

15 March 2026 – Will He Forgive Me?

Forgiveness; Authority

Matthew 9:1–8

Introduction

When you sin, your conscience begins accusing you and you feel guilty.

Believers are taught to run to God and to confess their sins to God.

But deep down we grapple with a question.

Will God ever be able to forgive me?

Then also believers when they sin tend to highly value forgiveness, but when others sin against us, we see it as a violation of justice.

When God forgives:

- He is in fact releasing sinners from judgment and the divine penalty for sin.
- He extends grace towards those who do not deserve it.
- He is displaying Mercy as well as justice.

How does God show Mercy while remaining just?

God's demands for justice is satisfied in Christ.

Romans 3:25–26 LSB

whom God displayed publicly as a propitiation in His blood through faith, for a demonstration of His righteousness, because in the forbearance of God He passed over the sins previously committed; for the demonstration of His righteousness at the present time, so that He would be just and the justifier of the one who has faith in Jesus.

God applies that declaration of not being guilty to those who trust in Jesus.

Romans 4:5 LSB

But to the one who does not work, but believes upon Him who justifies the ungodly, his faith is counted as righteousness,

You might say I get this, but how can I know that Jesus in fact can forgive me.

What evidence is there that when Jesus declares a person forgiven, that the person is in fact forgiven.

What evidence is there to support the fact that Jesus has the authority to forgive?

Historical Background

Matthew had set out to prove that Jesus is the true Messiah.

Part of that proof revolved around proving the authority of the Messiah as the Son of God.

Matthew had demonstrated various examples of the Messiah's authority:

His authoritative teaching in the Sermon on the Mount (Matthew 5-7)

His authority over the physical body:

- in healing a Leper who trusted in His authority Matthew 8:1-4
- in healing the slave of the Centurion who trusted in Christ authoritative word Matt 8:5-13
- in healing Peter's Mother-in-Law with no mention of faith Matthew 8:14-15
- In healing every sick person and demonic person brought to Him which authenticated God's word through fulfilled prophecy. Matthew 8:16-17

*His authority over creation when Jesus calmed the terrifying storm in an instant.
Matthew 8:23-27*

His authority over the demonic realm by casting out more than 2000 demons from two demoniacs with one word. Matthew 8:28-34

All these demonstrations lead to Matthew revealing the Messiah's authority to forgive sin.

He jumps back in history to an event in Capernaum, in which Jesus's authority to forgive sins was clearly proven and displayed.

Passage

Matthew 9:1-8 LSB

*And getting into a boat, Jesus crossed over the sea and came to His own city.
And behold, they brought to Him a paralytic lying on a bed. Seeing their faith, Jesus said to the paralytic, "Take courage, son; your sins are forgiven."*

And behold, some of the scribes said to themselves, "This man blasphemes."

And Jesus knowing their thoughts said, "Why are you thinking evil in your hearts?"

"For which is easier, to say, 'Your sins are forgiven,' or to say, 'Get up and walk'?"

"But so that you may know that the Son of Man has authority on earth to forgive sins"—then He said to the paralytic, "Get up, pick up your bed and go home."

And he got up and went home.

But when the crowds saw *this*, they were afraid, and glorified God, who had given such authority to men.

Proposition

3 Proofs that Jesus has authority to forgive you.

1. Jesus stated it vs 1-2.
2. Jesus did it vs 3-7
3. Jesus is glorified by it. vs 8

1. Jesus stated it vs 1-2.

Matthew 9:1–2 LSB

And getting into a boat, Jesus crossed over the sea and came to His own city. And behold, they brought to Him a paralytic lying on a bed. Seeing their faith, Jesus said to the paralytic, "Take courage, son; your sins are forgiven."

"1 And getting into a boat, Jesus crossed over the sea.

This verse concludes the previous text and introduces the next text.

Crossed over the Sea After Jesus had cast out the demons from the two demoniacs at Gadara, he climbed in the boat and returned to Capernaum.

Matthew did not mention the disciples, their presence is assumed. He wanted you the reader to focus all your attention on Jesus.

and came to His own city.

