

Rev. Dustin Daniels | River Bible Church
Matthew 4:23-25 | The Why of Teaching, Preaching and Miracles
June 5, 2022

WELCOME:

- Please turn your Bibles to Matthew 4.
- Bibles in back—our gift to you.

REVIEW:

Last Sunday, we saw how Jesus called Peter, Andrew, James, and John into full-time ministry.

We learned why Jesus called so many fishermen to be His Disciples as well.

Last Week's KEYPOINT'S

1. God always calls His people to do His work.

All throughout Scripture, we see God choosing His people.

2. Jesus never intended to save sinners alone.

Jesus was in a perfect community with God the Father and God the Holy Spirit, and now God the Son is showing mankind how to have that same kind of community on Earth.

3. Christianity is not only a set of teachings to understand. Christianity is a Person to follow.

Christianity is not about a set of rules trying to keep God happy.

Because that's impossible.

We've tried that once, Ten Commandments, and we've failed miserably trying.

Christianity is also not about a certain denomination.

It's not about whether you're a baptist or a Pentecostal.

What does matter is Jesus.

Christianity is not about religion.

Jesus hates religion.

And Jesus proved that ~~to us~~ by choosing fishermen from Galilee over seminary students from Jerusalem.

INTRODUCTION:

Last Sunday, we saw Jesus set free four fishermen who were a slave to the grind.

And He called them to fish for people.

They are now evangelists in training.

Think about this...these men are being trained to be evangelists by God Himself!

These men are eyewitnesses to the teaching, preaching and miracles of Jesus.

And what's it mean for you today?

Is there any relevance between Jesus' words and actions 2,000 years ago and your life at this moment?

Let's find out!

Please stand for the reading and honoring of God's Word.

SCRIPTURE: Matthew 4:23-25 CSB

Matthew 4:23— Now Jesus began to go all over Galilee, teaching in their synagogues, preaching the good news of the Kingdom, and healing every disease and sickness among the people.

Matthew 4:24— Then the news about him spread throughout Syria. So they brought to him all those who were afflicted, those suffering from various diseases and intense pains, the demon-possessed, the epileptics, and the paralytics. And he healed them.

Matthew 4:25— Large crowds followed him from Galilee, the Decapolis, Jerusalem, Judea, and beyond the Jordan.

***This is the Word of the Lord for River Bible Church.*

EXEGESIS:

Matthew 4:23— Now Jesus began to go all over Galilee, teaching in their synagogues, preaching the good news of the Kingdom, and healing every disease and sickness among the people.

In verse 23, Matthew summarizes the three main aspects of Jesus' life.

Teaching, preaching, and healing.

Let's look closely

Matthew 4:23— Now Jesus began to go all over Galilee,

Matthew takes us away from the beauty of the Sea of Galilee from last week and shows us how Jesus is a traveling teacher and preacher.

Jesus doesn't expect people to come to Him. Jesus goes to them.

And He doesn't go to only a select few.

Matthew 4:23— Now Jesus began to go all over Galilee.

All Over—Jesus' work was not limited to the city of Capernaum.

—where He now lives

He's now traveling with His disciples from village to village and town to town.

The picture here is that Jesus is in a rhythm—his teaching, preaching, and healing are repeated and continuous actions, *As He visits each town.*

Matthew is most likely not suggesting that Jesus went to every single village in Galilee.

If Jesus did, that would have taken about six months because Galilee has 204 towns.

But what Matt is *probably* hinting at here is that anyone interested in seeing Jesus wouldn't have had to travel far.

But regardless, Jesus did a lot of traveling.

The sheer physical drain of all this must have been *absolutely exhausting,* ginormous.

Jesus is traveling from town to town, facing the same problems, sickness, disease and the exact needs over and over again.

It's the same problems with different people.

Galilee has over 200 towns averaging 15,000 people.

Cottonwood has 13,000.

