

Matthew – The King And His Kingdom
The Great Adventure
Notes For Session 9 – Chapter 8: The King's Power Demonstrated

Remember to ask the Holy Spirit to help reveal God's word to us.

Chapter 8 is the beginning of the Second Narrative

- A. It shows us the Power of the Kingdom – The power to keep the new law of love (the law of the New Kingdom).
- B. We will study Jesus' ministry in Galilee.
- C. 10 Miracles will take place in Chapters 8 and 9 – They will demonstrate Jesus' power over sickness, demons, nature, and over death itself.

T1. Versus 1 4; The Cleansing of the Leper

When Jesus came down from the mountain, great crowds followed him. And then a leper approached, did him homage, and said, "Lord, if you wish, you can make me clean." He stretched out his hand, touched him, and said, "I will do it. Be made clean." His leprosy was cleansed immediately. Then Jesus said to him, "See that you tell no one, but go show yourself to the priest, and offer the gift that Moses prescribed; that will be proof for them."

A. This helps us to understand what Jesus is trying to do in the New Covenant in the terms of piety. Jesus could have simply spoken and said, "Be clean." But, he reached out and he touched a leper. (In the old covenant, sin was the superior power. The holy person is defiled, and the defiled person is not sanctified. If you touched an unclean person, you became unclean yourself.)

B. Has it ever dawned on you that God was withholding in the Old Testament, and now we get all the goods in the New Testament? God was not withholding His mercy and His grace. God had to let Israel discover their real situation. They were growing up.

C. Old Ways

- 1) Even the name Pharisees speaks about them being separate from the people. The word "Pharisee" comes from "pharush," which means holiness by separation.
- 2) The problem in the OT was the force of their sin was a greater force than the sanctifying force of their righteousness. Therefore, the consequence was that God had to separate them to save them from sin (i.e., leprosy).
- 3) In the era Jesus is in, God's people can only be separate if they are separated from outsiders. You had to be careful whom you ate with and came in contact with.
- 4) The people were as careful in everyday life as the priests were in the temple.
- 5) However, they began to take pride in their separation. Therefore, they cannot be effective in reaching the world. How could they be a witness to the whole world and reconcile the world to God if you cannot even be with them. That is a major problem.
- 6) St. Augustine said, "The law was given so grace we'd seek, and grace was given so the law we'd keep."
- 7) St. Thomas described pride as disordered self-trust. When we are filled with pride, it is trusting in ourselves and it is not ordered correctly.
- 8) Today, we do not define our holiness based on whom we stay away from. That is Pharisaic thinking.

D. Jesus' Ways

- 1) For Jesus, holiness is mercy.
- 2) Mercy is God's greatest attribute. Why? Because the cross is his greatest mercy -- the full giving of himself.

- 3) We assume that leniency is mercy. This is our mistake. Mercy has nothing to do with letting people off the hook. Sometimes sickness, an accident, losing a job, just might be God's mercy (He might be saving us from our own destruction). God can use anything to wake us up to His love.
- 4) Per St. Augustine, leprosy was a sign of Mortal Sin, which cuts you off from the relationship of God. Venial Sin weakens the relationship with God.
- 5) When Jesus is touching the leper, He is reconciling the leper with the community. He had the leper go to the priests for official authorization.

E. The leper changes, but Jesus does not.

T2. Versus 5-13, The Healing of a Centurion's Servant

When he entered Capernaum, a centurion approached him and appealed to him, saying, "Lord, my servant is lying at home paralyzed, suffering dreadfully." He said to him, "I will come and cure him." The centurion said in reply, "Lord, I am not worthy to have you enter under my roof; only say the word and my servant will be healed. For I too am a person subject to authority, with soldiers subject to me. And I say to one, 'Go,' and he goes; and to another, 'Come here,' and he comes; and to my slave, 'Do this,' and he does it."

When Jesus heard this, he was amazed and said to those following him, "Amen, I say to you, in no one in Israel * have I found such faith. I say to you, many will come from the east and the west, and will recline with Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob at the banquet in the kingdom of heaven, but the children of the kingdom will be driven out into the outer darkness, where there will be wailing and grinding of teeth." And Jesus said to the centurion, "You may go; as you have believed, let it be done for you." And at that very hour (his) servant was healed.

A. This story represents true faith in Christ.

- 1) The Centurion's faith amazed Jesus. Why?
- 2) The Centurion had the right understanding of the nature of the Kingdom of God. He recognizes that Jesus has the authority and that all he had to do is speak. (verse 9)

B. This ties into the mass.

- 1) We use the words in verse 8 in every mass: "Lord I am not worthy to receive you, but only say the word and I will be healed."
- 2) We come to Jesus at Eucharist and we need cleansing.
- 3) The Eucharist brings healing into our lives. Just receiving the Eucharist is a forgiveness of venial sin per the Catechism 1394:

As bodily nourishment restores lost strength, so the Eucharist strengthens our charity, which tends to be weakened in daily life; and this living charity wipes away venial sins. By giving himself to us Christ revives our love and enables us to break our disordered attachments to creatures and root ourselves in him:

C. "Sit at table." – Alludes to a great messianic feast mentioned in the Old Testament (Isaiah 25:6-9)

- Jesus hints of the universal spread of the gospel to all the nations, which is a fulfillment of the third promise to Abraham. (Gen 12)
 - a) Land—fulfilled with Joshua taking the land
 - b) A royal kingdom—fulfilled in Samuel as God made a covenant with David as a royal kingdom was established
 - c) Worldwide blessing—through the ministry of Jesus

D. As the leper was a restoration of an Israelite, the Centurion is the restoration of someone outside of Israel; that is, a Gentile.

