

We just finished worshipping together through the “Sermon on the Mount” (5:1-7:29). While Jesus did come *“teaching...and proclaiming,”* He also came *“healing every kind of disease and every kind of sickness among the people”* (4:23-24).

The Cleanser Who Is Faithful to God’s Law (8:1-4)

8:1 *When Jesus came down from the mountain, large crowds followed Him.* 8:2 *And a leper came to Him and bowed down [προσκυνέω, “worshiped,” as in 2:2,8,11; 4:9,10] before Him, and said, “Lord [compare title w/ 4:7,10], if You are willing, You can make me clean.”* 8:3 *Jesus stretched out His hand and touched him, saying, “I am willing; be cleansed.” And immediately his leprosy was cleansed.* 8:4 *And Jesus said to him, “See that you tell no one; but go, show yourself to the priest and present the offering that Moses commanded, as a testimony to them.”*

Including the Excluded

- Leviticus 13-14 excludes the leper from the worship life (and therefore social life) of old covenant Israel.
- Leprosy weren’t *healed*; they were *cleansed*. In 11:5 the cleansing of lepers was a sign of the coming of the Messiah/Christ.

Grace, Mercy, and Obedience

- 8:4 highlights for us both Jesus’ adherence to the Law of Moses (5:17), but also His concern that the man be socially/religiously restored. The ritual would have taken eight days (Leviticus 14:8-10), and would have required a sacrifice be made in the temple in Jerusalem (remember that this is happening in Galilee).
- The verbal testimony of the leper wasn’t going to be as powerful as the testimony of the priest (according to the Law) that the man was cleansed of leprosy.
- Also, notice the progression:
gracious cleansing + obedience = testimony.
- Obedience doesn’t mean we do what we want or what makes us comfortable. It means obeying the Lord

Who saved you and claims you.
READ James 5:13-16 (see also Mark 6:13). Why don’t we do this? How is this different from what we usually do in praying for the sick?

The Will of God Is the Highest Consideration

- *“Lord, if you are willing”* (8:2) shows a faith that the Lord is powerful enough to cleanse. This faith is submitted to the will of the Lord, though.
READ 2 Corinthians 12:7-10.

The Healer Who Has All Authority (8:5-13)

8:5 *And when Jesus entered Capernaum, a centurion came to Him, imploring Him,* 8:6 *and saying, “Lord, my servant is lying paralyzed at home, fearfully tormented.”* 8:7 *Jesus said to him, “I will come and heal him.”* 8:8 *But the centurion said, “Lord, I am not worthy for You to come under my roof, but just say the word, and my servant will be healed.* 8:9 *For I also am a man under authority, with soldiers under me; and I say to this one, ‘Go!’ and he goes, and to another, ‘Come!’ and he comes, and to my slave, ‘Do this!’ and he does it.”* 8:10 *Now when Jesus heard this, He marveled and said to those who were following, “Truly I say to you, I have not found such great faith with anyone in Israel.* 8:11 *I say to you that many will come from east and west, and recline at the table with Abraham, Isaac and Jacob in the kingdom of heaven;* 8:12 *but the sons of the kingdom will be cast out into the outer darkness; in that place there will be weeping and gnashing of teeth.”* 8:13 *And Jesus said to the centurion, “Go; it shall be done for you as you have believed.” And the servant was healed that very moment.*

The Faith of the Enemy

- The centurion was a reminder of Rome’s rule and oppression over the Jewish people. Did this geopolitical reality block Jesus’ engagement with the centurion?
- Jesus’ acceptance of the Roman centurion and the shocking words of promise in 8:11-12 reveal God’s

ultimate global mission through His Son. This is Gospel.

Faith Makes Family

- God’s goal was never the blessing of a single nation or ethnicity. He makes a foundational promise to Abraham: “...in you all the families of the earth will be blessed” (Genesis 12:3). The apostle Paul calls this promise “*the Gospel*” (Galatians 3:8). The “Lamb” is “worthy” because He was “*slain, and purchased for God*” with His “*blood...from every tribe and tongue and people and nation*” (Revelation 5:9-10).
- Table fellowship in “*the kingdom of heaven*” with “*Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob*” will have nothing to do with ethnicity, but rather faith in Jesus (recall John the Baptist’s words in 3:9-10).¹ This table fellowship imagery is drawn from Isaiah 5:6, where the banquet is for “*all peoples.*”
- To be the people of God does not exclusively mean Jewishness.
- Those without faith in Jesus “*will be cast out into the outer darkness,*” regardless of their ethnicity or nationality.²

Faith in Jesus’ Power

- Jesus, as fully God, has authority over all things, including the brokenness in this sin-twisted world.
- Others had sought out Jesus for healing, but the centurion believes that physical nearness or contact are not necessary for Jesus to manifest His healing power.

¹ Even before this, it was Gentiles (non-Jews) who first welcomed and worshiped Jesus (2:1-11).

² “*Weeping and gnashing of teeth*” (8:12) will also occur in 13:42,50; 22:13; 24:51; 25:30.

The Restorer Who Is Near to His Servants (8:14-15)

8:14 *When Jesus came into Peter’s home, He saw his mother-in-law lying sick in bed with a fever. 8:15 He touched her hand, and the fever left her; and she got up and waited on Him.*

- That Israel’s Messiah/Christ would heal a leper, a Gentile (non-Jew), and a woman show His welcoming character.
- Note that service follows healing.

The Deliverer Who Fulfills the Prophets (8:16-17)

8:16 *When evening came, they brought to Him many who were demon-possessed; and He cast out the spirits with a word, and healed all who were ill. 8:17 This was to fulfill what was spoken through Isaiah the prophet [in Isaiah 53:4]: “He Himself took our infirmities and carried away our diseases.”*

Jesus Is the Point of the Old Testament

- Matthew’s Isaiah quote reminds us that Jesus is walking in the Book, fulfilling all of the O.T. in all He does.

Jesus Embraced the Humanity in Its Brokenness

- Jesus didn’t accept or merely empathize with the brokenness of this sin-twisted world. His actions show that He will ultimately correct it all in restoration and judgment.

Jesus’ Miracles Point to His Greater Work

- Matthew Henry (1662-1704) says that these stories teach us Jesus is “the great Healer of a diseased world.”
- The physical healings and cleansings accomplished by Jesus point to the eternal, perfect restoration and healing that is accomplished by faith-union with Christ. READ 1 Corinthians 15:54; Revelation 21:3-4.
- The “*signs...performed*” by Jesus were “*written so that you may believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God; and that believing you may have life in His name*” (John 20:30-31).