

Matthew 8: 1-17

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[0 : 00] Please continue to pray that God would raise up men inside the church. We are in the book of Matthew, Matthew chapter 8. Matthew chapter 8, verses 1 through 17 will be our text this morning.

Matthew chapter 8, verses 1 through 17. If you are physically able and desire to do so, I'm going to ask if you'll join with me as we stand together and we read the word of God. Found in Matthew chapter 8, starting in verse 1 and going down to verse 17.

When Jesus came down from the mountain, large crowds followed him, and a leper came to him and bowed down before him and said, Lord, if you are willing, you can make me clean.

Jesus stretched out his hand and touched him, saying, I am willing, be cleansed. And immediately his leprosy was cleansed. 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.

And when Jesus entered Capernaum, a centurion came to him, imploring him and saying, Lord, my servant is lying paralyzed at home, fearfully tormented. Jesus said to him, I will come and heal him.

[1 : 02] But the centurion said, Lord, I'm not worthy for you to come under my roof, but just say the word and my servant will be healed. 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.

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. 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.

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. And Jesus said to the centurion, Go, it shall be done for you as you have believed.

And the servant was healed at that very moment. When Jesus came into Peter's home, he saw his mother-in-law lying sick in bed with a fever. He touched her hand, and the fever left her, and she got up and waited on him.

When evening came, they brought to him many who were demon-possessed, and he cast out the spirits with the word, and he healed all who were ill. This was to fulfill that, what was spoken through Isaiah the prophet.

[2 : 09] He himself took our infirmities and carried away our diseases. Let's pray real quick. Lord, we thank you for your word. We pray that your word would speak to us, resonate within our hearts and minds for your glory.

And we ask it in Christ's name. Amen. You may be seated. I appreciate your attendance this morning. And I know that there are a number of churches who were not able to meet this morning. And the decision was raging in my mind most of the day yesterday into the evening. And then even this morning, early this morning, I got up and saw snow showers falling and was going back and forth and reached out to the deacons.

And we kind of wrestled with that. And I shared with someone earlier this morning, I always go back and forth in my mind for two reasons. Number one, I love the church. I don't just love being a pastor of the church.

I love the church. I think the church is the bride of Christ. I think we ought to be cautious. And anyone I talk to, I tell them to err on the side of caution. If they're nervous, be careful. And if the roads get terrible, we'll go from there.

[3 : 05] But I love the church. I love the gathering together of the saints to praise his name. And the second one is the testimony of Charles Spurgeon. Charles Spurgeon is the prince of preachers who came to Christ in the middle of a blizzard when he thought no church would be open.

He was a young man walking down the road hoping to find a church open. And he found a church that a deacon decided to go start the pot belly stove in. It wasn't a Baptist church. I can't even remember the denominational affiliation.

But he started a fire thinking nobody would come. About ten people gathered together. The pastor couldn't make it. So the deacon said, well, I'm going to have to preach. And a young man, a young teenager, walked in and sat down.

And that deacon stood up and preached the simplest of messages and said to the congregation, someone here today needs Jesus Christ as their Lord and Savior. That day, Charles Spurgeon got up, walked down the aisle of that little church next to that pot belly stove and gave his life to Christ. Completely transformed the world for the gospel. Not only just England and Europe, but all of the world. So, with those testimonies that resonate in my mind, I wrestle. It is hard for me. Now, I understand those who can't be here.

[4 : 06] I know there are a lot that are watching. Some of those that are watching, I counsel not to be here. And I get that. But I appreciate your attendance and I appreciate your time. We are looking at Matthew 8, verses 1 through 17.

We've been making our way through the gospel of Matthew. And we've just finished up the Sermon on the Mount. We see that here in the 8th chapter because it says, When he had come from the mountain. So he's just delivered this great series of messages of what it looks like to live inside the kingdom.

It is really the application to the people of the kingdom. Because Matthew is the New Testament author of, here's the king, Christ the king. Right throughout the gospel of Matthew, Jesus is the king of kings.

He is presented as the king of not only the nation of Israel, but all of the world. He is the king that is fulfillment of all the prophecies of Isaiah and all the prophecies that resonate throughout the Old Testament.

In Matthew, Jesus is the king and the king has a rightful place, really, not only in this world, but in the world to come. And the king comes to set up a kingdom.

[5 : 07] And the Sermon on the Mount really just shows us and demonstrates to us what it looks like to live within the kingdom. As individuals, as people, how we behave, how we respond, how our attitudes are reflected out, how we respond to those around us, how we fulfill the law.

