

16. Jesus, the Master of all - Part 1

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For the last 11 studies of the Sermon on the Mount which is the pinnacle of the sermons that have ever preached to mankind, we've learned many valuable precepts and principles of Christianity from the lips of Jesus Himself.

After the mountain top experience from the Sermon on the Mount by Jesus, we must come down to valley where the real lives are waiting for us. We'd like to stay on the mountain top where there is no problem. However, it is the time when we go through the valley, we get to learn more about the practicality of our Christian living and about our Savior. It is the time when we get to have the fruits in our lives. It has been said that the fruit doesn't grow on the mountain top, but in the valley.

After giving these valuable precepts and principles to us from the mountain side with the complete authority, Jesus came down to the valley area where He demonstrates His authority over all areas - sickness, law, family relationship, nature and even demonic forces against us. These miracles were Christ's credentials, proving that He is God and He was sent of God the Father.

A. AGAINST SICKNESS #1 - LEPROSY

Matthew 8:1-2 When He had come down from the mountain, great multitudes followed Him. And behold, a leper came and worshiped Him, saying, "Lord, if You are willing, You can make me clean."

The leprosy was an untreatable blood disease that required many restrictions from the lepers to others. They had to live in isolation without means of earning anything, completely depending on their families for food and any necessity items. Because leprosy kills nerve systems in our bodies, anyone who has leprosy can hurt themselves without realizing it. Eventually, those open wounds or burned limbs fall off from their bodies as sore coming out.

The condition of leprosy is a model of sin and its effects. Our sins cut off our relationship from our God. At the beginning, we might be uncomfortable to sin against God. But as we sin against Him continuously, our conscience gets seared and could care less about what God wants in our lives.

Lepers were universally scorned by society and religion. Lepers were especially despised by the Rabbis, who saw their state as the particular judgment of God.

Please notice what the leper does and says to Jesus.

- 1) He worshiped Jesus - Realizing and acknowledging that Jesus as God.
- 2) He realizes that Jesus CAN heal him, it is a matter of His willingness.

He didn't demand what Jesus is supposed to do, but he simply left it at the hands of Jesus. That is a perfect way to pray to God - leaving everything in the hands of God.

This leper wants more than healing. He wants cleansing, not only from the leprosy, but from all its debilitating effects on his life and soul. In addition, this is the first place in the Gospel where Jesus is called, 'Lord'-'kurios' in Greek, a term that was particularly meaningful in light of the fact that the word 'Lord' was used to translate the Hebrew word 'Yahweh.'

Matthew 8:3-4 Then Jesus put out His hand and touched him, saying, "I am willing; be cleansed." Immediately his leprosy was cleansed. And Jesus said to him, "See that you tell no one; but go your way, show yourself to the priest, and offer the gift that Moses commanded, as a testimony to them."

This is a bold and compassionate touch from Jesus. It was against the ceremonial law to touch a leper, which made the touch all the more meaningful to the afflicted man who had been in isolation for a long time from anyone touching him. Of course, as soon as Jesus touched him, he was no longer a leper.

The Pharisees often accused Jesus that He was against the Mosaic Law, but Jesus was telling this man to go do what the law says.

Matthew 5:17 "Do not think that I came to destroy the Law or the Prophets. I did not come to destroy but to fulfill."

When Jesus told people not to talk about Him, they talked about Him. But when Jesus tells us to tell the whole world about the salvation of Jesus Christ, we don't tell them. Maybe Jesus should have used reverse psychology: "Guys, don't tell anyone about how to get saved through Me." Everyone who heard would go out and tell everyone. By now, the whole world would have been evangelized for fifty times.

B. AGAINST SICKNESS #2 - PALSY

Matthew 8:5-6 Now when Jesus had entered Capernaum, a centurion came to Him, pleading with Him, saying, "Lord, my servant is lying at home paralyzed, dreadfully tormented."

Here we have a Gentile coming to Christ for help. There are two instances in Matthew of gentiles coming to Christ, here and in 15:21–28. Note that in both cases Christ healed at a distance.

The word 'servant' used here is actually for a child slave in Greek. I believe that the Centurion had a very tender heart to care for a child slave when he could just kill that slave without a blink in his eye.

Matthew 8:7-9 And Jesus said to him, "I will come and heal him." The centurion answered and said, "Lord, I am not worthy that You should come under my roof. But only speak a word, and my servant will be healed. For I also am a man under authority, having soldiers under me. And I say to this one, 'Go,' and he goes; and to another, 'Come,' and he comes; and to my servant, 'Do this,' and he does it."

The centurion fully understands that Jesus' healing power was not some sort of magic trick that required the magician's presence. The centurion also shows great sensitivity to Jesus, in that he wants to spare Jesus the awkward challenge of whether or not to enter a Gentile's house - as well as the time and trouble of travel.

Would Jesus have entered a Gentile's house? Yes, it was completely against Jewish custom, but not against God's law. We must remember that at the foot of the Cross it is a leveled ground.

