

I. The King is revealed (1-3)
II. The Kingdom is revealed (4-10)

A. In Principle (4-7)

Matthew 8

B. In Power (8-10)

In chapters 8-10 we move from discourse to action. Jesus is going to demonstrate that the Kingdom has come in power with his baptism.

1. The authority of the King (8-9)

Jesus' authority is here revealed in his healing powers. This authority is not well received by the religious leaders but the compassionate heart of Jesus linking him with the people is a powerful testimony to the nature of the Kingdom.

a. Is revealed by Jesus' actions (8:1-9:27)

- Jesus' healing ministry was dramatic, varied, widespread, and symbolic of his authority as King.
- Note that in Jesus' day there was not a lot of preaching about healing (as in some circles today) but it took place in dramatic fashion.
- Matthew groups these accounts in thematic not chronological order to make a point.

1. Authority over disease (8:1-22)

a. The power - he removes illnesses (8:1-15)

Jesus starts by touching the outcasts of his society with the power of God.

1. Physical uncleanness. (8:1-4)

1 And when He had come down from the mountain, great multitudes followed Him. 2 And behold, a leper came to Him, and bowed down to Him, saying, "Lord, if You are willing, You can make me clean." 3 And He stretched out His hand and touched him, saying, "I am willing; be cleansed." And immediately his leprosy was cleansed. 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, for a testimony to them."

- It was not permitted to touch a leper (Lev.5:3) but Jesus does.
- Jesus is concerned that the healed man respect the demands of the law (Lev.14:1-32). Jesus' concern for not telling others is common at this point in his ministry and may have to do with the desire to bear testimony to the priests before anyone else.

2. Ethnic uncleanness. (8:5-13)

5 And when He had entered Capernaum, a centurion came to Him, entreating Him, 6 and saying, “Lord, my servant is lying paralyzed at home, suffering great pain.” 7 And He said to him, “I will come and heal him.” 8 But the centurion answered and 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, too, 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}.” 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. 11 And I say to you, that many shall come from east and west, and recline {at the table} with Abraham, and Isaac, and Jacob, in the kingdom of heaven; 12 but the sons of the kingdom shall be cast out into the outer darkness; in that place there shall be weeping and gnashing of teeth.” 13 And Jesus said to the centurion, “Go your way; let it be done to you as you have believed.” And the servant was healed that {very} hour.

- It was not permitted to associate with gentiles but Jesus does. Matthew often emphasizes the inclusion of Gentiles.
- Jesus again points out the remarkable faith of a Gentile in contrast to the Jews.

3. Gender uncleanness. (8:14-15)

14 And when Jesus had come to Peter’s home, He saw his mother-in-law lying sick in bed with a fever. 15 And He touched her hand, and the fever left her; and she arose, and waited on Him.

- It was not permitted to touch a woman in this way but Jesus does.
- “Waited on Him” is the same term later used of deacons.

b. The prophecy - he bore our illnesses (8:16-17)

16 And when evening had come, they brought to Him many who were demon-possessed; and He cast out the spirits with a word, and healed all who were ill 17 in order that what was spoken through Isaiah the prophet might be fulfilled, saying, “ *He Himself took our infirmities, and carried away our diseases.*”

- The prophecy from Isaiah is used in two contexts: 1) atonement for sin (1 Pet.2:24), 2) healing of physical illness.
- The Hebrew text renders “infirmities” as “illnesses” while the LXX uses “sins”. Matthew offers his own paraphrase of the Hebrew text.
- The idea seems to be that Jesus was willing to be made unclean so that we could be clean.

c. The point - we are to follow him. (8:18-22)

- The point of the healing miracles is not primarily focused on social welfare but on establishing the authority of Jesus.
- The two incidents that follow illustrate this point by showing how it can be recognized but not fully understood.

1. Following Jesus means we may be last. (8:18-20)

18 Now when Jesus saw a crowd around Him, He gave orders to depart to the other side. 19 And a certain scribe came and said to Him, “Teacher, I will follow You wherever You go.” 20 And Jesus said to him, “The foxes have holes, and the birds of the air {have} nests; but the Son of Man has nowhere to lay His head.”

- A Scribe (disciple in the broadest sense) gets the point - Jesus’ healings are to establish his authority.
- The Scribe is not however aware of the potential cost of following Jesus.
- Following Jesus means not only bearing the burdens of others but it also means living with material and physical insecurity.

2. Following Jesus means He comes first. (8:21-22)

21 And another of the disciples said to Him, “Lord, permit me first to go and bury my father.” 22 But Jesus said to him, “Follow Me; and allow the dead to bury their own dead.”

- Another disciple makes the mistake of thinking that following Jesus can take place after he takes care of important family affairs.
- Those who are spiritually dead can care for the physically dead.

2. Authority over Cosmic powers (8:23-34)

a. Nature (8:23-27)

23 And when He got into the boat, His disciples followed Him. 24 And behold, there arose a great storm in the sea, so that the boat was covered with the waves; but He Himself was asleep. 25 And they came to {Him,} and awoke Him, saying, “Save {us,} Lord; we are perishing!” 26 And He said to them, “Why are you timid, you men of little faith?” Then He arose, and rebuked the winds and the sea; and it became perfectly calm. 27 And the men marveled, saying, “What kind of a man is this, that even the winds and the sea obey Him?”

- The disciples, in following Jesus, are quickly in deep water and afraid.
- Jesus is there to protect them.

- The disciples got the point when they marveled not only at what Jesus did but at who he was.

b. Demons (8:28-34)

28 And when He had come to the other side into the country of the Gadarenes, two men who were demon-possessed met Him as they were coming out of the tombs; {they were} so exceedingly violent that no one could pass by that road. 29 And behold, they cried out, saying, “What do we have to do with You, Son of God? Have You come here to torment us before the time?” 30 Now there was at a distance from them a herd of many swine feeding. 31 And the demons {began} to entreat Him, saying, “If You are {going to} cast us out, send us into the herd of swine.” 32 And He said to them, “Begone!” And they came out, and went into the swine, and behold, the whole herd rushed down the steep bank into the sea and perished in the waters. 33 And the herdsmen ran away, and went to the city, and reported everything, including the {incident} of the demoniacs. 34 And behold, the whole city came out to meet Jesus; and when they saw Him, they entreated {Him} to depart from their region.”

- Jesus authority is not only over physical but also over spiritual forces that threaten us.
- While the disciples in the boat were confused about the identity of Jesus, the demons were not.
- The community sends Jesus away because they are only concerned about the loss of the livestock and fails to appreciate the authority of Jesus.

Insights and Lessons from this chapter

- Jesus’ spiritual authority is displayed in ways that suggest to us that “natural” circumstances of suffering are related to spiritual issues.
- Following Jesus must be treated as the first priority in life and those who follow him should not be surprised by hardship.
- A question that we must answer is this – Have we adapted a secular or a spiritual view of reality?