



Matthew 8:1–9:34—Commentary Notes*

A. Introduction

The Sermon on the Mount recorded in Matthew 5–7 reveals the heavenly authority (7:28-29) in Jesus's teaching (His word), proving that He is the King of the heavenly kingdom and that He has the power and authority of the Messiah, whom God promised. In the subsequent chapters, Matthew went on to give accounts of the miracles Jesus performed to provide further evidence that He has the power to fulfill the words He proclaimed (for the very work of the Messiah was to set the captives free, to give sight to the blind and freedom to the oppressed (Luke 4:18), as well as to testify to the truth that He is the One the Father sent to the world (John 5:36).¹ All in all, the teachings and miracles of the Lord Jesus reveal that He is the very "Word" that was with God in the beginning (John 1:1-2), and that He is also the very power of God (1 Cor 1:24).

In the passage studied in this lesson (8:1–9:34), Matthew recorded ten significant miracles to demonstrate the power of the heavenly King, Jesus, over sickness, nature, Satan, and death. These signs and wonders can be categorized into three groups (8:1-17; 8:23–9:8; 9:18-33a), each followed by a call or response (8:18-22; 9:9-17; 9:33b-38). The last of these calls (i.e., 9:35-38) will be covered in the next lesson over the sending of the twelve disciples.²

B. Outline

- I. 8:1-22 Christ displayed His power of healing by making well a leper, a centurion's servant, and Peter's mother-in-law.
- II. 8:23–9:17 Christ displayed His power over the realms of darkness by calming the storm, casting out demons, and forgiving the sin of a paralytic.
- III. 9:18-34 Christ displayed His power in overcoming death and in restoring physical functions by raising the dead and healing the woman with bleeding, the blind, and the mute.

C. Content

- I. **8:1-22 Christ displayed His power of healing by making well a leper, a centurion's servant, and Peter's mother-in-law.**

The signs and wonders that Jesus performed were God's way of directing man's attention to His Son. Every one of these miracles revealed God's love and compassion towards man, and they each carry unique spiritual significance and purpose.

8:1-4—Cleansing the leper (Mark 1:40-45; Luke 5:12-16). In the time of Jesus, leprosy was the most dreadful and infectious of skin diseases. According to Leviticus 13, those inflicted with leprosy must isolate themselves from others and live outside of the city in a place designated for lepers. Furthermore, when they saw others approaching, they must cry out, "Unclean! Unclean!" because anyone who came in contact with them would be defiled and become unclean. There are several

* Translator Note: These Commentary Notes were originally compiled in Chinese and translated into English for use by Chinese Christian Fellowship International's (CCF International's) English classes. All sources listed in the table (only listed in English when applicable) at the end of these notes were used and consulted in the original Chinese compilation. Please refer to the table for the references of each numbered annotation. For more information on the sources consulted, please contact CCF International. All biblical references are taken from The Holy Bible, New International Version® NIV® Copyright © 2011 by Biblica, Inc.® Used by permission. All rights reserved worldwide.

things to note about leprosy in biblical times. (1) It was asymptomatic in the early stage. (2) It spreads to other parts of the body. (3) It was considered unclean and required isolation. (4) Fabrics defiled had to be burned. (5) Only after the priest examined and pronounced the inflicted clean could he or she return to the community. Scripture often associates leprosy with sin (Isa 1:5-6). God uses it as an illustration to teach His people that sin is like leprosy, which might be hidden in the beginning, but will soon spread to impact the whole being—thoughts, emotions, and mind—and results in much harm. Therefore, sin must be cleansed before one may approach the Holy God.