Because we don't discount or discard the Old Testament law. But rather, we bring it to a greater fulfillment as kingdom people. And now we begin to transition out of that.

And you get to this section in Matthew where it really seems like there's the validation of the king, that he is validated. The testimonial works of Jesus validate his message.

Someone once said, because Jesus claimed to be God himself. He claimed to be the Son of God. And the works that he did validate it. Because he said himself, if you do not believe what I'm saying, believe the works that I do.

So each gospel author records for us a series of what we would call miraculous or testimonial works that validate the message which Jesus proclaimed.

[6 : 08] And this is something that continued on even into the early stages of the new church. If you remember when we went through the book of Acts, in the book of Acts, every time the gospel goes into a new region, there are miraculous testimonial works.

Some people today ask the question, do we see miracles today? Yes, we see miracles today. Quite often we see miracles and we kind of count them as common. Because sometimes one of the greatest miracles which God ever does are what we would refer to as ordinary happenings.

The fact that we can take in a breath and exhale a breath. The fact that God has planet creation around us that absorbs the things that would kill us and yet provides the things that sustain us.

Those things are miraculous to me.

But we also see him doing the supernatural that is working above and beyond creation. We see that. Do we see it or should we expect it as much? I believe that we should always expect God to be God.

I think sometimes the reason we don't see it and we see it prominent in the book of Acts is because every time there is this miraculous outpouring of the Holy Spirit followed by signs and wonders, it is when the gospel is going into a new region, right?

[7 : 18] It validates the message. It validates the message. We don't need signs and wonders to validate the message which we hear and we see clearly proclaimed to us.

We have the word of God. Now, when Jesus came and he said the kingdom of heaven is at hand. Remember, John the Baptist came and said the kingdom of heaven is near. And Jesus came and said the kingdom of heaven is here.

It is at hand. He validates that message through the signs and the wonders which we see. And we see some of them here. But what we are introduced to here is the power of the king.

If I had to have a message this morning, it would be the power of the king recorded for us in a series of three events. The leper, the centurion, and Peter's mother-in-law.

This is, by the way, how we know that Peter was married because you don't have a mother-in-law unless you're married, right? So this is how we know that Peter was married. And also because Paul himself testifies to the fact that Peter was married because he says, Should Timothy and I not type wives even as Cephas has?

[8 : 19] Because Cephas is another name for Peter. So anyway, we begin to see here the power of the king. And I want you to see three things that resonate.

And we will try to get out of here very quickly because I know our time is pressing. Number one, we see the power of the king removes all barriers. The barriers that are removed. The barriers that are removed.

You see that when Christ comes down from the mountain, and pay attention to this, it says large crowds followed him. There were large crowds that were gathered around him. So he didn't come down in isolation. He didn't even come down with the twelve apostles.

He came down amongst large crowds. So there's this multitude of people with him. And then as he gets down to the base of the mountain, something amazing happens. And we kind of discard it as ordinary or we discard it as something else.

He says, As he gets there, a leper approaches him and comes near him and bows down before him. Now, to us, we're like, Oh, okay. Well, that's pretty amazing. But pay attention to this for just a moment.

[9 : 19] Here is the king coming with a multitude of people around him. And immediately, one who is publicly ostracized, one who is prominently unclean, one who is to declare to anyone who gets near him, I am unclean, stay away from me, approaches him.

To be a leper was to be one who is ostracized. One who is isolated was to be one who could not be around anyone else. Leprosy in Scripture includes all various number of skin diseases.

We don't specifically know exactly which one it is. It is not necessarily what is commonly referred to as leprosy today. But there are all these various skin diseases which we see described for us in the Old Testament.

But one thing we do know that if you were a leper, you were to live in isolation and separation. And if anyone was to get near you, you were to loudly proclaim, unclean, unclean, unclean, so that people would know to stay away from you.

But when Jesus comes down from the mountain with a crowd around him, the leper approaches him. Now, that's not the most amazing thing about it because the leper comes before him. And we'll get to what he says in just a moment.

[10 : 22] The leper says, Lord, if you are willing, you can make me clean. But what blows me away about this whole situation is it says, Jesus said, I am willing, and he touched him. Now, to us, that doesn't seem too extraordinary.

But many of us, if you remember those days where we really lived in isolation, we lived in separation, and we were all social distancing. And I know some people are still doing that, and I'm not saying that anyone. But one of my greatest fears and one of my greatest concerns for the body of Christ during that time, and even in society, is that man is not supposed to live without physical touch.

