

Mike Portland | Bringing Jesus Home

Matthew 8, verse 14. This is God's word, would you pray with me? So God, this morning we just ask that as we go through this passage, God, that we would open up our hearts to you, whatever we're bringing into this room this morning, whatever distractions, whatever burdens, God, that we would just lay those at your feet, and that we would be able to receive from you this morning, God. And so, Lord, pour out your spirit upon us.

Speak through me. God, give us ears to hear what the spirit wants to say to his church today. In Jesus' name, amen.

Amen. Well, one of the strange things about living in this modern world is that we are more visible by more people than we've ever been in history, and yet often we are less known. People can see our pictures, our accomplishments, our kids, our political opinions, our vacations.

They can see what we want them to see. They can know of us what we want them to know, but that doesn't mean that they actually know us, because every one of us has a public life and a private life. There is the life that people see, and then there is the life that we actually live.

There's a version of us that walks into church every Sunday and smiles and greets people and worships and answers the question, how are you, with I'm good. How are you? And then there's the version of us that goes home. Sometimes that's the tired version, the anxious version, the irritable version, the overwhelmed version, the version carrying things that nobody else knows about.

And because of that, many of us have become very skilled at managing access to ourselves. We know the parts that we want to show, and we know the parts to keep hidden, which can be appropriate at times. But I think sometimes, without realizing it, we do the same thing with Jesus.

We admire Him publicly, but we keep Him at a distance personally. We're comfortable with Jesus in church. We're comfortable singing about Him and praying to Him and talking about Him in spaces where everybody already agrees with us.

But what happens when Jesus wants to step into the other rooms of our lives? It's kind of like mixing friend groups. You know that feeling where you have your Christian friends, and then you have your work friends, the people who've known you before you were serious about following Jesus? Sometimes it's your family. People have known you a long time.

And there's something intimidating, isn't there, about bringing those two worlds together? Because when Christ comes into those spaces, it feels vulnerable. It exposes things. It may change the way that people see us.

It may force us to stop compartmentalizing our life in the way that we're comfortable doing. But

that's the question this morning. Is Jesus someone that we visit in certain spaces, or is He Lord over the whole house? Does Jesus have access into every part of our lives? In our passage, Peter brings Jesus home.

And in so doing, Matthew shows us something beautiful here about the heart of Christ and the nature of His kingdom. And so as we come to Matthew 8, verses 14 through 17, I want us to see four things this morning. Four things that our own hearts need to see and need to believe.

And the first one is this, that Jesus wants access into every part of our lives. Verse 14 tells us that when Jesus entered Peter's house, and I just want to pause right there because that's a line that's just really easy to skip through, to overlook it. But I don't want us to move too quickly.

Jesus comes into Peter's house. Jesus doesn't only meet people in public spaces. Jesus meets people in ordinary life.

Not just in synagogues, or mountaintops, or significant religious spaces. A normal house, a family home, a place where people eat meals, and clean up messes, and have conversations, and get irritated, carry private burdens, and live ordinary life. Now why does it matter? Why is it significant that Peter brings Jesus home? I think it matters because our homes speak more truthfully about us than our public personas do.

Most of us know how to manage our public persona pretty well, right? We know how to look okay in public. We know how to hold it together, to keep going. We know how to answer the questions.

We know how to perform. We know how to manage access. And so we can present one version of ourselves in public, but home represents the place where we are most ourselves, where our true self is revealed.

It's where the exhaustion shows up. It's where the marriage tension shows up. It's where the anxiety follows you.

Home is where your kids see what you're really like. It's where our habits live. It's where our addictions play out.

Home is where the wounds that we know how to hide from everyone else are just harder to hide. And so bringing Jesus home means giving him access into every part of your life. Not just your public life, but to your private life.

The uncurated parts, the exhausted parts, the anxious parts, the parts you don't know how to talk about. The parts that you assume are either too ordinary or too overwhelming to deal with. Now listen, giving Jesus full access to your whole life can feel very scary.

And sometimes it's because of shame. Maybe it's your parenting. You love your kids, but you're afraid to surrender control.

