“Jesus the Healer” Matthew 8:1-17, Part 1
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Saving Grace Bible Church
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Morning Worship Service

“When Jesus came down from the mountain, large crowds followed Him. 2 And a leper came to Him and bowed down before Him, and said, ‘Lord, if You are willing, You can make me clean.’ 3 Jesus stretched out His hand and touched him, saying, ‘I am willing; be cleansed.’ And immediately his leprosy was cleansed. 4 And Jesus said to him, ‘See that you tell no one; but go, show yourself to the priest and present the offering that Moses commanded, as a testimony to them.’ 5 And when Jesus entered Capernaum, a centurion came to Him, imploring Him, 6 and saying, ‘Lord, my servant is lying paralyzed at home, fearfully tormented.’ 7 Jesus said to him, ‘I will come and heal him.’ 8 But the centurion said, ‘Lord, I am not worthy for You to come under my roof, but just say the word, and my servant will be healed. 9 For I also am a man under authority, with soldiers under me; and I say to this one, “Go!” and he goes, and to another, “Come!” and he comes, and to my slave, “Do this!” and he does it.’ 10 Now when Jesus heard this, He marveled and said to those who were following, ‘Truly I say to you, I have not found such great faith with anyone in Israel. 11 I say to you that many will come from east and west, and recline at the table with Abraham, Isaac and Jacob in the kingdom of heaven; 12 but the sons of the kingdom will be cast out into the outer darkness; in that place there will be weeping and gnashing of teeth.’ 13 And Jesus said to the centurion, ‘Go; it shall be done for you as you have believed.’ And the servant was healed that very moment. 14 When Jesus came into Peter's home, He saw his mother-in-law lying sick in bed with a fever. 15 He touched her hand, and the fever left her; and she got up and waited on Him. 16 When evening came, they brought to Him many who were demon-possessed; and He cast out the spirits with a word, and healed all who were ill. 17 This was to fulfill what was spoken through Isaiah the prophet: ‘HE HIMSELF TOOK OUR INFIRMITIES AND CARRIED AWAY OUR DISEASES.’" (Matthew 8:1-17 NAU)

Text: Matt 8:1-17

Title: Jesus the Healer, Part 1

Focal Point: vs 17b “He Himself took our infirmities and carried away our diseases.”

Homiletical Keyword: Heal

Interrogative: What? (What qualifies our Lord to be the Messiah?)

Teaching Aim: To demonstrate that Jesus came healing His people proving that He was the fulfillment of the Old Testament promises about the Messiah and thus the Man of God’s choosing to deliver His people for God.

Introduction

Truly the most appropriate response to Jesus Christ is to marvel. As we have seen His Words are powerful.

- "You have heard that It was said… but I say unto you"
- "Not everyone who says unto Me, 'Lord, Lord' shall enter into the Kingdom of Heaven"
- "He who hears these words of Mine and acts upon them is like a wise man"

These are powerful words coming from a Man like no other

I know the modern skeptic presents Jesus as a visionary who was able to manipulate crowds, probably having an affair with Mary or her sister Martha, who then found Himself getting in trouble with the government.

You watch any of those "Search for the Historical Jesus" documentaries and that is the message

- Basically, Jesus was a hippy peace activist before we had the 60's and 70's with the real hippy peace activists
- He was a hippy with a God complex since He claimed to be God
- He taught about peace, love, mercy, and grace
- After all, as one Pastor once said, Jesus came as a bartender turning water into wine.

The idea for the modern skeptic is to make Jesus just like us

- Today, Jesus is the non-conformist
- Jesus is the anti-establishment candidate seeking to set us free from the tyranny of oppression from poor leaders

So Jesus is seen as the radical historical character we turn to in order to justify rebelling against government and pushing for individual freedom

- For the modern skeptic, this is the only reason to come to Jesus

But the Bible's presentation of Jesus Christ is radically different

- The Jesus Matthew presents in his gospel is far more compelling and powerful
- The true Jesus, the historical Jesus, the Man who is God Himself, is radically different than anything man can conjure up, for God's ways are higher than our ways and God's thoughts are higher than our thoughts

We are reading and studying through Matthew's defense of Jesus Christ as the Messiah

Matthew has given us 8 proofs thus far

Proof #1: Jesus possess a Messianic Genealogy- Ch 1:1-17

- Comes as a Son of David, and as a Son of Abraham
- The record of the genealogy of Jesus the Messiah, the son of David, the Son of Abraham: (Matthew 1:1 NAU)
- This is like a boxer coming into the ring and throwing a huge punch
- He is letting you know right away that he means business
- So too is Matthew. There is no guessing where he is going with his argument. Jesus is the Messiah and His genealogy is the first proof.

