

Jesus the Healer

Matthew 8:1-17

Intro

Whenever we reread Genesis 1-2, we are confronted with a world that is different from our own in *one major way* — ***it is a world without sin...***

- This absence of sin in the idyllic Garden of Eden allows our first parents — Adam and Eve — to enjoy ***perfect health*** and ***perfect fellowship*** with the God who created them...

Unfortunately, once we get to Genesis 3 sin enters the world through the willful transgression of Adam and all of creation falls under the curse...

- *Disorder, disease* and *death* enter this once perfect world and paradise is lost...

But in the midst of the crushing devastation of the Fall, we see one of God's acts of mercy...

- And that act of mercy is God choosing to prohibit Adam and Eve from ever partaking of the Tree of Life again...

Now, I am convinced that God does this because it is not His will that human beings continue living in a fallen, sinful state forever...

As we study the Bible and human history we come to realize that apart from the exceptions of Enoch, Elijah and those who will experience the rapture of the Church — *all human beings will die...*

- This is a vital point that we must accept if we are to understand *the topic of healing...*

You see, as we move into Matthew 8 today, we will see that the Lord Jesus *heals* different individuals — and that is a wonderful thing...

- But we must remind ourselves that *each and every one* of those people that the Lord Jesus healed *eventually died* — and they died at least *19 centuries ago!...*

So, if we are to understand the topic of healing, it is vital that we understand that physical healing is ***always temporary*** — physical healing *does not* give us access to the Tree of Life...

- We must understand that a miraculous healing is a demonstration of the Lord Jesus' *power and authority...*

And that healing should lead to a recognition of the Lord Jesus as the Messiah...

If a person receives a miraculous healing but fails to place their faith in the Lord Jesus Christ then ultimately that healing was wasted...

Now, as we consider this subject of healing we must admit the hard truth that unless we are raptured, the day is coming when we will no longer be physically healed...

- The day is coming when our earthly tent — our body — will function no more and we will enter into the presence of the Lord...

This is a difficult truth but it is one that we must face head-on if we are to continue running this race until the end...

So, with this as our introduction, let's jump right into our text — Matthew 8:1-17 — and we begin with vs...

1 When He had come down from the mountain, great multitudes followed Him.

After giving the Sermon on the Mount (Matthew 5-7) the Lord Jesus comes down the mountain...

- And the Lord Jesus is followed not only by His disciples but also by **great multitudes**...

The Lord Jesus is very popular at this time and crowds of people are understandably drawn to Him...[expand on His teaching]

APPLICATION — The Lord Jesus is able to draw people to Himself by simply being who He is — it is not our job to make Him more palatable to those who do not believe...

Our job is to simply become as much like Christ as possible — to allow Him to live His life through us — so that people might truly encounter Him...

- Unfortunately, Christ is often misrepresented by believers who are trying help Him out...[expand — “updating Jesus”]

Continuing on in Matthew 8 to vs...

2 And behold, a leper came and worshiped Him, saying, "Lord, if You are willing, You can make me clean."

As a great multitude is following Jesus, a man with leprosy comes and kneels before Him...

Terrible Effects of Leprosy

- 1) *physical debilitation*
- 2) *financial incapacitation*
- 3) *social isolation*
- 4) *emotional devastation*

Please notice that the leper addresses Jesus as **Lord** (Master) — and the leper proclaims his faith in Jesus' ability to heal...

- But the leper is careful to acknowledge the sovereignty of the Lord Jesus — the leper says **“if You are willing, You can make me clean”**...

And the sovereignty of the Lord Jesus is a vitally important truth that we must take to heart if we are to walk in right relationship with Him...

You see, the Lord Jesus invites us to ask of Him — the Lord Jesus invites us to pray to the Father in Jesus' name — but our prayers are to be according to His will...

- But this is very challenging for us — especially when we pray for healing...

Because we want to be healed — because being healed is good — and we believe that is what God should do for us...

- But we must remind ourselves that the Lord is in charge — in charge of healing and of everything else — we do not get our way simply because we want it our way...

Jesus must be willing to heal us...

3 Then Jesus put out His hand and touched him, saying, "I am willing; be cleansed." Immediately his leprosy was cleansed.

