

Matthew Lesson 08

Matthew Chapter 8

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Memory verses for this week: *Zec 10:12 And I will strengthen them in the LORD; and they shall walk up and down in his name, saith the LORD.*

Introduction: In last week's lesson, we studied about how we are not to judge others, but rather judge our selves that we be not judged. This eighth chapter contains the first record of Jesus' miracles in the New Testament. Here, there is (1) the healing of a leper; (2) the healing of the centurion's servant; (3) the healing of Peter's mother-in-law; (4) the stilling of the storm; (5) and the casting out of the demons of Gadara. Additionally, Jesus dealt with several other disciples.

I. Jesus Heals a Leper

Mat 8:1 When he was come down from the mountain, great multitudes followed him.

Mat 8:2 And, behold, there came a leper and worshipped him, saying, Lord, if thou wilt, thou canst make me clean.

After the Sermon on the Mount, Jesus came down from the mountain. Many followed after Him. Several comments are in order. The leper worshiped him and Jesus accepted it.

(1) This points clearly to the Deity of Christ.

(2) Notice the faith evident in the leper: "Lord if thou wilt, thou canst make me clean."

(3) His healing was total and complete.

(4) The charge to “tell no man” likely is that the time for Jesus to publicly reveal Himself to Israel as their Messiah and King was not yet ready.

(5) When that time came, He would officially reveal Himself to Israel. In the meantime, He would seek to touch the hearts of Israel. Proclaiming Himself the Messiah would come in due time.

There are many examples in the four records of the Gospel where the multitudes followed Christ and He showed compassion towards them. The reasons that the multitudes followed were many. Some followed in order to eat the loaves of bread Christ provided for them. Some came to be healed, while some believers truly came to serve Him. Some in our day follow Christ for different reasons today. Some think that they may acquire more business by being a member of a popular church. Some may seek to be popular by being a part of a certain denomination or group. But today, there are still some who come for the right reason. They love the Lord and want to serve Him. In verse 2, the leper came due to his condition. He wanted Jesus to heal him of his leprosy. Leprosy caused one to be declared unclean in Israel. Leprosy typifies sin and shows us how sin makes us unclean in God’s sight. The leper had what it took to find an answer from the Lord. He came in faith.... He believed Jesus could make him clean. Faith and belief are crucial if we are seeking Christ to be saved.

Mat 8:3 And Jesus put forth his hand, and touched him, saying, I will; be thou clean. And immediately his leprosy was cleansed.

Mat 8:4 And Jesus saith unto him, See thou tell no man; but go thy way, show thyself to the priest, and offer the gift that Moses commanded, for a testimony unto them.

The miracles of Jesus Christ in His earthly ministry were for several reasons.

(1) Most obvious is the compassion and concern of our Lord for others. As He saw suffering around Him, He alleviated it by healing.

(2) There is another less obvious reason. His miracles authenticated His message and verified His claim to be the Son of God.

It is noteworthy, that the Holy Spirit led Matthew to provide a list of notable miracles immediately after the Sermon on the Mount. They give added weight to what Jesus taught and preached.

Jesus cleansed the leper immediately. Salvation is like this when we come with a repentant heart and by faith ask Christ to save us from our sins. Jesus told the leper to go to the priest and offer the gift Moses had commanded in the law for a testimony unto them. The offering required them to bring two birds alive and offer them in the manner set forth in Leviticus.

Lev 14:4 Then shall the priest command to take for him that is to be cleansed two birds alive and clean, and cedar wood, and scarlet, and hyssop:

Lev 14:5 And the priest shall command that one of the birds be killed in an earthen vessel over running water:

Lev 14:6 As for the living bird, he shall take it, and the cedar wood, and the scarlet, and the hyssop, and shall dip them and the living bird in the blood of the bird that was killed over the running water:

Lev 14:7 And he shall sprinkle upon him that is to be cleansed from the leprosy seven times, and shall pronounce him clean, and shall let the living bird loose into the open field.

II. Jesus Heals the Centurion's Servant

Mat 8:5 And when Jesus was entered into Capernaum, there came unto him a centurion, beseeching him,

Mat 8:6 And saying, Lord, my servant lieth at home sick of the palsy, grievously tormented.

The place where the centurion came to Christ was a Capernaum. The centurion was very concerned about his servant. His example is a good one... you and I should be concerned about others.

