

Matthew 8-12

by Chuck Smith

Jesus demonstrates his power to heal and forgive sins as he ministers in Galilee.

Duration: 1:02:38

Scripture: Matthew 8, Matthew 9:9, Matthew 11:28-30, Matthew 16:24, Matthew 18:3

Topics: "Jesus Teachings", "Faith And Trust"

Description

This sermon delves into the teachings and miracles of Jesus in Matthew's Gospel, Chapter 8, focusing on the compassion and power of Jesus displayed through healing the sick, cleansing the lepers, raising the dead, and preaching the gospel. It emphasizes the importance of coming to Jesus for rest, learning from Him, and finding peace for our souls. The sermon also highlights the need to prioritize Jesus above all else, even family, and the significance of having faith in Him despite challenges and persecutions.

Transcript

So let's turn now in our Bibles to Matthew's Gospel, Chapter 8, as we continue our journey through the Word from Genesis to Revelation, now into the New Testament, exciting times as we study the New Testament together. In Chapter 5, we read, seeing the multitudes, he went up into a mountain and when he had sat down, his disciples came unto him and he taught them saying. And thus we have what is known as the Sermon on the Mount.

He had gone into the mountain. So Chapter 8, the Sermon on the Mountain is over. And so when he was come down from the mountain, great multitudes followed him.

We don't know but what just the disciples were with him there on the mountain, but as he comes down, again, the great multitudes following Jesus. Behold, there came a leper and worshiped him saying, Lord, if you will, you can make me clean. Really, if you are willing, is the Lord willing to help you? Is the Lord willing to heal you? And Jesus here responds by showing that he indeed was willing.

Jesus put forth his hand and touched him. Now, according to the law of the leper in the Old Testament, you weren't to touch a person who had leprosy. And if you did touch a person that had leprosy, you would be considered unclean.

And you would have to go through this process of examination to make sure that you didn't contract this loathsome disease. So Jesus, though, reached forth his hand and touched him. I wonder how long this

fellow had gone without being touched by a loving hand.

And here he is with Jesus saying, Lord, if you will, you could make me clean. And here Jesus is touching the fellow's hand and reaching out to him. I will, Jesus said, be thou clean.

And immediately his leprosy was cleansed. So often, when we pray for healing, we do pray, Lord, if it is your will, we ask that you will heal, we ask that you will help. And it is always comforting to know that he is willing.

I will, he said, be thou cleansed. And immediately, his leprosy left him. Jesus said to him, see that you tell no man, but go your way, show yourself to the priest and offer the gift that Moses commanded for a testimony unto them.

Here's an interesting thing. Leprosy was, as far as man and human means, was incurable. It was known as an incurable disease.

And yet the amazing thing in the law, God gave to Moses the law concerning the leper in the day of his cleansing. Interesting that God would give such a law because the cleansing of a leper or the healing of the leper was an impossibility, humanly speaking. And yet God, and I love this, makes provision for him to work outside of the natural laws that we understand or know.

And with the leper, this is the law concerning the leper in the day of his cleansing. And of course, it prescribed how he was to come to the priest, show himself to the priest, be examined, and be set in a separate compartment for a while, and then be examined again. And if there be no further sign of the development of the leprosy, he was to be declared cleansed by the priest, and he could offer then some sacrifices and be rejoined to his family and to the community.

A leper was ostracized from society. He couldn't live with his family. He couldn't live in a neighborhood.

He had to live in a, well, he usually lived outside of the city walls, and they wouldn't even let them into the city. And they survived on the garbage that was thrown over the wall. And so it was a miserable life indeed.

And God had made provision though for their cleansing and the means by which they could be rejoined to the society in which they lived. And so when Jesus was entered then into Capernaum. Capernaum is on the Sea of Galilee.

It is there on the northern end of the Sea of Galilee, right almost at the place where the Jordan River comes in, probably three or four miles from where the Jordan River enters the Sea of Galilee, is this little village of Capernaum, or was a village of Capernaum. Today it's just a ruins, and there is a Catholic church there, and there is a fancy house or fancy structure that they have built over what they call the House of Peter. How in the world they ever figured out that Peter was living in this one little house, we don't know, but they have this fancy structure over the top.