You're trying to manage outcomes, trying to protect them from pain, trying to shape their future by anxiety rather than prayer. Maybe it's in your habits, the patterns that you practice at home that nobody sees, and the ways that you numb out in the evenings. The things that you escape to, the things that you run to when you're stressed, the private compromise you excuse.

Or maybe it's in your wounds. You're ashamed of your wounds because you've been hurt. And you've built your life around not being hurt like that ever again.

And so you keep people at a distance. You stay guarded. You call it wisdom, but sometimes it's just fear.

Fear of failure, fear of being exposed, fear of being alone, fear of not being enough. Fear that if you really surrender, Jesus will take something from you that you cannot live without. And so what would it mean for us to give Jesus full access into those places? Sometimes it's not shame, it's just self-reliance.

We think that we should be strong enough to deal with things on our own. We think that we should be independent, and so we hide our neediness. But notice what's happening here.

When Jesus gets there, he sees Peter's mother-in-law lying sick with a fever. Now to us, on first reading, that might sound small. It's not a demonized man in a synagogue.

It's not a leper living in isolation. It's not a paralyzed man being lowered through a roof. It's a woman in a house with a fever.

But Jesus hones in on her, and he comes near. And I think this is significant because we often minimize our needs. We rank our suffering.

We hear about somebody else's cancer diagnosis, or somebody else's marriage falling apart, or somebody else's child walking away from the Lord, or deep trauma, and we think, well, I shouldn't really be struggling. They have it much worse. My thing isn't really a big deal.

And so we minimize. We minimize our needs. Oh, I'm just tired.

I'm just overwhelmed. I'm not myself right now. I'm busy.

I'm just caring a lot. Does any of that sound familiar? And beneath all of that is the assumption that Jesus has more important things to deal with than this. But this text confronts that assumption.

That nothing is too small for Jesus. Jesus is not annoyed by your need. He's not inconvenienced by your weakness.

He's not dismissive of ordinary suffering. In fact, he's drawn to it. He sees a woman in weakness,

and he comes near.

And some of us need to let this land. Because we've been treating our burdens as if they're too small for Jesus, or as if we should be handling them fine on our own. You've thought other people need prayer.

Other people need help. Other people need Jesus to meet them. I should be stronger than this.

But listen, if it matters to you, it matters to Jesus. Your exhaustion matters to him. Your anxiety matters to him.

Your grief matters to him. The things that you do not know how to explain to anyone else matter to him. There is no suffering too small that Jesus is indifferent to it.

And there's no home so ordinary that Jesus refuses to enter it. And so we've seen that Jesus wants access into every part of our life. The second thing I want us to see is that Jesus comes into our life with power and compassion.

He comes into our life with power and compassion. Notice again verse 15. It says, he touched her hand and the fever left her.

And so Jesus heals her by touch, which he didn't need to do. Jesus doesn't need to touch somebody to heal them. In fact, we heard about that just last week.

The centurion comes to Jesus and Jesus heals his servant with a word from a distance. So Jesus doesn't need to touch in order to heal. He touches because that is what he is like.

See, Jesus embodies a kind of power that the world doesn't understand. Because in our world, power is often separated from compassion. And we all know power without compassion, don't we? We know what that feels like.

We know the boss who gets results but doesn't see us. Or the leader who is efficient but unavailable. Or the parent who is right but always harsh.

The friend who gives advice but never really enters the pain. But Jesus is different. Jesus comes near with a power that is compassionate.

And he does not merely send healing from a distance here. It says he touches her hand. That Jesus is so tender in the way that he approaches us.

Dane Ortlund in his book *Gentle and Lowly*, one of my favorite books. He says this, he says that when Jesus opens up his own heart to us, the way that Jesus describes himself is not demanding and severe. But Jesus' self-description of himself, this is what I am like.

He says, I am gentle and lowly. It's Matthew 11. Jesus says, I am gentle and lowly.

Meaning that when you get down to the deepest parts of Jesus, when you get beneath the miracles, and beneath the teaching and the authority, you do not find reluctance, you find gentleness. You find lowliness. You find a savior whose heart moves toward the burden.

And that's why he says, come to me all you who labor and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest. Jesus says, come to me with your burden. Come to me with the exhaustion.

Come with the shame. Come with the fear. Come with the thing that you are trying to carry by yourself.