Wonderfully, the Lord Jesus is willing to cleanse this man!...

- But the Lord does not simply speak the word — instead, the Lord Jesus chooses to heal this man by reaching out His hand and touching him...

And this is significant because a person with leprosy was an *untouchable* — they were not to be touched by people for fear of contagion...

But the Lord Jesus has no fear because as soon as the Lord Jesus touches the man the leprosy is gone — disease has no power over the Lord of life...

4 And Jesus said to him, "See that you tell no one; but go your way, show yourself to the priest, and offer the gift that Moses commanded, as a testimony to them."

Here the Lord Jesus commands the former leper to not tell anyone how he was healed — but to go to the priest to get certification of healing...

- And then to offer the gift that **Leviticus 14** commands for the person who is healed of leprosy...

[expand — Jesus wanting the priests to have to acknowledge the healing that Jesus brought — the Lord wants to reach the priests as well...]

REMEMBER — Jesus loves His enemies — and if we are to be like Him then we are to love our enemies as well...

Moving on we come to vs...

5 Now when Jesus had entered Capernaum,

Capernaum was located on the northwestern shore of the Sea of Galilee and would become the Lord Jesus' base of operations during His earthly ministry...

It was the home of Peter and Andrew and it was a flourishing town with an important Roman garrison...

Continuing on in vs 5 we read...

Now when Jesus had entered Capernaum, a centurion came to Him, pleading with Him,

A **centurion** was a Roman soldier who was in charge of 100 men...

- It is my understanding that the centurion was the backbone of the Roman army and it is interesting to note that in the NT, centurions are always viewed in a positive light...

*Now, please notice the word **pleading** in vs 5...*

To make a strong request for something, request, implore, entreat...

This is very interesting — a Roman centurion — a foreign occupier of the nation of Israel — *strongly requests* something from a Jewish Rabbi...

And if that is not intriguing enough, the request itself is especially unusual...

6 saying, "Lord, my servant is lying at home paralyzed, dreadfully tormented."

Once again we see Jesus being addressed as **Lord** or Master — the centurion is acknowledging that the Lord Jesus is superior to him...

- And the centurion begs the Lord Jesus to heal his suffering servant...

We do not know what the servant was suffering from but we do know that the servant was **paralyzed and dreadfully tormented**...

Now, this is a very unusual request from the centurion because servants or slaves were often treated as nothing more objects — as resources to be used up and then thrown away...

But this is not how the centurion views his servant — the centurion is pleading for the healing of his servant...

The Lord responds to the centurion in vs...

7 And Jesus said to him, "I will come and heal him."

Once again, we see the willingness of the Lord Jesus to heal...

And it is interesting to note that the Lord Jesus is willing to go and heal the servant in person — to go to the home of a Roman centurion and heal the man's servant...[expand]

8 The centurion answered and said, "Lord, I am not worthy that You should come under my roof. But only speak a word, and my servant will be healed."

Amazingly, the centurion recognizes his unworthiness and does not want to trouble the Lord Jesus with coming to his house...

- [expand — ceremonial defilement from visiting the house of a gentile...]

Instead of making the trip to the house — the centurion suggests that the Lord Jesus simply **speak a word** to heal the servant...

And as we move into vs 9, we see the rationale behind the centurion's request...

9 For I also am a man under authority, having soldiers under me. And I say to this one, 'Go,' and he goes; and to another, 'Come,' and he comes; and to my servant, 'Do this,' and he does it."

This is an incredible insight and I want to take a moment to unpack it — because this centurion is one of my heroes...

The centurion begins with these words...

For I also am a man under authority,

This is one of the most important concepts in all of life — to recognize that *each of us* is under authority — we are not our own authority...

- [expand — boss / law enforcement / government officials, etc...]

But ultimately, we are under *God's authority* — and if we can truly accept this — that God is our righteous authority — then we will be able to live well — to live without entitlement...[expand]

- Now, please notice that the centurion says to Jesus, “**For, I also am a man under authority**” ...

This leads me to believe that the centurion understands that the Lord Jesus is conducting His ministry *under the authority of God the Father*...

