate the publican's calling (Luke 5:27-29; Mark 2:14), but Matthew made it personal. This was part of his story. It was set in the context of Jesus's miraculous ministry; but for him, no miracle was as big as the change in his life through the grace of Christ. He responded to Jesus's invitation to discipleship much like the four fishermen of Galilee—immediately leaving his past to follow Jesus (Matt. 4:18-22; Luke 5:28).

Afterward, Matthew hosted a meal so his friends could meet Jesus. The Pharisees who witnessed this episode scorned Jesus for hanging around "sinners." Jesus rebuked these self-righteous hypocrites for their lack of love, reminding them He had come for people just like Matthew. They lacked mercy because they felt no need for forgiveness themselves.

Even disciples of John the Baptist did not fully understand Jesus's way of doing things. Ironically identifying themselves with the Pharisees, they questioned why Jesus and His disciples did not engage in public fasts. Like them, we need to be reminded of the deeper spiritual truths concerning Jesus's relationship with His followers.

These two encounters are sandwiched between more accounts of Jesus's merciful ministry toward desperate people seeking His help. One man was a leader of the local synagogue. He was not worried about Jesus's eating companions

or His fasting habits. His daughter was dying, and he needed a miracle. So, Jesus accompanied the frantic father on another mission of mercy. Arriving at the man's home, Jesus raised his daughter to life, demonstrating His authority over life—and even death itself.

Though they could not see what took place, two blind men heard Jesus was in the area. Also desperate, they called out to Him for mercy. Professing faith in His ability to heal them was akin to belief in Him as Messiah. He quietly healed them, not wanting publicity that would create unnecessary distractions. Overwhelmed at receiving their sight so suddenly, the men ignored Jesus's request and told everyone they met about His merciful miracle.

Later, a demon-possessed man was brought to Jesus. Without hesitation or conversation, Jesus cast out the evil spirit, enabling the mute man to speak. This sequence of events caused most people to praise God. However, the same Pharisees who challenged Jesus's previous acts of mercy again scorned Him and attributed His power to Satan rather than to God. When we forget our need of mercy, we join the ranks of those who love the trappings of religion, all while denying the power and love of God.

**Review Matthew 9:10-19,23-26 in your Bible. Summarize and contrast the attitudes of the Pharisees to the compassionate attitude of Jesus. (PSG, p. 78)**

# ENGAGE



**PREPARE:** Display **Pack Item 5** (Poster: Key Verse: Matthew 9:12) and **Pack Item 1** (Map: Jesus's Ministry Around Galilee) on a focal wall. Make copies of **Pack Item 12** (Handout: *Miracles in Matthew 8–9*).

## INTRODUCE:

Enlist a volunteer to read the opening paragraph (PSG, p. 77). Encourage one or two volunteers to share words that come to mind when they hear “mercy.” Share this definition found on page 1081 of the *Holman Illustrated Bible Dictionary* (Nashville: B&H Publishing, 2015): “one’s consideration of the condition and needs of his fellowman.” Share that our mercy toward others is rooted in God’s mercy toward us.

## ASK:

**In what ways can we show mercy in our everyday encounters?** (PSG, p. 77)

## SHARE:

Remind adults that the group has been studying the Gospel of Matthew. Note that to this point, Matthew had not mentioned himself, even though he was one of Jesus’s early disciples. Summarize this information from page 78 of the PSG to highlight how Matthew revealed himself in today’s passages:

“The writer of the Gospel gives us a personal glimpse into his own calling to be a disciple. While Mark and Luke also record the calling of Matthew, in those two Gospels he is called Levi, which was his Hebrew name. Matthew was his Greek name. He was a tax collector for the Roman government. . . . No doubt Matthew included the story of his calling to point to the fact that Jesus extended grace even to those considered to be outcasts.”