Mat 8:7 And Jesus saith unto him, I will come and heal him.

Mat 8:8 The centurion answered and said, Lord, I am not worthy that thou shouldest come under my roof: but speak the word only, and my servant shall be healed.

Mat 8:9 For I am a man under authority, having soldiers under me: and I say to this man, Go, and he goeth; and to another, Come, and he cometh; and to my servant, Do this, and he doeth it.

Jesus is always ready to help those in need. The centurion was an important man, and he showed faith towards God. While he had authority over others, he recognized Jesus as the one who had authority over sickness. The centurion said he was unworthy, but knew that Jesus could but speak the word and his servant would be healed.

Mat 8:10 When Jesus heard it, he marvelled, and said to them that followed, Verily I say unto you, I have not found so great faith, no, not in Israel.

Here is the record account of the Roman centurion and his sick servant. Capernaum was located at the north end of the Sea of Galilee and was at an important crossroads. There was considerable merchant traffic and the city was prosperous.

The Romans had a tax office here and though there is no record of a Roman garrison at Capernaum, clearly there must have been Roman soldiers nearby as evidenced by the Roman centurion. He may have been connected with the Roman department of revenue for protection and enforcement. In any event, this man came to Jesus. What is notable is the compassion the Roman had for his servant and his faith in Christ.

Mat 8:11 And I say unto you, That many shall come from the east and west, and shall sit down with Abraham, and Isaac, and Jacob, in the kingdom of heaven.

Mat 8:12 But the children of the kingdom shall be cast out into outer darkness: there shall be weeping and gnashing of teeth.

Mat 8:13 And Jesus said unto the centurion, Go thy way; and as thou hast believed, so be it done unto thee. And his servant was healed in the selfsame hour.

The faith of the centurion was the greatest faith that Christ found. He had not found this kind of faith in Israel. Jesus tells them of upcoming blessings, and also of judgment that awaits those that reject God.

Jesus blesses the centurion due to his faith. As soon as the Lord spoke the word, the servant was healed. Jesus touched the leper and he was healed. With the centurion's servant, he simply spoke the word and he was healed. When we know Christ, we are blessed.

This gentile Roman showed more faith than Jesus had seen in so-called, godly Israel. In verse 11-12, Jesus alludes to how in the foreseeable future, the gospel would go to the uttermost parts of the earth. In that day,

gentiles from all over the world will sit with Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob in the kingdom of heaven, but many (Jewish) children of the kingdom would be excluded.

Sadly, when Christ returns, there will be still unbelieving Jews, notwithstanding that many are saved during the Tribulation.

This also may be an unspoken prophecy that when Christ returns, Israel from ages past will be resurrected to face their judgment. See Daniel 12:1-2. Many Jews, which down through the ages have rejected Christ and otherwise have been ungodly, will be confounded to see gentiles entering the kingdom and they be condemned.

Notice in verse 13 that it was the faith of the centurion that moved Jesus to heal his servant, even from a distance. The common denominator in all of Jesus' miracles was faith on the part of the recipient. The faith of this gentile centurion was the agency which effected the healing of his servant.

III. Jesus Heals Peter's Wife's Mother

Mat 8:14 And when Jesus was come into Peter's house, he saw his wife's mother laid, and sick of a fever.

Mat 8:15 And he touched her hand, and the fever left her: and she arose, and ministered unto them.

Jesus cared not only for the multitudes, but those near to him were also of concern to him. Perhaps he did not know Peter's mother in law, but he still came and healed her. I am sure this made Peter's family very happy, and the healing of this woman caused others to come unto Christ.

Peter was married. Notwithstanding claims to the contrary (Catholicism), Peter's wife is clearly mentioned here. Jesus, in compassion to His disciple, healed her. Today in the ruins of ancient Capernaum, there has been uncovered the ruins of a house that archaeologically is linked to Simon Peter. This is thought to be the home of his mother-in-law.

Mat 8:16 When the even was come, they brought unto him many that were possessed with devils: and he cast out the spirits with his word, and healed all that were sick:

Albert Barnes in his notes on the bible said:

When the even was come ...—The fame of the miracles of Jesus would probably draw together a crowd, and those who had friends that were afflicted would bring them. All that were brought to him he healed. This was proof of two things: first, of his great benevolence; and, secondly, of his divine mission. He might have established the latter by miracles that would do no good. None of his miracles were performed, however, merely to make a display of power, unless the cursing of the barren fig-tree be an exception. Compare Mark 11:11-14. What is here recorded occurred on the evening of the Sabbath, Mark 1:21-32. The Jews kept the Sabbath from evening to evening, Lev. 23:32. On the Sabbath they would not even bring their sick to be healed Luke 13:14; but as soon as it was closed, on the evening of the same day, they came in multitudes to be cured.