1. Jesus' childhood city had been Nazareth. But in Luke we learned that the people from Nazareth had rejected Jesus and in fact had attempted to kill Him by wanting to throw Him off a cliff. (Luke 4:28-31)
2. So, Jesus's home city became Capernaum.

Since Matthew was cherry picking events in vs 2 he picked the miraculous healing of the paralytic that had happened prior to the Sermon on the Mount event , after Jesus had healed Peter's Mother in Law and after having returned form a brief tour in Galilee Matthew 4:23-24, Mark 1:35-39, Luke 4:42-44

We travel back in time to what actually preceded this event.

Jesus had been ministering throughout Galilee, proclaiming the gospel and healing many and casting out many demons.

Matthew 4:23–24 LSB

And Jesus was going throughout all Galilee, teaching in their synagogues and preaching the gospel of the kingdom, and healing every kind of disease and every kind of sickness among the people.

And the news about Him spread throughout all Syria; and they brought to Him all who were ill, those suffering with various diseases and pains, demoniacs, epileptics, paralytics; and He healed them.

Having returned we read.

Mark 2:1 LSB

And when He had come back to Capernaum several days afterward, it was heard that He was at home.

Jesus had become famous.

News about this healer had spread far and wide.

Jesus chose to stay in Peters home.

This home likely was a two-story building with a roof.

People would often meet on the second story.

ON hot summer nights, people would often sleep on the flat roof.

A set of stairs were built outside the house that led to the roof.

We continue reading.

2 And behold,

The Term behold =idou= lo and behold, call attention to something, look or see

Matthew had noted how Jesus displayed his authority over Nature to his disciples and then his authority over the demonic realm.

Here Matthew calls you his readers to see this display of Christ authority to forgive sins.

We see what preceded this display of authority.

they brought to Him a paralytic lying on a bed.

The term paralytic =paralytikos= lame, paralyzed, palsied (cripple, quadriplegic), disabled in feet or legs

Wheelchairs did not exist and paralytics had to be carried around on their beds (mats or mattresses)

A second problem they faced was the social stigma.

Jews generally believed that all disease and affliction were the direct results of sin, either your own or close family.

In the book of Job, his friends attributed his problems to his sin or his children's sin.

Job 4:7–8 LSB

*“Remember now, whoever perished being innocent? Or where were the upright
wiped out?
According to what I have seen, those who plow wickedness and those who sow
trouble harvest it.*

Job 8:4 LSB

If your sons sinned against Him, Then He sent them into the power of their transgression.

In Jesus's time his disciples displayed this same belief.

John 9:1–2 LSB

*As He passed by, He saw a man blind from birth.
And His disciples asked Him, saying, “Rabbi, who sinned, this man or his parents, that he
would be born blind?”*

The Bible does teach that all sickness and pain and hardship are the results of original sin and displays the destruction and the curse upon creation.

But the Bible does not teach that all sickness or afflictions are the direct result or punishment for your own sin, or the sins of your parent.

You cannot make this direct connection as a hard and fast rule.

In fact, Jesus corrected this belief with His disciples in that context.

John 9:3 LSB

*Jesus answered, “Neither this man nor his parents sinned, but this was so that the works
of God might be manifested in him.*

Studying the early chapters of Job you soon see that the reason for Job's affliction and illness was God who chose to display Job as a blameless, upright, God-fearing man to Satan. (Job 1:8, 2:3)

One may assume the Paralytic and his friends believed that his paralysis was the direct result of punishment for his own sins or his parents or grandparents' sins.

Even though this may not have been the case, what they did showed they believed.

Jesus could fix this situation.

The rapport that the healer was there and moved them to carry their friend to the house of Peter and they went to extraordinary lengths to get this man to Jesus.

The other gospel writers tell you what they did.

Mark wrote.

Mark 2:2–4 LSB

And many were gathered together, so that there was no longer room, not even near the door; and He was speaking the word to them.

And they came, bringing to Him a paralytic, carried by four men.