Proof #2: Jesus' Birth into this world was supernatural- Ch 1:18-25

- He was conceived by the Holy Spirit
- This work was affirmed by an angel of the Lord to Joseph, who had the right to be the greatest skeptic since it was his soon-to-be-wife who was pregnant
- Yet the Virgin Birth affirms the OT Prophecy of Isaiah that a sign would be given
- The sign of the Virgin Birth is proof of the Messiah's presence

Proof #3: Jesus as a young child was worshipped and honored by religious leaders- Ch 2:1-12

- While the coming of the Messiah was missed by the Jewish religious leaders, it was not missed by the rest of the world
- Magi came, honored Christ, and gave gifts

Proof #4: God protected Jesus from jealousy within Israel- Ch 2:16-23

- The coming of the Messiah should have been a time of great rejoicing, and instead it was filled with sadness because sin was in the house of Israel
- Herod's jealousy and decree to execute every male child 3 years and younger led to the death of many children in Bethlehem

Proof #5: The forerunner to the Messiah, John the Baptist, affirmed Jesus as the Messiah- Ch 3:1-12

- The one who was coming to make straight the way of the Lord
- The one who came as a voice crying in the wilderness
- The one who himself had a unique entrance into this world
- Though not a Virgin Birth
- He was born to parents who had been without child and were older
- His birth was announced by angels
- John came making ready the way of the Lord

Proof #6: Divine testimony from God the Father at the baptism of Christ- Ch 3:13-17

- God speaks out of heaven and says "This is my beloved Son in whom I am well pleased."

Proof # 7 that Jesus is the Messiah: He resists the evil one and walks in obedience to the Father- Ch 4:1-8

- Resists the temptations after great personal suffering
- Walks in perfect obedience even while suffering personally

Proof #8: The Messiah comes preaching the Way of God- Ch 5-7

- The message of the King

What is tragic in Matthew's defense of Jesus as the Messiah is that he will demonstrate that Jesus' own people rejected Him because He did not come saying and doing what they expected or wanted

What is terrifying about this is that we too can get in a place where we expect Christ to say and act in a particular way, and if He were to come today He would be rejected again, but this time by the Church

- Already, people have responded this way to sermons I have taught from Jesus' own words
- They say, "I want more grace in a sermon"
- How can I say that? Because the words He just taught us in the Sermon on the Mount are hard to swallow

So think carefully, friends, about who this Jesus is. If He is simply a great man, with loyal friends, who cared for others and had some wisdom, then in your mind you will justify rejecting Him.

- But if He is the Son of God, if He is the Messiah, if He is the Savior of the world, if He is God in human flesh, then He is to be worshipped and followed

The point Matthew is making here is that you must see Jesus as who He really is, the promised Messiah

The next proof in Matthew's argument is the proof of His power over disease and illness

- Matthew gives 3 illustrations of Jesus' power over illness, diseases, and other infirmities

The culmination of these three illustrations comes in verse 17

- There is no way I can get to verse 17 today without recreating Paul's prolonging until midnight as he did in Acts 20:7-12
- The problem is one of you might fall out of the pew and die and I would not be able to raise you from the dead like Paul did for Eutychus!
- So we will take the first illustration today and see how far we can get next week

"When Jesus came down from the mountain, large crowds followed Him. 2 And a leper came to Him and bowed down before Him, and said, 'Lord, if You are willing, You can make me clean.' 3 Jesus stretched out His hand and touched him, saying, 'I am willing; be cleansed.' And immediately his leprosy was cleansed. 4 And Jesus said to him, 'See that you tell no one; but go, show yourself to the priest and present the offering that Moses commanded, as a testimony to them.'" (Matthew 8:1-4 NAU)

The Impact of Jesus Ministry

Vs 1 is an indicator to us about the ministry of Jesus Christ

In Chapter 3, Jesus was alone and revealed Himself to John the Baptist

- In Chapter 4, Jesus went alone to the wilderness to be tempted
- After the temptation, He chooses some disciples; Simon Peter and Andrew his brother, along with James and John, the sons of Zebedee
- This is the first time Matthew records that Jesus has company with Him other than His parents
- His earthly ministry had begun
- In Chapter 5 we see that crowds come to Him, and He began instructing

Now here in 8:1 we see that many are now following Christ

When Jesus came down from the mountain, large crowds followed Him. (Matthew 8:1 NAU)

He went up with His disciples, trailed by some curious onlookers

- He came down with people following Him

You can see the increasing popularity of Christ, and Matthew is attributing this to the teaching of Jesus Christ

- These now following Christ have heard His teaching, and are not coming after Christ

What was He doing for His ministry?