In the first two miracles, we see the restoration of an Israelite and a Gentile.

T3. Verses 14-15 – The Cure of Peter’s Mother-in-Law

“Jesus entered the house of Peter, and saw his mother-in-law lying in bed with a fever. He touched her hand, the fever left her, and she rose and waited on him.”

A. Lesson to be learned is that Jesus is healing/restoring people so that they can serve Him and to serve others. To do the work of the Kingdom.

B. Here is the purpose for miracles—not to show off, but so that we can serve.

C. MT Verse 16-17: “When it was evening, they brought him many who were possessed by demons, and he drove out the spirits by a word and cured all the sick, to fulfill what had been said by Isaiah the prophet: “He took away our infirmities and bore our diseases.””

- 1) Verse 17 quote comes from Isaiah 53:4 “Yet it was our infirmities that he bore, our sufferings that he endured, While we thought of him as stricken, as one smitten by God and afflicted.”
- 2) Isaiah 53 is the Suffering Servant Chapter, along with Isaiah 49. Done so that the suffering servant will be restored. That portion (Isaiah 53) better known as “The 4th Servant Song.”

D. Curing of Peter’s Mother-in-Law is the only healing that Jesus initiates. In all the other situations, it was in response to a petition.

T4. Verse 18-22 – The Would be Followers of Jesus

When Jesus saw a crowd around him, he gave orders to cross to the other side. A scribe approached and said to him, "Teacher, I will follow you wherever you go." Jesus answered him, "Foxes have dens and birds of the sky have nests, but the Son of Man * has nowhere to rest his head." Another of (his) disciples said to him, "Lord, let me go first and bury my father." But Jesus answered him, "Follow me, and let the dead bury their dead."

A. Jesus uses a title about Himself – “Son of Man.” He uses this more than any other title combined.

- 1) This means something to those of the first century; it is a hint of Daniel 7:13-14. Daniel talks about the Son of Man, which is the highest title of the Messiah in the first century. The Son of Man who’s Kingdom will never end.
- 2) Daniel has a vision in Chapter 8 where 4 beasts come out of the sea.
 - Those beasts stand for 4 countries; i.e., Babylon, Persia, Greece and Rome.
 - The sea stands for the nations.
 - Then, there comes the Son of Man.
- 3) Jesus made known the fact that He was God. He is using rabbinic ways of doing this by calling Himself the Son of Man (calling Himself the Messiah.)
 - There is only one point where Jesus is asked are you the Son of God? (Matthew 26:63) “But Jesus was silent. Then the high priest said to him, "I order you to tell us under oath before the living God whether you are the Messiah, the Son of God."
 - In most ways, Jesus is evasive, but in this one case when Caiaphas puts him under oath, Jesus says, “It is as you say”.

B. “Let the dead bury their dead”

- 1) Jesus is not condemning burying parents. He is making a point. The rabbis taught that there was one thing that took precedence over daily prayers; that is, burying a loved one (a corporal work of mercy). Jesus would never put down corporal works of Mercy. This is hyperbole. What Jesus is saying is that what He is doing in His Kingdom takes precedence over everything else. Follow me.
- 2) Shows how important the Kingdom is.

T5. Verses 23-27 – The Calming of the Storm at Sea

He got into a boat and his disciples followed him. Suddenly a violent storm came up on the sea, so that the boat was being swamped by waves; but he was asleep. They came and woke him, saying, "Lord, save us! We are perishing!" He said to them, "Why are you terrified, O you of little faith?" Then he got up, rebuked the winds and the sea, and there was great calm. The men were amazed and said, "What sort of man is this, whom even the winds and the sea obey?"

A. Shows His power over nature

B. Jesus is much like Jonah in the Old Testament. (Compare these versus to those in the Book of Jonah.) Alike in seven ways:

- 1) Both set sail in a boat
- 2) Both are caught in a storm
- 3) Both are found asleep
- 4) Both are accompanied by frightened sailors
- 5) Both sets of sailors call upon the Lord
- 6) Both are instrumental in bringing about a great calm
- 7) Both sets of sailors marveled at the outcome

T6. Versus 28-34 – The Healing of the Gadarene Demoniacs

"When he came to the other side, to the territory of the Gadarenes, two demoniacs who were coming from the tombs met him. They were so savage that no one could travel by that road. They cried out, "What have you to do with us, Son of God? Have you come here to torment us before the appointed time?" Some distance away a herd of many swine was feeding. The demons pleaded with him, "If you drive us out, send us into the herd of swine." And he said to them, "Go then!" They came out and entered the swine, and the whole herd rushed down the steep bank into the sea where they drowned. The swineherds ran away, and when they came to the town they reported everything, including what had happened to the demoniacs. Thereupon the whole town came out to meet Jesus, and when they saw him they begged him to leave their district.

A. Gadarene is located approximately 6 miles SE of the Sea of Galilee.

B. It was mostly a Gentile area.

C. The people assume what is taking place there as a threat.

D. In the Old Testament, beasts would rise from the sea (Daniel 7:1-3). Jesus is demonstrating his power and authority in the Kingdom over the beasts.

Conclusion:

A. Jesus demonstrates His authority in the Kingdom over sickness, uncleanness, nature, and even over death itself.

B. Jesus gives us authority to go out in the world and to wonderful things.

C. Chapter 8 is the demonstration of the power of God.