And being unable to bring him to Jesus because of the crowd, they removed the roof over where He was; and when they had dug an opening, they let down the mat where the paralytic was lying.

Luke wrote.

Luke 5:17–19 LSB

And it happened that one day He was teaching; and there were some Pharisees and teachers of the law sitting there, who had come from every village of Galilee and Judea and from Jerusalem, and the power of the Lord was present for Him to perform healing.

And behold, some men were carrying on a stretcher a man who was paralyzed; and they were trying to bring him in and to set him down before Him.

But not finding any way to bring him in because of the crowd, they went up on the roof and let him down through the tiles with his stretcher, into the middle of the crowd, in front of Jesus.

None of the gospels mention any dialogue between Jesus and the men or the paralytic lying on his bed.

His need was obvious, obvious to Jesus, but not necessarily obvious to humans.

His need was greater than just physical healing.

Matthew leaves out all this extra information like:

- The room was overcrowded.
- These men had carried this man to the roof.
- These men had lowered him down before Jesus.

Why the abbreviated approach?

Authorial intent.

Matthew did not want to distract from his purpose .

He wants you the reader to focus on Jesus and see Him displaying His authority to forgive sins.

The healing of the paralytic or the men doing lowering him down through the roof may have distracted you from seeing the main point.

Again, the focus is on Jesus.

Seeing their faith,

He saw their faith.

As the all-knowing God, Jesus knew what was in these men's hearts and he saw their faith in action.

But Jesus was zooming in to the need in his heart.

He said:

Jesus said to the paralytic, "Take courage, son."

Talk about a preaching distraction.

Bits of dust, straw, mud even tiles may have interrupted Jesus's teaching session.

The next moment here comes a man lowered down likely on ropes on a mat in front of everyone.

Put yourself in the paralytic's mind.

He can't move.

He is filled with the thoughts of the social stigma that he is paralyzed because of his sin.

He would have preferred not having the spotlight upon him.

But now all attention was on him, being lowered down into the very presence of the Living God man Jesus.

Jesus began addressing what this man's heart needed.

This man needed comfort.

So, Jesus gave a command.

Take courage son (Tharseo = dare to be bold, includes the idea of trusting in something, be of good courage, be cheerful, be enheartened, be confident, be bold, have the courage that eliminates fear.)

Don't be afraid, because you no longer have anything to be afraid of.

The use of the term son or child as the Greek reads is a term of endearment.

(Translators changed it to son, to indicate gender.)

But Jesus knew He needed more than comfort.

And so, Jesus stated it.

your sins are forgiven."

These are the most precious words any person would want to hear.

Jesus did not start by fixing his body.

He started with the heart.

This heart needed comfort, but more than that.

It needed forgiveness.

We read this incredible statement: your sins are forgiven = your released. It's not held against you anymore.

Note:

The initiative came from Christ.

The man did not even ask for forgiveness.

This is a principle with Divine forgiveness.

God takes the initiative in all forgiveness not man.

Matthew predicted that the Messiah would save his people of their sins.

*Matthew 1:21 LSB
And she will bear a Son; and you shall call His name Jesus, for He will save His
people from their sins.*

Here we see the first mention of how He would save them from their sins.

It would happen through forgiveness.

Jesus's authority over sin is seen by Christ's statement.

He chose to forgive this man.

Forgiveness is not only initiated by God it's a declaration.

A declaration in which promises not to hold his sin against Him.

Forgiveness = aphiemi= apo=from +hiemi=to send, to send forth, The GL has the idea of throwing, or to send away, to hurl, to release from legal or moral obligation, consequences, to become pardoned, depart from

It's a declaration releasing that person from capability.

It's a decision in which God chooses to remember the persons sins no more, not forgetting, but choosing not to hold it against or bring it up against that person.

It does not depend upon emotions.

The OT provides some pictures of Yahweh forgiving His people.

He describes it as:

Removal

*Psalms 103:12 LSB
As far as the east is from the west, so far, he has removed our transgressions from
us.*

Casting

Micah 7:19 LSB

He will again have compassion on us; He will subdue our iniquities. And You will cast all their sins into the depths of the sea.