The Lord Jesus spoke of this truth in...

John 6:38 (NKJV)

“For I have come down from heaven, not to do My own will, but the will of Him who sent Me.”

And this is another incredibly valuable insight if we are to live life well...

If we understand that the Lord Jesus was a Man under authority — that He did not come to do His own will but the will of Him who sent Him — then we will be able to live a life *under authority*...

- Because there is no way for us to live well if we refuse to live under the authority of the Triune God — it is impossible...

And almost every social ill that we find on our fallen planet comes back to this one issue — a refusal to live life under the authority of God...

The centurion continues in vs 9...

For I also am a man under authority, having soldiers under me. And I say to this one, 'Go,' and he goes; and to another, 'Come,' and he comes; and to my servant, 'Do this,' and he does it."

*Here we have the key to the centurion's faith — he understood **authority**...*

And to truly understand authority you and I must understand that as human beings we are each in some form of *middle-management*...

- As human beings, God has given us a certain level of authority — he has given us limited freedom...

We have the ability to make choices — to make decisions — to affect the world around us...

- But we are in *middle-management* because even though we have authority over things and maybe even people — we are also *under* authority...

And if you and I can come to grips with this — if we can understand that we are simply in middle-management...

- That we have authority over **some things** and God has authority over **all things** — we will see our faith grow...

We will be able to step out in faith and exercise authority with the power that God has entrusted to us and look to Him to do those things that are *not* in our authority to do...

- You see, the primary failing of the so-called faith and prosperity teaching is that it *fails to recognize God as the ultimate authority* and teaches that if a person has enough faith, *they become the authority...*

We are told that with *enough faith* and with *the right words* a person can get their will done — they have the authority to command reality to become what they want it to be...

- *This is a very tempting false teaching — I understand the allure of it because this is what I want...*

I want everything to be the way that I want it to be — but I cannot be trusted with that sort of authority...[expand]

- Now, I believe that the key to the centurion's faith was that the centurion *didn't view himself as the ultimate authority...*

Instead, he sought out the Lord Jesus — a Man who had clear authority to heal — and asked for His help...

And please do not miss what the centurion is saying to the Lord Jesus in vs 9...

The centurion is essentially saying — *"I know you have the authority to cause things to happen when you speak — so I am asking you to speak and make it happen"...*

As we move into vs 10, we see the response of the Lord Jesus...

10 When Jesus heard it, He marveled, and said to those who followed, "Assuredly, I say to you, I have not found such great faith, not even in Israel!

Up to this point, the Lord Jesus had not seen a greater demonstration of faith during His ministry — not even among the Israelites...

- And with the centurion I believe we find a key to exercising great faith — and that is simply ***being a faithful person...***

You see, the centurion had been entrusted with responsibility and the centurion took it seriously — he had been faithful — he was someone who others could trust in...

- And because he acted faithfully — because he was someone who others could trust in — *he could trust in others...*

So, if we want to trust in the Lord more fully — if we want to exercise greater faith — we should seek to be as trustworthy and faithful as possible...[expand]

Let's move into vs 11-12 as the Lord Jesus proclaims...

11 And I say to you that many will come from east and west, and sit down with Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob in the kingdom of heaven.

12 But the sons of the kingdom will be cast out into outer darkness. There will be weeping and gnashing of teeth."

With this shocking statement, the Lord Jesus makes it clear that it is not ethnic identity that grants a person entrance into **the kingdom of heaven** — *it is **faith** that grants access...*

- Those from the **east and west** are gentiles who place their faith in Christ and who will come and sit with the patriarchs and feast in God's kingdom...

But many of the sons of the kingdom — Israelites — will be cast into outer darkness because they never trusted in the Lord Jesus Christ for salvation...

John the Baptist warned about this in...

Matthew 3:7-10 (NKJV) [turn there...]

7 But when he saw many of the Pharisees and Sadducees coming to his baptism, he said to them, "Brood of vipers! Who warned you to flee from the wrath to come?"

8 Therefore bear fruits worthy of repentance,

9 and do not think to say to yourselves, 'We have Abraham as our father.' For I say to you that God is able to raise up children to Abraham from these stones.