This passage describes how Jesus healed the leper who was once in isolation. At the risk of breaking the law, this leper approached Jesus, demonstrating his belief that Jesus could heal him. He first knelt to worship and honor Jesus as God, then humbly asked the Lord for healing. Traditionally, a Jewish man would not casually kneel before anyone lest he violate the first and second commandments (Exod 20:3-5). But this leper knew that Jesus was God, and he therefore knelt to worship Him. His faith is truly exemplary to us. When he asked to be cleansed, Jesus responded by approaching him. He reached out and touched him—a leper who was an outcast and rejected. Jesus’s actions demonstrated His acceptance of the man and His compassion towards him. Touching a leper meant possibly contracting the same disease. Yet the Lord Jesus was not defiled by touching him. In fact, the leper was healed upon contact! Jesus thus completely rewrote the norm governing ceremonial cleanliness! After healing the man, Jesus warned him not to tell anyone that he had been cleansed, but only to show himself to the priest according to the law in order to be permitted to return to his people and community. The instructions in the Old Testament (Lev 14) concerning how a recovered leper was to reclaim ceremonial cleanliness for himself foreshadowed Christ’s redemption on the cross for sinners.³

Jesus instructed this cleansed leper to go and be examined by the priest as a testimony to all. Very few lepers were healed in the history of Israel other than Miriam, who was healed due to Moses’s intercession (Num 12:10-15) and Naaman the Gentile commander (2 Kgs 5:1-14). At the time, leprosy was considered incurable. Therefore, it is not hard to imagine what a great impact this miracle must have wrought when this man appeared in the temple and told the priest that he had been healed of leprosy!⁴

The cleansing (healing) of a leper is also a spiritual new birth and a sign of salvation, in that we can only be cleansed by believing in the Lord Jesus. It involves a definitive action. I (as a person) must come to Jesus and ask Him to heal me (Rom 10:13; 1 John 1:9), acknowledging that Christ bore all my sins on the cross—past, present, and future, and that His precious blood was shed to take my sins away and to cleanse me of my “spiritual leprosy” (Matt 26:28; 1 Pet 2:24). Do you believe that Jesus has the power to cleanse your sins? Only through trusting in Jesus can our sins be forgiven. It is through faith that we are justified and reconciled to God (Rom 5:8-11).

8:5-10—The healing of the centurion’s servant (Luke 7:1-10). The centurion is one of the most notable persons in the Bible. As a centurion, he held an important position in the Roman army. Every Roman troop comprised of six thousand men who were under the command of sixty centurions. And even though he was a Gentile, the centurion was respected and loved by the Jewish community under his rule because he protected them and built synagogues for them (Luke 7:5). He not only feared and honored God, he also had faith in Jesus. In those days, the Romans treated their slaves as nothing but work horses and cattle. They would kick their slaves out or simply leave them to die when they got sick. This centurion, however, made it his personal business to find the best physician on earth, Jesus, for the sake of his dying servant. Moved by his love, Jesus was willing to heal his servant. Yet the centurion knew that he was not worthy for Jesus to personally come under his roof, especially since it would make a Jew ceremonially unclean if he were to go into the house of a Gentile.⁵ We not only witness the humility of the centurion but his great faith in the Lord as well. He himself was with authority, and he therefore understood what that meant. He firmly believed that the Lord Jesus had absolute power and authority that was not bound by geography or distance. He said, “Just say the word, and my servant will be healed.” The Lord Jesus was amazed at this Gentile centurion’s great faith. He actually believed that as long as the Lord

spoke a word, it would be done accordingly.

The faith of the centurion was a tremendous irony in contrast to the faith of Jews at the time. As a Gentile, he did not possess much knowledge about God as the Jews did, yet he had a simple faith. Therefore, those who know a great deal about God may not necessarily have great faith. The Lord Jesus said, “But many who are first will be last, and many who are last will be first” (Matt 19:30). A Christian intellectual must be particularly careful to be humble and to examine himself—not to regard himself as higher than others, or to think that he must possess a deeper understanding of spiritual matters just because he is an intellectual. Abundant knowledge of the truth does not guarantee spiritual maturity.⁶ Who can we compare ourselves to (in terms of faith)? The Lord desires that we have a faith as great as the centurion so that we can experience His wonderful power and might!⁷