Mat 8:17 That it might be fulfilled which was spoken by Esaias the prophet, saying, Himself took our infirmities, and bare our sicknesses.

There is a correlation between demonic activity and physical ailment alluded to here. All human sickness is not totally physiological. Satan at times can produce illness. There is again reference to fulfilled Scripture as Matthew quotes from Isaiah 53:4, referring to Jesus' healing.

Mat 8:18 Now when Jesus saw great multitudes about him, he gave commandment to depart unto the other side.

Satan has a lot of power in the world, but he and his demons are no match to our Lord Jesus Christ.

1 John 4:4 Ye are of God, little children, and have overcome them: because greater is he that is in you, than he that is in the world.

The healing of the sick was a fulfillment of the prophecy in Isaiah. Christ truly took our infirmities and bare our sicknesses.

Isa 53:4 Surely he hath borne our griefs, and carried our sorrows: yet we did esteem him stricken, smitten of God, and afflicted.

IV. Professed Disciples Tested

Mat 8:19 And a certain scribe came, and said unto him, Master, I will follow thee whithersoever thou goest.

Mat 8:20 And Jesus saith unto him, The foxes have holes, and the birds of the air have nests; but the Son of man hath not where to lay his head.

Mat 8:21 And another of his disciples said unto him, Lord, suffer me first to go and bury my father.

Mat 8:22 But Jesus said unto him, Follow me; and let the dead bury their dead.

Before they could get underway, *"a certain scribe came, and said unto him, Master, I will follow thee whithersoever thou goest."* He evidently was effected by the teachings and actions of the Lord, professing allegiance to Him.

Jesus replied, *"The foxes have holes, and the birds of the air have nests; but the Son of man hath not where to lay his head."*

(1) Jesus essentially said, if you follow me, you will not have any place to live. In other words, he would face deprivation.

(2) Total discipleship to Jesus Christ of necessity demands sacrifice. That is not to say all disciples will never have shelter. The vast majority do. But Jesus was warning of the cost.

(3) This is His first use of the term "Son of man" in the New Testament. It alludes to His humanity even as His title, the Son of God, refers to His Deity.

It would seem that after Jesus left home and embarked upon His ministry upon His baptism, He did not have a permanent home in those three years. He and His disciples 'camped out' wherever they could.

Matthew 9:7 refers to His house at Capernaum. That however, apparently was only a temporary arrangement. When in the vicinity of Jerusalem, they likely slept at Gethsemane which was a park-like garden. He ate where people would invite Him. During the three final years of His life, He evidently was largely itinerant and indigent.

Complete dedication means sacrifice. That at times means that our family takes second priority.

Jesus tells his disciples that if they want to truly follow Him, there is nothing that should be between us and our service. There is a cost associated with being a disciple, and we must be willing to bear our cross. Christ warns them that not even the dead should stand between us and our relationship and service to Him.

J. Vernon McGee said this about the young man who wanted to come with Christ.

In effect, the Lord Jesus was saying to this young man, “Have you counted the cost?” Our Lord was revealing His poverty when He was here upon this earth. The young man had opened his heart; so our Lord opens His heart. I imagine that He said something like this: It will cost you something to follow Me. When we go to a place, there are no reservations made for us at a Hilton Hotel or a Holiday Inn—we just don’t have a place to stay. The birds of the air have nests, and the foxes have holes in the rocks where they can go, but the Son of man has nowhere to lay His head. The poverty of the Lord Jesus! Poverty is part of the curse that He bore.

We are not told that this young man followed Christ. I have always felt that he did. I think that when the boat pulled out, there was a young man in it who had made a decision for Him.

V. Jesus Stills the Waves

Mat 8:23 And when he was entered into a ship, his disciples followed him.

Mat 8:24 And, behold, there arose a great tempest in the sea, insomuch that the ship was covered with the waves: but he was asleep.

Mat 8:25 And his disciples came to him, and awoke him, saying, Lord, save us: we perish.

