

Sunday School Lesson for February 8, 2026

Matthew 8

Welcome to Sunday School on the go from the First Baptist Church in Tallahassee. I'm Jim Glass, one of the teachers in the Pairs and Spares Class, and, on this second Sunday of February, we're moving chapter-by-chapter through the gospel according to Matthew, with Pastor Trey preaching from the odd-numbered chapters and our Bible Fellowship lessons drawn from the even-numbered chapters. Following Trey's final message from the Lord's Sermon on the Mount found in chapter seven, our lesson today comes from chapter eight where we learn something of the Lord's healing miracles, His calming of a storm, and His responses to two men who said they wanted to follow Him.

The Lord closed His message about the Kingdom of God and how those who listened to Him could become a part of that Kingdom / with a compelling challenge to heed His words and be like the wise man who built his house on the rock rather than neglect His words and become like the one who built his house upon the sand, and, when the rains came, his house was washed away.

As the Lord came down the mountain, He was met by those who believed His words as we find in the very first verse of chapter eight: "When he came down from the mountain, great crowds followed him. And behold, a leper came to him and knelt before him, saying, 'Lord, if you will, you can make me clean.' And Jesus stretched out his hand and touched him, saying, 'I will; be clean.' And immediately his leprosy was cleansed."

There was, as you know, no disease, no affliction, more dreadful than the leprosy that we read about in our Bibles. It advanced from one stage to another with a slow and certain degeneration of flesh and bone, and people could be afflicted for as much as fifty years with an indescribable misery as the body literally fell apart. Those infected were also excluded from society as "unclean," dying without hope and without help. It was a wretched disease from which there was no relief.

... Unless Jesus was willing to help him. The man knew He could. He believed that this Man Who had just spoken so captivatingly about God's Kingdom, addressing His words to those who were poor in spirit, was fully able to heal him. All he needed was for Jesus to say He would, and so, he asked, and Jesus healed him. James tells us we have not / because we ask not--chapter four, verse two--but this diseased, unclean man asked, and the Lord gave him what he asked for.

Vines makes some interesting observations about this healing. "Leprosy," he says, "pictures vividly for us the foulness of sin." Like leprosy, sin can't be hidden, it's progressive in nature, and spreads in a slow but lethal fashion. Although some regard certain sins to be harmless, it's progressive and incurable.

He also directs our attention to the motivation of the leper. He worshiped Jesus. In his despair, he knew that Jesus was the only one who could deliver him. He didn't tell Jesus, "Lord, if you can, you will make me clean." Vines writes, "No such insulting confidence is seen in the leper. He worshiped Jesus, not doubting His ability, but only humbling himself to the will of God." "Jesus' compassion flowed naturally and flawlessly to the leper's ugly condition. Matthew records the unthinkable action, 'Jesus put forth his hand and touched him' (v. 3). Touching a leper was an act of unutterable kindness, for he assuredly had not been touched for years. In itself, this must have been a psychological lift for this social outcast. The Bible tells [us] elsewhere that 'we have not an high priest which cannot be touched with the feeling of our infirmities; but was in all ways tempted like as we are, yet without sin' (Hebrews 4:15). Jesus touches the untouchable. If He did not, no hope could exist."

He goes on to add, "As a result, Jesus did not contract the leper's misery; instead, He communicated His cleansing mercy. ... Jesus was willing to save. He is always willing to save (1 Timothy 2:3-4). The problem is not His will to

save; it is your will to be saved. Elsewhere Jesus said, ‘I would … ye would not’ (Matthew 23: 37).”

We can only imagine the emotions that flooded this man’s soul when he looked at his hands and his feet and, instead of seeing a bloody, pus-covered mass of flesh, he saw fresh, smooth skin. But, then Jesus told him, “See that you say nothing to anyone, but go, show yourself to the priest and offer the gift that Moses commanded, for a proof to them.” This was in accordance with the Law of Moses found in Leviticus, chapters thirteen and fourteen where the priest was to confirm the disease and the healing, officially declare the person clean, and formally restoring him back into the community.