8:11-13—The kingdom of heaven is often described as a feast (Isa 25:6; Matt 22:1-14; Luke 14:15-24). The Lord Jesus continued on the subject of faith by saying that anyone who has faith and trusts in God will be allowed into His kingdom regardless of nationality, ethnicity, or place of residence. However, those who assume that they are granted automatic entry (or “take their place at the feast”) simply because of their religious background or because they consider themselves as citizens of the heavenly kingdom, will surely not be able to enter, but will rather fall under judgment (Matt 22:13).⁸ Being “thrown outside into the darkness” means being cast into the lake of fire where the perished end up (Matt 13:42; Rev 20:10-15).

The Lord Jesus healed the centurion’s servant according to his faith. The servant was healed at the exact moment the conversation with the centurion took place.

8:14-15—The healing of Peter’s mother-in-law (Mark 1:29-31; Luke 4:38-39). Jesus came to Peter’s house in Capernaum and saw that his mother-in-law was lying in bed, suffering from a high fever. Moved by compassion, Jesus reached out and touched her hand, and the fever left her. Ordinarily, our bodies remain weak for a short period after a fever subsides, but Peter’s mother-in-law was not so. When she was healed by the Lord of life, she was strengthened and immediately got up and humbly waited on the Lord and His disciples.⁹

8:16-17—Healing All the Sick and Casting Out Demons (Mark 1:32-34; Luke 4:40-41). According to Mark and Luke’s account of the Gospel, it was the day of the Sabbath when Jesus healed Peter’s mother-in-law. The news of her healing quickly spread throughout the entire fishing village of Capernaum because the houses were very close to each other. And in keeping with the Sabbath, the people waited until sundown to bring all the sick and the demon-possessed to Jesus, and He healed them.¹⁰

Matthew perceived then that the prophecy of Isaiah 53:4 was fulfilled here: “Surely he took up our pain and bore our suffering.” In His days of ministering on earth, the Lord Jesus indeed delivered many from their sicknesses and pain, but the complete fulfillment of this prophecy did not come until Jesus accomplished it all on the cross: “He himself bore our sins in his body on the cross, so that we might die to sins and live for righteousness; ‘by his wounds you have been healed’” (1 Pet 2:24).

Sin is often associated with sickness (Psa 103:3). Illness entered the world after the fall of man. God did not promise healing for all our sicknesses and physical brokenness. But He has firmly assured us that all sinners who call on Him will be saved (Rom 10:13).¹¹ Therefore, do not take these verses (8:16-17) out of context and think that a believer will never experience the suffering of physical sickness or insist that simply by believing in Jesus, someone will surely be healed from illness. That is not what these verses mean nor do they warrant such an interpretation. The Scriptures teach us that because sin entered the world (Gen 3), sin can often bring illness and cause others to suffer as well (Prov 17:22; Matt 9:2; Jas 5:14-16). Christ’s redemption is to do away with death and sickness, but the final salvation of the body (i.e. doing away completely with sin, sickness, and death) will not happen until eternity (Rom 8:22-23; 1 Cor 15:42-43; Rev 21:1-4).¹² In

light of this, the miracles of Jesus's healing is a foretaste of the reality of the kingdom of heaven that is to come. Indeed, many today are still healed through prayer, but we cannot generalize these individual cases into a principle to be applied to every situation and think that it is "God's will for *everyone* to be healed." As we wait for the Second Coming of the Lord, believers and non-believers alike will encounter trials, sickness, and death. Saints in ages past suffered physical ailments as a result of their obedience to the will of God. Ailments can be a manifestation of God's glory and grace in one's body. This however is a topic outside the scope of our lesson today.