And you can go there to Capernaum and see what they claim to be the House of Peter. I have my doubts, but you know it's an interesting thing how that they have selected many sites, and they want to give you sort of a biblical basis to attract you to go and to see that site. So they usually call it by a particular, you know, event of the Bible.

And I was reading concerning this guy that was taking this group around and showing them the various sites there in the Holy Land, and he showed him this site, and he said, this is Peter's house, and this is where Peter lived. And so a few days later as they were in another place, he said, now this is Peter's house and where Peter lived. And the fellow spoke up and said, well, now yesterday we were several miles from here, and you showed us a house, and you said it was Peter's house and where Peter lived, and now you tell us this is Peter's house and where he lived.

And he said, how can that be? And he said, well, this is second Peter. So when Jesus entered Capernaum, there came unto him a centurion. A centurion was a Roman soldier who was over a hundred men, and thus centurion from the Latin century, so a hundred men.

And this centurion, and we have a couple of them in the New Testament, and they seem to be very quality men, the centurions that we come across in the New Testament. And the centurion came to Jesus, this Roman soldier, and he was beseeching or begging him and saying, Lord, my servant is at home sick of the palsy and is grievously tormented. And Jesus said unto him, I will come and heal him.

And the centurion answered and said, Lord, I'm not worthy that you should come under my roof, but just speak the word only and my servant shall be healed. For I am a man under authority and having soldiers under me. And I can say to this man, go, and he goes, and to another, come, and he comes, and to my servant, do this, and he does it.

And when Jesus heard it, he marveled. And he said unto him that followed, verily I say unto you, I have not found so great faith, no, not in Israel. And I say unto you that many shall come from the east and the west, will sit down with Abraham and Isaac and Jacob in the kingdom of heaven.

But the children of the kingdom shall be cast out into outer darkness, and there shall be weeping and gnashing of teeth. And Jesus said to the centurion, go thy way. And as thou hast believed, so be it done unto thee.

And the servant was healed in that very same hour. And so the healing of the centurion's servant, and the things that are worthy of noting here, he said, I understand authority. I'm a man of authority, having under me men.

In other words, he understands the chain of command. I have certain authority, but I am under authority, but I do have men under me. And I can understand how authority works.

I can say to one, go, and he goes, to another, come, and he comes. And so I know, and sort of recognizing, I recognize your authority. I know that you can just speak the word, and that's all that's necessary, and my servant will be healed.

Jesus marveled at the faith of this centurion, said, I haven't found it in all of Israel. I haven't found it among the Jews, you know, this kind of faith. And he commended him for the tremendous faith that he had.

And of course, the faith was honored with the healing of his servant. So when Jesus was coming to Peter's house, and so this is first Peter, and he saw his wife's mother laying there, and she was sick of a fever. And he touched her hand, and the fever left her, and she arose, and she ministered unto them.

So Peter's mother-in-law, so you know, the Catholics like to claim that Peter was the first pope, but he was a married man, obviously, and so where they got the custom that the priest shouldn't get married, surely

he didn't come from their first pope. So he healed Peter's mother-in-law of this fever, and she ministered unto them. So when the evening was come, they brought unto him many that were possessed with devils.

And he cast out the spirits with his word, and he healed all that were sick, that it might be fulfilled which was spoken by Isaiah the prophet, saying, himself took our infirmities and bear our sicknesses, a quotation from Isaiah 53. Now when Jesus saw the great multitudes about him, he gave commandment to depart to the other side. So they got in this little boat, and Jesus commanded to head to the other side of the Sea of Galilee.

Now at Capernaum, you're actually at the upper end, as we said, of the Sea of Galilee, and it isn't that far over to the other side from Capernaum, maybe a distance of three or four miles across the Sea of Galilee at that particular point. And so we read that he went over to the other side, and a certain scribe came and said to him, Master, I will follow thee wherever you go. Sounds like a great commitment.

And Jesus said to him, the foxes have holes, the birds of the air have their nest, but the Son of Man doesn't have any place to lay his head. And another of his disciples said to him, Lord, allow me first to go and bury my father. But Jesus said unto him, follow me and let the dead bury their dead.