But the first part of the Lord’s instruction was that he “say nothing to anyone.” On the one hand, he wasn’t to delay his fulfillment of the Law’s requirement by stopping to tell people of his healing. On the other hand, if he delayed, it might give the priests in Jerusalem time enough to formulate a plan to make it seem like the man’s healing was a hoax. However, if he simply appeared before the priests with witnesses who could confirm that he had, in fact, been healed by Jesus, they would have difficulty denying it.

Next, Matthew tells us of Jesus’ healing of a Roman centurion’s servant with a rather significant detail. Centurions were veteran Roman warriors, commanding a hundred soldiers, who were promoted for valor, administrative skill, and loyalty to Rome. In Judea and other Roman provinces, they served to keep the local population in check, using any means at their disposal to maintain order. As a result, they were despised by the Jews--and the feeling was mutual--, but here we have a centurion who comes to Jesus with a problem--verse six: “Lord, my servant is lying paralyzed at home, suffering terribly.” What the source or symptoms of the paralysis were, we don’t know--only that the centurion came to Jesus, believing--just as the leper had--that Jesus could heal him.

And Jesus agrees to go with the centurion to heal his servant. But here's the twist. The centurion doesn't only believe that Jesus is able to heal his servant, his faith is such that he knows Jesus' power extends beyond His physical presence. The centurion told Him, "Lord, I am not worthy to have you come under my roof, but only say the word, and my servant will be healed. For I too am a man under authority, with soldiers under me. And I say to one, 'Go,' and he goes, and to another, 'Come,' and he comes, and to my servant, 'Do this,' and he does it." He knew the power of command authority, for, whenever he told his soldiers to do something, it was done--there was no doubt, no hesitation, no question. The centurion even knew that the Lord's power extended to his servant, not the most valued class of people in that day. Yet the centurion knew that, at the Lord's word, his servant would be healed.

Verse ten: "When Jesus heard this, he marveled and said to those who followed him, 'Truly, I tell you, with no one in Israel have I found such faith.'" Jesus, pressed as He was by the great crowds that followed Him, had been stopped by a leper who wanted to be healed, and now a centurion asks Him to heal his servant, to which Jesus agreed. But the centurion, recognizing both the power of Jesus as well as the lack of any real need for Him to go out of His way to come to his house, asks the Lord only to "say the word" and his servant would be healed.

We've heard about Jesus marveling in another place--Mark, chapter six--when He was teaching in the synagogue in Nazareth, and the people asked--verse three--, "'Is not this the carpenter, the son of Mary and brother of James and Joses and Judas and Simon? And are not his sisters here with us?' And they took offense at him." As a result--verse five--: "he could do no mighty work there, except that he laid his hands on a few sick people and healed them. And he marveled because of their unbelief." God's chosen people who had been told for generations about the Messiah and what He would do, now

beheld their Messiah, and they took offense at Him. No wonder He marveled at their unbelief.

But now the Lord Jesus marvels at someone's **belief**. And it's not a Jew--steeped in the prophecies of the Messiah, eagerly anticipating His advent--but a Gentile who has heard enough to believe that Jesus is able to heal his servant with just a word, and Jesus delighted in the evidence of his faith. So, Jesus said, "Verily," "Truly," "I assure you," "I guarantee you," "I haven't found a faith like this among all the people of Israel." A Gentile, a Roman soldier, / yet one who believed all the things that the Lord's own people should have believed about Him. John was right: "He came to his own, and his own people did not receive him. But to all who did receive him, who believed in his name, he gave the right to become children of God."

Do you see what Jesus is looking for among His followers? "Truly, I tell you, with no one in Israel have I found such // faith." We're in the very earliest stages of His ministry, and Jesus is already making clear that the Kingdom of God is not an earthly kingdom built with physical or political power. It's a heavenly kingdom that one enters by faith and faith alone.