8:18-20—The Call and Response for the First Group—The Cost of Following the Lord (Luke 9:57-62). A teacher of the law (or a scribe) came to Jesus and said to Him (perhaps without giving it much thought), "Teacher, I will follow you wherever you go." And even though Jesus desired all disciples to come and follow Him, and join in the work of harvest, He understood that only those who came with a pure motive will be willing to truly pay the price. Jesus humbly compared Himself to animals (i.e., foxes and birds) and explained that He did not have a permanent dwelling place. At times, He did not even have a place to lay His head at night. Jesus's reply demonstrated that He knew the heart of the scribe. His intention for following Jesus was only to gain fame along with other benefits.¹³ However, following the Lord requires many sacrifices, such as having no permanent home or being separated from one's family. But it also comes with countless blessings, one of which is that the Father will surely supply all our needs—food, a place to stay, clothes, and livelihood—if we first seek His kingdom and His righteousness. In the same way, Jesus takes care of all who belong to Him—those whom He affectionately calls "my children" (John 13:33) and protects them to the end (John 17:12). Even though we might lose the comforts of this life when we follow Jesus, the reward of being able to share all of life's joy with Him (not only to belong to Him, but to also walk with Him, live for Him, and receive even greater reward in eternity to come) far surpasses any price we might pay. Jesus wanted His disciples to first consider the cost and sacrifice, and then decide whether to commit to follow Him.

8:21-22—Full Heartedly Following the Lord. Another disciple wanted to follow Jesus—not right away, but after he buries his father (i.e., to wait at home until his father passed). Perhaps this meant that he would come and follow the Lord many years later when he had both the time and opportunity. Easter customs and tradition believe that the practice of filial piety included remaining close to one's parents while they were still alive. Filial piety is to be commended, but if we love our parents more than the Lord, we will often ignore and delay what God appoints us to do (Matt 10:37). People today find many excuses to delay our obedience and commitment to the Lord. For example, some might say, "Wait till I am old, then I will believe in Jesus," or "Wait until I retire, then I will serve God." No matter what excuses we use to delay our obedience to God, it is considered disobedience. God's Spirit will not continue to prompt and move in the hearts of those who ignore Him. If you and I reject the opportunity God gives at the present time, the Holy Spirit will not move so strongly again. Now is the time of God's favor (2 Cor 6:2). Seize the opportunity to serve Him or to return to Him. "Let the dead bury their own dead" means to let those who do not have life (the life of God) do lifeless things (things that no value to life). For those who know the Lord, following Him is our priority in life for which we must dedicate our everything despite difficulties or hindrances. Ask yourself: what are some things that are hindering me from immediately responding to God's call? Do I understand from this passage that such a God-given opportunity may not come again?

II. 8:23–9:17 Christ displayed His power over the realm of darkness by calming the storm, casting out demons, and forgiving the sin of a paralytic.

8:23-27—Jesus Subdued Nature (Mark 4:35-41; Luke 8:22-25). The miracle of Jesus in calming the winds and the waves displayed His authority over the laws of nature. It was well known that storms could suddenly hit without warning on the Sea of Galilee. When Jesus and the disciples encountered strong winds as they were crossing the lake, Jesus was asleep, exhausted from a day of hard labor. As the disciples faced death and were greatly afraid, they woke Jesus up, and he rose and rebuked the winds and the waves. The storm immediately calmed. The disciples of Jesus were mostly skilled fishermen who were familiar with these sudden storms. They knew that the

waves never immediately died down after a storm subsided but it normally took some time. Therefore, they marveled at the miracle and wondered who Jesus was that even the nature obeyed His rebuke and immediately calmed down!¹⁴

The Gospel of Mark gives us the most detailed account of this event. There are two points to note:

1. The winds and waves they encountered this time were so mighty that they almost lost their lives, even though the Lord Jesus was present with them. This shows us that even though the Lord is always with us, we will nevertheless encounter difficulties in life. But we can call on His name, and He will be our ever present help, so that even in storms, we can have peace.
2. The fact that Jesus rebuked the winds and the waves implied that the “sudden furious storm” was the work of the enemy, Satan. From the passage that follows this event, we see that Jesus crossed to the other side of the sea in order to cast out demons. Even though the disciples did not yet know His purpose, Satan knew. Therefore, what appeared to be a storm on the sea was actually a spiritual battle. The Lord Jesus always spoke to the true enemy behind an event, just as He did with Peter when the disciple told Him not to go down the way of the cross. The Lord rebuked the one who used Peter: Satan (Matt 16:23).¹⁵