Summary of Jesus Ministry

"Jesus was going throughout all Galilee, teaching in their synagogues and proclaiming the gospel of the kingdom, and healing every kind of disease and every kind of sickness among the people." (Matthew 4:23 NAU)

From this narrative, we see three events which demonstrate Jesus' power over disease

- An act of faith
- Demonstration of power
- Proof of authenticity

1. Event #1: An Act of Faith

"And a leper came to Him and bowed down before Him, and said, 'Lord, if You are willing, You can make me clean.'" (Matthew 8:2 NAU)

Demonstration of Faith

- Man was a leper, and an outcast because of it

- He would be forced to stay away from the crowds, and if he were to come near people he was to call out his uncleanness to others by saying “unclean, unclean.”

"As for the leper who has the infection, his clothes shall be torn, and the hair of his head shall be uncovered, and he shall cover his mustache and cry, 'Unclean! Unclean!' (Leviticus 13:45 NAU)

The Bible is clear that the leper is to make himself or herself known

Here in Matt 8:

- The Greek term emphasizes a skin disease
- He was suffering from something that caused him to need Jesus’ help
- He came to Jesus amongst others who would have seen his ailment
- He came displaying his weakness, not covering it up

If he was a leper, he would come telling people he was unclean, and to step aside since his uncleanness could come upon them

- He could not hide his uncleanness and find Jesus privately; he had to come publicly

Likely, this is one of the reasons why Matthew demonstrates that there was a large following after Jesus at this moment

- This man had to come and bring his ailment which is causing him public shame, to get Jesus’ help
- He had to be brought low publicly so that he could find the healing he longed for

Friends, this is true for us as well. If we want healing from the great Physician, we do not come proudly, we come humbly.

- We come broken by the weight of our sin
- We come willing to be seen as a fool by men, but an object of mercy for our Lord
- We acknowledge our infirmity
- We come saying, “I am a sinner and I need a Savior”
- We come saying, “my life is filled with corruption and I am a slave to this sin which consumes my passions and life, and I can see no way out. Lord, deliver me! Lord, you can deliver me if you are willing!”

This man could see no way out of his disease

- There was no medical treatment
- There was no hope
- The more time passed, the more evident his corrupt state became
- The more his corruption increased, the greater distance people kept from him and he from them

But his act of faith pushed him to seek remedy

- There is one who could heal
- There is one who could deliver from his shame
- There is one who could rescue
- And if it meant open ridicule to find private rescue, then he was willing to take it

This is the first demonstration of his faith; He was willing to experience public ridicule for private deliverance

Friends, you too must get to this place if you are going to have a faith which honors the Lord

- Willing to lose all for Christ since He gave up all for you
- Willing to be seen as a fool in this world to be a member of God's Kingdom
- Willing to be weak so that He is strong
- Willing to come giving up all to receive all that God gives to His people

In this case it was an act of faith to deliver from disease

- In our case it is an act of faith to deliver from sin

2nd aspect of His faith was affirmation that Jesus was the Healer, so He called Him Lord

The 1st act of faith was to believe that Jesus could heal, so he came

Secondly he called upon Jesus as Lord

- This term 'Lord' used to refer to Jesus in Matthew's gospel is used multiple times by those who cry out in faith to Christ

"And a Canaanite woman from that region came out and began to cry out, saying, 'Have mercy on me, Lord, Son of David; my daughter is cruelly demon-possessed.'" (Matthew 15:22 NAU)

"Lord, have mercy on my son, for he is a lunatic and is very ill; for he often falls into the fire and often into the water." (Matthew 17:15 NAU)

"And two blind men sitting by the road, hearing that Jesus was passing by, cried out, 'Lord, have mercy on us, Son of David!' 31 The crowd sternly told them to be quiet, but they cried out all the more, 'Lord, Son of David, have mercy on us!'" (Matthew 20:30-31 NAU)