So, Jesus tells the crowd--verse eleven--, "I tell you, many will come from east and west and recline at table with Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob in the kingdom of heaven, while the sons of the kingdom will be thrown into the outer darkness. In that place there will be weeping and gnashing of teeth." In our introduction, we said that, although Matthew writes primarily to a Jewish audience, he shows them how the gospel is for the Gentiles as well, beginning with the visit of the wise men and concluding with the Great Commission. Here, he includes the Lord's words as part of that message.

The image of a banquet being held to celebrate the establishment of the Kingdom of Heaven was common in Jewish literature outside of the Bible, perhaps inspired by the words of Isaiah, chapter 25, verse six: "On this mountain the LORD of hosts will make for all peoples a feast of rich food, a

feast of well-aged wine, of rich food full of marrow, of aged wine well refined,” and all faithful Jews looked forward to this meal and the opportunity to sit down with such greats as Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob.

But Jesus throws a wrench into their expectations by telling them the sons of the kingdom--those who thought they’d get an invitation just because they’re related to the guests of honor--won’t be let in the doors; instead, people from the east and from the west who had no physical connection to the host would find a seat at the table. And not only will those who thought they had a right to be there / not be let in to the glorious place where the banquet is being held, they’re going to be “thrown into the outer darkness” where “there will be weeping and gnashing of teeth.” This is a common description of hell that we find in Matthew’s gospel, and you’ll hear more about it later in our study.

With this stinging rebuke of those who had heard His words but did not do what He told them to do, the Lord Jesus turns to the centurion who was standing there, hat in hand, most likely not even lifting his eyes to Jesus, and the Lord turns to him and says, “Go; let it be done for you as you have believed.” And the servant was healed at that very moment.” By the simple expression, “Let it be done,” the centurion’s servant was healed, just as effortlessly as God said at creation, “Let there be light, and it was so.”

Notice that the Lord didn’t tell him, “according to your prayer” or “according to your righteousness” but “according to your faith.” And the servant wasn’t cured as much as for the sake of the servant as for the sake of the centurion: “**As you** have believed, let it be done **for you**.” Please don’t miss the incredible power of intercessory prayer here as the centurion intercedes for his servant.

Next in Matthew’s accounting of the healing miracles of Jesus is the healing of Peter’s mother-in-law, found in verse fourteen: “And when Jesus entered Peter’s house, he saw his mother-in-law lying sick with a fever. He touched her hand, and the fever left her, and she rose and began to serve him.”

Matthew's remarks about her getting up to serve them authenticates the completeness of her healing.

That day ended with even more coming to Jesus that they might be healed--verse sixteen: "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." If the Sabbath was now over, as Mark's and Luke's accounts suggest, it's likely that many were now able to assist or carry others to the Lord for healing. Matthew's emphasis is found in the word "all"--"all who were sick were healed." None were so ill as to be beyond His power to heal, no demon too great for Him to cast out. Neither was anyone turned away.

They all were healed in a continuing demonstration of His power and authority, showing to all the world that He was indeed the Messiah, the Savior of the World--just as Matthew notes in the next verse: "This was to fulfill what was spoken by the prophet Isaiah: 'He took our illnesses and bore our diseases.'" This passage is found in Isaiah, chapter 53, verse four. In this familiar, messianic chapter, Isaiah lays out the doctrine of atonement--the fact that the Messiah was to suffer for our sin. The word translated "grieves" in Isaiah, and "infirmities" in Matthew, means, in the Hebrew and Greek, "diseases of the body." Neither word refers to diseases of the mind, or to sin. To bear those griefs is clearly to bear them away, or to remove them. This was done by His miraculous power in healing the sick. The word rendered "sorrows" in Isaiah, and "sicknesses" in Matthew, means "pain, grief, or anguish of mind." To "carry" these is to sympathize with the sufferers; to make provision for alleviating those sorrows, and to take them away. This he did through His teaching and by His example.