Can you imagine hundreds and even thousands of people trying to get at Jesus so He can solve their problem? *Every moment of the day.*

Matthew 4:23— Now Jesus began to go all over Galilee, teaching in their synagogues,

Jesus was a teacher.

didáskō (dee-dask-co) — to impart skills or knowledge to someone.

To carefully communicate specific content from one mind to another.

Jesus not only did that, but He also taught how people need to unlearn things, *as well*.

When we unlearn and undo some things that we were taught incorrectly-

Jesus can then teach us about the true things—the right things—the Heavenly things.

Matthew 4:23— Now Jesus began to go all over Galilee, teaching in their synagogues,

A synagogue is a place for a congregation to gather and worship.

The word itself means “a gathering place.”

Most towns with ten or more Jewish families had a synagogue.

What’s that tell us?

We see the importance of the synagogue in Jewish life.

Yes, they were places for prayer and the study of Scripture.

But synagogues ^{*were much more than that.*} were the central institution of Jewish life.

The synagogue is where they studied the Hebrew Bible.

They also studied the Talmud.

The Talmud is a collection of Jewish texts that record the oral tradition of the early rabbis.

So, the local synagogue is where the Jews learned to read, write, and do basic arithmetic.

It's also a place of advanced theological study.

But The synagogue was also the central hub for legal matters and politics.

Most synagogues were built on a hill, often on the highest point of a town.

Many had a tall pole pointing into the sky.

It resembled a church steeple today.

And the whole point of the location and architecture of the synagogue was to make them stand out so that it would be easy to find.

How did the Jews go about their worship service?

I think you'll find this fascinating.

Worship was held every Saturday (Sabbath).

Their change of day didn't happen at midnight like ours.

Their days' changed at sundown.

So their Sabbath began on Friday at sundown and ended on Saturday at Sundown.

During their ~~Sabbath day~~ worship service, sections of the Hebrew Bible would be read.

That text of Scripture would then be taught and illustrated line by line.

How do we know this?

Because they followed the example that the Priest Ezra gave in Nehemiah.

Nehemiah 8:1—They asked the scribe Ezra to bring the book of the law of Moses that the Lord had given Israel.

Hebrew Bible - Torah - First 5 books of O.T.
Gen, Ex, Lev, Num, Deut

Nehemiah 8:2— ...the priest Ezra brought the law before the assembly of men, women, and all who could listen with understanding.

So the children were with the parents and the rest of the congregation.

Nehemiah 8:3— he read out of it from daybreak until noon ... All the people listened attentively to the book of the law.

Nehemiah 8:4— The scribe Ezra stood on a high wooden platform made for this purpose.

Nehemiah 8:5— Ezra opened the book in full view of all the people, since he was elevated above everyone. As he opened it, all the people stood up.

Sound familiar?

Ezra taught the Scripture expositionally.

The prophet Isaiah said the same thing—

Isaiah 28:13—The word of the Lord will come to them:

"Law after law, law after law,
line after line, line after line,
a little here, a little there,"

Wow, what a coincidence that our mission statement is nailed to the foyer wall,

"*Experiencing God... Verse by Verse.*"

After the Rabbi was done teaching, ^{IN THE SYNAGOGUE} they would pray and sing.

So all that to say this...As a visiting rabbi, Jesus would be invited to teach and preach in the local synagogue.

Matthew 4:23— Now Jesus began to go all over Galilee, teaching in their synagogues, preaching the good news of the Kingdom,

Preaching is different than teaching.

If teaching explains a message, then preaching proclaims it.

kērussō (*Kay-ru-so*) —it's the proclamation to herald or cry out, ^{A CERTAIN MESSAGE}

Now it's vital the message that a preacher preaches.

What's Jesus preaching?

Matthew 4:23— preaching the good news of the Kingdom,

Matthew's Gospel is written for Jewish Christians.

The lens through which he writes is that Jesus is King—that's Matt's focus.

Jesus has a kingdom, and He is indeed King.

The *good news of the Kingdom* is that the long-awaited Christ/the Messiah is finally here.