8:28-34—Casting Out Demons (Mark 5:1-20; Luke 8:26-39). This passage helps us to see even more clearly that Jesus possessed power and authority over the demonic realm. Jesus came to the people of Gadarenes (same as Gergesenes or Gerasenes in Mark 5:1 and Luke 8:26), which is an area that is located eight miles southeast of the Sea of Galilee and the capital of that region. There, Jesus encountered two demon-possessed men. (Mark and Luke’s Gospels record only one, perhaps because the demon was notably the more ferocious of the two.) The demonic power over these men was evident, for they were violent and strong (Mark 5:4), so much so that they were driven out of town to live in the tombs. The two questions that the demons asked Jesus revealed that they knew that He was the Son of God and that His appearance meant their end. There is no power in the spiritual realm that can overcome Jesus. Therefore, the demons begged Jesus to allow them to go into the pigs (numbering around two thousand—Mark 5:13). When the unclean spirits entered the pigs, the entire herd ran down the steep bank into the lake and drowned. Those who tended the pigs were terrified and ran into town to report this incredible event. The whole town then came out to meet Jesus and asked Him to leave their region because they were afraid. They did not want to risk losing any more possessions (i.e. pigs) (Luke 8:37).¹⁶

Demons are fallen angels (Rev 12:3-4a) who belong to the kingdom of Satan and are subject to his authority. They like to go into men and animals. Those who lived in these two men numbered around six thousand, for their name was “legion” (Mark 5:9). A typical Roman legion in those days numbered six thousand. It is obvious from this account that demons are spirits and are, therefore, not confined or limited by the size of physical matter. Furthermore, they possess knowledge and know who the Lord is. They have senses and are afraid to be thrown into the bottomless pit. They also have a mind and a will that allow them the ability and freedom to choose, but they chose to defy God. We should know that demons cannot freely possess anyone they choose. Usually, the person they possess has sinned and remains unrepentant, going as far as forming alliances with evil spirits and giving them a foothold (as in the case of Judah, John 13:2, 27). And even in such cases, it is still within God’s permission. If a sinner chooses to repent and makes every effort to resist the devil, Satan will surely leave (Jas 4:7; Rev 12:11).¹⁷

Demons are restrained under the authority of Christ. Therefore, Christians do not need to be afraid of them “because the one who is in you is greater than the one who is in the world” (1 John 4:4). Furthermore, the reason the Lord Jesus came was to destroy the devil’s work (1 John 3:8). The purpose for this particular miracle is to show us that Jesus possesses power and authority over the devil. He is willing to deliver all who suffer from any kind of demonic oppression, such as alcohol, drugs, sexual immorality, and suicidal thoughts. We all have, at one time or another, experienced feelings of helplessness due to our inability to overcome sin or bad habits, our lack of discipline, or

criticism from others (Rom 7:19). But thanks be to God! If we seek the help of Jesus, He will deliver us from the bondage of sin (Heb 7:25).

Even the demons knew who Jesus was, but the Gentiles did not. After hearing the report from those who tended the pigs, the whole town did not express any gratitude to Jesus nor ask for more favors. Instead, they begged Him to leave their region. Obviously, they completely ignored the deliverance of the two demon-possessed men. Instead, they valued the lost herd of pigs even more. Their eyes were fixed on their wealth, unlike Jesus who esteemed the souls of men as surpassingly more valuable than anything else.¹⁸ In fact, it is very easy for us to overlook the importance of a man's soul and instead to give higher value to material goods. Are you reluctant to let go of certain things and would rather that Jesus leave you? Or, do you wish for Him to change your life and make you a new creation?¹⁹