## TRANSITION:

*After calling Matthew, Jesus also attended a banquet with “sinners.” As we study today’s verses, focus on how Jesus showed mercy and how He wants us to follow His example.*



MIRACLE	REFERENCE
Healing a leper	Matthew 8:1-4
Healing a centurion's servant	Matthew 8:5-13
Healing a blind man in a town	Matthew 9:1-13
Healing a demon-possessed man	Matthew 9:14-17
Healing a paralytic	Matthew 9:18-22
Healing a woman with an issue of blood	Matthew 9:23-26
Healing a man's daughter from the dead	Matthew 9:27-34
Healing the twelve with a leprosy ointment	Matthew 9:35-38
Healing a man possessed with an evil spirit	Matthew 10:1-15

## Group Activity Option

### Music

Share the lyrics to “Rescue the Perishing” (*Baptist Hymnal 2008*, No. 357). Explain that the hymn was written by Fanny Crosby, a prolific writer of the 19th century. Note that she was also blind from her infancy. Encourage adults to discuss how her blindness may have helped her develop the kind of mercy reflected in this song. Share that Crosby wrote thousands of hymns, including many that remain popular today. Ask: **How does God use suffering to develop our mercy?** Lead adults in singing the first verse of “Rescue the Perishing” together.



## Jesus's Mission (Matt. 9:10-13)

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**10** While he was reclining at the table in the house, many tax collectors and sinners came to eat with Jesus and his disciples. **11** When the Pharisees saw this, they asked his disciples, “Why does your teacher eat with tax collectors and sinners?” **12** Now when he heard this, he said, “It is not those who are well who need a doctor, but those who are sick. **13** Go and learn what this means: I desire mercy and not sacrifice. For I didn’t come to call the righteous, but sinners.”

After Jesus healed the paralytic, He went for a walk. This was not a casual walk-about. He knew exactly where He was going. Matthew was sitting at his station, collecting taxes on transactions from fishing vessels and other boats bringing cargo to port. When Jesus called him, Matthew asked no questions. He simply rose, left everything behind, and followed Jesus (Luke 5:27-28).

**(v. 10)** When we experience Christ’s mercy, we want others to know Him. Matthew invited his friends and colleagues to share a meal at his house with **Jesus and his disciples**. Although the text mentions **the house**, Mark’s account specifies this was Matthew’s home (Mark 2:15). This dinner likely was served a low **table** with couches or pillows on which people were **reclining** while they ate.

Matthew’s acquaintances were **tax collectors** and other people considered **sinners** by religious establishment. Whether because of Matthew’s popularity or Jesus’s fame, **many** of these social outcasts **came to eat** with Him. We can follow Matthew’s example by using hospitality to reach our friends for Christ.

**(v. 11)** We don’t fully understand how **the Pharisees saw this**. Given their disdain for such “sinners,” they would not have followed Jesus into Matthew’s house. Some commentators argue they observed the dinner from the courtyard through an open window. Others interpret “saw” in the sense of “I see what happened here.”

Instead of confronting Jesus directly, the Pharisees **asked his disciples** why Jesus was present. In their view, upright persons did not socialize with such people. Tax collectors were ostracized not only because they worked for Rome, but also because many were dishonest.

Ritual separation from unsavory people was expected, especially for a spiritual teacher. Like guilt by association, His presence suggested to the Pharisees that He was also a sinner.

**(v. 12)** **Heard this** could mean Jesus was listening to what was said in the moment. It also might refer to a later report from the disciples. Using a metaphorical analogy, Jesus said **those who are well** don’t **need a doctor**. In general, the **sick** are the ones who seek out doctors. Around Matthew’s table, many of the guests were spiritually ill, and Jesus is the Great Physician.

**(v. 13)** If Jesus was responding to the Pharisees, His statement to **go and learn** was a rebuke. If He addressed the disciples, this was a teachable moment. Jesus quoted Hosea 6:6, emphasizing **mercy** over **sacrifice**. Pharisees thought their religious duty involved following rabbinic rituals. Both the Pharisees and the disciples needed to learn that God is more interested in repentance and forgiveness than man-made rules.

Jesus declared He had not come **to call the righteous, but sinners**. By “righteous,” Jesus meant people who considered themselves to be righteous, even though they were sinners like everyone else. In referencing “sinners,” Jesus was not offering criticism or condemnation. These people understood their need of forgiveness. They came to Jesus because He offered mercy.