The one human ruler who is chosen and anointed by God Himself, would establish his rule, government, and administration on Earth.

The Kingdom of God means that there are no more politics.

There are no more elections, run-offs, ballot counting, or political debates.

There is no more finger-pointing and blame.

There's no such thing as left vs. right— *God's ways are up.*

God's rule, His ways are up.

God's governing principles are immersed in grace and truth.

Matthew 4:23— Now Jesus began to go all over Galilee, teaching in their synagogues, preaching the good news of the Kingdom, and healing every disease and sickness among the people.

We mentioned that Jesus was not limited in the location to where He was ministering.

Now we see that Jesus was not limited in His type of work.

Matthew 4:23— and healing every disease and sickness among the people.

Jesus didn't only heal a few people. He healed every disease.

Nothing was too complicated for Jesus.

So how can a man heal every every disease and sickness?

One of the ways in which Jesus demonstrates that He is God— is through healing and miracles.

KEYPOINT #1:

Jesus' miracles served as messianic credentials.

Messianic / Messiah / God's anointed Man

So, in other words, Jesus' miracles were verification of His divinity.

Now, this is a significant point to grasp this morning.

Apart from the reality that Jesus is God— nothing else matters.

We see Jesus back up His words with His supernatural works.

Matthew is exhibiting Jesus' kingly power.

Jesus' works prove that God has anointed him to be King over the Earth.

No sickness is too hard for Jesus to cure.

No problem is too difficult to relieve.

In the Kingdom of God, there are no hospitals.

For those of you who are medical doctors and nurses, sorry you're out of a job.

Now, why miracles? Why supernatural healing?

The NT displays the connection between the Kingdom of God and miracles.

They go hand in hand — two sides of the same coin.

Let me give you a couple of examples.

+ **Matthew 10:5**—Jesus sent out these twelve after giving them instructions: "Don't take the road that leads to the Gentiles, and don't enter any Samaritan town.

+ **Matthew 10:6**— Instead, go to the lost sheep of the house of Israel.

Matthew 10:7— As you go, proclaim/preach, 'The kingdom of heaven has come near.'

+ **Matthew 10:8**— ^{then} Heal the sick, raise the dead, cleanse those with leprosy, drive out demons.

Pause, because this is super cool.

Do you see the connection between Jesus' message and His miracles?

There is a correlation between the two that we don't want to miss here.

Let me give you another example.

Jesus was teaching the religious leaders and said this...

+ **Matthew 12:28**—If I drive out demons by the Spirit of God, then the Kingdom of God has come upon you.

In other words, now that Jesus is here—now that God walks on the Earth—everything changes.

Jesus is not only addressing human brokenness at its deepest level—

He's brought the cure.

Jesus is not only talking about it, because talk is cheap.

Jesus is the cure to human brokenness.

The cure is Himself within the Kingdom of God.

What's the result of God's Kingdom coming down from Heaven to Earth?

Matthew 4:24— Then *the news about ^{Jesus} him* spread throughout Syria. So they brought to him all those who were afflicted, those suffering from various diseases and intense pains, the demon-possessed, the epileptics, and the paralytics. And he healed them.

Matthew says that “the news spread.”

Wow, is that an understatement.

Can you imagine the confusion and frenzy— and then hope— that Jesus created.

Jesus didn't need social media.

This news spread so fast and wide that Matt says it reached Syria.

Syria is a Gentile region north of Galilee.

It's another 60 miles north of Capernaum.

That's a three to five-day walk if you're healthy.

Imagine how long it would take if you were traveling with people who are sick or lame.

Now, by Jesus healing Gentiles, Jesus is making a profound statement.

And the statement is this—

The Gospel is for everyone regardless of social status, race, language, and nationality.

Matthew 4:24— *So they brought to him all those who were afflicted.*

Anyone who had a physical sickness or mental illness—Jesus healed completely and totally.

Matthew 4:24— *those suffering from various diseases and intense pains,*

Anyone who had an incurable, ~~uncommon~~ disease —Jesus healed completely, totally, and instantly.

