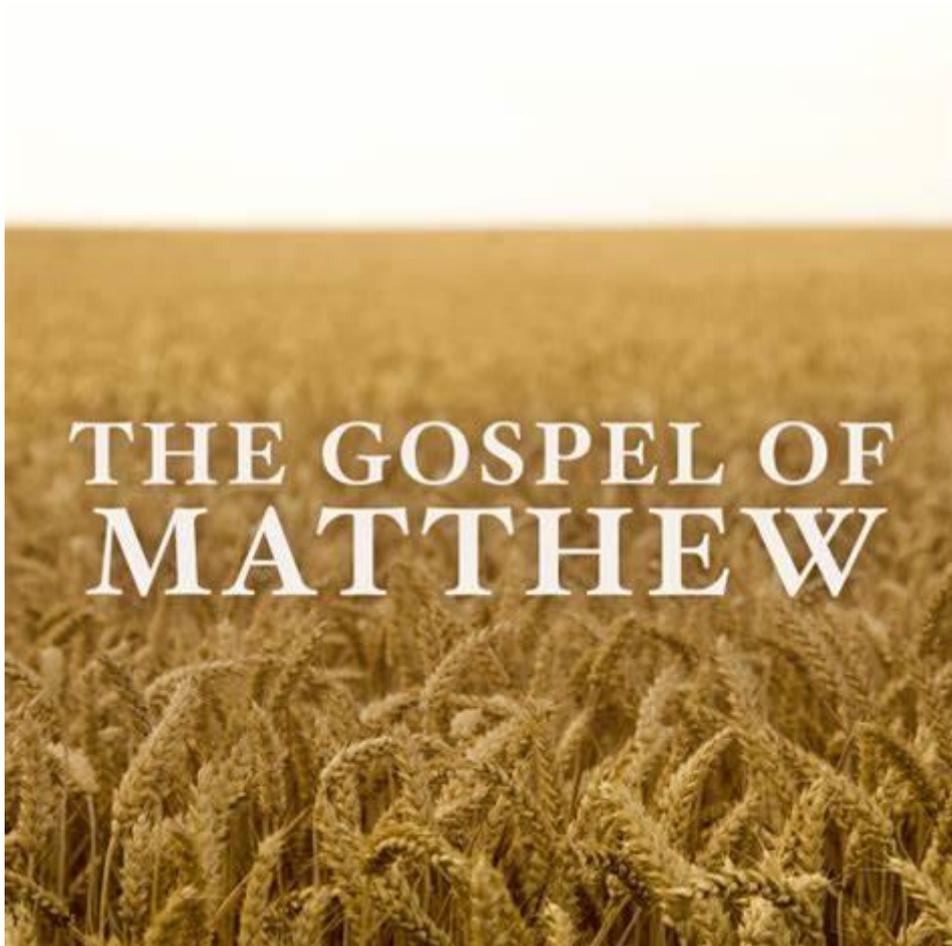


The Book of Matthew



Part 4

4 more studies in Matthew's Gospel

Brief Outline of Matthew's Gospel

1:1 - 4:16	Introducing Jesus
4:17 - 16:20	Public ministry in and around Galilee
16:21 - 18:35	Private ministry in Galilee; preparing the disciples
19:1 - 25:46	Ministry in Judea
26:1 - 28:20	The death and resurrection of Jesus

Please Note the following:

1. It is helpful, but not mandatory, to prepare your answers before meeting with your group.
2. It is not necessary to look up all the Bible cross references listed in a particular question; your Growth Group Leader will summarize these Bible cross references for you.
3. Just a reminder that sometimes in our Growth Groups, people feel comfortable sharing very personal and sensitive things about their lives. This information **MUST BE CONFIDENTIAL and NEVER LEAVE THE GROUP.**

Study 1 – The King's Power: Cleansing the Leper– Matthew 8:1-4

(Sermon on 20-Jun-21)

Before we begin: What is leprosy?

Leprosy has terrified humanity since ancient times and was reported as early as 600 BC in India, China, and Egypt. Hansen's disease is still a major health problem.

Disease is a constant reminder of just how much things have changed since God pronounced a curse on the earth. At first, everything was "very good," but Adam's brought death and decay into the world.

One of the most well-known examples of debilitating disease in this sin-cursed creation is Mycobacterium leprae, the infectious bacterial agent of leprosy. Leprosy is discussed quite often in the Bible. While its definition in modern times is different from biblical times, there is no doubt that the definitions overlap, and the modern form of the disease still illustrates important spiritual lessons today.

The term "leprosy" (including leper, lepers, leprosy, leprous) occurs 68 times in the Bible—55 times in the Old Testament (Hebrew = tsara'ath) and 13 times in the New Testament (Greek = lepros, lepra). In the Old Testament, the instances of leprosy most likely meant a variety of infectious skin diseases, and even mould and mildew on clothing and walls. The precise meaning of the leprosy in both the Old and New Testaments is still in dispute, but it probably includes the modern Hansen's disease (especially in the New Testament) and infectious skin diseases.