And to live in isolation and to live in separation really is detrimental not only physically but mentally and even socially to the individual. And it is a great concern of mine. There was a number of things, and some of you men have noticed that, and maybe it makes you a little bit uncomfortable.

I remember when I first came to Christ, a pastor I had would always give me a hug. He was a hugger. And I want to tell you, I was 20 years old when I came to Christ, and I didn't want men hugging me.

Okay? I wanted people to stay away from me, get outside my bubble. Don't run up and give me a hug. There was one person who could give me a hug. That was my wife. I was okay with my kids giving me a hug, but I didn't want some strange man coming up and giving me a hug.

[11 : 33] And it kind of, you know, I didn't like it a whole lot. I warmed up to it, so I got to where I would, you know, give him a hug, and I kind of learned that. Then as I became a pastor, I began to look at things, and there's this thing that I have found is that men, and I'm picking on you men for just a moment, men have this habit of building this wall around themselves and closing themselves off in isolation to everyone around them, yet men are those who really need more contact than anyone else.

So if you will notice, and some of you are going to start paying attention to this and probably start avoiding me, when I shake a man's hand, I usually shake the hand and put my hand on their shoulder. Some of you men, well, yeah, and some of you I hug.

Some of you I'm afraid if I hug you, you may punch me. That's okay. But the reason I do that is because that is a clear sign even around the world, like, hey, you're welcome into my bubble. I'm okay if you come in my space.

And men need to know that. Ladies, you kind of get that, right? You get all up in everybody's space all the time. That's okay. You're moms. That's the way God created you. It's fine. You know, that's fine. You know, I always had it as my practice, you know, I would hug men before I hug ladies.

That was just one of my practices as a pastor, right? Now, the older women, I'll hug and things like that. Somebody's like, well, he hugged me. Does that mean I'm old? That's not what I'm saying, okay? I'm just saying I began to draw a line there as a pastor, you know.

[12 : 50] And then I got to where, you know, I could call people, and I'll call brothers, and even Braden will hear me sometimes. I'm talking to a guy, and I was like, man, I love you, man. And they're like, what? Dad, you just told another man you love him. Well, yeah, I know.

Because men need to know that. Look at what Jesus did here. This man who was socially unacceptable and isolated and discarded from everyone else, Jesus touched him.

He touched him. He could have healed him with a word because he does that other places, right?

When the ten leopards come to him, he heals all ten of them. He doesn't touch any of them. But this one individual living in isolation, Jesus touches.

And all of a sudden, that barrier is removed. That barrier of isolation, that barrier of separation, that barrier of just being an outcast, that barrier of no one wanting me around them, that barrier of kind of being a fragment of society nobody wants there is removed because the king touches him.

Now, what's amazing is that Jesus could touch him and take away the leprosy and not contract the leprosy. That's the power of the king. The second barrier we see removed is a political barrier, if you will, because the centurion comes to him and the centurion is there.

[14 : 00] Now, when we read the other gospel accounts, it tells us that it is the servant of the centurion. And it really doesn't matter however we read it. It is either the centurion himself or the servant. More than likely, it is the servant of the centurion.

But as Matthew would tell us, when a servant came, he was coming in the name of the centurion.

So it was pretty much like the centurion himself was coming. But what we read here is the centurion comes to him and he approaches Jesus.

Now, a centurion is a leader over a hundred Roman soldiers. Okay. So he has a hundred Roman soldiers underneath him, which means he's non-Jewish.

So he's a Roman. In other words, in biblical words, he is a Gentile. Right. And the centurion comes to him. Now, he's not the only Gentile who comes to Christ, but he tells him about his servant that is lying home sick.

And then Jesus makes this astounding statement. Now, we don't catch the weight of it, but it's so astounding. Jesus says, I will come and heal him. That is the statement that amazes us.

[14 : 57] Because what Jesus is saying, a Jewish rabbi, which is who Jesus was in the flesh, one who is teaching, anyone who has a disciple, is a Jewish rabbi.

He is fulfilling all of the law to the utmost. He is not discarding any of the law. And he makes this astounding statement. I will come into your house.

I'm willing to come into a Gentile's house. Now, if you want to know how just amazing that is, all we have to do is go into the book of Acts, and we read in Acts chapter 10 where Peter goes into a centurion's house, and Peter catches grief about it from the church.

Because a Jew is not supposed to go into the house of a Gentile. But as Peter said, who am I? If God accepts them, then who am I to deny them?