Matthew 4:24— *the demon-possessed, the epileptics, and the paralytics. And he healed them.*

Demon possession—Notice how Matthew distinguishes the spiritual disease of demon possession from humanity's physical and mental diseases.

Epilepsy (“those having seizures”)— It’s a common belief today for people to say that people were not demon-possessed in Scripture, but instead, they have epilepsy.

However, as we can see here, the people in the first century carefully distinguished between the two.

The third group was the paralytics, ~~a general term representing~~ ^{people} a wide range of physical ailments and crippling disabilities.

And because Jesus was able to heal every kind of sickness and disease—~~wholly~~ ~~and~~ instantaneously, verse 25 says.

Matthew 4:25— Large crowds followed him from Galilee, the Decapolis, Jerusalem, Judea, and beyond the Jordan.

Large Crowds— A vast mixed multitude of people.

It didn't matter what race, tribe, or tongue.

They all come to see Jesus.

Everyone has the same problem—sin.

Sin manifests itself out in many ways, but the root cause is sin—because we're all eventually going to die.

Decapolis— the name itself means ten cities = deca.

These ten cities are all Gentile cities.

The Decapolis is where Jesus healed a man full of demons—his name was Legion—after Jesus healed him, Jesus told him to go home.

He didn't want to. He wanted to stay with Jesus—for obvious reasons.

It just so happened that this [ex-demon-possessed man] became the first evangelist throughout the Decapolis.

He did such a good job of evangelizing that it set Jesus up for the supernatural feeding of the 15,000 Gentiles in Matthew 15.

Beyond the Jordan probably referred to areas south of *Decapolis* and east of *Jerusalem and Judea*.

These areas are outside the nation of Israel

Matthew gives us these details to show us the impact of Jesus' teaching, preaching and performing miracles.

PREACH

I want to wrap up today's sermon by talking about miracles.

Miracles from a Biblical perspective—not these *so called miracles* from self proclaimed faith healers. *today*

What *we* call miracles *today* are not the same as what we see throughout the gospels.

Let me confess to you that it grieves my soul and angers me when people today say that they are faith healers or apostles.

I didn't even know I had this *AMIST* in me until we preached through Mark's Gospel—and we discussed those healing narratives.

So over the past two years, I've had all this rattling around in my brain.

And it occurred to me as we studied this passage that if we don't have our theology *on center* with Biblical theology—when it comes to healings and miracles—we're going to have a big problem.

Does God still heal today, you bet—look at this!

James 5:13—*Is anyone among you suffering? He should pray. Is anyone cheerful? He should sing praises.*

James 5:14—*Is anyone among you sick? He should call for the elders of the church, and they are to pray over him, anointing him with oil in the name of the Lord.*

+ **James 5:15**— *The prayer of faith will save the sick person, and the Lord will raise him up; if he has committed sins, he will be forgiven.*

What's all the mean?

It means God will heal anyone anytime, anywhere—but only when He chooses to do so.

+ Let's not forget that the biggest miracle anyone can ever see is a changed life—when God turns a sinner into a saint.

If we don't understand why Jesus healed or why Jesus cast out demons, our theology becomes subjective.

It all becomes our opinion—splashed with a Bible verse taken out of context.

And no matter how sincere we are about it, we will be sincerely disappointed if we don't understand a Biblical understanding of miracles and supernatural healings.

There is a reason that when you study the book of Acts and look at the Epistles, healings and miracles become less and less.

Jesus gave the apostle Peter the power to heal.

Peter had so much supernatural healing power that his shadow would heal people. (Acts 5:15)

The apostle Paul also had healing power—healed the crippled.

The Lord Jesus gave Paul so much supernatural power that he's preaching one night, and he's preaching and preaching—for hours.

One guy sitting on the window ledge falls asleep while Paul's preaching—he hits the ground dead.

That's gonna stop a Bible study!

And yet, the Lord used Paul to bring this man back to life.