Forgive and not remembering.

Jeremiah 31:34 LSB

And they will not teach again, each man his neighbor and each man his brother, saying, 'Know Yahweh,' for they will all know Me, from the least of them to the greatest of them," declares Yahweh, "for I will forgive their iniquity, and their sin I will remember no more.

Your and my greatest need is the need for forgiveness of sin.

Had Jesus healed the paralytic's body, and not addressed his need for forgiveness, we would have read about a healthy paralytic heading to hell.

Unbelieving quadriplegics go to hell just as much as unbelieving healthy persons do.

A restored body comes secondary to the need for forgiveness.

In summary

And forgiveness is a **declaration initiated by God in which He chooses not to punish you for your sins or to bring it up.**

Paul sheds more light on forgiveness and provides the ultimately the basis for Divine forgiveness.

2 Corinthians 5:18–21 LSB

Now all these things are from God, who reconciled us to Himself through Christ and gave us the ministry of reconciliation, namely, that God was in Christ reconciling the world to Himself, not counting their transgressions against them, and He has committed to us the word of reconciliation.

So then, we are ambassadors for Christ, as God is pleading through us. We beg you on behalf of Christ, be reconciled to God.

²¹ *He made Him who knew no sin to be sin on our behalf, so that we might become the righteousness of God in Him.*

To be reconciled to God, you need the forgiveness from God.

And forgiveness means God chooses not to count a person's transgression against them.

But if He did not count it against us, does that not make God unjust?

The answer comes in vs 21.

The Gospel is the basis for God's declaration.

When Jesus died on the Cross and rose again, God punished Jesus for your sins and credited you with His holy ness.

God debits your sin on Christ account and credits you with the righteousness of Christ.

When you trust in Jesus's death and resurrection, you are forgiven of your sins. Now When Mathew 1:21 declared Jesus would save his people form their sins. Jesus demonstrated His authority to forgive sins by declaring it to this paralytic. Jesus stated it.

The gospel confirmed it.

The Gospel forms the bedrock off all Divine forgiveness declared to man.

This paralytic's relationship to God and towards other people would instantly be changed by Christ declaration, your forgiven.

Application

Are your sins forgiven?

Have your sins been debited on Christ account and have you been credited with Christ righteousness?

If not repented today

Trust trusted in Christ death and resurrection for the forgiveness of your sins.

*Luke 24:46–48 LSB
and He said to them, "Thus it is written, that the Christ would suffer and rise again from
the dead the third day,
and that repentance for forgiveness of sins would be proclaimed in His name to all the
nations, beginning from Jerusalem.
You are witnesses to these things.*

The basis for God forgiving you of any sin, is the Gospel.

This brings us to the 2nd proof that Jesus has authority to forgive you.

2. Jesus did it vs 3-7

Matthew 9:3–7 LSB

*And behold, some of the scribes said to themselves, "This man blasphemes."
And Jesus knowing their thoughts said, "Why are you thinking evil in your hearts?
For which is easier, to say, 'Your sins are forgiven,' or to say, 'Get up and walk?'"
"But so that you may know that the Son of Man has authority on earth to forgive sins"—then He
said to the paralytic, "Get up, pick up your bed and go home."
And he got up and went home.*

“3 And behold, some of the scribes said to themselves, “This man blasphemes.”

Blasphemes= Blasphemeo = to revile, slander, speak irreverently, disrespectful, defame, to speak in an irreverent or impious manner.

Mark and Luke tell us why they thought He blasphemed.

Mark 2:7 LSB

Why does this man speak that way? He is blaspheming, who can forgive sins but God alone?

Luke 5:21 LSB

The scribes and the Pharisees began to reason, saying, "Who is this who speaks blasphemies? Who can forgive sins, but God alone?"

The Jews knew that only God ultimately forgives sins.

The Prophets taught this.

Isaiah 43:25 LSB

I, even I, am the one who wipes out your transgressions for My own sake, And I will not remember your sins.