We get an idea of the fact that He personally felt the healing of each and every individual when we remember the story of the healing of the woman with the issue of blood--Luke, chapter eight, verse 44. When she got close enough just to touch the tassels of His robe, she was immediately healed. In the press of the crowd, Jesus stopped and said, "Someone touched me, for I

perceive that power has gone out from me.” Truly, “he has borne our griefs and carried our sorrows;” and because “he was wounded for our transgressions; he was crushed for our iniquities; upon him was the chastisement that brought us peace, and with his stripes we are healed,” He ultimately removed the root cause of all our sickness and sorrows--that is, our sin-- by His atoning death on the cross.

Once again, Jesus’ preaching, teaching, and miracles have drawn a great crowd of followers; so many, in fact, that Jesus tells His disciples that it’s time to cross over to the other side of the Sea of Galilee, but why, we aren’t told. Sometimes it was to allow Jesus to pray alone; other times, He sought to avoid those who were coming to Him for the wrong reasons, and, at other times, to reach out to a group of people yet untouched by His message.

Some time after they arrive, Jesus is approached by two individuals--first, a scribe, and, second, one of His own disciples, and His interactions with them reveal the penetrating insight into the character of those who said they wanted to follow Him. The scribe--a professional student of the Law of Moses who wrote decisions about how the Law was to be applied in specific instances--came up to Him--verse nineteen--and said, “Teacher, I will follow you wherever you go.” Good intentions. Well-meaning. This scribe probably had a very good idea of what following Jesus entailed and required, but the Lord Jesus “knew what was in man”--John, chapter two, verse 25--, so He said to him, “Foxes have holes, and birds of the air have nests, but the Son of Man has nowhere to lay his head.”

Jesus didn’t decline his offer, but he did encourage him to count the cost, giving him fair warning of what to expect. The one who was truly devoted and courageous would have been energized by those words, rejoicing to be “counted worthy to suffer shame” and loss “for His name;” but the selfish and faint-hearted--apparently like this scribe--would turn away.

In the Lord's rebuke of this would-be disciple, Jesus identifies Himself for the first time as the "Son of Man." Scholars wonder whether He intended to speak of Himself merely as a simple man existing on the barest of means without even a place to lay His head down at night, or whether He was He revealing Himself to be the Son of Man spoken of by Daniel in chapters seven and eight of his prophetic message and Whom the Jews identified as the Messiah. Since He was speaking to a learned scribe, fully trained in the traditions and theology of Judaism, it seems most likely that Jesus was telling Him that He was, indeed, the Messiah, but there was no place for Him in the religion of the Jews as it was being practiced at the time. So, His response wasn't a refusal of the scribe's offer, but a solemn warning--not only that He had chosen voluntary poverty, so to speak, with no place to call His home, but also that the life of the Messiah would be fraught with challenges that could easily cause this young man to turn away.

At the opposite extreme was one whom Matthew identified as "His disciple"--almost certainly not one of the twelve, but one who had become an active student of the Lord in this early stage of His ministry. This one came to Jesus and said, "Lord, let me first go and bury my father." We don't know if his father was ill, expecting to pass soon, had already passed away, or was spiritually dead, but the request seems to have been a reasonable one. One of the primary duties of any Jewish son was to care of his parents, but the Lord saw, in his request, conditions beyond the simple permission to bury his father that would have kept the young man from ever returning to Him as a disciple. As a result, His answer, "Follow Me, and let the dead bury the dead," although it might appear impolite or even disrespectful, was intended to lead this young man to pursue exclusively the greater duty--the imperative of seeking first the Kingdom of God and leaving the rest to Him including his father's needs.

In these incidents, Matthew underscores two opposite dangers that those who would choose to follow the Lord then and now / faced and will face.