So we see the power of the king to remove all barriers. He who was of the right genealogy, but yet not walking around with improper health, was accepted by the touch.

[15 : 59] And he who was not even in the right group genealogically, that is, he who was a Gentile, Jesus said, I'll come into your house too. See, one of the most amazing things about the power of the king is that every barrier that we have that we think would keep us away from him is removed by his power.

Each one of us have just as many barriers in our life. The greatest of that is our sin barrier. That which separates us and isolates us from the king, but it is removed by his power.

Number two, we see the belief found. And this is where we, again, just look at it because two of them approach him, but there is great belief in his power that is found. When the leper comes, the boldness, and I would even say the audacity that the leper had of approaching Jesus with a crowd around him, realizing he was not supposed to do that, he came because he made this statement, Lord, if you are willing, you can make me clean.

There's no doubt there, right? His only concern was whether or not the Lord was willing to do what he knew he could do. And there was great belief in that statement. He kneels down and bows before him on this belief.

He can do it. It is just a matter of will he do it? And that is a great place of faith and belief and a great place for every individual to find themselves. Lord, if you are willing, you can do this.

[17 : 24] And that belief that the leper possessed was what led him to do something that was just socially unacceptable and led him to stand out and eventually led him to the healing which he was able to experience.

The centurion displays a faith that Jesus himself said he had not found in all of Israel because the centurion came to him and Jesus says, I will go to your house and heal him. And he says, no, I'm not worthy for you to come into my house.

I don't, I'm not even worthy. But I too am a man of same authority that if I say to this one, do that, he does it. If I say to this one, do this, and he does it. He says, so just say the word. Let's look at this belief.

This wasn't a belief that said, I need to be in the presence of Jesus. This was a belief that says, the king doesn't even have to be present to do it. Right? He is one of such authority and such power.

The centurion says that his power is so that all he has to do is say it.

And the centurion just told him, I'm not worthy for you to come to my house. He says, just say the word. And Jesus testifies to this belief. He says, I haven't found such great faith in all of Israel.

[18 : 33] So, then he makes this really startling comment. Well, it's not, it's startling to what would be the audience of Matthew here. Is that I tell you truly that many will come from the east and the west. By the way, that is a symbol for those from around the world.

And recline at the table with Abraham and Isaac. Now, that table, that's the marriage supper of the Lamb. So, that's really a picture of being in heaven. So, it is there that we see at the end of the book of Revelation. But those that are of the kingdom will be cast out.

Now, those of that kingdom are the Jewish people, right? Who will be, it says, will be cast out into outer darkness. Where there will be weeping and gnashing of teeth. Some Bible scholars believe that this means that they'll be in heaven. But they won't be able to celebrate the feast.

And they won't be able to be present at the table. Because of their refusal. That's not at all what it means. I'm just going to go ahead and say it here. Usually, I say it could mean that. I'm just going to go ahead and say it doesn't mean that. And the reason it doesn't mean that. Is because everywhere else, Jesus speaks of outer darkness.

And weeping and gnashing of teeth. He is speaking of those who are being cast out into hell. So what he is saying is that your birthplace and who you are, you know, in your genealogy, is not that which is going to gain you access into heaven.

[19 : 40] It is belief. It is true, salvific belief. And in order to experience the true power of the king, one must live in that belief.

Now, this third and final thing, and we'll make it very quick because it is really becoming upon us to understand this. Why are these things recorded for us? We see the benefits received.

The benefits received. There were barriers that were removed. There's this great belief that's found in these individuals. And then there's the benefits received. One thing that I notice in reading this passage is the leper came to Jesus.

The centurion came to Jesus. But Jesus noticed Peter's mother-in-law. Right? He paid attention to her. By the way, just as a side note, I believe that's another barrier that was removed.

No offense to the ladies because in Jewish culture, ladies were not that prominent and therefore typically overlooked. Jesus paid special attention to her, right? He noticed her. The two men came to him, but he noticed her.

[20 : 40] He noticed that she was lying sick and he went to her. He was going into Peter's house. But all of these display for us this great benefit that it's received as a result of the power of the king. It says that the leper was cleansed immediately.

Immediately, his leprosy left him. And as a greater testimony to this, Jesus tells him to go to the priest. He says, don't tell anyone. Some people call this a messianic secret. People that would like to discard scripture and discount the authority of Jesus.