Isaiah 44:22 LSB

I have wiped out your transgressions like a thick cloud and your sins like a cloud. Return to Me, for I have redeemed you.

Micah 7:18 LSB

Who is a God like You, who forgives iniquity and passes over the transgression of the remnant of His inheritance? He does not hold fast to His anger forever Because He delights in lovingkindness.

Since ultimately, it's against God that you sin.

Psalm 51:4 LSB

Against You, you only, I have sinned and done what is evil in Your sight, so that You are justified when You speak and pure when You judge.

The Mishnah states that “The blasphemer’ is not culpable unless he pronounces the Name itself” (*Sanh.* 7:5; in 7:4 we find that the punishment for blasphemy was stoning).

But these Scribes were in their hearts enlarging the concept to include Jesus’s claim to do something only God could do for their own purposes.

They were disturbed by Jesus’s words, and Matthew reveals their inward reflections and muttering.

But what they believed was true.

In the end of the day God can forgive your sins.

So, looking at Jesus’s statement, your left with two options:

- Either Jesus is God

Or

- Jesus is a Blasphemer.

We continue reading:

Jesus needed to respond to clear His name.

4 And Jesus knowing their thoughts said, “Why are you thinking evil in your hearts?”

Since Jesus is all knowing,

Jeremiah 17:10 LSB

¹⁰ *“I, Yahweh, search the heart; I test the inmost being, even to give to each man according to his ways, according to the fruit of his deeds.*

Genesis 6:5 LSB

Then Yahweh saw that the evil of man was great on the earth, and that every intent of the thoughts of his heart was only evil continually.

Jesus is God and He saw their thoughts and just like in the days of the flood, he saw their thoughts were evil. (Malicious, bad, morally and socially worthless, vicious, Sense: abusive words falsely spoken that damage a person’s reputation.)

Jesus confronted these thoughts using two statements and asking a question to the Scribes, what is easier to affirm?

5 “For which is easier, to say, ‘Your sins are forgiven,’ or to say, ‘Get up and walk’?”

The first statement was His declaration to the paralytic:” your sins are forgiven.”

The second statement introduces a new dimension “get up and walk.”

What is easier to say?

The obvious answer is to say that it is easier to say your sins are forgiven, because it’s impossible for the hearers to confirm or refute what has been said.

Healing the paralytic could easily be verified and thus harder to just say it. But this is reasoning from a human perspective.

But for God, who is infinitely holy, it’s more difficult to say, your sins are forgiven, since to make that declaration would cost Jesus His life as he paid the penalty for His people’s sins on the cross.

Soon this will happen.

The foundation for the declaration of forgiveness would cost Jesus His life.

How ironical was it that Jesus proved His authority to forgive sins, by doing the easier thing of telling the paralytic to stand up and walk in His mind, but which was more difficult in the human mind.

The logic

IF He could do the one, then He could also perform the other.

The Scribes belief that sickness was the result of sin.

Jesus’s proposal if I can heal this person surely, I can also forgive his sins.

The authority Jesus has to forgive is verified by the authority Jesus has to heal.

It’s not Jesus words here that proved He had authority, but rather His actions.

Demonstrating the power to heal a devastating paralysis, proved His authority to forgive sins.

We continue reading.

6 “But so that you may know that the Son of Man has authority on earth to forgive sins.”

—then He said to the paralytic, “Get up, pick up your bed and go home.” 7 And he got up and went home.”

No description of the healing is given.

The command to get up, pick up your bed and go home implied the healing had already taken place.

At the words of Jesus, he rose and went home.

Mark adds it happened immediately.

Mark 2:12 LSB

And he got up and immediately picked up the mat and went out before everyone, so that they were all amazed and were glorifying God, saying, "We have never seen anything like this."

My comment to this is simple.

He did it...

Jesus' actions authenticated His words.

It's not God's words that authenticate God's actions.

Rather it is God's actions that authenticate God's word.

Application

As you read this you are confronted with the actions of Jesus.

