

SELAH Devo – “Authority Over Our Past”

Text: Matthew 9:1–8

Focus: *The Son of Man has authority on earth to forgive sins.*

Stop

Pause before the Lord.

Take a slow breath and picture the scene: a crowded room, a paralyzed man on a mat, dust falling from the ceiling as his friends lower him down before Jesus.

Now imagine Jesus looking at *you*—not with judgment, but with deep compassion—saying,

“Take heart, my child; your sins are forgiven.”

What rises in your heart when you hear that? Gratitude? Relief? Disbelief? Shame?

Exhale

Let go of the lie that forgiveness is only a heavenly idea.

Matthew wants us to see that forgiveness happens **on earth**—in rooms filled with dust and doubt, in the middle of ordinary life.

The Greek word Jesus uses for “forgiven” (*ἀφίενται*) means *to release, to let go, to send away*. When Jesus speaks that word, He doesn’t simply overlook sin—He **liberates** you from its claim.

As N.T. Wright says, “*Jesus was doing in the present what Israel believed God would do at the end—putting the world to rights by forgiving sins.*”

In other words, forgiveness isn’t an escape from reality—it’s the **beginning of new creation**.

Look

Jesus’ words echo Psalm 103:

“He forgives all your sins and heals all your diseases.”

Notice the order—first forgiveness, then healing.

Jesus knows that the paralysis of sin is deeper than the paralysis of the body.

He starts with what’s eternal.

So ask yourself:

What part of my past still lies on the mat, waiting for Jesus’ word?

Ask

Pray slowly and honestly:

Lord Jesus, You have authority on earth to forgive.
Speak that word over my life again.
Help me to bring my hidden places into Your light.
Teach me to receive—not negotiate—Your mercy.
And when You say, “Rise,” help me to get up and walk as a forgiven person.

Hear

Hear the voice of Jesus as clearly as the man on the mat did:

“Rise, pick up your mat, and go home.”

Forgiveness is not theoretical—it’s embodied.
Heaven’s verdict is spoken into your story.
When Jesus forgives, shame loses jurisdiction.
The same *authority*—the divine right to rule—that spoke worlds into being now declares *you free*.

Closing Verse

“Bless the LORD, O my soul... who forgives all your iniquity, who heals all your diseases.” Psalm 103:2–3