We can trust that Jesus came to offer salvation to sinners. Each of us lands in that category (Rom. 3:23). Contrite and repentant, we can receive mercy and forgiveness through Christ.

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### Key Doctrine

#### Man

Only the grace of God can bring man into His holy fellowship and enable man to fulfill the creative purpose of God. (See Ephesians 2:1-10; Colossians 1:21-22.)

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**READ:**

**APPLICATION POINT:** We can trust that Jesus came to offer salvation to sinners.

**Read Matthew 9:10-13 aloud**, directing adults to underline the direct quotes in this passage.

**CONTEXT:**

Direct attention to **Pack Item 1** (*Map: Jesus's Ministry Around Galilee*). Point out the village of Capernaum. Remind adults that this was the hometown of Peter, Andrew, James, and John. Note that Matthew also worked as a tax collector by the Sea of Galilee.

**SAY:**

*After he accepted Jesus's call to discipleship, Matthew immediately reached out to his friends. Despite the social stigma attached to tax collectors and other "sinners," Jesus attended a banquet at Matthew's house. This drew the attention—and the contempt—of the religious elite.*

**ASK:**

**What does it mean that Jesus was a "friend of sinners"?** (PSG, p. 79)

**RECAP:**

Highlight the Pharisees negative response. Encourage adults to consider why they approached the disciples instead of Jesus. Use this information from page 80 of the PSG to explain the Lord's response to His critics.

*Jesus was aware of the intent of the Pharisees but refused to take the bait. Instead, He answered the question directly by quoting a well-known proverb of the day. The proverb stated that it is sick people who need a doctor. . . . Jesus, however, shifted the meaning of the proverb away from physical healing. He had already demonstrated His power and His willingness to heal physical maladies. Spiritual healing was Jesus's focus as He addressed the Pharisees.*

**DISCUSS:**

Direct adults to read the Key Doctrine (PSG, p. 80). Highlight this phrase: "Only the grace of God can bring man into His holy fellowship." Lead a brief discussion on how Jesus's words affirm the Key Doctrine. Point out Jesus's quote of Hosea 6:6 and why He would emphasize mercy above sacrificial laws.

**ASK:**

**How would you summarize what Jesus came to do?** (PSG, p. 81) Point out **Pack Item 5** (*Poster: Key Verse: Matthew 9:12*). Note that this is the memory verse for this session. Encourage adults to reflect on this verse and to ask God to help them learn how to show mercy and lead people toward the Great Physician.

## Jesus's Work (Matt. 9:14-17)

**14** Then John's disciples came to him, saying, "Why do we and the Pharisees fast often, but your disciples do not fast?" **15** Jesus said to them, "Can the wedding guests be sad while the groom is with them? The time will come when the groom will be taken away from them, and then they will fast. **16** No one patches an old garment with unshrunk cloth, because the patch pulls away from the garment and makes the tear worse. **17** And no one puts new wine into old wineskins. Otherwise, the skins burst, the wine spills out, and the skins are ruined. No, they put new wine into fresh wineskins, and both are preserved."

(v. 14) Pharisees were not the only ones questioning Jesus's actions. **John's disciples** also asked Him to explain Himself. They were followers of John the Baptist, who had been put in prison by Herod Antipas. The term **then** does not mean immediately after the encounter at Matthew's house, but shortly afterward.

Like the **Pharisees**, John's disciples practiced strict religious disciplines. It's ironic that John's followers included themselves with the Pharisees. They noted how they would **fast often**, not only during national days of fasting, but also as a regular spiritual regimen. John's followers couldn't understand why Jesus's followers did not observe similar practices.

Some writers link their inquiry to Jesus's participation at Matthew's dinner. Possibly, the celebration at Matthew's house occurred on a day normally set aside for fasting. Alternatively, they could have observed that the disciples' general pattern of life did not include fasting rituals. Some commentators suggest they questioned why Jesus's disciples didn't join them in fasting because John was imprisoned.