The term "Hansen's disease" was not given until 1873, when Gerhard Henrik Armauer Hansen described the leprosy bacillus (the lay term for the "bacterium"). Only at this point was a precise definition for leprosy made available. (<https://answersingenesis.org/biology/disease/biblical-leprosy-shedding-light-on-the-disease-that-shuns/>)

Read Leviticus 13

1. Summarize the regulations concerning leprosy.

Spots (vv1-8)

- Anyone who has a swelling or a rash or shiny spot on their skin is brought to the High Priest, Aaron for examination (v2)
- If hair on sore is white and appears more than skin deep - it is a defiling skin disease (leprosy) - therefore person is pronounced unclean (v3)
- If the shiny spot on the skin is white but does not appear skin deep and hair in it has not turned white, the priest is to isolate the person for 7 days (v4)
- After 7 days, if no change, isolate another 7 days (v5)
- After 7 days, if faded, then pronounced clean and must wash clothes (v6)
- If rash has spread, the priest pronounced them as unclean (vv7-8)

Defiling Skin Disease aka leprosy (vv9-17)

- Priest examines person
- If white swelling in skin and hair has turned white and raw flesh in the swelling, then pronounced unclean (vv10-11 and vv14-15)

Boils (vv18-23)

- If a boil with white swelling or reddish white spot, or if spreading, then pronounced unclean

Burn (vv24-28)

- If burn is white spot or reddish white spot, or if spreading then pronounced unclean,

Head or beard (vv29-37)

- *If sore on head and more than skin deep and has yellow hair, or if sore has spread, then pronounced unclean*

Spots (vv38-39)

- *If white spots on skin and dull white, then harmless*

Baldness (vv40-46)

- *A man who has lost all his hair is clean*
- *But if has reddish-white sores on bald head or swollen sore on his head or forehead is reddish-white; then diseased and pronounced unclean*

2. From Leviticus 13:3 - how is leprosy like sin?

Sin is more than skin deep and defiling (i.e., sin makes us impure and unclean)

3. From Leviticus 13:8 - how is leprosy like sin?

Sin spreads and makes us unclean. Often one sin leads to another, to cover up the first sin.

4. From Leviticus 13:45-46 - how is leprosy like sin?

Sin makes us unclean in God's eyes.

Sin separates us from God (i.e., put outside the camp!)

5. From Leviticus 13:52, 57 - how is defiling mould (literally leprosy in the garment) like sin?

The consequence of sin without repentance is Hell - i.e., burned (v52 and v57)

Read Numbers 5:1-4

6. What rules are there about people with skin diseases like leprosy?

Anyone with a defiling skin disease or with a discharge of any kind or who is ceremonially unclean because of a dead body was to be sent outside the camp so as not to defile the camp.

Read Matthew 8:1-4

7. Why would large crowds be following Jesus in verse 1? (cf. Matthew 4:23)

Large crowds followed Jesus, a) because His miracles attracted much attention and b) because of His teaching as we saw in the Sermon on the Mount.

8. Why did the leper come to Jesus?

The leper came for Jesus to make him clean. The leper knew that Jesus could heal/cleanse him.

9. Is the fact that the leper **kneelt** before Jesus and called Jesus, **Lord**, important?

The Greek word means worship, usually by bowing down and kneeling before God (gods). Can even me to prostrate oneself. He refers to Jesus as Lord, honoring Jesus' status as not only a teacher but someone who is divine.

According to Spurgeon: "The leper rendered to Christ divine homage; and if Jesus had been merely a good man, and nothing more, he would have refused the worship with holy indignation"

Spurgeon also says: "those who call Jesus, Lord, and do not worship him, are more diseased than the leper was! "

This is the first time in the Gospel, that Jesus is called, Lord!

10. Why does the leper say "Lord, **if you are willing**"?

The leper had no doubt about Jesus' ability to heal him, his only question was whether Jesus was willing to do so. The leper, being unclean, and an outcast, did not presume that Jesus would heal him.

The leper shows great humility by not being presumptuous.

11. By Jesus touching the leper, is Jesus breaking any laws? (cf. Leviticus 5:3)

This was a bold and compassionate touch from Jesus here.

Leviticus 5:3 says: if they touch human uncleanness (anything that would make them unclean) even though they are unaware of it, but then they learn of it and realize their guilt...

Leviticus 5:6 says: the priest shall make atonement for them for their sin.

12. Why is it okay for Jesus to break such laws? (cf. Mark 1:41)

Because Jesus had compassion (see textual variant for Mark 1:41 - which says "Jesus was filled with compassion")

Compassion trumps rules every day of the week!

13. What significance is there in Jesus saying the words "**Be clean!**" in verse 3?

At Creation, Jesus, spoke and created things; "Let there be light!" and light was created. Here Jesus speaks "Be clean!" and the man is cleansed. The significance of this is: only God can do that sort of thing. Jesus is showing His divinity.