So the first fellow is saying, Lord, I'll go wherever you go. And Jesus is saying to him, count the cost. You know, just foxes have their holes, birds of the air have their nest.

I don't have any place to lay my head. Count the cost of following me. To the other, it was allow me first.

If you're going to follow Christ, it can't be a me first kind of a thing. It's got to be Christ first. And he was using a common kind of a excuse that people would give in those days of wanting to postpone things.

Let me bury my father first. That is, his father probably wasn't sick, probably was strong and healthy. But I want to stick around home until my dad dies.

And then once he dies, I'll follow you. And so he's just postponing or seeking to postpone his following Jesus Christ. But Jesus is saying, you know, let the dead bury their dead.

You follow me. So when he entered into the ship, his disciples followed him. And behold, there arose a great tempest in the sea, insomuch the ship was covered with the waves.

But he was asleep and his disciples came to him and they awoke him and they said, Lord, save us. We perish. And he said unto them, why are you fearful, O ye of little faith? Then he arose and he rebuked the winds and the sea, and there was a great calm.

But the men marveled, saying, what manner of man is this that even the winds and the sea obey him? And so here is Jesus stilling the waves. And there was then a great calm when he had rebuked them. And they were marveling at the power of Jesus being able to command the elements themselves.

And when he was come to the other side into the country of the Gergesnes, and there met him two possessed with devils coming out of the tombs, exceeding fears so that no man might pass by that way. When you go across on that upper end of the Sea of Galilee, you come over into the area known as the Gadarenes. And there was this one village over there.

And next to that village, there is this mountain and up on the mountain is this large cave. And they do point that out as the cave where these men were living. Whether or not that is so, can't tell for sure.

But it is interesting that this certainly would be the spot where Jesus did meet these men in that around the Sea of Galilee, usually there is a gentle slope of the terrain leading into the Sea of Galilee. And this is the only place where you have a steep cliff leading into the Sea of Galilee. And so with the swine actually going over the cliff and drowning in the Sea of Galilee, this is the only place where that could have happened there in the northern part of the Sea of Galilee across from Capernaum.

And so when you're there, you're pretty much sure that this is the spot where this particular experience took place. So when he was come to the other side of the country of the Gergesnes, there met him two that were possessed with devils coming out of the tombs. They were exceeding fierce so that no man might pass by that way.

The other Gospels tell us of just one, but Matthew tells of two that were there. Behold, they cried out saying, What have we to do with thee, Jesus, thou Son of God? Art thou come hither to torment us before the time? And there was a good way off from them a herd of many swine that were feeding. And so the devils besought him, saying, If you cast us out, suffer us to go away into the herd of swine.

And he said unto them, Go. And when they were come out, they went into the herd of swine. And behold, the whole herd of swine ran violently down a steep place into the sea, and they perished in the water.

And they that kept them fled, and went their ways into the city, and told everything of what was befallen to the possessed of the devils. And behold, the whole city came out to meet Jesus. And when they saw him, interesting, they besought him that he would depart out of their coast.

First case of deviled ham here in Matthew, where Jesus allowed the devils to go into the swine. And of course, they had enough sense to just destroy themselves, rather than to be possessed by these demonic spirits. But they perished there in the sea.

And the thing that really gets me is that the people of that city, and no doubt it was that city of Gadera there, that came out and they said to Jesus, you know, we don't want you here. They valued the swine more than they valued the presence of Jesus. And they were asking Jesus to please leave.

We, you know, under the law, the Jews were not to keep pigs. And it was a forbidden a industry for the Jews to keep pigs. And yet, here was this herd of swine, it was really a unlawful kind of activity.

And Jesus destroys this unlawful activity. And the people would prefer the pigs to the presence of Jesus. Hard to understand or believe.

When he entered into the, and he entered into the ship, and he passed over and came to his own city, that is, he crossed back over to Capernaum from, and it looks like that was all that he went there for, is just to have this one incident take place. Behold, they brought to him a man that was sick of the palsy, lying on a bed. And Jesus, seeing their fate, said to the sick of the palsy, Son, be of good cheer.