One man was eager and impulsive, while the other was hesitant and indecisive. We don't know how each of them responded to the Lord's response, but we can be sure that the Lord Jesus, who "knew what was in man," crafted His words to speak to their hearts and allow them to examine their own faith or lack thereof and act accordingly.

The next event Matthew narrates for us in his gospel is that of Jesus and His disciples crossing the Sea of Galilee--verse 23: "And when he got into the boat, his disciples followed him. And behold, there arose a great storm on the sea, so that the boat was being swamped by the waves; but he was asleep. And they went and woke him, saying, 'Save us, Lord; we are perishing.' And he said to them, 'Why are you afraid, O you of little faith?' Then he rose and rebuked the winds and the sea, and there was a great calm. And the men marveled, saying, 'What sort of man is this, that even winds and sea obey him?'"

It was not enough that the Savior of the world would have the power to heal diseases and know the hearts of men and women. He proved Himself to be Master of human life, but Lord of all creation as well. In this passage, Jesus is on the move once again, this time choosing to go by boat across the Sea of Galilee that, you remember, was only nine miles across at its widest point, but, because its surface lies some seven hundred feet below sea level and is surrounded by the hills of Galilee that reach to 1400 feet above sea level and the mountains of the Golan Heights--the area called The Decapolis in Matthew's day--climb to more than 2,500 feet above sea level--almost a mile above the waters of the sea below--makes it subject to sudden and violent storms as the wind comes over the eastern mountains and drops suddenly onto the sea. [Here's a topographical map to show the sea and surrounding area.](#) 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 period of time, as it did here in Matthew, chapter eight.

The word we have translated “storm” is actually the word from which we get our word, “seismic,” and it’s usually translated as “earthquake” in the New Testament. Mark and Luke describe it with the word normally translated “hurricane.” And the word “great” is the word from which we get “mega.” This was a mega-seismic event on the sea, not just a light squall. The storm was so great that waves were breaking over the sides of the boat, and water was quickly filling it. Even the seasoned and sea-worthy fishermen on board despaired for their lives.

But Jesus was sleeping. For those of you who are triviaphiles, this is the only time we read that Jesus slept. It seems that He felt there was no real danger and showed His disciples how calmly one could sleep with a pure conscience, secure in the hands of God, just as the Lord promised in the second verse of Psalm 127: “he gives to his beloved sleep.”

Jesus wasn’t disturbed from His slumber by the waves; it was the first cry from His disciples that moved Him to action. His first concern was for the faith of His disciples. He asked them, “Why are you afraid, O you of little faith?” They certainly had some faith, but their faith in an awake Jesus was far greater than their faith in a sleeping Jesus, even though He was right there in the boat with them. So, the first storm Jesus calms / is in the minds of His disciples. In his comments, Vines notes, “What we find in the disciples’ plea is what we find in us--a curious mixture of faith and fear. “Save us” is the language of faith. On the other hand, “perish” is undoubtedly the language of fear. If we’re honest, we must admit that we don’t always respond the way we should. Sometimes we simply blow it. How easy to see in the Bible what we should do; it’s another matter entirely to do it when a crisis arises.”

“Why are you afraid, O you of little faith?” “Instead of being filled with faith, they were filled with fear. Rather than exercise faith, they expressed their doubts. Faith is simply taking God at His word. How like the disciples most people are. They possess unhealthy fear for their health, their job, and growing old. Yet, faith calls us to action.” He adds, “If our eyes are on the

sea, fear obviously rules. If our eyes are on our Savior, faith carries the day. Fear looks at God through circumstances while faith looks at circumstances through God. Faith is the victory that overcomes the world (1 John 5:4). Faith is the power we must exercise, for without it, it is impossible to please God (Hebrews 11:6)."

Then, having rebuked the disciples for their lack of faith, the Lord Jesus "rebuked the winds and the sea, and there was a great calm." With a simple word, the winds died down, the waves settled, the boat was upright once again, "and there was a great calm." The same word translated here as "great" was the very same word we heard earlier to describe the enormity, intensity, and power of the storm. Now, as great as the storm was, so great was the calm that now enveloped their little boat and the entire sea.