Jesus has proven that He has authority to forgive your sins.

And Based on the Scriptures Jesus has already declared to every believer in Christ that they have been forgiven.

Ephesians 1:7 LSB

In Him we have redemption through His blood, the forgiveness of our transgressions, according to the riches of His grace

Colossians 1:13–14 LSB

*Who rescued us from the authority of darkness, and transferred us to the kingdom of the Son of His love,
in whom we have redemption, the forgiveness of sins.*

Brothers and sisters.

You related to God on the basis of grace, on the basis of having been forgiven in Christ.

You cannot achieve judicial forgiveness through your own efforts.

And you cannot maintain your judicial forgiveness through your own efforts.

That would be legalism.

So, when you obey God, it's out of thankfulness, for His grace, for the forgiveness he has already obtained in the gospel.

This brings us to the third proof that Jesus has authority to forgive you.

3. Jesus is glorified vs 8.

Matthew 9:8 LSB

But when the crowds saw this, they were afraid, and glorified God, who had given such authority to men.

“8 But when the crowds saw this, they were afraid, and glorified God, who had given such authority to men.”

The Crowds witnessed this paralytic stand up and walk.

They had witnessed a manifestation of God’s power.

Jesus’s authority to heal confirmed His authority to forgive.

Fear and praise to God filled their hearts.

Praise that God would give such authority to any human being.

Now their very response serves to authenticate two things.

1. The paralytic was healed.
2. Jesus indeed has authority to forgive sins.

That’s the main point of Matthews passage.

Jesus Christ has authority to forgive sins, and he proved it by healing the paralytic.

Now sadly many churches missed the boat with this passage.

Some have argued using this passage to teach that the church has the authority to render **ultimate judicial forgiveness**.

This passage however does not give a blanket statement authorizing human beings to **give ultimate judicial forgiveness by** removing eternal guilt.

- The church did not even exist when Jesus performed this action.
- Matthew’s intention here was to display Jesus’ authority to forgive and not the churches authority to forgive.
- And if our offences are all ultimately against God (Ps 51:4), then the prerogative lies with God to ultimately forgive.
 - Since God is a righteous God, His holiness and justice demand payment for all sins. And the only one who was fully able to provide payment for sins was Jesus Christ.

Christ death on the cross redeemed his children from the wrath of God.

Romans 3:23–25 LSB

*for all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God,
being justified as a gift by His grace through the redemption which is in Christ Jesus;*

whom God displayed publicly as a propitiation in His blood through faith, for a demonstration of His righteousness, because in the forbearance of God He passed over the sins previously committed.

The Believer is not called to render judicial forgiveness.

How should you and I respond to the fact that Jesus has authority to forgive sins and that He proved it by healing the paralytic and accomplished it by His death and resurrection.

How should you respond to the fact that Jesus has declared every believer in Christ forgiven.

1. Since you have received judicial forgiveness, Jesus wants you to practice personal forgiveness to those who have hurt you and sinned against you to restore interpersonal relationships. (Matthew 18:21-35)

Ephesians 4:31–32 LSB

Let all bitterness and anger and wrath and shouting and slander be put away from you, along with all malice.

Instead, be kind to one another, tender-hearted, graciously forgiving each other, just as God in Christ also has graciously forgiven you.

2. How do you do that?

1. You take the initiative and pursue reconciliation.
2. You use biblical language: Please forgive me, if you have sinned or I forgive you. (I am sorry is a worldly substitute and focusses on your feelings.)
 - a. For the offender means your humbly admit you sinned and request the person to erase the unpayable debt... please forgive me for
 - b. For the one sinned against, you choose to verbally assure the person that the debt has been erased. I forgive you for.... (I will not hold it against you or bring it up again.)
3. You make the choice not to brood over the sin, nor to bring the sin up again so as to punish or embarrass the person or to make them pay for the offence
4. The motive for forgiving the other person:
 - a. Jesus commands you to forgive.
 - b. Jesus forgave you for all your sins. (If He forgave you so much, how can you not forgive the smaller offence of the other person.