(v. 15) Jesus did not rebuke John's disciples. Fasting is a good practice when used correctly. Instead, He taught them using three analogies. First, He noted that **wedding guests** are not **sad while the groom is with them**. Weddings are a cause for celebration, not mourning. The groom represented Jesus and the wedding guests referred to His followers. While they were together, it was appropriate that they rejoiced.

However, **the time will come when the groom will be taken away**. The term "taken" connotes being led away involuntarily. Neither Jesus's disciples nor John's followers understood that He was referring to His death on the cross.

At that time, **they will fast**. Like John's disciples who grieved over John's imprisonment, Jesus's disciples would mourn for Him. The metaphor could also include Jesus's departure back to heaven when the disciples would no longer enjoy His physical presence.

(v. 16) Jesus's second analogy involved repairing clothing. An **old garment** often developed holes from wear and tear. But **no one patches** the hole with **unshrunk cloth**. Such cloth was often made from wool and needed to be washed before being applied so it would shrink to its permanent size. Without the shrinking, the cloth **pulls away** from the old garment and makes the **tear worse**.

Trying to incorporate the old trappings of ritualistic religion with the fresh spirit of Christ damages both. In some ways, John's disciples had been trying to follow the teachings of John while clinging to the rituals of the scribes and Pharisees. They didn't yet comprehend the totally new relationship with God that Jesus made possible. Mixing the new and the old was detrimental to both.

(v. 17) Similarly, **no one puts new wine into old wineskins**. Wineskins were made from animal skins that grew hard and brittle over time. Fresh wine would ferment, creating gases that would expand and cause the **skins** to **burst**. Consequently, both are lost as the **wine spills out** and the **skins are ruined**. Like the analogy of the new and old cloth, this illustration showed the problem of trying to combine the old and the new. People knew to **put new wine into fresh wineskins**. In the same way, the new covenant of Christ needed a fresh container—the church.

We can rejoice in the truth that salvation is not based on religious works or rituals. We have the living Spirit of God filling us as we trust Christ by faith and follow Him.



## READ:

**APPLICATION POINT:** We can rejoice in the truth that salvation is not based on religious works or rituals.

**Enlist a volunteer to read Matthew 9:14-17** as adults identify the images Jesus used to make His point.

## CONTEXT:

Use information from Matthew 9:14 in the Leader Guide to identify John the Baptist's disciples. Briefly discuss how their question differed from the criticism of the religious leaders.

## EXAMINE:

Divide the group into at least three teams and give each team one of the following assignments. (For larger groups, more than one team can look at the same set of verses. For smaller groups, an individual can be a team.)

- **Team 1:** *Examine the content for Matthew 9:14-15 on pages 81-82 of the PSG. Identify the illustration Jesus used and what He was emphasizing with the metaphor.*
- **Team 2:** *Examine the content for Matthew 9:16 on page 82 of the PSG. Identify the illustration Jesus used and what He was emphasizing with the metaphor.*
- **Team 3:** *Examine the content for Matthew 9:17 on page 82 of the PSG. Identify the illustration Jesus used and what He was emphasizing with the metaphor.*

## DISCUSS:

Allow teams to share what they learned. Supplement the discussion with information from page 100 in the Leader Guide.

## SAY:

*Jesus never rejected fasting as a spiritual discipline, but He did emphasize a new approach to living in relationship with God. And this new approach stood in stark contrast to both the legalism of the Pharisees and the austerity of John's followers.*

## ASK:

**What does Jesus offer that religion does not?** (PSG, p. 83)

## Group Activity Option

### Object Lesson: Home Furnishings

Gather a poster and glue sticks. Bring magazines and newspaper ads featuring home furnishings (sofas, tables, chairs, and so forth). Include photos of broken or damaged furniture. Direct the group to design and decorate a living room using the photos. Once the project is completed, note that the broken furniture wasn't used because the new furniture was better. Point out that the transformation into new life through Christ is much the same. The former things just do not fit in with the new, including old habits or ways of doing things. Apply this truth to the metaphors Jesus used in Matthew 9:14-17.