9:1-8—The Forgiveness of Sins and The Healing of the Paralyzed Man (Mark 2:1-12; Luke 5:17-26). Jesus returned to Capernaum from Galilee in the east. This town was the headquarters of Jesus's ministry because people from his own town, Nazareth, did not receive Him. As Jesus was preaching in a crowded room, four people with much faith carried a paralytic lying on a mat and lowered him to Jesus from the roof (Mark 2:3-4). Seeing their earnest faith, Jesus said to the paralyzed man, "Take heart, son; your sins are forgiven." This man's paralysis was obviously the result of sin.²⁰ The Lord Jesus spoke in such a way in order to reveal that the Son of Man Himself was God and had the authority to forgive sins, something only God could do. The scribes, however, were not convinced. They instead believed that Jesus has spoken arrogantly (blasphemy). From their viewpoint, it was harder to forgive sins because only God Himself could do so. This was the first incident where the religious leaders opposed Jesus. But the crowd was amazed by the miracle and acknowledged His authority behind them. Therefore, they gave glory to God.²¹

Man emphasized the healing of the body, but the Lord Jesus focused on the soul. The paralytic and those who carried him hoped that he could walk again. But Jesus first told him that "your sins are forgiven" before proceeding to heal his body so that he could walk. We need to note that not all sickness is the result of sin, as was the case of the paralyzed man.²²

We see here that it was not the faith of one man only but that of a collective few which brought healing to this paralyzed man. His friends did what they could to bring the paralytic before Jesus, believing that He could save him. Therefore, prayer in one accord coupled with actions of faith will lead others to Christ. There are many around us, who are like the paralyzed man, but no matter how many try to persuade, push, or drag them, they remain unwilling to come before God for help. How can we bring such people before the Lord? We will need to "carry" him like those who carried the paralytic to Jesus in unity. May we be determined to pay the price—no matter how great, even to dig an opening through the roof—to bring such kind of people before the Lord.

9:9-17—The Call and Response for the Second Group—The Call of Matthew (Mark 2:13-17; Luke 5:27-32). When Jesus called Matthew (Levi), he was sitting at the tax collector's booth collecting taxes from travelers who went in and out of Capernaum. Matthew's Gospel (as well as two other Gospel books) does not tell us if Matthew had prior contact with Jesus. His calling came right after the healing of the paralytic. Perhaps Matthew was impacted by this miracle of healing and therefore immediately followed Jesus when He called him. In fact, all of Jesus's twelve disciples answered His call immediately and laid down their old occupations. Of these disciples, Peter, Andrew, James, and John followed the Lord because of a netful of fish. They became fishers of men. For the others, the call of the Lord Jesus came with spiritual authority. They were deeply moved and became willing to give up everything to follow Him.²³

9:10-17—Jesus Came to Call Sinners (Mark 2:15-17; Luke 5:29-32). When Matthew first followed the Lord, he threw a dinner in Jesus's honor and invited many of his friends, colleagues (tax collectors), and sinners to come and dine with Him for the purpose of introducing Christ the Savior to them. The Jews hated and despised tax collectors because they imposed the tax on their own

people to support the Roman government who conquered them. In addition, they often collected more than what was required so that they could fill their own pockets. For this reason, the Pharisees and the teachers of the law asked Jesus's disciples why He was eating with tax collectors and sinners, especially when sharing a meal represented forming a friendship at that time. Jesus's reply pointed out the very audience He was seeking (i.e., those who acknowledged their need for the Lord): "It is not the healthy who need a doctor, but the sick." The Pharisees did not perceive themselves to be sinners (the ones who are sick). Therefore, they would naturally not seek the Lord (the great Physician). Even though they offered up all kinds of required sacrifices, they had no compassion towards sinners. In the absence of compassion, all rituals and sacraments lose their meaning (Hos 6:6) because God delights in the heartfelt seeking and worship (sacrifices) of those who acknowledge that they are sinners.