Your sins are forgiven thee. It is thought that this form palsy was actually a indication that the fellow probably had a syphilis. And it was something that probably, again, from immoral activities and so forth, that he contracted this horrible disease.

And he was, it was in its advanced stages. He was lying on the bed, sick of the palsy. And Jesus said, Your sins are forgiven thee.

Interesting, he sort of relates the illness to his sins. Your sins are forgiven thee. Now, it is interesting, we are told in the other Gospels that this man's friends actually carried him and brought him to Jesus.

And this was where Jesus was in the house, and they removed the roof and let him down in the presence of Jesus, where Jesus said, Your sins are forgiven. And I'm sure that the fellows that brought him went to all of the trouble of bringing him to Jesus, carrying him there, removing the tiles from the roof and letting the guys down in the presence of Jesus. When he said, Your sins are forgiven.

I'm sure that they must have said, No, no, no, no. That's not what we wanted. We wanted you to heal him, you know, not to forgive his sins, but heal him, Lord.

And I'm sure that they were probably a little disturbed with him just saying, Your sins are forgiven thee. And yet, because the possibility that this problem, the disease and the palsy that he had came from sinful activity, it probably was plaguing his mind. Oh, why did I do that? You know, why? I knew better.

Why? Why? Why? And probably just plaguing his mind. And when Jesus said, Your sin is forgiven. He probably felt a great relief.

Oh, praise God, you know, I'm forgiven. But the scribes that were standing by, they were saying, you know, that's blasphemy. And Jesus, knowing their thoughts, said, Why do you think evil in your hearts? For what is easier to say, Your sins be forgiven thee, or to say, Arise and walk? What's easier to say? Well, it's easy to say, Your sins are forgiven.

Why? Because you can't see that anything really happened. You can't see the sin flying out of the man's heart and say, Wow, isn't that great? You know, his sins are forgiven. They've disappeared.

Because you can't see that. What you can see, if the guy is, Jesus says, Rise up and walk. If the guy stands up and begins to walk, that you can see.

That would be much harder to say, Rise up and walk. And so, when Jesus said, Your sins are forgiven you, the people were really upset and saying, That's blasphemy. And so, Jesus said, What's easier to say? Your sins are forgiven, or to arise and walk? But that you might know that the Son of Man has power on earth to forgive sins.

He said to him that was sick of the palsy, Arise, take up your bed and go to your house. And he arose and departed to his house. And when the multitude saw it, they marveled and they glorified God, which had given such power unto men.

So, Jesus heals this fellow. And he uses it to put across a good point, proving to the people that were there that he had the power to forgive sins. And it would be a, as I said, a harder thing to say, Arise, take up your bed and walk.

Because then you can see the evidence of the power of his word, where you couldn't see the evidence with just declaring, Your sins are forgiven. So, as Jesus passed forth from there, he saw a man named Matthew. And he was sitting at the receipt of customs.

He was a tax collector. And he said then to him, Follow me. And he arose and followed him.

And it came to pass, as Jesus said it, meet in the house. And this is the house of Matthew, the tax collector. He is going to follow Jesus.

But he, first of all, invites all of his cohorts, the other tax collectors, and sort of a farewell dinner for them. And he's going to be following Jesus. So, it came to pass, as Jesus said it, meet in the house.

Behold, many publicans and sinners came. And they sat down with him and with his disciples. So, here's sort of an open kind of a meal.

Jesus is eating with these tax collectors and these sinners that were there. And when the Pharisees saw it, they said to his disciples, Why does your master eat with publicans, our tax collectors and sinners? And when Jesus heard that, he said unto them, They that are whole don't need a physician, but they that are sick. But go and learn what that means.

And I will have mercy and not sacrifice. I am not come to call the righteous, but sinners to repentance. And so, then came to him the disciples of John.

And they said, Why do we and the Pharisees fast often, but your disciples don't fast? And Jesus said to them, Can the children of the bride chamber mourn as long as the bridegroom is with them? But the days will come when the bridegroom will be taken from them, and then shall they fast. And so, the question of fasting and that they are challenging Jesus, why the disciples of John, the Baptists, they fasted and all, but your disciples don't fast. So, Jesus said, No man puts a piece of a new cloth onto an old garment, for that which is put on it to fill it up taketh from the garment, and the rent is made worse.