Because Jesus is not only powerful, he's compassionate. He has authority, but he's not harsh. He is holy, but he's not distant.

He is truthful, but he's never cruel. He is efficient, but he's never transactional. Jesus is profoundly different.

And I think that this is what some of us struggle to believe, right? We believe that Jesus has power, but we're not sure that he has compassion for us. Or we believe that Jesus can heal, but we're just not sure that he's willing. We believe he's Lord, but we are not sure that he is gentle with people like us.

And the text says that he touches her fevered hand. He moves toward weakness. He's not irritated by it.

He is not overwhelmed. He draws near in power and compassion. That Jesus is both gentle and lowly.

That he enters our life with compassion, the compassion we long for, as well as the power to actually change us. And he comes to bear the burdens that would crush us without him. In verse 16, we're told that that evening they brought to him many who were oppressed by demons.

And he cast out the spirits with a word and healed all who were sick. And then Matthew goes on to give us the theological meaning in verse 17. He says, this was to fulfill what was spoken by the prophet Isaiah.

He took our illnesses and bore our diseases. You see, Matthew wants us to understand the kind of king that Jesus is and the kind of kingdom that he brings. He is not a king who stands at a distance from human suffering and merely gives commands.

He is a wounded healer. He is the king who bears what he heals. You see, Jesus' miracles were never meant to just simply display his raw power.

His miracles were always meant to give us a foretaste of his redemptive mission. Every healing is a signpost, ultimately pointing to the cross. Because the cross is where Jesus ultimately takes our

sickness and our sin and our guilt and our shame, our judgment and our death onto himself.

And this is so important that Jesus doesn't merely remove suffering. Jesus absorbs our suffering. Isaiah 53, Matthew quotes it, He goes on to say in Isaiah, this prophetic passage pointing to the servant who is Jesus.

And this is not sentimental language. This is substitutionary language. That Jesus doesn't just stand by sufferers and say, I feel bad for you.

He comes under the weight and carries what is crushing us. He bears what would bury us. And I believe that some of us are just carrying weight that we were never meant to carry.

Some of us are carrying shame, right? That sense that there's, it's not just about what I've done, but there is something wrong with me. That fear that if people really knew you, they could never love you. That they would pull away.

That your old self still defines you, that thing you did or that thing that was done to you. That voice that just says you are dirty. You are disqualified.

You've gone too far. Listen, Jesus bears our shame. Some of us are carrying fear.

Fear about our future, right? Fear about money, fear about our children, fear about our health, fear about being alone. Fear that your life will not be what you hoped it would be. Jesus bears our fears.

Some of us are carrying grief. That loss that still aches. That relationship that never healed.

That dream that died. That chair that's since empty at the dining room table. That sorrow you keep functioning through because life does not stop long enough for you to fall apart.

Listen, Jesus bears our grief. And Jesus comes to us not as a harsh ruler, but as a burden-bearing king. Because ultimately, the greatest burden that Jesus bears is our sin.

Because beneath all the suffering in this passage is the deeper sickness of the world. And Matthew's not saying that every individual sickness is a direct result of some individual sin. That's not the point.

The point is that sickness exists in the first place because the world is broken by sin. Death entered through sin. Decay entered through sin.

Shame entered through sin. The whole creation groans because humanity has ultimately turned from God. And so our greatest problem is not merely that we are weak.

It's that we are guilty. We've sinned against a holy God. We've loved lesser things.

We've trusted ourselves. We've used people. We've hidden from God.

We've built our lives on things that cannot save us. We've made ourselves Lord and asked Jesus to submit to our plans instead of submitting to him as Lord. And if Jesus only heals broken bodies but does not heal our sin, then every healing would only be temporary.

The fever would leave, but death would still come. The pain would lift, but guilt would remain. The body would be restored, but the soul would still be separated from God.

And so Jesus goes deeper. He doesn't only touch the fevered hand. Jesus stretches out his hands on the cross for you and I. And there he bears the ultimate burden of our sin.

On the cross, Jesus was treated as guilty so that guilty people could be declared righteous by God. He is cast out so that we may be brought in. He was crushed so that we may be healed.

He takes our judgment so that we can receive mercy. He takes the wrath of God so that we can know the welcome of God. This is the gospel.