Matthew 8:10-13 When Jesus heard it, He marveled, and said to those who followed, "Assuredly, I say to you, I have not found such great faith, not even in Israel! And I say to you that many will come from east and west, and sit down with Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob in the kingdom of heaven. But the sons of the kingdom will be cast out into outer darkness. There will be weeping and

gnashing of teeth." Then Jesus said to the centurion, "Go your way; and as you have believed, so let it be done for you." And his servant was healed that same hour.

This was an earth-shattering idea to many of the Jewish people of Jesus' day. Jesus reminds his Jewish listeners that just as the Gentile's racial identity is no automatic bar to the kingdom, and their racial identity is no guarantee of the kingdom.

I don't believe that it only limits the Jewish religious leaders. I find many religious leaders including those who are in Christianity in America will have a rude awakening in someday. God will judge the His own house first before He does the others.

1 Peter 4:17 For the time has come for judgment to begin at the house of God; and if it begins with us first, what will be the end of those who do not obey the gospel of God?

C. AGAINST SICKNESS #3 - FEVER & OTHER SICKNESS

Matthew 8:14-15 Now when Jesus had come into Peter's house, He saw his wife's mother lying sick with a fever. So He touched her hand, and the fever left her. And she arose and served them.

This is the only recorded mistake Jesus made. Healing a mother-in-law. Just a kidding.

This clearly establishes the fact that Peter was married. The Roman Catholic church teaches that all priests must be celibate and unmarried, but the one they would call the first and greatest pope was certainly married.

Peter's mother-in-law shows a fitting response of those who have been touched by Jesus' power – she immediately begins to serve. Oh, how we should learn from her!

Matthew 8:16-17 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 sick, that it might be fulfilled which was spoken by Isaiah the prophet, saying: "He Himself took our infirmities And bore our sicknesses."

Matthew was quoting Isaiah 53:4. Some Bible teachers believe that God's healing is no longer apply in modern day. I don't see anywhere in the Bible that says He stops doing it. God still heals people. Whom He chooses to heal now in this life is up to the sovereignty of God, not anyone else. We can demand all we want, but it is up to Him.

We tend to come up with some formulas we try to find in the Bible. By doing this, it sounds like we are trying to put God in our box. A fat chance!

This section of Matthew shows four different people being healed, each one different from the other.

1) Different people were healed:

- A Jew with no social or religious privileges.
- A Gentile member of the army occupying and oppressing Israel.
- A woman, related to one of Jesus' devoted followers.
- Unnamed multitudes.

2) Their requests were made in different ways:

- A direct request from the sufferer, made in his own faith.
- A request from one man for another, made in faith on behalf of a suffering man.

- No request made because Jesus came to the sufferer, so there was no evidence of faith from the healed.
- Sufferers that were brought to Jesus, with different kinds of faith.

3) Jesus used different methods to heal:

- Jesus used a touch that was forbidden.
- Jesus used a word spoken from afar.
- Jesus used a tender touch.
- Jesus used a variety of unnamed methods.

D. THE COST OF DISCIPLESHIP

Matthew 8:18-20 And when Jesus saw great multitudes about Him, He gave a command to depart to the other side. Then a certain scribe came and said to Him, "Teacher, I will follow You wherever You go." And Jesus said to him, "Foxes have holes and birds of the air have nests, but the Son of Man has nowhere to lay His head."

With the miracles associated with the ministry of Jesus, following Him might have seemed more "glamorous" than it really was. Jesus may have received many spontaneous offers like this. Jesus didn't tell the man, "No, you can't follow Me." But He told him the truth, without painting a glamorized version of what it like to follow Him.

This is exactly the opposite of the technique used by many evangelists today, but Jesus wanted the man to know what it would really be like.

I feel the same way. A friend of mine who is a pastor told me that born-again Christians should have many kids that we can overpower other religions in numbers. It is easy for him to say, since he is not the one who gets pregnant. I disagree with him. Just because we have many kids, that does not guarantee that they will grow up to be godly born-again Christians either. God didn't use mass multitude to accomplish any feat. As a matter of facts, in most cases, He did everything with one man or one woman whose hearts are loyal to Him.

Matthew 8:21-22 Then another of His disciples said to Him, "Lord, let me first go and bury my father." But Jesus said to him, "Follow Me, and let the dead bury their own dead."

It sounds very harsh for Jesus to say this. Actually, this man did not ask for permission to dig a grave for his deceased father. He wanted to remain in his father's house and care for him until the father died. This was obviously an indefinite period, which could drag on and on.

Jesus clearly states the principle that family obligations - or any other obligation - must not be put ahead of following Jesus.

E. APPLICATIONS

1) By the sovereignty of God, He chooses whom He is going to heal while we are on this earth.

Just because some of us are not healed by the power of God, that doesn't mean that He doesn't love us. It is His sovereignty.

2) You may feel unworthy to come to God because of whatever you have done. Jesus wants to touch you, forgive you and accept you into His kingdom.

There is no sin too big that God cannot forgive, there is no pit too deep God cannot reach down to rescue us.

3) God should be our first priority in our hearts and in our lives.
God will not have any other competitors in us.