In those days, they didn't have sand fries shrunk material. And so, you would have a dress or something that you would tear it. And so, you would patch it with a new cloth that hadn't been sand fries shrunk.

And that when you would patch the garment that you were patching, putting this new patch on, the first time you would wash it, the new patch would shrink, and it would cause the garment to tear even worse. And so, he's using that as an illustration, you know, that you put a piece of new cloth into an old garment, and that which puts in it fills up from the garment, and the tear is made worse. Neither do men put new wine into old bottles, else the bottles break, and the wine runs out, and the bottles perish.

But they put the new wine into new bottles, and both are preserved. Now, bottle would be a wine skin, and of course, they would take these wine skins, and they would use them to, they would use them, of course, for water, or for wine, or whatever. But with wine, when you would put the wine into these new wine skins, as long as you put it into new wine skins, you were all right, because the leather was still supple enough that as it began to ferment and expand, it would just expand, and you would be okay.

But if you would put the new wine into old skins that had already dried and were set, as it fermented and would expand, it would tear the old skins, and they would, of course, the wine would leak out. And so, Jesus is just actually sort of illustrating, you've got a new work that's going. And, you know, you don't try to attach it to the old.

In other words, we're leaving Judaism and the religion that had been the predominant religion of the people, and new things are going to be happening. And so, you don't try to keep them in the old skins or in the old garment, but God has a new work that's going to be going on. So, while he spake these things unto them, behold, there came a certain ruler and worshipped him, saying, My daughter is even now dead, but come and lay your hand upon her, and she shall live.

And Jesus arose and followed him, and so did his disciples. And behold, a woman which was diseased with an issue of blood for twelve years came behind him and touched the hem of his garment. For she had

said within herself, If I might just but touch his garment, I'll be healed.

But Jesus turned about, and he saw her, and he said, Daughter, be of good comfort. Your faith has made you whole. And the woman was made whole from that hour.

And when Jesus came into the ruler's house, he saw the minstrels and the people making a noise. And he said unto them, Give place or get out of here, for the maid is not dead, she's only sleeping. And they left him to scorn.

But when the people were put forth, he went in and took her by the hand, and the maid arose, and the fame thereof went abroad into all of the land. And so the healing of this little girl by Jesus. Now we are told in the other Gospels that she was twelve years old.

And so for twelve years she had been, of course, her father's delight, as little girls are. And now she dies. And the father comes to Jesus and says, You know, come and heal my little girl.

I know that if you'll just lay your hand on her, she shall live. Twelve years of joy and blessing with this little girl. Now she's dead.

Here's another woman, an older woman, no doubt. And she has this hemorrhaging that has been going on for twelve years. Life slowly going out of her for twelve years.

And she comes through the crowd and grabs the hem of Jesus' garment with the thought, If I can just but touch the hem of his garment, I know that I'll be healed. And probably, you know, it's interesting, Jesus stopped and he called attention to what she had done. And so probably it was a thing to just encourage Jairus, the name of the man whose daughter had died.

And the fact that this woman had been for twelve years hemorrhaging and now is healed. And he probably related his little daughter twelve years of life and now dead. But, you know, the touch of Jesus is all that's necessary.

So when Jesus departed from there, two blind men followed him and they were crying out and saying, Thou son of David, have mercy on us. And when he was coming to the house, the blind men came to him and Jesus said to them, Do you believe that I am able to do this? And they said, Yes, Lord. And he touched their eyes saying, According to your faith, be it unto you.

And their eyes were opened and Jesus immediately charged them saying, See that no man knows it. But when they were departed, they spread abroad his fame throughout all the country. And they went out and behold, they brought to him a dumb man that is mute, and he was possessed with the devil.

And when the devil was cast out, the mute spake and the multitude marveled saying, It was never seen like this before in Israel. So the Pharisees said, He is casting out devils through the prince of devils. Now, we'll get this again a little later on.