Mat 8:26 And he saith unto them, Why are ye fearful, O ye of little faith? Then he arose, and rebuked the winds and the sea; and there was a great calm.

Mat 8:27 But the men marvelled, saying, What manner of man is this, that even the winds and the sea obey him!

Jesus boarded the boat with His disciples and in the midst of a storm. As they journeyed across the Sea of Galilee in an open boat, a storm raged around them. It is not unusual for storms to roll down onto the lake from the west or northwest.

The Sea of Galilee is nestled beneath high hills (low mountains) on both its western as well as eastern shores. As weather systems came ashore from the Mediterranean Sea, not distant; they could stir up nasty windstorms on Galilee, especially for those using small, open boats such as were common in that day.

The fishing boats customary on the lake were designed to have relatively low freeboard to enable fishing nets to be drawn aboard. The danger thereof was that rough seas could sweep right over the side. That apparently happened

that night. Riding out storms in a small boat is always nerve wracking. However, in the darkness of night, it becomes terrifying. Being in such a terrified state, His disciples came to Him and woke Him saying "Lord, save us: we perish."

The humanity of Jesus is evident in His sleep. However, His Deity quickly became evident as He stilled the storm. There is implicit fulfillment of Psalm 89:9 as well as Psalm 65:7; 93:3,4; and 107:29 which all point to the Deity of Christ. Our Lord showed that He is the key to peace.

There is an interesting correlation between fear and faith. The disciples' fear rested in their lack of faith in the Lord. It was not until they turned to Him and besought Him for deliverance that He saved them (physically). Here is a lovely picture of our salvation. Moreover, it was not until the disciples in faith finally turned to the Lord and besought Him that peace came.

The miracle is even more notable in that the waves immediately ceased. On a body of water, even after the winds have subsided, swells will linger as wave energy continues to oscillate back and forth across the lake. In this case, all was flat calm at Jesus' word.

The physical peace upon the sea that night surely is instructive of the spiritual peace that only He can give. Indeed, He is the Prince of Peace. As we trust Him, He imparts the peace of God which passes all understanding. That peace precludes the many problems of anger, fear, anxiety, bitterness, and depression that we often suffer.

When we follow the Lord, we can be sure that there will be many storms that come into our lives. Jesus warned the disciples that it would be hard and that there was no promise of things being easy. We read a few weeks ago that those that will live righteously will suffer persecution. When things went bad and the storm came, the disciples went to the right one for help. Jesus tells us all to come to Him in time of need, and in this situation, Jesus took total control. Not only did Christ create all things, but all things including nature must obey him. He stands and rebukes the winds and makes the storm become a great calm.

VI. Jesus Casts Out Demons in Gergesenes

Mat 8:28 And when he was come to the other side into the country of the Gergesenes, there met him two possessed with devils, coming out of the tombs, exceeding fierce, so that no man might pass by that way.

Mat 8:29 And, behold, they cried out, saying, What have we to do with thee, Jesus, thou Son of God? art thou come hither to torment us before the time?

It is a tragedy to see someone possessed by Satan. These two come out of the tombs and cry out unto Jesus. The demons are the ones questioning if Christ had come to torment them before the time. Even Satan and his demons know who Jesus Christ is. Satan had full control over these men. And the demons call out and call him “Jesus, thou Son of God”.

Mat 8:30 And there was a good way off from them an herd of many swine feeding.

Mat 8:31 So the devils besought him, saying, If thou cast us out, suffer us to go away into the herd of swine.

Mat 8:32 And he said unto them, Go. And when they were come out, they went into the herd of swine: and, behold, the whole herd of swine ran violently down a steep place into the sea, and perished in the waters.

Mat 8:33 And they that kept them fled, and went their ways into the city, and told every thing, and what was befallen to the possessed of the devils.

Mat 8:34 And, behold, the whole city came out to meet Jesus: and when they saw him, they besought him that he would depart out of their coasts.

After the storm, the boat carrying Jesus and the disciples arrived on the eastern shore of Galilee. The region today is called the Golan Heights. These are high hills rising steeply and in some cases almost out of the water’s edge. To this day, the hills are pocketed with caves.

The region then was called Gergasa and some miles inland was the town of Gadara. Greeting Jesus were two men “possessed with devils.” The word so translated (*daimonizomai daimonizoma*) literally means to have a demon or to be ‘demonized.’ In the account of these so called maniacs, several things are of note.