As their hearts begin to slow to a normal rhythm, we hear them thinking out loud, "What sort of man is this, that even winds and sea obey him?" Who does this kind of thing? They had seen Him heal lepers, paralytics, the bind, the lame, the deaf--even cast out demons. But this was far and away greater than anything they had seen yet or had even imagined.

One commentator tries to capture the moment: "No One but God could calm the heaving billows and scatter the tempest like that. No scene could have been more grand than this display of the power of Jesus. The darkness; the dashing waves; the howling winds; the heaving and tossing ship; the fears and cries of the seamen, all by a single word hushed into calm repose, present an image of power and divinity irresistibly grand and awful. So the tempest rolls and thickens over the head of the awakened sinner. So he trembles over immediate and awful destruction. So, while the storm of wrath howls, and hell threatens to engulf him, he comes trembling to the Saviour. He hears; he rebukes the storm, and the sinner is safe. An indescribable peace takes possession of the soul, and he glides on a tranquil sea to the haven of eternal rest."

Matthew makes one more stop before this chapter closes, beginning in verse 28: “And when he came to the other side, to the country of the Gadarenes, two demon-possessed men met him, coming out of the tombs, so fierce that no one could pass that way. And behold, they cried out, ‘What have you to do with us, O Son of God? Have you come here to torment us before the time?’ Now a herd of many pigs was feeding at some distance from them. And the demons begged him, saying, ‘If you cast us out, send us away into the herd of pigs. And he said to them, ‘Go.’ So they came out and went into the pigs, and behold, the whole herd rushed down the steep bank into the sea and drowned in the waters. The herdsmen fled, and going into the city they told everything, especially what had happened to the demon-possessed men. And behold, all the city came out to meet Jesus, and when they saw him, they begged him to leave their region.”

“Gadara” was a city not far from the Sea of Galilee, one of the ten cities that were in the “Decapolis.” As Jesus and His disciples were passing through the area, “two demon-possessed men met him, coming out of the tombs.” The hills on the eastern shore are part of a limestone foundation and were apparently used for burying the dead. Such was the home of these two men.

There are, of course, those who would deny that they were truly demon-possessed, suggesting they suffered from some physical malady or relegating such stories to myth or legend; but scripture leaves no doubt that there are spiritual powers that operate beyond the world of our senses, just as Paul wrote to the followers of Christ in Ephesus in the twelfth verse of the sixth chapter of his letter to them: “For we do not wrestle against flesh and blood, but against the rulers, against the authorities, against the cosmic powers over this present darkness, against the spiritual forces of evil in the heavenly places,” and we are to equip ourselves with the necessary armor provided to us for that battle.

These two men were no so equipped; instead, their possession was so fearful that no one was allowed to pass by. As Jesus drew near, the demons cried out, “What have you to do with us, O Son of God? Have you come here

to torment us before the time?" The demons immediately recognized the superior power and authority the Lord Jesus wielded. They also apparently knew there was a time appointed for their punishment that we read about in The Revelation, chapter twenty, verse ten, when "they will be tormented day and night forever and ever." At the moment, they were free from this anguish, living among the tombs around Gadara, torturing the two men they possessed and tormenting any who dared pass their way. But, if Jesus were there to send them to the place of eternal torment early, they wanted to know.

So they spoke to Him, addressing Him as the "Son of God." They knew Who He was, but they had nothing to do with Him--they had no access to His grace, His forgiveness, or His salvation. He was no Savior for them, but they recognized Him as the very Son of the living God and so feared Him for the power He held over them. Apparently having a pretty good idea that Jesus was going to heal the men by casting them out and fearing that the time of their own judgment was at hand, they asked to be sent into a nearby herd of pigs instead. Mark tells us there were 2,000 pigs in this herd.