Desperation leads one to see clearly what we really need, and do not need

- Have you ever noticed how we think we need so much, and then something happens and we have to adjust, and we realize we really do not need as much to make it?
- Desperation led this man to see clearly that Jesus is Lord, and He could heal him
- Jesus had the power to rescue and it was to Jesus that this leper was going to turn

This act of faith, turning to Jesus even if it meant personal scrutiny, because he knew Jesus to be Lord and Healer, was the first act to demonstrate the greatness of Jesus Christ

3rd act of Faith – He asked

1st- He Came

2nd- He acknowledged

3rd- He Asked

- This too, is how we come. We come, we believe that if we confess Jesus as Lord and believe that God raised Him from the Dead, and we ask for His forgiveness, that we will be saved.

"If you are willing you can make me clean"

Jesus I know you to be from God

- I know you to possess the power of God
- I know you to be the Lord over all, even disease
- I know you do the works of God
- I know that if you are willing, you will set me free

The third expression of his faith was an acknowledgement of who Jesus was

- No debate about His deity
- No debate about His power
- No debate about this man's relationship to Christ
- Jesus is Lord, and this guy is a servant in need of help

This is how we come to Christ, friends

- Empty of self-reliance
- Empty of pride
- Willing to demonstrate our brokenness
- Knowing Jesus is the only Savior
- Looking for His favor alone

2. Event #2: A Demonstration of Power

"Jesus stretched out His hand and touched him, saying, 'I am willing; be cleansed.' And immediately his leprosy was cleansed." (Matthew 8:3 NAU)

Jesus responds by reaching out and touching the man to heal him

- An act that would have disqualified Jesus had He not healed the man

“Or if he touches human uncleanness, of whatever sort his uncleanness may be with which he becomes unclean, and it is hidden from him, and then he comes to know it, he will be guilty.” (Leviticus 5:3 NAU)

- If Jesus was not the Messiah, the Lord, the great Physician, and He touched this man, He would have been guilty of being unclean

But as it was, He reached out and touched him and healed him

Mounce records “According to rabbinical practices, it was illegal to even greet a leper in an open place. Priests often ran and hid themselves upon seeing a leper in the distance.” Pg 73 New International Biblical Commentary

- This man is used to religious leaders running and hiding from him, but he approaches Jesus and finds mercy

Jesus once again demonstrates that He is different than the rest

- Others run from lepers and shame them
- Jesus heals
- Others condemn them, while Jesus restores them

The world promotes sin and then mocks those who engage in it

The religious person who is devoid of true spiritual life oppresses the wicked and does not deliver them from their sin

But only through Christ comes the power to save from sin

- The text says immediately it was gone
- It was suddenly gone

From the time the man had to look Jesus in the face and say, “Lord if you are willing you can heal me” from the moment Jesus said, “I am willing” to the moment it took for the man to look at his own skin, he was healed

- A split second
- No elaborate washing
- No extra steps
- No waiting or slow progression
- Instantaneous and immediate healing

This is real power, friends

- It was sudden and immediate
- An instantaneous transformation from sickness to wellness
- From that moment forward, he was to go live as if he was healed. Because he was!

Can you imagine if he returned to live with the lepers? If he returned to be an outcast?

- What are you doing? You have been healed?

This man was delivered like we are saved

- Instantly sin is dealt with
- Instantly covered by Christ
- Instantly washed so that we are set free from the penalty of sin
- Instantly we are made new
- Instantly we have a new nature
- Instantly we start living differently because we no longer have to go back to the leper's camp, we are free to live in God's kingdom

One demonstration of power set this man free

3. Event #3: A Proof of Authenticity

"And Jesus said to him, 'See that you tell no one; but go, show yourself to the priest and present the offering that Moses commanded, as a testimony to them.'" (Matthew 8:4 NAU)

This is a strange response isn't it?

- Tell no one
- Not the way we would respond. We'd say, "Go tell everyone!"
- "Get everyone together!"

Some might say, "Jesus you need a new PR manager. You have to capitalize on this moment!"

Why would Jesus insist the man tell no one?