Pause... why did Peter and Paul [along with the select Apostles] have the power to do those miracles?

What's the reason? Let's start with why, why miracles?

Let me ask you this...

Why couldn't the apostle Paul heal himself?

Paul had several severe physical issues with his body.

Why couldn't Paul heal Timothy?

Why, instead, did Paul tell Timothy to drink a little wine for his stomach?

Which is a human remedy.

I ask these questions because there is a unique role of miracles in Scripture.

Even in the OT, miracles were ^{SPARSE} unique.

As a pastor friend of mine says, if miracles were normal, they would be called "normalcals."

Miracles are not normal—they are supernatural

And this supernatural power was given to only a select few for very specific reasons.

1. Moses and Joshua (65 years)
2. Elijah and Elisha (65 years) <Very specific time frame and purpose.>
3. Jesus and the Apostles (70 years total)

So out of all Biblical history, there are only about 200 years where God empowered certain men to perform miracles.

Back to the NT—all we have to do is read through the Epistles and see how miracles declined during the Apostolic age.

Where am I going with all this?

If we don't have a Biblical understanding of why Jesus healed in the NT, we will fill in the why with our own view.

And this is so dangerous.

And it becomes not only dangerous but wicked when you watch these so-called faith healers on TV or social media.

Because we start to ask questions like:

1. Why didn't God heal my spouse, my child, my friend, my neighbor?
2. Do I not have enough faith? After all these years of being a Christian?
3. Is God mad at me?
4. Am I not forgiven?
5. What am I doing wrong?
6. Am I even saved? — Are you punishing me?

And it's those kinds of questions within the diary of your darkest days to where you may be tempted to walk away from Jesus.

And I don't want you to walk away from Jesus.

So let me give you the short answer to why only a select few had the supernatural power to perform miracles and healings.

Starting with Moses, Joshua, Elijah, and Elisa—

These men performed miracles to prove that they were divinely appointed.

Miracles established credibility as one who speaks for God.

These men didn't speak about God like I am this morning.

God spoke directly through them—^{is they wrote it down} and that's why its called Scripture.

These men also point to Jesus.

They foreshadow Jesus.

Jesus finally shows up.
Now, why did Jesus perform miracles?

- so*
1. To also ^{continue} validate His Gospel message.
 2. To prove that Jesus is God.
 3. To establish the Kingdom of God *like we already discussed.*

But Israel didn't want the Kingdom.

They crucified the King.

When Israel turned their back on Jesus, there wasn't a reason for the miracles to continue.

The physical Kingdom of God is temporarily a spiritual Kingdom for all those who trust in Jesus.

That's why we see miracles and healings fade throughout the book of Acts and the Epistles.

And we fast forward to today.

Once again, why am I telling you all this?

Because I want to warn you of watching these self-proclaimed faith healers fill stadiums of people on TV.

They put on quite the show.

They say that miracles happen ^{All the time} at any time.

And they quote Scripture, and they pray in Jesus' name.

And they bring people on stage, lay hands on them, blow on them—everything is dramatic—and say they're healed.

As if they have supernatural power

But, here's my question—

Aren't these guys missing the whole point of why Jesus healed in the first place?

Are they ^{Announcing} here to announce the Kingdom of God?

Then what are they doing? What are they trying to prove?

So, there's the sheepdog in me.

If you start believing what they say, they will destroy you

I want to protect you from the wolves that will devour you, your family, and home.

Lastly, I also want to remind you ^{that when} that as you go through the diary of your darkest days, and you start to question's God's love for you.

Dear friend, you have to run to the cross.

God's love for you was proven there—His own son taking your place ^{God Himself} and conquering sin and death by walking about of His own grave.



PRAY/Benediction:

1 Thess 5:23-24

Now may the God of Peace Himself sanctify you completely. And may your whole spirit & soul & body be kept blameless at the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ. He who calls you is faithful. He will surely do it!

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Tom Nelson, Denton Bible Church. Matthew 4:12-25
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