And Jesus will warn them at that point of the unpardonable sin, attributing the works of God to Satan. But here they begin this explanation. You see, they've got to explain how he's doing it.

It's a miracle. And it's obviously a miracle. Here's a man who can't speak.

Jesus touches him, and the guy is now able to speak. And so they're saying, Well, he's doing it through the powers of darkness through the devils. And Jesus is, as I said, going to warn them the next time they make this accusation.

So Jesus went about all of the cities and the villages teaching in their synagogues, preaching the gospel of the kingdom, healing every sickness, every disease among the people. But when he saw the multitudes, he was moved with compassion on them, because they fainted, and they were scattered abroad as sheep, having no shepherd. And then he said to his disciples, The harvest is truly plenteous, but the labors are few.

Pray ye therefore, the Lord of harvest, that he will send forth laborers into his harvest. Interesting, the crowds always moved Jesus. He had compassion upon them, seeing their needs, seeing their hunger.

He had compassion on them. So when he had called unto him his 12 disciples, he gave them the power over unclean spirits to cast them out and to heal all manner of sickness and all manner of disease. And now the names of the 12 are these.

First of all, Simon, who is called Peter, then Andrew, his brother, James, the son of Zebedee, and John, his brother, Philip and Bartholomew, Thomas and Matthew, the publican, and who we met earlier, James, the son of Alpheus, and Levitas, whose surname was Thaddeus, Simon, the Canaanite, and Judas Iscariot, who also betrayed him. Now these 12 Jesus sent forth and commanded them, saying, Go not into the way of the Gentiles or into any city of the Samaritans. Do not enter, but go rather to the lost sheep of the house of Israel.

And as you go, preach, saying, The kingdom of heaven is at hand. Heal the sick, cleanse the leper, raise the dead, cast out devils. Freely you have received, freely give.

So the commissioning of the disciples, sending them forth. Basically, they were to go forth as sort of an advanced team. He's going to be going into these villages.

He's going to be coming along. They are front men for him. They are to go, and they are to work miracles in these villages.

But they are really to prepare the hearts of the people for the coming of Jesus, who will be following them through these same villages later. So he said, Don't provide gold, nor silver, nor brass for your purses, nor script for your journey, neither two coats, neither shoes, nor stays, for the workman is worthy of his meat. And into whatsoever city or town you will enter, inquire who is worthy, and abide there until you go from there.

And when you come into a house, greet it, and the house will be worthy. Let your peace come upon it. But if it is not worthy, let your peace return to you.

And whosoever shall not receive you, nor hear your words, when you depart out of that house and city, shake off the dust from your feet. Verily I say unto you, it will be more tolerable for the land of Sodom and Gomorrah in the day of judgment than for that city. Behold, I send you forth as sheep in the midst of wolves.

Be ye therefore wise as serpents and harmless as doves. But beware of men, for they will deliver you into their councils. They will scourge you in their synagogues.

And you shall be brought before the kings for my sake and as a testimony against them and the Gentiles. And when they deliver you up, take no thought of what you're going to speak, for it shall be given to you in that same hour what you shall speak. For it is not you that speak, but the spirit of your father which speaks in you.

And a brother will deliver up a brother to death. And the father, the child, and the children shall rise up against their parents and cause them to be put to death. And you shall be hated of all men for my namesake.

But he that endureth to the end shall be saved. But when they persecute you in the city, flee into another. And verily I say unto you, you shall not have gone over all of the cities of Israel until the Son of Man become.

In other words, I'll be coming behind you. You won't finish this journey until I'm there behind you. So you are there to let the people know that I'm on my way.

The disciple is not above his master nor the servant above his Lord. It is enough for the disciple that he be as his master and the servant as his Lord. If they have called the master of the house, Beelzebub, how much more shall they call them of his household? Fear not them, therefore, for there is nothing covered that shall not be revealed and hid that shall not be known.

What I tell you in darkness that speak in the light and what you hear in the ear that preach upon the housetops. And don't fear those which can kill your body, but after that are not able to kill the soul, but rather fear him which is able to destroy both your soul and body in hell. Are not two sparrows sold for a farthing and one of them shall not fall to the ground without your father, but the very hairs of your head are all numbered.