14. Why did Jesus heal the leper? (cf. Matthew 7:7)

Because the leper did ask, seek and knock!

I wonder if the leper had heard Jesus' Sermon on the Mount!

As Mark 1:41 says, Jesus was filled with compassion.

Note: Mark 1 verse 41 which has a textual variance - NIV states "Jesus was indignant/filled with anger" and the footnote says "Jesus was filled with compassion" which many manuscripts say.

Bruce Metzger is usually the go to person for textual variants.

Here's his take on it:

It is difficult to come to a firm decision concerning the original text. On the one hand, it is easy to see why ὀργισθεῖς ("being angry") would have prompted over-scrupulous copyists to alter it to σπλαγχνισθεῖς ("being filled with compassion"), but not easy to account for the opposite change. On the other hand, a majority of the Committee was impressed by the following considerations. (1) The character of the external evidence in support of ὀργισθεῖς ("being angry") is less impressive than the diversity and character of evidence that supports σπλαγχνισθεῖς ("being filled with compassion"). (2) At least two other passages in Mark, which represent Jesus as angry (3.5) or indignant (10.14), have not prompted over-scrupulous copyists to make corrections. (3) It is possible that the reading ὀργισθεῖς ("being angry") either (a) was suggested by ἐμβριμησάμενος of ver. 43, or (b) arose from confusion between similar words in Aramaic (compare Syriac ethraḥam, "he had pity," with ethra'em, "he was enraged").

There is an explanation for either translation. If Jesus was angry - he may have been angry with the assumption from the leper that Jesus might not be willing to heal him or Jesus may have been angry because here He was faced (a leper standing before Him) with the consequences of sin and evil, and living in a broken sinful world. If Jesus was moved with compassion - that would be understandable given his loving compassionate nature.

15. Why did Jesus command the leper to not tell anyone about his healing?

Compare, Mark 1 v43, Jesus sends the leper off with a stern warning - the reason for the warning follows in v44 - and that is a warning not to tell anyone but to show himself to the priest. Jesus wants the leper to fulfill the requirements of the law for someone who is now cleansed. The reason Jesus didn't want the leper to tell anyone was to keep the excitement of the crowds down until the time Jesus would fully reveal who He was/is. Also, Jesus' miracles were not designed to make Him famous but to meet a person's specific needs and to aid in believing in Him. Jesus wanted to be seen as more than just a wonder-worker and did not want to be misunderstood as a leader of a rebellion. He wanted to be identified as the promised Messiah, sent by the Father, to rescue people from sin and death; and not rescue them from Roman rule.

16. Why did Jesus command the leper to show himself to the priest? (cf. Leviticus 14)

To fulfil the ceremonial law.

The Levitical Law demanded that a leper who had been cleansed must come to the priest and offer the required sacrifice.

According to Leviticus 14, the priest must order a sacrifice of two live clean birds and some cedar wood, scarlet yarn and hyssop be brought by the cleansed person. The priest is then to take the live bird and dip it, together with the cedar wood, scarlet yarn and the hyssop, into the blood of the bird that was killed over the fresh water. Then the priest sprinkles the one to be cleansed of leprosy, seven times, and pronounce them clean; then release the live bird.

Then the cleansed person must wash their clothes, shave off all their hair and bathe, to be ceremonially clean. They can then reenter the camp but must stay outside their tent for 7 days. After seven days, they shave all hair again and wash clothes and bathe; then they are clean! Certain sacrifices were then made consisting of two male lambs without blemish, and one ewe lamb, three-tenths of an ephah of fine flour mingled with oil and one log of oil. The restored leper was touched on the right ear, right thumb and right big toe with blood and oil. The leper

was finally examined for the last time, and if the cure was real, the leper was allowed to go with a certificate that he was cleansed.

17. According to Mark's account of this same story (Mark 1:44-45), the leper did not obey Jesus' instruction about keeping quiet. What problem did this cause Jesus?

Mark 1:45 says that because the leper talked freely about Jesus' miraculous healing of him; Jesus could no longer enter a town openly but confined Himself to lonely places outside the main towns. Nevertheless, this didn't stop people coming to Him, from everywhere.

18. **Ponder:** We all have a "disease" we need cleansing from, what is it? (cf. Isaiah 64:6; Romans 3:23)

We all have the disease of sin and rebellion against God.

Isaiah 64:6: All of us have become like one who is unclean, and all our righteous acts are like filthy rags; we all shrivel up like a leaf, and like the wind our sins sweep us away.

Romans 3:23: for all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God,

19. **Ponder:** Is God willing to cleanse us? (cf. Romans 5:8; 2 Corinthians 5:21; 1 Timothy 2:3-4; 2 Peter 3:9)

Oh yes!

Romans 5:8: But God demonstrates his own love for us in this: While we were still sinners, Christ died for us.

2 Corinthians 5:21: God made him who had no sin to be sin for us, so that in him we might become the righteousness of God.

