

02/22/2026

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MATTHEW

Chapter 08:01-13

BACKING IT UP

I. INTRODUCTION

- A. Jesus has just delivered the Sermon on the Mount and laid forth for the disciples a very high standard by which they should live their lives: **Mat 5:20** **"For I say to you that unless your righteousness surpasses *that* of the scribes and Pharisees, you will not enter the kingdom of heaven.**
1. Now the logical question would be, "How can ANYONE live up to this high of a standard if even the Scribes and Pharisees – could not?"
 - a) Remember **Mat 7:28-29** **When Jesus had finished these words, the crowds were amazed at His teaching; (29) for He was teaching them as *one* having authority, and not as their scribes.**
 - (1) But they had other teachers around them, and those teachers were hypocrites! They didn't live what they preached.
 - (2) So, Jesus is going to prove that He has the power to back up his statements.
 2. Matthew **Chapters 8** and **9** contain 12 miracles by the same person who just gave them the Sermon on the Mount - Jesus! There are 6 contained in each chapter.

II. **MAT 8:1 WHEN JESUS CAME DOWN FROM THE MOUNTAIN, LARGE CROWDS FOLLOWED HIM.**

- A. Pastor Chuck Smith used to say, it is not hard to draw great crowds. All you have to do is bring the circus to town and the crowd will show up.
1. But the problem is you have to give them a bigger and better show each night to keep them!
 - a) Jesus, is the newest and best "show" in town right now, so the **"large crowds follow Him."**
 - (1) Among other (not so selfless reasons), they want to see if He can back up what He says.
 - (a) By the way – the crowds will diminish, but not because He fails in any way.
 - (b) The crowds always diminish when there is work to be done!

III. **MAT 8:2 AND A LEPER CAME TO HIM AND BOWED DOWN BEFORE HIM, AND SAID, "LORD, IF YOU ARE WILLING, YOU CAN MAKE ME CLEAN."**

- A. This man was not just a leper on the outside, but he was a leper on the inside also!
1. OK Pastor, What do I mean by that?
 - a) Well ,you see, when he was suspected of this disease, he was isolated for

14 days (according to **Leviticus 14**) while the priest determined if it was indeed leprosy.

- (1) After that if he was diagnosed positive – he was never to touch anyone again! In fact he was to shout out “UNCLEAN”, “UNCLEAN”, if anyone came even close to him.
 - (a) That means that this man had to watch his children grow up from a distance. He could not hug them or his wife, and he could not even eat with them. They would have to set his food out like a dog, and he would have to come along when it was safe and eat alone.
 - (i) He had not touched or been touched by anyone in a very long time!
 - (a) So, he carried the psychological scars of this disease as well as the physical scars.

"Don't call me a leper." - People with leprosy say the "L" word hurts! They say words and labels are as painful as leprosy's scars - sometimes even more so. "Please don't call us lepers," they say. The word carries too much ugliness. The word has been used by misinformed people to portray us as unlovable, dirty, dangerous, and even sinful.

http://www.christianity.com/partner/Article_Display_Page/0..PTID96718|CHID226220|CIID1090886.00.html

IV. **MAT 8:3 JESUS STRETCHED OUT HIS HAND AND TOUCHED HIM, SAYING, "I AM WILLING; BE CLEANSED." AND IMMEDIATELY HIS LEPROSY WAS CLEANSED.**

- A. Jesus was “willing” to touch him!
 1. In one single touch Jesus healed him physically, emotionally, psychologically, and even socially!
 - a) He gave this man back his life and his family, and even his faith in God which had no doubt been tested.

V. **MAT 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."**

- A. I think it is very important that Jesus told the man to go back to the priest and “verify” the miracle!
 1. This would be the equivalent of going back to the Dr. that diagnosed the disease and having a complete blood workup and X-rays to validate that you have indeed been healed!
 2. The gospel of **Mark** tells us that the man was so excited that he could not contain himself.
 - a) **Mar 1:40-45** And a leper *came to Jesus, beseeching Him and falling on his knees before Him, and saying, "If You are willing, You can make me clean." (41) *Moved with compassion*, Jesus stretched out His hand and touched him, and *said to him, "**I am willing; be cleansed.**" (42) Immediately the leprosy left him and he was cleansed. (43) And He sternly warned him and immediately sent him away, (44) and He *said to him, "**See that you say nothing to anyone; but go, show yourself to the priest and offer for your**

cleansing what Moses commanded, as a testimony to them." (45)

But he went out and began to proclaim it freely and to spread the news around, to such an extent that Jesus could no longer publicly enter a city, but stayed out in unpopulated areas; and they were coming to Him from everywhere.

(1) It is never a good idea to go against the advice of the Lord, but I think we can at least understand this man's excitement!

VI. MAT 8:5-9 AND WHEN JESUS ENTERED CAPERNAUM, A CENTURION CAME TO HIM, IMPLORING HIM, (6) AND SAYING, "LORD, MY SERVANT IS LYING PARALYZED AT HOME, FEARFULLY TORMENTED." (7) JESUS *SAID TO HIM, "I WILL COME AND HEAL HIM." (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. (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*."

- A. This man was in the Roman military. He was a Centurion, meaning he was captain over 100 men! - thus the title - Centurion
1. So, on a daily basis he commanded 100 men for the Roman government.
 - a) The Gospel of Luke gives a little more insight into what kind of man this Centurion was: **Luk 7:2-5 And a centurion's slave, who was highly regarded by him, was sick and about to die. (3) When he heard about Jesus, he sent some Jewish elders asking Him to come and save the life of his slave. (4) When they came to Jesus, they earnestly implored Him, saying, "He is worthy for You to grant this to him; (5) for he loves our nation and it was he who built us our synagogue."**
 2. This man understood "chain of command". He humbled himself before the Lord without undermining His authority.
 - a) You see he knew what it meant to have men under him that simply did what they were told by their commanding officer – without question!
 - b) He also knew Jesus was under the authority of His Father, and that if He commanded the servant to be well – all the powers that were under Jesus' authority - would have to obey!
 - (1) Jesus was VERY impressed.

VII. MAT 8:10-13 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. (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; (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." (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.

- A. Jesus gives the people a glimpse of what **Isa 42:6-7** had already spoken of... **I the**

LORD have called thee in righteousness, and will hold thine hand, and will keep thee, and give thee for a covenant of the people, for a light of the Gentiles; (7) To open the blind eyes, to bring out the prisoners from the prison, [and] them that sit in darkness out of the prison house.

1. The Gentiles - Isaiah had spoken of were the same as those from the “east and west” that Jesus speaks of!
 - a) The faith of this “Gentile” Centurion was greater than what Jesus had seen in all of Jerusalem. Here referred to as “The sons of the kingdom” – the Jews!
 - (1) And he makes it clear that is not your religion or nationality that gets you into heaven – it is your faith!
 - (a) And that faith must be properly placed – in Christ!

VIII. CONCLUSION

- A. We have only seen 2 miracles – so far – yet He has already “blessed those who were poor in spirit, those who mourned, and those who were gentle!
 1. Faith in Jesus is faith that is properly placed.