## Jesus's Compassion (Matt. 9:18-19)

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**18** As he was telling them these things, suddenly one of the leaders came and knelt down before him, saying, “My daughter just died, but come and lay your hand on her, and she will live.” **19** So Jesus and his disciples got up and followed him.

**(v. 18)** Most of us do not appreciate interruptions. We dislike intrusions into our conversations or our well-planned days. But Jesus never saw people as interruptions, especially when those interactions involved a dire need.

In the moment, Jesus was teaching the disciples of John some important truths about who He was and why He had come. But, **as he was telling them these things**, someone pushed through the crowd to get to Him. The intrusion came **suddenly**. In fact, the Greek wording suggests a measure of surprise, calling attention to something important happening without warning.

The newcomer was **one of the leaders** in the local synagogue. Mark's Gospel reveals that his name was Jairus (Mark 5:22).

Synagogues were local assemblies of Jews that emerged after the destruction of the original temple and the people's deportation to Babylon. Synagogues were not places of sacrifice, but focused on teaching and worship. While most synagogues had a chief ruler, a group of lay elders also helped fill administrative positions. The general term “one of” suggests that Jairus was among this larger group of elders.

With no concern for what others might think, he humbly **knelt down before** Jesus. This influential man displayed faith by coming to Jesus and pleading for his **daughter** who had **just died**. This phrase can refer to something that had just happened or was about to happen. Matthew compressed the longer narratives of Mark and Luke (Mark 5:22-43; Luke 8:40-56). In any case, Jairus didn't think of himself as a leader of the synagogue, but a father whose child had only one hope—Jesus.

Hope and faith flowed from Jairus's lips as he spoke. The conjunction **but** contrasts the girl's helpless condition against the leader's faith in Jesus. He confessed publicly that if Jesus would **lay your hand on her**, the girl would **live**.

This was an extraordinary statement. People witnessing this encounter would know the truth about Jesus and the validity of Jairus's belief

based on what happened next. Jairus wasn't worried about such matters. Any risk was worth taking for his child.

**(v. 19)** All eyes were on Jesus. The word **so** linked what just happened with what followed. Moved by Jairus's faith and humility, Jesus went into action. During the exchange with John's disciples, Jesus likely sat in the manner of rabbinical teachers. Now, however, the time for sitting was past. **Jesus and his disciples got up and followed** Jairus to his home.

Amazingly, there is no indication of hurry or anxiety. In fact, Jesus actually stopped to help a woman with a long-term bleeding disorder (Matt. 9:20-22). Also, unconcerned with cultural or religious prohibitions, this woman touched the hem of Jesus's garment. When she timidly explained what she did and why, Jesus assured her that her faith had made her whole.

Apparently, Jairus did not object when Jesus delayed their journey to heal the woman. It is possible that his faith allowed him to commit the entire situation into Jesus's control. We can cast our cares on Him because He cares more for us than we could ever imagine (see 1 Pet. 5:7).

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### Praying Scripture

#### Matthew 9:18-19

Spend time praying Scripture using Matthew 9:18-19. Read the verses, then respond to these questions:

- How does God reveal Himself in these verses?
- How should I respond to what He reveals?

*Example:* Bow your heart in worship and reverence. Tell God about your deepest needs and humbly ask Him to bring healing and help. Thank Him for caring and for giving you the strength and faith you need to trust Him.

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## READ:

**APPLICATION POINT:** We can know that Jesus cares and will respond to our needs.

**Direct the group to read Matthew 9:18-19 silently** and to reflect on how they feel about interruptions in their lives. Allow adults to share how they respond to interruptions.

## SAY:

*Some interruptions might seem minor, while others seem to come at the absolute worst times. When we're in the middle of something we consider important or we've finally gotten a measure of momentum, interruptions can test our patience.*

## CONTEXT:

Remind adults that Jesus had been teaching the disciples of John more about who He is and why He had come. Affirm that this was important for them to understand. Share that, as He was sharing these truths, a synagogue leader named Jairus interrupted His teaching time with a plea for his daughter's life.