1 Timothy 2:3-4: ³This is good, and pleases God our Savior, ⁴who wants all people to be saved and to come to a knowledge of the truth.

2 Peter 3:9: ⁹The Lord is not slow in keeping his promise, as some understand slowness. Instead, he is patient with you, not wanting anyone to perish, but everyone to come to repentance.

What's the **BIG IDEA** of **Matthew 8:1-4**?

We all have a disease like leprosy but it's a spiritual disease called sin; and we need Jesus to cleanse us from it.



Give a **light globe** moment you experienced in this passage?



How does this passage **apply to your life**?

- a. *Identify the sin in our live and kneel before Jesus and repent of our sin*
- b. *Thank Jesus for cleansing us of our sin and rebellion against God*
- c. *Share the good news of this cleansing with others - as the leper did!*

Share the verse that had a special meaning to you in this study?

Matthew 8:3

Finish in prayer: Thank God for His grace and mercy in sending Jesus - and allowing Him to become sin for us, so that we might become the righteousness of God (2 Corinthians 5:21)

Study 2 - The King's Power: Healing the sick - Matthew 8:5-17

(Sermon on 27-Jun-21)

Read Isaiah 53:1-6

1. Who is being described here?

The one being described is a suffering servant (see heading Isaiah 52:13)

This passage is a reference to our Lord Jesus

2. What happened to the "one" described?

*He grew up as a **tender shoot** - seemingly weak and insignificant until His ministry started at age 30. Luke 2:52 says "Jesus increased in wisdom and stature, and in favour with God and men".*

Yet He was not weak because he is before the Lord (v2) and so had the strength of God.

Jesus grew up in Galilee, a region of Roman occupied Palestine; a place that was spiritually, politically and financially dry ground (v2); but God had other ideas.

*Jesus was **not a man of remarkable beauty or physical attractiveness**; it doesn't mean He was ugly; but He did not have the "advantage" of good looks (like King Saul)*

*He was **despised and rejected**; he **suffered** greatly and experienced **pain**.*

3. What does verse 4 say about this "one"?

Isaiah is not talking at this point about Jesus taking our guilt and God's wrath for our sins upon Himself; although Jesus certainly did do that.

*What Isaiah is saying is **Jesus took our pain and suffering as though they were His**. The image of Him carrying people's burdens on His back.*

*But many saw Jesus as being **punished and stricken and afflicted by God**; which is certainly true; but many didn't see why Jesus was punished. It wasn't for His own sins but humankind's sin.*

4. What did He do for us in verse 5?

*He was **pierced for our sins**; He was **punished for our iniquities**, so we could have peace with God. And by his wounds (literally stripes - as in scourging) we were **healed of our disease of sin!***

5. How are we described in verse 6?

We are described as needing Jesus, the Messiah; because we are like lost sheep who have gone astray and gone our own way, instead of God's way. We are in need of the Good Shepherd, Jesus, and God takes all of our sins from us and places them on the Shepherd's shoulders.

Read Matthew 8:5-13

6. What's significant about a Roman centurion approaching Jesus in verse 6?

The Roman centurion was a Gentile (i.e., non-Jew) and being under Roman occupation, the Jews, would have every reason to hate a centurion.

So, it is very surprising a Roman Gentile man would come to a Jewish teacher for help!

Also, significantly he came not for help for himself but for his servant.

Under Roman law, the centurion could have disposed of (even kill) a slave if the slave was to be a burden by being unfit to work!

7. What's significant in the way the centurion addresses Jesus in verse 6?

He refers to Jesus as "Lord" - and he respectfully asks Jesus to help by explaining the servant's problem.

8. What protocols will Jesus break if he goes to heal the centurion's servant in verse 7?

It was against Jewish custom for a Jew to enter a Gentiles house; yet it was not against God's Law! As we saw last week, when Jesus healed the leper; Jesus does not have a problem with breaking convention to help someone who is sick.

9. How does this protocol affect the centurion's reply in verse 8?

The centurion understands the Jewish custom would put Jesus in an awkward position; if Jesus were to come to the centurion's home. The centurion also realized that a great rabbi or teacher, like Jesus, would consider the centurion's home, unworthy.

The centurion shows he is "other-person" centred by his compassion and concern for his sick servant; and his concern for Jesus.

10. What do you make of the centurion's reply in verse 8?

The centurion is well aware of Jesus' power. Jesus does not need to be present in the centurion's home to accomplish His miracle of healing. Jesus only needs to say a word to heal the servant.

11. How does the centurion recognize Jesus' authority?

Just as the centurion has authority over his men and gives them orders; the centurion recognized that Jesus had authority over nature, diseases and in fact authority over everything.

12. Why was Jesus amazed at the centurion's faith in verse 10?

Jesus was amazed at the centurion's faith because He was not from Israel, he was a Gentile and yet showed more faith in Jesus' power than most of the Jews!

