

Tuesday, January 10, 2017 - Day 9 – Genesis 22-24; Psalm 8; Matt 8

Jesus's movements are important in the telling of this eighth chapter of Matthew's gospel. As the chapter begins, he comes down from the mountain after giving the Sermon on the Mount in which he has shared the Beatitudes, the Lord's Prayer, and significant teaching about love of God and neighbor. In those prior three chapters, Jesus has elaborated and clarified for us what God intends, and how God expects us to live with one another in God's reign, which in Matthew's gospel is called the Kingdom of Heaven.

In the eighth chapter, Jesus begins to show us what that loving reign looks like in action. What follows is a tour de force of healing ministry performed among both Jews and Gentiles on both sides of the Galilee. Each instance of healing, as well as the stilling of the storm that has frightened the disciples, reveals something more and something new about the Kingdom of Heaven, Jesus's own identity, and the nature of faith.

In the healing of the leper, Jesus shows *compassion* by touching an untouchable. He ignores a purity code, yet then complies with the law by sending the healed leper to make an offering and report what has happened to the priest. In Capernaum, Jesus is moved to heal by the *humility and faithfulness* of the centurion whom we may presume is a Roman pagan. "Truly," Jesus says, "I tell you in no one in Israel have I found such *faith*." Peter's mother-in-law rises from her bed healed and moves to serve him, demonstrating yet another aspect of the Kingdom of Heaven. When Jesus stills the storm after chastising the disciples for their lack of *faith*, they ask, "What sort of man is this, that even the winds and the sea obey him?" The demoniacs whom he encounters in the country of the Gadarenes answer that question, when they recognize him and pose their own question: "*What have you to do with us, Son of God?*" The remainder of Matthew's Gospel will address that same question for us now.

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