Study on Matthew 8:1-17

**\***Jesus went to Peter’s home, **and there he saw Peter’s mother-in-law sick in bed with fever. He touched her hand, and she got up and began to wait on him.**

When evening came, people brought to Jesus many who had demons in them. **Jesus drove out the evil spirits with a word and healed all those who were sick**. He did this to make what the prophet Isaiah had said come true, “He himself took our sickness and carried away our diseases”*(Matt. 8:14-17).*

**\***Jesus answered, “**Go back and tell John what you are hearing and seeing:** **the blind can see, the lame can walk, those who suffer from dreaded skin-diseases are made clean, the deaf hear**, the dead are brought back to life, and the Good News is preached to the poor. How happy are those who have no doubts about me” *(Matt. 11:4-6).*

**\*“The blind will be able to see,**

 **and the deaf will hear.**

**The lame will leap and dance,**

 **And those who cannot speak will**

 **shout for joy”** *(Isaiah 35:5-6).*

**\*I heard a loud voice speaking from the throne: “Now God’s home is with mankind! He will live with them, and they shall be his people. God himself will be with them, and he will be their God. He will wipe away all tears from their eyes. There will be no more death, no more grief or crying or pain….”** *(Rev. 21:3-4).*

DVD Spot: **Matthew DVD, *the visual Bible*** <https://youtu.be/PmK9Mvsyfqs?t=2902>

\*Matthew 8:1-17 *(48’ 22’’- 53’ 55”)*

Discussion Questions:

1) What do you think of the healing miracles of Jesus in our focus verses for today from Matthew’s Gospel: the healings of the leper, the centurion’s servant, Peter’s mother, the demon possessed, and “all who were sick”?

Discuss our Bible reading among yourselves.

2) Why do you think that Jesus did miracles of healing?

What were his miracles “signs” of? *Read Matt. 11:4-6; Isaiah 35:5-6; Matt. 16:13-16; John 20:31-32.* What did Jesus’ miracles point forward to? *Read Rev.21:1-5.*

3) Have you ever thought to yourself:

**“Well, Jesus healed people back then. Surely he can still heal people now…. So why isn’t he healing me, or my loved one, as I cry out to him for healing? Have I not got enough faith, or doesn’t he think that I deserve healing or that my loved one deserves healing?”**

Talk about situations in your life, or in the life of loved ones, when you have ever wondered this. What conclusions did you come to?

4) What does God encourage us, His children, to do in time of sickness and suffering? Reflect on the following:

**\* Jesus encourages us to pray** **to our dear Father**

**\* Pray “Your will be done”**

**\* Ask for strength to cope**

**\* Pray that God will use your** **situation for His glory**

5) The writer of the letter to the Hebrews urges us always to keep our eyes on Jesus *(Heb. 12:1-2).* How does that help us in times of sickness and suffering?

Quotes:

The following are quotes from Sunday’s message on the theme: “When sickness or suffering comes our way….”

**\*You know, it’s easy to watch this part of Matthew’s Gospel, *as we have just done,* and think to ourselves:**

**“Well, Jesus healed people back then. Surely he can still heal people now…. So why isn’t he healing me, or my loved one, as I cry out to him for healing? Have I not got enough faith, or doesn’t he think that I deserve healing or that my loved one deserves healing?”**

**\*Firstly it is important to note that Jesus’ healings were signs from God as to who Jesus was: that he was God’s “Messiah”, *God’s special King.***Matthew makes this clear in chapter eleven of this Gospel when he relates what Jesus said to the disciples of John the Baptist when John sent them to ask Jesus whether he really was the Messiah *(Matt. 11:13; cf. Isaiah 35:5-6).*

**In the first instance, that’s why God empowered Jesus to do these miracles: to point people to who he was….**

**\*Secondly though, *and perhaps just as importantly,* Jesus’ healings are pointers to what the Kingdom of God will be like in all its fullness: that in God’s Kingdom *to come* there will be no more sickness, or suffering, or grief, or death…** *(cf. John Chapman’s book, Making the most of the rest of your life).*

**\*It is only when the Kingdom of God breaks into this world *as the Gospel is proclaimed*, that there are healings. God can, and does, heal in this day and age, but it seems to me that often He only heals when healings promote the spread of the Gospel…. Witness the fact that in the New Testament, Peter, Philip, and Paul for example are empowered by God to do “signs and great miracles” when they preach the gospel in places for the first time…** *(Acts 3:1-9; 8:5,6,13; 9:32-35, 36-43; 14:3; 16:25-34)*

**\*So let’s get back to our question for today: “When sickness and suffering comes our way, or the way of a loved one, what should we do?” Jesus encourages us always to pray to our dear Father in heaven, and to ask Him to change our situation** *(Matthew 7:7-11).*

**Pray always, “Your will be done”, as we go to our Father and humbly ask for healing or for God to change our situation. After all, this is what Jesus taught us to say as we pray!** *(Matt. 6:9-10; 26:39-42).*

**Ask for strength from God to cope with your situation, *especially if God doesn’t dramatically change your situation in answer to your prayer*** *(1 Cor. 10:12-13).***Ask God to fill you with your Spirit, so that you will be strong in your faith in God as your Loving Father and in Jesus as your Saviour and Lord, as you face the situation that you are in** *(Luke 11:13; Eph. 1:15-20).*

**Pray that God will use your situation to His glory: that, for example*,* through your sufferings *and the way that you bear your suffering with faith* you may have the opportunity to witness to others and to enable others stop and reflect about their relationship with God** *(cf. John 9:3).*

**\*Always keep your eyes on Jesus, and his cross, rather than on your suffering and the suffering of others** *(Hebrews 12:1-3****).* If you don’t, you can get lost in anger and frustration and doubt.**

**\*How should we respond when sickness and suffering come our way? Well, in the final analysis, I think God wants us to simply trust Him: to trust that He has us in his care, and that He is working for good in our life, *and through us, for the good of those around us*** *(Rom. 8:28).* **As Helmut Thielicke famously**

**put it:**

**“I don’t know the meaning, but I trust the one who does”**