13. What radical statement does Jesus make in verse 11? (cf. Psalm 107:3; Isaiah 49:12; 59:19; Malachi 1:11)

Because of the centurion's faith; he will be included at the feast in the Kingdom of Heaven along with many other non-Jews coming from the east and west. This is radical because many Jews believed that there would be no Gentiles in the feast in Heaven; and that all Jews would be in attendance.

Psalm 107:3 - those he gathered from the lands, from east and west, from north and south.

Isaiah 49:12 - See, they will come from afar— some from the north, some from the west,

Isaiah 59:19 - From the west, people will fear the name of the LORD, and from the rising of the sun, they will revere his glory.

Malachi 1:11 - My name will be great among the nations, from where the sun rises to where it sets. In every place incense and pure offerings will be brought to me, because my name will be great among the nations," says the LORD Almighty.

14. What radical statement does Jesus make in verse 12?

That being identified as a Jew didn't mean automatic entry to the feast in the Kingdom of Heaven. Many Jews would be excluded (thrown out) from the feast into darkness (i.e., Hell) where there will be weeping and gnashing of teeth (a picture of suffering).

It's faith (like the centurion) that gets people entry into the feast in the Kingdom of Heaven; not their nationality!

15. What is the destination for those mentioned in verse 12?

Hell. Jesus is not afraid to speak of Hell; neither should we!

16. How did Jesus heal the centurion's servant in verse 13? (cf. Genesis 1:3, 6, 9, 11, 14, 15, 20, 22, 24, 26)

He spoke "Go! Let it be done as you believed it would."

That's how God created everything; just by speaking - Let there be light; let there be a vault between the waters; let the water under the sky be gathered to one place; let the land produce vegetation; let there be lights in the expanse of the sky; let them be lights in the vault of sky; let the waters teem with living creatures; be fruitful and increase in number; let the land produce living creatures; let us make mankind in our image

Read Matthew 8:14-17

17. What's significant about Peter having a mother-in-law?

It means Peter was married and that there is no requirement for priests to be celibate or unmarried as per the R.C. teaching.

18. How did Jesus heal her?

He simply touched her hand and she was healed immediately.

19. What do you make of Peter's mother-in-law's response to her healing?

- a. *Because she was healed immediately and so completely, she was able to wait on (serve) Jesus.*
- b. *Once a person is healed (of their sins) by Jesus - their response of gratitude is to serve Jesus in whatever ways a person has been gifted.*

20. Why would there be so many demon-possessed people at this time?

- a. *In Jesus' day, according to the Jewish historian, Josephus, "there was not a nation under Heaven more wicked than they were"*
- b. *People were strongly addicted to magic, and so, as it were, invited evil spirits into their lives. We must be careful what we dabble in!*

21. What prophecy does Jesus fulfill in verse 17?

As Jesus drove out evil spirits and healed the sick; He fulfilled the prophecy from Isaiah 53:4 - He took up our infirmities and bore our diseases. [In Septuagint – Greek translation of Hebrew Scriptures] – NIV: Surely, he took up our pain and bore our suffering,

22. **Ponder:** What is more important to Jesus that healing sickness? (cf. Matthew 9:9-13?)

Jesus has come to heal a spiritual sickness of sin:

Jesus said, "It is not the healthy who need a doctor, but the sick. But go and learn what this means: 'I desire mercy, not sacrifice.' For I have not come to call the righteous, but sinners." (Matthew 9:12-13)

What's the **BIG IDEA** of **Matthew 8:5-17?**

Jesus' healing is available for everyone (Jew and Gentile)

Jesus' Word heals - both physically as in the passage - and spiritually - as is sharper than a double-edged sword (Heb 4:12)

Faith gets us into the kingdom of Heaven - not colour or race or status

We all have a spiritual sickness of sin we need healing from - and only Jesus, the great doctor, can heal us.



Give a **light globe** moment you experienced in this passage?

➔ How does this passage **apply to your life?**

- a. *Are there people we are writing off as not included in God's Kingdom?*
- b. *Are we making wrong assumptions about who Jesus died for?*
- c. *Our response to being healed by Jesus, is to serve Him.*
- d. *Sickness is a consequence of Adam and Eve's sin. God is not obliged to heal all sickness but He is obliged to save all sinners who call on Him.*

Share the verse that had a special meaning to you in this study?

V13

Finish in prayer: Thanking Jesus that He was pierced for our transgressions, He was crushed for our iniquities; that His punishment brought us peace; and that by His wounds we are healed.

Study 3 – The cost of following the King – Matthew 8:18-22

(Sermon on 04-Jul-21)

Before we begin: what is a disciple?

Dictionary definition:

a personal follower of Jesus during his life, especially one of the twelve Apostles. a follower or student of a teacher, leader, or philosopher.

Greek word: Mathaytes: a learner, i.e., pupil: —disciple

Read Matthew 8:18-22

1. Why is there such a crowd in verse 18?

Because of his increased popularity due to His teaching and His miracles.

2. Why did Jesus give the command to cross to the other side of the lake?

To get away from the crowd.

3. What does the teacher of the law state in verse 19? Why?

That he will follow Jesus wherever He goes.