That we do not save ourselves by carrying our burdens. We are saved because Jesus carried what we could never carry on our own. And so bring him the burden.

Bring him your shame. Bring him your fear, your exhaustion, your sin. Give Jesus access into the rooms of your life that you don't want people to see.

Since Jesus has already bore your death, you can trust him with your life. Lastly, I want us to see that Jesus makes our lives places of kingdom mercy. When we give Jesus access, he makes our lives places of kingdom mercy.

Verse 15 goes on to tell us that he touched her hand, the fever left her, and she rose and began to serve him. You see, Matthew here is showing us what grace does. Grace always restores us outward toward other people.

Jesus heals her and then she begins to serve. Now, we do need to be careful here. This is not Jesus saying, I healed you, now get to work.

But this is just the natural movement of grace. That grace does not terminate on us. Grace moves through us.

You see, when Jesus restores us, he restores us into love. He restores us into purpose. He restores us into participation.

And the truth is, restored people restore people. Healed people become agents of healing. Comforted people become people of comfort.

But see, this confronts one of the great distortions of modern Christianity. And that distortion is

that coming to Jesus is good because it's useful. This kind of thinking says, I came to Jesus so that my life could work better.

I came to be inspired. I came to be healed. I came to get my marriage fixed.

I came to get my anxiety down. I came to get something from him. And praise God, Jesus does do those things and more.

But the kingdom instinct is different. See, the modern instinct says, I got healed so I can get my life back. The kingdom instinct says, I got healed so I can give my life away.

That's what's happening here. Peter's mother-in-law is restored and then she serves. And in verse 16, we're told that the evening gets more and more intense.

That that evening they brought to him many who were oppressed by demons and sick. And he cast out the demons and healed all who were sick. Can you imagine the scene? Jesus is in Peter's house.

It's his first time having Jesus over. And Jesus comes in and he sees Peter's mother-in-law laying on the couch with a fever. By the way, I just got to say, if Peter had a mother-in-law, he certainly wasn't the first pope.

Okay, I said it. He was married. He was married.

But they're there and Jesus is in the house. Next thing you know, there's a knock at the door. And Mark's gospel gives us an insight that Matthew doesn't.

He says that the whole city was gathered in the front of the house. You can imagine just looking through the peephole. And all these demon-possessed people and sick people are standing on the front lawn.

It's like Night of the Living Dead. The sick, the oppressed, the demonized, the desperate. The people that no one knows what to do with, they're all gathered there around Peter's door.

They are all gathered at Peter's house. Why? Because Jesus is there. That's the picture.

You see, when Jesus enters our home, our home becomes a place of healing and witness to the kingdom. I wonder how many of us, when we think about the primary place that people can encounter Jesus, think of our home. Right? I mean, most of us probably think primarily of this place.

The Sunday worship gathering at church. This is the primary place where people can encounter Jesus. But the reality is this only happens once a week.

And this isn't where we live our lives. This isn't where we live out life with Jesus. See, many of us,

I think, we get uncomfortable when we think about our home as a kingdom space where people can encounter Jesus.

Makes us nervous. I think for multiple reasons. For some of us, our home is just a private space.

Just private. And not private in a healthy sense, but closed. It's guarded.

It's uninterrupted. Our home is protected. It's inaccessible.

We get home. We pull into the garage. We close the garage door.

And we disappear. It's okay. Maybe that's some of you.

Some of our homes are more look-but-don't-touch kind of homes. You know what I'm talking about? Right? Super curated. Magazine worthy all the time.

Everything has to look perfect. And you don't open your home because people are just messy. Some of our homes are just frantic spaces.

Right? Everyone is depleted. Everyone is running from one thing to the next. There is no margin for prayer or hospitality or conversation or rest.

You see, a home shaped by the kingdom, it doesn't have to be big or beautiful. A home shaped by the kingdom is simply a place where Jesus has access and where Jesus reigns over it. If the kingdom of God is God's rule over God's people in God's place, then certainly Jesus wants to reign over our homes.

When our home becomes a place where people can encounter Jesus, they become places of prayer. They become places of welcome. Where people are treated not as burdens but as guests.

