

## Lesson 7: Review of Matthew 8:1-17: "Of Sovereignty And Grace"

Matthew 8:1-17 provides plenty of narrative that allows us to see Jesus truly as the One John wrote about in His Gospel "from the Father, full of grace and truth." (John 1:14). In this short passage we see person after person coming to Jesus casting themselves on the mercy of God, seeking help and healing through faith in Him! In this passage we see a God, who is Sovereign; a God who is kind, merciful and compassionate to those who come to Him in faith!

Recently I watched the Wizard of Oz. It amazed me how the "great and all-powerful" Wizard was so far removed from the lives of those who sought him. Dorothy just wanted to go home. The Straw Man just wanted a brain. The Tin Man wanted a heart and the Lion, courage. When they finally, finally made it into the "presence" of the Wizard he was fuming, angry, annoyed, frustrated and so on. They presented their requests to the Wizard and got nothing but threats. They had to make a deal before the Wizard would grant their requests. I could not help but think how people impose this scene from the Wizard of Oz upon their relationship with God in Christ.

In our text from Matthew we first we see a person who is culturally despised. A man with leprosy comes to Jesus. Now, most people would run the other way if a leper got within 20 feet of them. This leper boldly comes to Jesus and kneels down before Him. Then, with insight that belied his tattered and homely condition he addressed Jesus as "Lord". "Lord, if you are willing you can make me clean."

He acknowledged his desperate need for being made clean. Notice he didn't ask for healing but cleansing. The Old Testament tells us that people with skin disorders were to be put outside the camp because of their uncleanness. Until they were "clean" they could not join in the daily living inside the Jewish camp.

This man was unclean and needed to be made clean. So, he came to Jesus. Jesus first response to the leper was "touch". He touched him and then said, "I am willing. Be clean." At that moment the man was cured. Jesus didn't blow the leprosy away like dust off an old book. He didn't send it into the sky. No! He, instead, took it upon Himself yet remained clean Himself. We know this because Matthew so much as says so in 8:17. There he quotes Isaiah 53:4, "He took up our infirmities and carried our diseases."

This is what happened at the cross. Jesus absorbed, He took upon Himself our diseases, our sicknesses, infirmities and SINS, yet He, Himself remained sinless! What a savior!

Nevertheless, after the cure was provided Jesus had the man go to the priests to have them declare him "clean" from leprosy. Now the man was "whole" spiritually and physically. He could reenter society as a new man!

Have you gone to Jesus for cleansing from your sins that are even more despicable than leprosy? If you come to Him through faith not only will your sins be washed away and you be made clean, but you will have a new relationship as a new spiritual person with God, and this is through faith in Jesus Christ!

Our second narrative in Matthew 8 involves a Roman Centurion's faith in Jesus. A Roman was despised by most Jews because Rome ruled over Israel and a Roman was a Gentile. Two major strikes. Yet, this Gentile was more faithful and compassionate: faithful in that he trusted in Jesus and His power to heal and save; and compassionate as he loved his servant and wanted his servant healed.

He approached Jesus and stated the facts. Jesus agreed to go with him to heal him. But the Centurion would not allow it. "Just say the word and my servant will be healed." This Centurion had deep faith in the power of Jesus to heal. Jesus even said so, declaring that it was this man's faith that brought healing to the servant! But to the shame of the Jewish community they were rebuked for their unbelief!

Have you been to Jesus through faith believing that He can heal and save not only yourself but a loved one—a spouse, a child, a parent?

Finally, Jesus went into Peter's home at the end of a long day. He noticed her sick and immediately touched her and healed her. Yes, she was now able to serve a meal! The Scripture says that she "waited on Him." She had the privilege of serving the One who **graciously** healed her!

The rest of the evening was full. People came from all around to see Jesus and Jesus healed sick people, and drove out demons. This, Matthew adds, was to fulfill what Isaiah spoke, "He took up our infirmities and carried our diseases."

The people in need apparently made haste to come to Jesus no matter the hour of the day. How about you? Jesus is never too tired to help, heal, forgive and renew you. Have you been to Him lately for your spiritual well being? Why not go to Him right now!

## Questions for Matthew 8:18-27: "The Challenge of Following Jesus"

In Matthew 8:18-27 Jesus commanded His disciples to leave the area and cross the Sea of Galilee. Now these disciples will learn to follow Him in very difficult circumstances. In this lesson hear Jesus challenge potential followers, take His disciples safely through a storm!

1. From the notes on page 1, **A)** what impressed and/or helped you? **B)** Explain "A".
  
2. Read Matthew 8:18-22. **A)** Who came to Jesus to volunteer to follow Him? **B)** What do you think Jesus was indicating to the young Scribe in 8:20 about loss and risk associated with following Him? **C)** What about the second person that came to Jesus asking for a reprieve from following? See 8:21 **D)** \*\*We don't see it in our English language, but the Greek language in which this is written indicates that the *burying of his* father was hypothetical, not an actual circumstance. What was this person's primary focus in life? **E)** What does this tell you about how a true follower of Jesus must re-orient their life's priorities?
  
3. Read Matthew 8:23-27. So what about those who follow Jesus? Here in this passage these faithful followers now have their faith tested through a terrible storm! **A)** 8:24-25 What is surprising about Jesus in this scene? What did the terror lead the disciples to do? **B)** What emotion or feeling do you think contributed to their "little faith"? **C)** What is your reaction to Jesus' question in 8:26? **D)** What attribute or quality in Jesus is revealed by His actions in 8:26-27? **E)** How does this help you?
  
4. Reread Matthew 8:18-27. Very rarely do we read of anyone blindly following Jesus. **A)** Look up and read Matthew 10:37. How do you process that? **B)** What is preventing you from following Jesus with more devotion? What people or things are obstacles preventing a closer walk with Him? **C)** What storms are causing you to feel like you are about to be swept over board? Is it your career, your marriage, your finances, your health? Will you cry out, "Lord save me!" **D)** What final thoughts come to your mind as you have studied this passage this week?