Attracted by the miracles perhaps.

With the miracles associated with the ministry of Jesus, following Him might have seemed more glamorous than it really was. Jesus perhaps received many spontaneous offers like this.

“I wonder if this man thought, ‘Well, now, I am a scribe. If I join that company, I shall be a leader. I perceive that they are only fishermen, the bulk of them; and if I come in amongst them, I shall be a great acquisition to that little band. I shall no doubt be the secretary.’ Perhaps he may have thought that there was something to be made out of such a position; there was one who thought so.” (Spurgeon)

4. What do you make of Jesus' reply in verse 20? What does He mean?

Jesus is not a false recruiter; He didn't glamorize what it would be like to follow Him; He told the truth - He wanted the teacher of the law to know what it really be like following Jesus.

“In the immediate context of Jesus' ministry, the saying does not mean that Jesus was penniless but homeless; the nature of his mission kept him on the move and would keep his followers on the move.” (Carson)

5. Who is the Son of Man? (cf. Daniel 7:13; Matthew 12:8, 32, 40; 16:13, 27, 28; 17:9; 19:28)

The Son of Man is Jesus

In Daniel 7:13, Daniel sees a vision: "In my vision at night I looked, and there before me was one like a son of man [Jesus], coming with the clouds of heaven. He approached the Ancient of Days and was led into his presence.

Matthew 12:8 Jesus says this about Himself: For the Son of Man is Lord of the Sabbath.

Matthew 12:32, Jesus says this about Himself: Anyone who speaks a word against the Son of Man will be forgiven, but anyone who speaks against the Holy Spirit will not be forgiven, either in this age or in the age to come.

Matthew 12:40, Jesus says this about Himself: For as Jonah was three days and three nights in the belly of a huge fish, so the Son of Man will be three days and three nights in the heart of the earth.

Matthew 16:13, Jesus says this about Himself: When Jesus came to the region of Caesarea Philippi, he asked his disciples, "Who do people say the Son of Man is?"

Matthew 16:27-28, Jesus says this about Himself: ²⁷ For the Son of Man is going to come in his Father's glory with his angels, and then he will reward each person according to what they have done. ²⁸ "Truly I tell you, some who are standing here will not taste death before they see the Son of Man coming in his kingdom."

Matthew 17:9 Jesus says this: ... "Don't tell anyone what you have seen, until the Son of Man has been raised from the dead."

Matthew 17:28 Jesus says: "Truly I tell you, at the renewal of all things, when the Son of Man sits on his glorious throne, you who have followed me will also sit on twelve thrones, judging the twelve tribes of Israel.

6. What does one disciple ask in verse 21? What does he mean?

"First, let me bury go and bury my father"

That he remains in his father's house and care for him until he dies. This was an indefinite period, which could drag on and on.

The disciple basically wanted to follow Jesus; but not just yet.

"If the teacher of the law was too quick in promising, this 'disciple' was too slow in performing." (Carson)

7. What does Jesus mean in verse 22 by "follow me"?

The Greek verb used in this verse means: to follow one who precedes, join him as his attendant, accompany him; to join one as a disciple, become or be his disciple. So, it will mean follow Jesus' teaching and way of life.

8. What does Jesus mean by "**and let the dead bury the dead**"? Does this seem harsh?

Jesus was pressing the potential disciple to follow Him now; and to not let any family obligations or any obligations for that matter; deter the potential disciple from following Jesus. Jesus must come first. Therefore, not harsh, but a clear statement on what priority Jesus should be in our lives.

"Much of the concerns of politics, party tactics, committee meetings, social reforms, innocent amusements, and so forth, may be very fitly described as burying the dead. Much of this is very needful, proper, and commendable work; but still only such a form of business as unregenerate men can do as well as disciples of Jesus. Let them do it; but if we are called to preach the Gospel, let us give ourselves wholly to our sacred calling." (Spurgeon)

"Let the spiritually dead bury the physical dead" – Jesus was not asking the man to be disrespectful to his father (who was not yet dead), but to have the right priorities in life. It is better to preach the Gospel and give life to the spiritually dead, as a disciple of Jesus, than to wait for your father to die and bury him; who knows how long that might be; and all that time could have been spent spreading the Gospel.

9. Discuss: Jesus gives a fair indication of the cost of following Him...

Yes, Jesus has made it clear the cost to follow Him.

It may mean no luxury (i.e., no permanent home and not much money or possessions); it means putting Him first priority in our life; and may mean other things, including family come after Him.

Jesus is honest with His followers from the offset; He is not a false recruiter.

10. What do the following passages say about the cost of being a disciple of Jesus?

Luke 14:25-35

In comparison to loving Jesus; loving our family seems like hating them; such should be our love for Jesus.

It will mean carrying our cross - i.e., may involve trials and persecutions and sacrifices.

Just like a builder counts the cost of building a house - followers of Jesus need to assess whether they are willing to take the cost in their lives of following Him.

