

## It Was Never Like This!!

Have you ever witnessed something so unaccepted that all you could say was, “I’ve never seen anything like that before!”? That was the crowd’s reaction in Matthew 9:33. “*And when the demon was cast out, the mute spoke and the multitudes marveled, saying, ‘It was never seen like this in Israel!’*”

There weren’t people unfamiliar with religion. They were used to synagogue teachings and careful religious traditions. Yet at one unforgettable moment, they encountered power and authority unlike anything they had ever experienced. Their astonishment invites us to look closer at what Jesus was doing and why His presence still makes hearts marvel today.

**Faith That Moved a Roof-** Earlier in Matthew 9, friends carried a paralyzed man to Jesus. Because of the pressing crowd, they lowered him through the roof (Mark adds this vivid detail). Jesus looked beyond the man’s broken body to the deeper need of his soul and said, “*Son, be of good cheer; your sins are forgiven you.*” Matthew 9:2.

The religious leaders were stunned “*Who can forgive sins but God alone?*” Luke 5:21. Yet Jesus healed the man physically to prove He had authority to forgive spiritually. The paralytic man walked home carrying the very bed he’d been carried on moments earlier. This miracle wasn’t just about healing; it signaled that God’s kingdom was breaking into everyday life in a way no one had seen before.

**A Power Never Seen -**By the time we reach Matthew 9:33, Jesus had calmed storms, raised the dead, cast out demons, and taught with unmatched clarity. The people’s exclamation, “It was never like this in Israel!”, wasn’t only about dazzling displays of power, it was about absolute authority. *Jesus taught them as one having authority, and not as the scribes.* Matthew 7:29. Jesus demonstrated:

- **Authority Over Sin:** Forgiving the paralytic’s sins showed reconciliation with God was available now, through Jesus Himself.
- **Authority Over Sickness and Evil:** Casting out demons and healing disease revealed His dominion over creations’ brokenness.
- **Authority in Teaching:** His words pierced hearts because they carried the life-giving power of God, not mere human commentary.

This combination of compassion and divine authority was utterly unique, and the people knew it.

**Why It Matters Today-** We may not stand on a Galilean hillside, but we know how easily faith can become routine. Churches can slip into comfortable patterns such as singing familiar songs, hearing predictable lessons, all while missing the living Christ who still forgives, heals and transforms. This matters today:

- **For the Individual:** Maybe you carry a “paralysis” of guilt or fear. Jesus still speaks forgiveness and freedom no human effort can give.

- **For The Church:** Programs and polished worship cannot replace the presence of Christ. What makes a congregation exclaim, “It was never like this!” is when lives are changed, when addictions break, families reconcile, and skeptics encounter God’s grace and mercy.
- **For The World:** Our neighbors need to see a faith that is vibrant and real, not just words or rituals. When the church loves sacrificially and proclaims Jesus boldly, people notice.

**Living in the “Never Like This” moment-** The challenge is to expect and welcome Christ’s transforming power. Are we open to the Lord interrupting our schedules, reshaping our hearts, and sending us into our communities with His compassion?

When the church embodies the character of Christ and the message of the cross, the world still marvels. Hearts still cry out, “It was never like this!”, not because of us, but because Jesus is alive and working through His people.

Let’s not settle for a faith of mere habit. Let’s draw near to the One who forgives, heals, and astonishes. In Him, every day can become a testimony of God’s power, just as it was when a paralyzed man stood, walked, and glorified God while the crowd exclaimed, “It was never like this!”

~Ron Josselet (Assisted by ChatGPT)