10 And even now the ax is laid to the root of the trees. Therefore every tree which does not bear good fruit is cut down and thrown into the fire.

Let's turn back to Matthew 8 as we move into vs...

13 Then Jesus said to the centurion, "Go your way; and as you have believed, so let it be done for you." And his servant was healed that same hour.

In response to the faith of the centurion, the Lord Jesus was willing to heal the servant...

And this is a wonderful result — but we must be careful not to make it say more than it does...

Because we may be tempted to think that we will get the healing that we desire for ourselves or for others ***if we just have enough faith...***

But that is simply not true — faith is not a spiritual currency where if we just have enough of it we can get whatever we want...

Instead, we must recognize that faith is essential to a right relationship with the Lord — but faith does not guarantee that I will get my way...

To prove my point, would you please turn to...

2 Corinthians 12:7-10 (NKJV)

7 And lest I should be exalted above measure by the abundance of the revelations, a thorn in the flesh was given to me, a messenger of Satan to buffet me, lest I be exalted above measure.

8 Concerning this thing I pleaded with the Lord three times that it might depart from me.

9 And He said to me, "My grace is sufficient for you, for My strength is made perfect in weakness." Therefore most gladly I will rather boast in my infirmities, that the power of Christ may rest upon me.

10 Therefore I take pleasure in infirmities, in reproaches, in needs, in persecutions, in distresses, for Christ's sake. For when I am weak, then I am strong.

- [expand on difficulty of living out end of vs 9 and vs 10...]

Let's turn back to Matthew 8 as we move into vs...

14 Now when Jesus had come into Peter's house, He saw his wife's mother lying sick with a fever.

Here we see that the Lord Jesus took notice of Peter's mother-in-law...

And please remember, you have never informed the Lord Jesus about anything — He sees it all — it is our job to simply bring our requests before Him and ask Him to work as He sees fit...

15 So He touched her hand, and the fever left her. And she arose and served them.

Once again, the Lord Jesus chooses to heal a person through touching them — a beautiful picture of the care and intimacy of the Lord...

- Also, please notice that after Peter's mother-in-law is healed, she arises and **serves**...

This is an important point — whenever the Lord chooses to heal us — we are to respond in service to Him — we are to use the healing to bless Him with our service...

16 When evening had come,

We know from Mark and Luke's gospels that it had been the Sabbath and **evening** signaled the end of the Sabbath...

Continuing on in vs 16-17 we read...

When evening had come, they brought to Him many who were demon-possessed. And He cast out the spirits with a word, and healed all who were sick,

17 that it might be fulfilled which was spoken by Isaiah the prophet, saying:

**"He Himself took our infirmities
And bore our sicknesses."**

The Lord Jesus cares for these people by casting out unclean spirits with a word and healing all the sick who were brought to Him, fulfilling the Messianic prophecy of **Isaiah 53:4**...

Conclusion

Now, we will stop here in Matthew 8 and Lord-willing pick up in vs 18 next week...

But before we close in a song of worship, I want you to turn to one final passage so that we may be reminded of the ultimate, final and unending healing that each believer will experience...

So please turn to...

2 Corinthians 4:16 - 5:8 (NKJV)

16 Therefore we do not lose heart. Even though our outward man is perishing, yet the inward man is being renewed day by day.

17 For our light affliction, which is but for a moment, is working for us a far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory,

18 while we do not look at the things which are seen, but at the things which are not seen. For the things which are seen are temporary, but the things which are not seen are eternal.

1 For we know that if our earthly house, this tent, is destroyed, we have a building from God, a house not made with hands, eternal in the heavens.

2 For in this we groan, earnestly desiring to be clothed with our habitation which is from heaven,

3 if indeed, having been clothed, we shall not be found naked.

4 For we who are in this tent groan, being burdened, not because we want to be unclothed, but further clothed, that mortality may be swallowed up by life.

5 Now He who has prepared us for this very thing is God, who also has given us the Spirit as a guarantee.

6 So we are always confident, knowing that while we are at home in the body we are absent from the Lord.

7 For we walk by faith, not by sight. 8 We are confident, yes, well pleased rather to be absent from the body and to be present with the Lord.

Let's pray...