Just like a king who is about to wage war assesses His army's strength against an enemy; a follower of Jesus must assess the cost of following Jesus; and be prepared to give up everything to follow Jesus.

Just like salt that loses its flavour is no use; so too a follower of Jesus who gets corrupted by the world and doesn't make Jesus first priority, loses their

Christian saltiness and is not a true follower. A follower of Jesus Christ must have the nature of Christ.

Luke 9:21-27

A follower of Jesus must be prepared to suffer (i.e., carry our cross) as Jesus suffered. There is a sacrifice to following Jesus, we must bear whatever comes our way as we follow Jesus.

It also means to deny oneself - which means being other-person focused. Only Jesus can do this perfect, but we are to follow His steps.

1 John 2:15-17

It means not loving the world and lusting after the attractiveness of this world (remember our citizenship is in Heaven - Philippians 3:20). Everything in this world is temporary; and

Matthew 6:24

We can't serve two masters. We can't serve money (mammon=world) and God.

Luke 18:18-25

It is hard for the rich to enter the kingdom of Heaven because they love their riches more than God

Genesis 12:1-9 (cf. Hebrews 11:8-12)

Abram is told, by God, to leave his homeland (Haran), his people and his father's household to the land that God will show him. And remember, Abram, is about 75 years old. Abram simply obeyed God (stepped out in faith) and Abram took his wife, Sarai, his nephew, Lot, and Abram's household and left Haran and set out for the Promised Land of Canaan. The latter was a foreign land and occupied by the Canaanites at the time; but God promised He would give this land to Abram's descendants.

Hebrews 11:8-12 commends Abram's (later renamed Abraham) faith and obedience to God in leaving his homeland and making his home in the Promised Land.

As Genesis 15:6 and Romans 4:3 say: Abraham believed God and it was credited to him as righteousness.

Imagine how hard it would be for Abraham to leave all he knew at age 75 and move to a foreign land; but in faith, he trusted God and did what God asked, without questioning. God want us to have that same faith - and to act on that faith and obey Him.

What's the **BIG IDEA** of **Matthew 8:18-22**?

It will cost us something to follow Jesus; there will be sacrifices in our lives to follow Jesus.



Give a **light globe** moment you experienced in this passage?

- ➔ How does this passage **apply to your life**?
- a. We need to count the cost in following Jesus*
 - b. Are we prepared to put Jesus first as one of His followers - and make sacrifices to follow Him and share the Gospel*
 - c. Are we committed to following Jesus now - not delaying for some earthly reasons*

Share the verse that had a special meaning to you in this study?

Matthew 8:22

Finish in prayer: Ask God to help us to make sharing the Gospel a priority in our lives.

Study 4 – The King's Power: Peace in a storm – Matthew 8:23-27

(Sermon on 11-July-21)

Read Psalm 65:7; 89:8-9; 107:25, 29

1. What do we learn about the power of God from these verses?

Psalm 65:7 - who stilled the roaring of the seas, the roaring of their waves, and the turmoil of the nations.

Psalm 89:8-9 - ⁸ Who is like you, LORD God Almighty? You, LORD, are mighty, and your faithfulness surrounds you. ⁹ You rule over the surging sea; when its waves mount up, you still them.

Psalm 107:25, 29 - ²⁵ For he spoke and stirred up a tempest that lifted high the waves.

²⁹ He stilled the storm to a whisper; the waves of the sea were hushed.

These verses show God has complete control, power and authority over nature; and in particular, in these verses, authority over the seas (and just by speaking)

Read Genesis 7:1-4, 8:1

2. What do we learn about the power of God from these verses?

Genesis 7:4 shows God's authority over all creation. He will send rain on the earth for forty days and nights, and will wipe out all living creatures He has made, except those in the Ark.

Genesis 8:1 shows God's grace in remembering Noah, his family and the animals on the Ark and it shows God's power, in stopping the rain; by sending a wind over the Earth to make the flood waters recede. Again, it shows God is in control of nature.

Read Matthew 8:23-27

3. Do some research on Lake Galilee (Sea of Galilee)



From verse 5 we know Jesus was at Capernaum

The River Jordan flows through the Sea of Galilee. The Sea of Galilee also known as Lake Tiberias. In the Old Testament times it was called Sea of Chinnereth, and later Lake of Genesaret.

The surface area is 64 square miles (166 sq Km)

The Lake extends 13 miles (21 km) from north to south and 7 miles (11 km) from east to west, it is pear-shaped. Its surface elevation was long given as 686 feet (209 metres) below sea level, but for decades the annual water level generally has been 6.5 to 13 feet (2 to 4 metres) below the traditional level.

The Sea of Galilee is the scene for Jesus' walking on the water (John 6:19-21); calming the storm (Matt 8:23-26); and a miraculous catching of fish (Luke 5:1-8 and John 21:1-6).