## ASK:

**How would you have responded to such an interruption?**

## RECAP:

Emphasize that Jesus did not see this as an interruption, but as a chance to demonstrate mercy to a family in need. Share this content from pages 83-84 of the PSG to highlight Jairus's need and Jesus's response:

*In putting the life of his daughter in Jesus's hands, this leader was bucking the religious establishment of which he himself was a part. He turned to the only one who could give life back to his little girl. . . . With compassion, Jesus rose to accompany this grieving father to his home. Jesus knew that, sometimes, interruptions are divine appointments. The disciples also followed, and according to Mark, "a large crowd was following and pressing against him" (Mark 5:24).*

## ASK:

**Why should we take our concerns to Jesus?** (PSG, p. 83)

## PRAY:

Invite adults to pray Matthew 9:18-19 back to God using the "Praying Scripture" prompt on page 102 of the Leader Guide. Remind adults that Jairus came to Jesus with boldness and humility. Affirm that Jesus still longs to act on our behalf when we come to Him. Challenge adults to continue reflecting on the questions from the "Praying Scripture" prompt as they speak these verses back to God during the week.

## Jesus's Power (Matt. 9:23-26)

**23** When Jesus came to the leader's house, he saw the flute players and a crowd lamenting loudly. **24** "Leave," he said, "because the girl is not dead but asleep." And they laughed at him. **25** After the crowd had been put outside, he went in and took her by the hand, and the girl got up. **26** Then news of this spread throughout that whole area.

(v. 23) Hope can quickly melt into despair until faith intervenes. Parallel accounts of this story in other Gospels reveal that, soon after Jesus healed the woman with the blood disorder, word came from Jairus's home that the child had indeed died. But Jesus quickly reassured the distraught father that everything would be all right (Mark 5:35-36; Luke 8:49-50).

Moving on, Jesus **came to the leader's house**. He had delayed along the way to minister to the woman whose long-term illness was healed, yet Jesus arrived at exactly the right moment. It's never a matter of *if* Jesus will come, but only **when** He will arrive. Jesus is always on time.

At the leader's home, Jesus encountered **flute players**. Jewish mourning customs in Jesus's day included more than a typical gathering of family and friends. Hired musicians and professional mourners were normal parts of the setting. Even poor families followed this custom, though they might only be able to afford a small number.

Jesus also observed a **crowd lamenting loudly**. Funerals in any culture are emotional, but funerals in the ancient Middle East were especially so. Unlike the subdued atmosphere of western funerals, individuals in that context freely expressed strong feelings of loss. The death of a child was especially heartbreaking.

(v. 24) Upon His arrival, Jesus told the gathering to **leave**. Their presence must have been distressing to Jairus who came with the expectation that Jesus would raise his daughter to life. Jesus insisted that Jairus's daughter was not **dead**, but merely **asleep**. We should not interpret this "sleep" as evidence for a type of soul-sleep after death. Like His friend Lazarus, Jesus used the word asleep to mean death (John 11:11-13). He knew that He was about to raise her up, so she was not dead permanently.

The people merely **laughed at him**. This term describes continuous scoffing and boisterous derision. Death had been pronounced. The mourners were present. For this newcomer to

assert the child was merely asleep seemed like complete foolishness. Of course, the crowd didn't realize they were in the presence of the One who holds life and death in His hand.

(v. 25) Since the **crowd** would not follow Jesus's instructions voluntarily, He had them **put outside**. The original language more fully portrays the apparent force needed to make them leave. They were a distraction and were detrimental to the faith of the girl's parents. They might scoff at Jesus, but they ultimately could not stand against His authority.

Jesus was already in the house, so **went in** means that He entered the room where the child's body lay. Other Gospel accounts reveal that He only allowed the girl's parents and three of His disciples (Peter, James, and John) to accompany Him into the room (Mark 5:40; Luke 8:51).

In the room, Jesus **took her by the hand** and told her to rise (Luke 8:54). Immediately, she **got up** as her spirit returned to her (Luke 8:55). The phrase "got up" implies more than being raised from an incapacitated state. It described Jesus bringing her back from the dead. He restored life to her body.