- Possibly, Jesus did not want the attention to stir up the crowds and thus garner more attention from Rome
- Possibly, Jesus did not want to have crowds seeking Him for the wrong reasons
- Possibly, Jesus did not want to confuse His primary purpose of being here with His secondary work of deliverance from physical pains
- Possibly, Jesus was concerned it would draw unwanted attention from the Jewish leaders, thereby causing a threat to His life
- Possibly, as some have argued, this was made up by Mark and copied by Matthew to quiet the message about Jesus being the Messiah. (IE Jesus did not want everyone to know. He wanted to keep it out of the tabloids)
- Possibly, Jesus wanted to make sure that His works were proven first before they were broadcasted to everyone

I tend to think this: Possibly, Jesus wanted to make sure this man honored the Law of Moses first before he got caught up in the hysteria of joy which would come to him and his family because of this great work

We cannot really say why, except that Jesus gave clear instructions for this man to fulfill the Mosaic laws of cleansing after his healing

“Then the LORD spoke to Moses, saying, 2 ‘This shall be the law of the leper in the day of his cleansing. Now he shall be brought to the priest, 3 and the priest shall go out to the outside of the camp. Thus the priest shall look, and if the infection of leprosy has been healed in the leper, 4 then the priest shall give orders to take two live clean birds and cedar wood and a scarlet string and hyssop for the one who is to be cleansed. 5 The priest shall also give orders to slay the one bird in an earthenware vessel over running water. 6 As for the live bird, he shall take it together with the cedar wood and the scarlet string and the hyssop, and shall dip them and the live bird in the blood of the bird that was slain over the running water. 7 He shall then sprinkle seven times the one who is to be cleansed from the leprosy and shall pronounce him clean, and shall let the live bird go free over the open field. 8 The one to be cleansed shall then wash his clothes and shave off all his hair and bathe in water and be clean. Now afterward, he may enter the camp, but he shall stay outside his tent for seven days. 9 It will be on the seventh day that he shall shave off all his hair: he shall shave his head and his beard and his eyebrows, even all his hair. He shall then wash his clothes and bathe his body in water and be clean.’” (Leviticus 14:1-9 NAU)

"Now on the eighth day he is to take two male lambs without defect, and a yearling ewe lamb without defect, and three-tenths of an ephah of fine flour mixed with oil for a grain offering, and one log of oil;” (Leviticus 14:10 NAU)

"The priest shall offer up the burnt offering and the grain offering on the altar. Thus the priest shall make atonement for him, and he will be clean.” (Leviticus 14:20 NAU)

Israel had very elaborate ceremony for those who were delivered from leprosy

- Why” To demonstrate that the person was actually healed
- There was a waiting period to see if the guy was changed
- There was a sacrifice to be made
- One bird was slain and offered up, the other was set free to fly away
- After waiting seven days, he shaved all his hair and entered the camp
- Literally all his hair, beard, eyebrows, hair on his head
- This guy was not going to be able to hide any blemish with his hair
- Lumpy, frumpy, bald head was to display every blemish to demonstrate the disease was totally gone

Notice Jesus’ words at the end of verse 4: “as a testimony to them”

- Clearly in the context, the “them” refers back to “The priest”

- Wait why does it say “them’? When the antecedent is singular “The Priest?”

Could be referring to all the Jewish leaders

- He could be sending an open message to Annas and Caiaphas, who was the Chief Priest
- Annas used to be the Chief Priest and then he turned it over to his son in law, who continued the family business
- It is quite possible here that Jesus is demonstrating His power to them so that they would be aware of what He was doing
- It may be as others translations say “to be a witness to the people”
- This would have to be assumed that “the priest” is not the antecedent of the personal pronoun
- Then you just fill in the antecedent

If this was the case, then Jesus is doing anything but hiding

- He is demonstrating His power for all to see
- And the first people who should have seen it were the religious leaders of Israel
- They were aware of the Law. They were aware of the power of God. They were aware of the coming of the Messiah. They were aware of man’s condition and yet they would not turn to Christ and exercise this same faith.

Conclusion

How will you respond to Jesus when His work is demonstrated before you?

- Do you see the power of God around you? You should when you see sin-stained lives transformed by the power of Christ.
- Will you come broken like the leper, seeking help and willing to lose all to be delivered from your malady?
- Or are you like the religious leaders of Israel; no matter what the work, you will not turn even though God keeps demonstrating His power before you?

Let me caution you, persistent rejection leads to hardness of heart

- A man who will not honor the Lord when He graciously comes will then turn on the Lord when He comes to lead
- Jesus will come to rule and the wicked fight against Him because they would not honor Him when He was graciously giving His gifts

This first story records is Jesus’ power over disease and illness. We will continue this story next week.

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