When the Pharisees questioned Jesus for eating with the tax collectors and sinners, their disciples and those of John the Baptist came to see Him (Mark 2:18). They asked Him concerning fasting. To John the Baptist and his disciples, it was only right to fast because they were called to repent and to wait for the coming kingdom. Yet Jesus told them that it was improper and inappropriate to fast in a wedding feast. For Jesus was like a groom. Men ought to eat, drink, and be merry in His presence rather than fast and mourn. But knowing He was to be rejected, He added, "The time will come when the bridegroom will be taken from them; then they will fast."²⁴

This illustration of patching up a tear in a piece of cloth (Mark 2:21-22; Luke 5:36-39) has much to do with Jesus's answer concerning fasting. The Pharisees demanded fasting, but the good news of Jesus was new. It could not be mixed with the old traditions of the Pharisees. Jesus gave the illustration that no one sews a patch of unshrunk cloth on an old garment that has been washed many times and preshrunk. Otherwise, the new patch will tear the old garment when it is washed. Likewise, no one pours new wine into an old wineskin lest it burst in the fermentation process because the old wineskin (made usually of goat skin) has already been stretched to its limit the first time. What Jesus was really saying was that He had no intent to correct the traditions of Judaism or that of the Pharisees. He wanted to completely do away with the meaningless formalism derived from traditions that give no life or freedom. Jesus was not, however, implying that all Old Testament principles and commands were to be abolished. Rather, His coming ushered in a new era. The kingdom of heaven had arrived in the midst of the Israelites. They were to live a new life in this new era. Jesus taught us that we are a new creation. Through Him and by His righteousness, we are to live up to the standard of God.²⁵

III. 9:18-34 Christ displayed His power in overcoming death and in restoring physical functions by raising the dead, healing the woman with bleeding, the blind, and the mute.

9:18-26—The Power of Jesus over Death (Mark 5:21-43; Luke 8:40-56). This passage described two miracles. Jairus, a synagogue leader, came before Jesus and asked Him to heal his twelve-year-old daughter. Mark and Luke recounted what the father said to Jesus, that his daughter was "dying" rather than "has just died" as Matthew's account records. This difference occurs because Matthew omitted the details and directly reported her death together with Jairus's request.

On the way to Jairus's house, Jesus encountered a woman with a blood issue. By faith, she touched Jesus's cloak and was instantaneously healed. She was ceremonially unclean according to Jewish law (Lev 15:19-30) and could therefore, not publicly seek out for Jesus. However, she believed that Jesus had the power to heal, and her faith drove her to approach the Lord. She thought in her heart, "If I only touch his cloak, I will be healed." [This refers to the edge or the tassel of a cloak, which Jewish men used to carry on their shoulders and which was used to remind them to obey all of God's commandments (Num 15:37-42; Deut 22:12).] Surely, she immediately felt that her illness had been healed. Jesus said that it was the faith of this woman which healed her. Her faith became her praise and glory. It was the intention of the Lord Jesus to have her testify about her healing before the crowd because it would help not only herself, but Jairus as well. The

testimonies of others often encourage us to trust God even more.

When Jesus and Jairus were still on their way, news arrived that his daughter had died. Jesus knew how Jairus must have felt and therefore immediately strengthened Jairus's faith. He said, "Don't be afraid; just believe" (Mark 5:36). What a timely encouragement and comfort. When they finally arrived at Jairus's house, Jesus saw a commotion of people playing pipes and wailing loudly for the dead and her family. Jesus then said that the girl was not dead but sleeping. Jesus was not denying the fact that she actually died, but rather describing her death as sleeping because He knew that she will be raised from the dead. After the crowd had been dispersed, Jesus, the Giver of life, commanded the girl to rise from the dead, that the breath of life be restored to her.²⁶ Even though Jesus commanded the family to keep this miracle to themselves, how could this unbelieving crowd keep silent after witnessing such a great miracle?