(v. 26) Although Jesus instructed the parents not to tell anyone what had happened (Luke 8:56), word **spread throughout the whole area**. Jesus's fame included healing the sick and driving out demons, but this was the first time He had raised the dead. This miracle demonstrated He held ultimate power over life and death. If a healed leper or a delivered demoniac got the people's attention, a dead girl's resurrection was awe-inspiring.

We can trust that Jesus has the power to transform lives. Just as He turned a father's heart-rending grief to unspeakable joy, even so He can transform our grief over sin into the joy of forgiveness and salvation.



**APPLICATION POINT:** We can trust that Jesus has the power to transform lives.

**READ:**

**Guide the group to read Matthew 9:23-26 silently** and to circle words or phrases that stick out to them. Allow a few volunteers to share what they circled and why.

**EXPLAIN:**

Distribute copies **Pack Item 12** (*Handout: Miracles in Matthew 8–9*). Highlight that “Healing the woman with a bleeding condition” occurred within the verses that describe “Raising Jairus’s daughter from the dead.” Note that again we see an interruption that wasn’t an interruption for Jesus.

**RECAP:**

Encourage adults to share their thoughts on the musicians and mourners at Jairus’s house. Summarize this content from page 84 of the PSG to explain the commotion and Jesus’s response:

“Arriving at the house, Jesus discovered the flute players and a crowd lamenting loudly. These were professional mourners. Their presence indicated that enough time had passed since the daughter had died to summon them. . . . The words “put outside” [v. 25] implies more than simply inviting them to step outside. The terminology points to a forceful eviction of the mourners from the house. The presence of mourners was a time-honored tradition. So in the crowd’s mind, Jesus rejected tradition once again by demanding they leave the house.”

**ASK:**

**How does it impact your faith when you read of Jesus’s miracles and power?** (PSG, p. 85)

**STATE:**

*Jesus demonstrated mercy through both His words and His touch. He always makes time for His people when they are in need. He helped the woman with the bleeding condition, and He helped Jairus’s family. He will help us, as well.*

### Group Activity Option

#### Bible Skill

Use a concordance to find references to fasting in the Bible. Read the article about fasting in a Bible dictionary. Ask: **What are the different forms of fasting in the Bible? What biblical purposes of fasting did you discover?** Consider how fasting can benefit you spiritually. Ask: **How can you incorporate the discipline of fasting into your life?**

## CHALLENGE

### REVIEW:

Review these points from Apply the Text on page 86 of the *Personal Study Guide*.

- *We can trust that Jesus came to offer salvation to sinners.*
- *We can rejoice in the truth that salvation is not based on religious works or rituals.*
- *We can know that Jesus cares and will respond to our needs.*
- *We can trust that Jesus has the power to transform lives.*

### REFLECT:

Direct attention back to **Pack Item 5** (Poster: Key Verse: Matthew 9:12). Note that while Jesus remains the Great Physician, He often uses His people as His hands and feet for ministry. Encourage adults to meditate on this memory verse during the week and to look for opportunities to live out the Apply the Text points listed above.

### DISCUSS:

Encourage the group to examine the first set of questions on page 86 of the PSG. As a group, list groups of people who may be in need. Challenge the group to consider ways they can help meet those needs for God's glory. Remind them that they are called to follow Jesus's example of mercy.

### PRAY:

Read Matthew 9:18-19 aloud, along with the questions from the "Praying Scripture" prompt. Urge the group to continue using these verses in their prayer time this week and to bring their needs to Jesus with boldness and humility. Close the session in prayer.

### AFTER THE SESSION

Text or email the group during the week to remind them of Jesus's mercy toward them and their call to show mercy toward others. Encourage them to read and reflect on the second set of questions from page 86 of the PSG. Challenge them to ask God to help them reflect His character through mercy and compassion as He leads them.

### ADULT COMMENTARY



Want to go deeper in your study?  
*Explore the Bible Adult Commentary*  
 offers additional information and biblical  
 insights related to the key passages.  
 (Available for purchase at **Lifeway.com**.)

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