The sea's location makes it subject to sudden and violent storms as the wind comes over the eastern mountains and drops suddenly onto the sea. Storms are especially likely when an east wind blows cool air over the warm air that covers the sea. The cold air (being heavier) drops as the warm air rises. This sudden change can produce surprisingly furious storms in a short time, as it did in Jesus' day (Matt. 8:24).

4. What problem is there in verse 24?

Suddenly a furious storm came over the lake and waves swept into the boat carrying Jesus and the disciples?

5. What was Jesus doing? Why?

Jesus was asleep.

Jesus is asleep a) He needed rest; b) He rested confidently in His Father's will, knowing all was under His control. Something the disciples should have done.

6. How did the disciples react to the storm?

They were afraid; they thought they were going to drown in the storm and they thought Jesus didn't care (Mark 4:38)

7. Why does Jesus say they have **little faith** in verse 26? (cf. 2 Timothy 1:7 and 1 John 4:18)

Matthew intends us to see the contrast between the great faith of the Roman centurion (Matthew 8:10) and the little faith of the disciples. The disciples have accompanied Jesus in His ministry and witnessed the most amazing things but still they doubt and don't recognize that Jesus is able to do ANYTHING.

*Instead of faith, the disciples have shown **fear**.*

2 Timothy 1:7 - For the Spirit God gave us does not make us timid (fearful), but gives us power, love and self-discipline.

1 John 4:18 - There is no fear in love. But perfect love drives out fear, because fear has to do with punishment. The one who fears is not made perfect in love.

Fear is the opposite of faith!

8. How did Jesus stop the storm? What does this say about Jesus?

Just by speaking and rebuking the waves!

Shows that He has authority over creation and shows that He is God.

9. What question do the disciples ask in verse 27? What is the answer to their question?

They asked "What kind of man is this?"

The answer is He is fully human (he sleeps just like any tired human being) and He is fully God (in His deity He controls nature). They saw Jesus for who He is: fully man and fully God.

10. **Ponder:** What lesson does this story have for us today?

Would should not fear what goes on in our lives. Nothing is impossible for Jesus - the God/Man.

11. What is Jesus' role in **creation**? (cf. John 1:3; 10; 1 Corinthians 8:6; Colossians 1:15-17; Hebrews 1:2)

*John 1:3 - Through him all things were made; without him nothing was made that has been made. **Jesus was there at creation and created everything!***

*John 1:10 - Through him all things were made; without him nothing was made that has been made. **Without Jesus, creation wouldn't exist.***

*1 Corinthians 8:6 - ^{yet} for us there is but one God, the Father, from whom all things came and for whom we live; and there is but one Lord, Jesus Christ, through whom all things came and through whom we live. **Without Jesus there would be no life.***

*Colossians 1:15-17 - ¹⁵ The Son is the **image of the invisible God**, the **firstborn over all creation**. ¹⁶ For in him all things were created: things in heaven and on earth, visible and invisible, whether thrones or powers or rulers or authorities; **all things have been created through him and for him.** ¹⁷ **He is before all things, and in him all things hold together.***

Jesus is fully God, He created everything and He holds it all together.

*Hebrews 1:2 - but in these last days he has spoken to us by his son, whom he appointed heir of all things, and through whom also he made the universe. **God speaks to us through Jesus (who is the Word made flesh) and Jesus is heir of all things AND created all things.***

12. What is Jesus' role in **re-creation**? (cf. Matthew 9:10-13; Luke 19:10; John 5:8-9; 14; John 10:10)

Matthew 9:10-13 - Jesus came to heal those who are sick with the disease of sin (that's all of us)

Luke 19:10 - Jesus came to seek and save those lost from God (again, that's all of us, because sin separates us from a proper relationship with God)

John 5:8-9, 14 - Jesus came not just to make the lame walk - but to make us walk with God again by the forgiveness of sins.

John 10:10 - Jesus came to give us a full life that leads to eternal life.

What's the **BIG IDEA** of **Matthew 8:23-27**?

Have faith in Jesus - nothing is impossible with Him because He created everything and restores everything.



Give a **light globe** moment you experienced in this passage?

Contrast the little faith of the disciples with the great faith of the Roman Centurion earlier in the chapter.

➔ How does this passage **apply to your life**?

- a. *Confess our lack of faith*
- b. *Learn to have faith in Jesus in ALL things*
- c. *Jesus brings peace in the storms of our life [including COVID19] and ultimately brings peace between God and humankind - He truly is a Saviour*

Share the verse that had a special meaning to you in this study?

V26

Finish in prayer: Thanking Jesus - the God-Man, who creates and re-creates.

Studies prepared by Paul O'Rourke
May/June 2021

Resources:

The MacArthur Study Bible

New Bible Commentary (Carson, France, Moyter & Wenham)

Life Applications from Every Chapter of the Bible (G. Campbell Morgan)

The Message of Matthew (Michael Green)

Focus on the Bible: Matthew (Charles Price)

Matthew Volume 1 (Barclay)

Be Loyal Following the King of Kings NT Commentary on Matthew (Warren W. Wiersbe)

Notes/Prayer Points