Jairus and the woman with bleeding were two people with entirely different backgrounds. Jairus was a prominent and prestigious Jewish man while this woman was an unknown person. Jairus was an honored synagogue leader (different from those who kept watch in it) or an elder in the Jewish community, while this woman was not even permitted to worship in the synagogue due to her uncleanness (Lev 15:19-30). Furthermore, while the request of Jairus could be made public, the situation of this woman needs to remain a private matter. It was best kept from the crowd and known only to the Lord. However, faith compelled them both to bring their needs before the Lord, and the Lord answered both of their pleas.²⁷

The woman who suffered from bleeding for many years had long been disheartened and in pain. We too, after enduring a relationship or a circumstance for many years with no change in sight, may be contemplating to give up. However, God is able to change hopeless situations and instill new meaning and hope in them.²⁸ "Is anything too hard for the Lord" (Gen 18:13). Jesus's words to Jairus on that day brings us great comfort and hope: "Don't be afraid; just believe!" Have you lost hope concerning a matter that has plagued you for many years? Do the experiences of these biblical characters encourage you in any way?

9:27-31—The Healing of the Two Blind Men. As Jesus went on from there, two blind men followed and called out to Him. They addressed Him as the Son of David, implying that they believed that Jesus is the Messiah (Matt 1:1). Their perseverance was evident in that they followed Jesus into the house. Jesus, the life-giving light then asked them, "Do you believe that I am able to do this?" Faith was what He desired (Heb 11:6). Whoever wishes to be shown mercy, must firmly believe in His power and might. These blind men believed that the Lord was able to heal them. Therefore, Jesus miraculously opened their eyes. Their faith restored their sight. Even though Jesus warned them not to tell others of the miracle of their healing, they went out and spread the news about Him throughout the region.²⁹ Perhaps Jesus warned them to keep quiet in order to prevent the jealousy of the religious leader, or perhaps it was to keep the crowd from forcing Him to be their king for their own benefit (John 6:15).

9:32-33—The Healing of the Demon-Possessed Mute. After Jesus healed the two blind men, someone brought to Him a mute and demon-possessed man. If we compare this man to the other demon-possessed individuals in Scripture, we would soon realize that demons utilize different means to harm and control men. When Jesus set the man free, the mute began to speak.³⁰ Two things resulted from this healing: (1) The crowd was amazed, thinking nothing like this ever happened in Israel. (2) The Pharisees blasphemed the Lord. "But the Pharisees said, 'It is by the prince of demons that he drives out demons'" (9:34). The religious leaders refused to acknowledge that Jesus was the Messiah. How then would they explain this miraculous sign? They said that Jesus had done so by the power and authority of Satan. Later on, when they again attacked Jesus and blasphemed God, Jesus refuted them (Matt 12:24-32). In their disbelief, the Pharisees actually became Satan's instruments!³¹ They openly opposed the Lord's message to the crowd, for He said that He had the authority to forgive sins (9:3). Next, they attempted to defame Him because He dined with tax collectors and sinners (9:11). Later, they accused Him of being ungodly (9:14)

because He did not fast. Lastly, as recorded in this passage, they accused Him of healing by the power of the devil (9:34). We will study the calling at the end of this passage (9:35-38) in the next lesson.

D. Conclusion

The Lord Jesus's signs of healing, casting out of demons, subduing nature, and overcoming death all testified to the truthfulness of His teachings. These two chapters in the Gospel of Matthew very clearly revealed Jesus's compassion and power. They also emphasized God's requirement of faith from man. Every miracle performed in these two chapters, apart from the healing of the demon-possessed man (8:28-32), emphasized that faith was the channel through which God collaborated with man to accomplish His plan in their lives. The centurion, the paralyzed man and his four friends, Jairus, the woman with bleeding, and the two blind men all had their pleas answered when they cried out in faith to the Lord Jesus, the Almighty. When the faith of man meets the power of God, miracles are birthed.

The Lord Jesus proved Himself to be a mighty and trustworthy physician, who is able to heal and restore us to wholeness—body, soul, and spirit. He is able and willing to save whoever comes before Him. May we glorify the Lord with our body, soul, and spirit as a response to His grace and compassion to us.

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