(1) Such behavior, if exhibited today, would be called a mental illness. Here, it was produced by demonic activity.

(2) The demons knew precisely who Jesus was. They acknowledged Him as the Son of God.

(3) The statement of the demons to Jesus about being tormented before the time, no doubt, is a reference that they knew Jesus would someday judge them, casting them into the Lake of Fire.

(4) Matthew notes, there was a good way off from them an herd of many swine feeding. (Gergasa was a gentile area in what would be called modern-day Syria. Jews then and now would not tolerate pigs.)

The devils requested that if the Lord were to cast them out that they may go into that herd of swine.

The demons ask that they might not be cast out totally but be cast into a herd of swine. Jesus grants their request and they go into the herd and cause it to run violently into the sea and they perish. We see that the people here about what happened, and instead of being happy that he demons were removed from the two men, they rather ask that he leave their coasts. Losing the herd of swine was a loss to them, and their money was more important than the men. To send Jesus away is the worst thing a person could ever do.

Matthew Henry said this about the demons in the men. Now, besides the general instance which this gives us of Christ's power over Satan, and his design against him to disarm and dispossess him, we have here especially discovered to us the way and manner of evil spirits in their enmity to man. Observe, concerning this legion of devils, What work they made where they were, and where they went.

I. What work they made where they were; which appears in the miserable condition of these two that were possessed by them; and some think, these two were man and wife, because the other Evangelists speak but of one.

1. They dwelt among the tombs; thence they came when they met Christ. The devil having the power of death, not as judge, but as executioner, he delighted to converse among the trophies of his victory, the dead bodies of men; but there, where he thought himself in the greatest triumph and elevation, as afterwards in Golgotha, the place of a skull, did Christ conquer and subdue him. Conversing among the graves increased the melancholy and frenzy of the poor possessed creatures, and so strengthened the hold he had of them by their bodily distemper, and also made them more formidable to other people, who generally startle at any thing that stirs among the tombs.

2. They were exceeding fierce; not only ungovernable themselves, but mischievous to others, frightening many, having hurt some; so that no man durst pass that way. Note, The devil bears malice to mankind, and shows it by making men spiteful and malicious one to another. Mutual enmities, where they should be mutual endearments and assistances, are effects and evidences of Satan's enmity to the whole race; he makes one man a wolf, a bear, a devil, to another—Where Satan rules in a man spiritually, by

those lusts that war in the members, pride, envy, malice, revenge, they make him as unfit for human society, as unworthy of it, and as much an enemy to the comfort of it, as these poor possessed creatures were.

3. They bid defiance to Jesus Christ, and disclaimed all interest in him, v. 29. It is an instance of the power of God over the devils, that, notwithstanding the mischief they studied to do by and to these poor creatures, yet they could not keep them from meeting Jesus Christ, who ordered the matter so as to meet them. It was his overpowering hand that dragged these unclean spirits into his presence, which they dreaded more than any thing else: his chains could hold them, when the chains that men made for them could not. But being brought before him, they protested against his jurisdiction, and broke out into a rage, What have we to do with thee, Jesus, thou Son of God? Here is,

(1.) One word that the devil spoke like a saint; he addressed himself to Christ as Jesus the Son of God; a good word, and at this time, when it was a truth but in the proving, it was a great word too, what flesh and blood did not reveal to Peter, ch. 16:17. Even the devils know, and believe, and confess Christ to be the Son of God, and yet they are devils still, which makes their enmity to Christ so much the more wicked, and indeed a perfect torment to themselves; for how can it be otherwise, to oppose one they know to be the Son of God? Note, It is not knowledge, but love, that distinguishes saints from devils. He is the first-born of hell, that knows Christ and yet hates him, and will not be subject to him and his law. We may remember that not long since the devil made a doubt whether Christ were the Son of God or not, and would have persuaded him to question it (ch. 4:3), but now he readily owns it. Note, Though God's children may be much disquieted in an hour of temptation, by Satan's questioning their relation to God as a Father, yet the Spirit of adoption shall at length clear it up to them so much to their satisfaction, as to set it even above the devil's contradiction.

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Prov 4:18 But the path of the just is as the shining light, that shineth more and more unto the perfect day.

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Practice Random Acts of Kindness. Each act spreads, and many will be blessed.