Where the lonely have a seat at our table. Where the wounded are not rushed out. They become places of shared meals.

There's something deeply Christian about sharing meals together. Jesus did so much ministry around the table. Meals force us to slow down.

Meals make space for people. Meals communicate to people, you are not just useful to me, you matter. Kingdom homes also become places of discipleship.

Where our children see repentance modeled. Where friends talk about life and faith over laughter and over tears. It's where our faith becomes embodied in real life.

Kingdom homes become places of healing. Now, I want to be clear here. This is not a plea to open up your home for a home group.

I'm sure some of you are like, when's that coming? It's not a plea to open up your home for a home group or to host a church barbecue. If you want to do those things, that's great. But this isn't just about opening your home.

It's about opening your whole life to Jesus. It's to give him access into every part of your life. Because you can host dinners and still not be vulnerable.

You can entertain people and still not love them. You can have a full house and a guarded heart. The question is, what kind of person are you becoming because Jesus has entered your life? When Jesus gets access to your whole life, your life becomes a place of healing and kingdom witness.

We become more available. We become more merciful. We become more present, more honest, more willing to carry burdens, and more willing to let other people carry our burdens.

Listen, Jesus wants full access to you because he wants to heal you. He wants to change you. He wants all of you because you are his.

And he wants to make you a space where people can encounter Jesus through you. Listen, church, this is a really simple story. And it's a simple message.

Are you willing to bring Jesus home with you? Will you let him in? Will you give him access into every part of your life? Every circle of influence that you run in, every friend group, every habit. Will you let Christ have sovereignty over your Monday through Saturday? And so the invitation for us this morning is to bring Jesus home. To come.

To come with your need. To come with your exhaustion. To come with your sin.

To come with the parts of your life that you keep hidden. That Jesus is not annoyed by your need. He's drawn to it.

He is gentle and lowly in heart and he still comes near. And so let's let him in. Not just to our beliefs.

Not just to our Sunday rhythms. Let's let him into the house. The whole house.

Let him touch what is weak. Let him bear what is heavy. Let him restore what is broken.

And then by grace your life becomes a place where other weary people can encounter him too. Maybe the Spirit is prompting your heart this morning that you need to surrender some parts of your life. That there are parts of your life that you have compartmentalized that you have kept Jesus out of.

And Jesus is calling you this morning to allow him access. To bring him in. And we do that

through faith and repentance.

Simply believe who he is and what he says. Turn from our mindset that we've been living in and turn to him. Maybe some of us have been touched by Jesus.

He's touched our life but our faith up to this point has only been internalized. And the Spirit is calling you today to give away what he's already done for you. To let grace flow through you.

And so today is Serve Sunday. There's opportunities to serve. There's opportunities to give yourself away.

To share some of what God has done for you with one another. Listen, Jesus wants to refill your cup with fresh grace. But some of us need to give away what he's already done for us first.

The promise is that he will fill our cup as long as we keep pouring out for one another. And so maybe he's calling you this morning. To get involved.

To serve. To give. To give your life away for his mission and for his kingdom.

Whatever it is that God is speaking to you, I want to give us an opportunity to respond this morning. Let's bring Jesus home today into every part of our world. Let's begin with prayer.

Pray with me. Jesus, we do confess that there are parts of our life that we're prone to keep you at a distance from. There's parts of our life, God, that we keep hidden.

There's parts of our life that we're just ashamed of or feel like we should be able to handle on our own. And this simple narrative, this simple story that you give us in your word this morning, just tells us that you're not just a God of the extraordinary, you're a God of the ordinary. That you want to enter into our ordinary and daily life.

That as king, you want to rule and reign over every part of our life. So that you can bring renewal and restoration and healing. You want to give us a deep joy that the world cannot take from us.

And so God, I pray this morning that as we enter into a time of worship, God, that your spirit would move upon our hearts and that we would respond to you in faith. That we would come to you this morning and we would just decide, I'm no longer holding anything back from you, Jesus. Everything I am, everything I have is yours.

You bore my biggest fear. You bore my sin. You can handle my life and you're good.

And so Jesus, we come to you this morning in faith, believing that everything you call us to is for our good and for your glory. And so God, help us to respond now in faith. In Jesus' name, amen.