Or people who would like to say that Christians have completely misinterpreted the sayings of Jesus. Said that Jesus didn't want anyone. Didn't even himself think that he was the Messiah. That Jesus himself didn't even think that he was God's son.

And they point to what they refer to as a messianic secret that Jesus is always telling people not to tell anyone. That's not at all what it means. What it means is that Jesus knew that if the world heard or the people around him heard about what he was doing, they would try by force to make him king. I think feeding of the 5,000, which we would come up to, right? They wanted to make him king because anybody who could remove sickness and anybody that could feed the multitudes with a little needs to be our king. He's a great king. And that's not the kingdom that Jesus came to establish.

[21 : 44] He came to establish the kingdom of righteousness. And he came to establish the kingdom of forgiveness. And that kingdom could only be established by his death, burial, and resurrection. So what he is doing is trying to be clear about where he's at.

He's dealing with individuals here. And he tells the leper to go to the priest and offer the offering or the sacrifice declared by Moses. Well, that makes sense. As a testimony to them. Now, why is this a testimony?

Go back and read your Old Testament. If you have leprosy in the Old Testament, it's a long, drawn-out process, right? The priest comes. He looks at you. Oh, there's a red spot there.

Remember the red spot? It has a white hair growing out of it.

It's this. Or there's this stuff on the forehead and all this stuff. But there's this big, long, drawn-out process. But if your leprosy leaves, if it is there and if it is gone, this is what amazes us.

Even about the 10 lepers, and this is what amazes us about this case, right? Because we're looking at the benefit of it. When that spot is gone, then you're to call the priest in. And the priest is to come look at you and go, yeah, you look like you're pretty clean. But then he's to come back seven days later and look at it again.

[22 : 41] And if it's still not there, then you are to do a ceremonial unwashing. You're to shave your whole body. You're to wash yourself. And then a little bit later, you're to go into the temple and offer the sacrifice declared by Moses.

It's a long, drawn-out process. You have to prove that you are clean. You know what Jesus is saying here? When I cleanse you, you don't have to prove it to anyone because you are clean. Therefore, go offer the sacrifice as a testimony to them.

You are clean. And they didn't need this days-long process of validating what God had already done in an instance.

It is this great benefit that he was clean. The centurion declares his faith in him. And when he gets back home, we read this testimony that his servant was healed at that moment.

As soon as Jesus said it, at that moment, he was healed. That very hour, the other gospel accounts say, he was cleansed and healed at that very hour.

[23 : 44] Peter's mother-in-law is probably the most astounding of them all. Jesus walks into Peter's house and he notices Peter's mother-in-law is lying there sick in bed. So he touches her hand and heals her.

And it says, and she got up and served him. So in one moment, lying sick in bed, the very next moment, getting up and serving him. Again, we don't need to get bent out of shape about this, but what we can say is that she was better.

Right? It's instantaneous. In a moment. It's not a long, drawn-out, oh, I'm getting over it process. It was the power of the king has interrupted what was going on process, right? So once I was here and now I'm here and I'm getting up and serving.

It says, and then they began to bring to him all who were sick and ill and demon-possessed. And he cast out the spirits and he cured the illness. And then Matthew does what Matthew always does.

This was to fulfill the prophecy. This was to fulfill the prophecy.

That prophecy we find in Isaiah. Jesus is all, I mean, Matthew's always pointing back to Jesus's fulfillment of prophetic word. This was to fulfill that which was spoken through Isaiah the prophet.

[24 : 46] He himself took our infirmities and carried away our diseases. What is Matthew saying?

This is why the king came. Now the question rages.

It must be answered. And we'll say this in closing. If he comes to take our infirmities and carry away our diseases, then why do we have such things today? If he can cleanse the leper in a moment, cause it's ensuring servant to rise in an instant and heal Peter's mother-in-law in a second.

Why don't we see that today? Because sometimes he carries away our infirmities and heals our sicknesses in an instant. Sometimes he heals them in eternity. But whenever he chooses to heal them, he does it definitely.

The benefits of his power will all eventually be complete and final. Whenever he chooses to heal us, either temporarily or eternally, whenever he decides to do it, when he does it, it is a finished work for his glory.

There is great power in the king that he puts on display. Let's pray. Lord, we thank you so much for this day. God, we thank you for the time you've given us. And we thank you for your presence among us.

[26 : 07] We ask that you would be glorified and honored in all that we do. And we ask it in Jesus' name. Amen.

Thank you.

Thank you.

Thank you.

Thank you.

[28 : 57] Thank you.

Thank you.

Thank you.

Thank you.