We don't know why they suggested the pigs. Scholars suggest that it was perhaps because the pigs were regarded as unclean and the demonic spirits delighted in unclean things, or the spirits hated the people around Gadara and wanted to hurt them as much as possible through the death of their livestock. Either way, Jesus gave them permission to enter the pigs, and they immediately "rushed down the steep bank into the sea and drowned in the waters." Whether or not the owners of the pigs were Jewish and thus in violation of the laws concerning unclean animals // we really don't know.

What we do know is that the two men were healed of their demon possession and the Gadarenes were made aware that the Kingdom of Heaven was among them in the presence of Jesus, the Messiah, Whom even the demons had identified as the Son of God. However, the peoples' response was not one of celebration that the two men had been set free from their demonic possession, but one of apparent displeasure and aggravation that two thousand

of their pigs had just drowned themselves--a significant source of income lost in seconds. Their anger and lack of any consciousness of sin or desire to repent led them to beg Jesus to leave, and He granted their request, for, with that attitude, He could do nothing for them. It seems that the pigs were more precious to them than the two men who had just been healed. They did not seek first the Kingdom of God and His righteousness. However, the testimony of the men who had been freed from their demon possession could not be denied. Luke tells us in chapter eight, verse 35, that the “people went out to see what had happened, and they came to Jesus and found the man from whom the demons had gone, sitting at the feet of Jesus, clothed and in his right mind, and they were afraid.”

Throughout chapter eight, we've seen how Jesus dealt with physical illness by healing both a leper and a centurion's servant without the servant having been present. We've seen Him heal Peter's mother-in-law and heard how he challenged two aspiring disciples. We've watched Him calm a tremendous storm on the Sea of Galilee with just a word and free two men from demon-possession. With each miracle, a new aspect of His power and authority has been revealed as a confirmation of His preaching and teaching, and there's so much more to come. In the opening verses of the next chapter, Jesus forgives a瘫痪的 his sins in the process of healing him physically, and the Jewish leaders go nuts, but Pastor Trey will cover that and more in his sermon.

Thank you for being a part of brief overview of the life and ministry of the Lord Jesus as seen through Matthew's eyes as he leads us to understand Who Jesus is through His works and His words so that we might be the people of God He's calling us to be for such a time as this. Next week, following Pastor Trey's message from chapter nine, we'll turn to chapter ten of Matthew's gospel to hear the Lord's instructions to His disciples as He prepares to send them out on their first missionary journey, instructions that apply to us today.

As always, as it's still a good thing to do, keep calm, trust in the Lord, and wash your hands! God bless you!

As we apply the lessons from this chapter in the life of our Lord to our own lives today, we should always remember that Jesus Christ is the sovereign Lord of the universe. He created all things, and He now sustains everything in existence. He demonstrated this sovereignty by healing the man of leprosy who stood before Him, by healing the servant at a distance, by commanding the storm to cease, by casting out an evil spirit from a man, and by forgiving sin. Nothing is too difficult for God. No matter what you are facing now, regardless of what you have faced in life or may yet face one day, God is greater than your predicament, and if your faith is rooted and grounded in His ability and His love for you, you can have the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ.

Second, the greatest thing that Jesus Christ ever did was make it possible for my sin and your sin to be forgiven. His greatest contribution was not His miraculous healings, not His great teachings, and not His marvelous miracles. The same is true today. While we may want desperately for God to heal us or someone else physically, the spiritual welfare of humanity is a far greater concern than our physical welfare. It is the soul that is eternal, not the body. While we may ask God to bless us materially and financially, God wants us to experience a personal relationship with Him that is so much higher than the need for “things” that we have that the two should not even be compared. That’s why Jesus tells us, “Don’t all caught up in worrying about what you will eat or what you will drink or what you will wear. Seek first the kingdom of God and His righteousness and all these things shall be supplied as God sees fit.”

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