I'm giving the Lord an easier task. Fear ye not, therefore, for you are of more value than many sparrows. Whosoever, therefore, shall confess me before men, him will I confess also before my father, which is in heaven.

But this, whoever shall deny me before men, him also will I deny before my father, which is in heaven. Don't think that I'm come to send peace on the earth. I came not to send peace, but a sword.

For I am come to set man at variance against his father and the daughter against her mother and the daughter-in-law against her mother-in-law. And a man's foes shall be those of his own household. He that loves father or mother more than me is not worthy of me.

He that loves his son or daughter more than me is not worthy of me. He that takes not his cross and follows after me is not worthy of me. He that finds his life shall lose it.

He that loses his life for my sake shall find it. And he that receives you receives me. He that receives me receives him that sent me.

And he that receives a prophet in the name of a prophet shall receive a prophet's reward. And he that receives a righteous man in the name of a righteous man will receive a righteous man's reward. And whosoever shall give to a drink unto those little ones a cup of cold water only in the name of a disciple, verily I say unto you, he shall in no wise lose his reward.

And so the commissioning of the disciples, going out and telling them, you know, the ministry that they are to have as they are to prepare the people for his coming and how that, you know, it's not going to be an easy task. I'm not calling you to a bed of roses or whatever, but you're going to have, you're going to have difficulties and in following me. So it came to pass when Jesus had made an end of the commanding of the twelve disciples.

He departed from there to teach and to preach in their cities. So following after them. So John the Baptist sends his disciples to question Jesus.

And now when John had heard in the prison the works of Christ, he sent two of his disciples and they said unto him, are you he that should come or do we look for another? And Jesus answered and said unto them, go and show John again those things which you do here and see. The blind receive their sight, the lame walk, the lepers are cleansed, the deaf are hearing, and the dead are raised up, and to the poor the gospel is preached to them. And blessed is he whosoever shall be that is not offended in me.

And as they departed, Jesus began to say to the John, what went you out into the wilderness to see? A reed shaken with the wind. But what went you out to see? A man clothed in soft raiment? Those that wear soft raiment are in king's houses, not in king's prisons. But what did you go out to see? A prophet? Yea, I say unto you, more than a prophet, for this is he of whom it is written, behold, I send my messenger before thy face, which shall prepare the way before thee.

Verily I say unto you, among those that are born of women, there is not risen a greater than John the Baptist, notwithstanding, he that is least in the kingdom of heaven is greater than he. And from the days of John the Baptist until now, the kingdom of heaven suffers violence, and the violent take it by force. For all of the prophets in the law prophesied until John, and if you will receive it, this is Elijah, which was to come.

For he that hath ears to hear, let him hear. But whereunto shall I liken this generation? Like unto children sitting in the markets, and their calling to their fellows. And they said, we have piped unto you, but you've not danced.

We've mourned with you, but you have not lamented. For John came neither eating nor drinking, and you say he has a devil. The son of man came eating and drinking, and they say, a man who is gluttonous, he's a winebibber, a friend of the publicans and the sinners.

But wisdom is justified of our children. So Jesus is testifying to them of the ministry of John the Baptist here. And so John at this point was in prison because of Herod the king, and he had told Herod that he should not be married to his wife, that she was the wife of his brother, and he had sort of vamped her away from his brother.

And so John the Baptist was rebuking him for that, and it made her angry. And so she had John arrested and put in prison. And John has been sitting there in prison for a while, and it's more or less like he's trying to prod Jesus on into action.

He sends his disciples to Jesus and said, are you the one we are looking for, or shall we start looking for someone else? And in other words, you know, let's get the show on the road. Let's get, you know, I'm tired of being in this prison, you know, and go ahead, establish yourself and establish your kingdom and get me out of here, you know, basically is what John is saying. And so Jesus, of course, when he didn't give a direct answer to John, are you the one that we're looking for, or shall we look for someone else? He just

went ahead with this ministry, healing all manner of sicknesses that were there, raising the dead and doing these wonderful works.

And he just said, go and tell John what you see. The lame are walking, the lepers are cleansed, the deaf are hearing, the dead are being raised, and the poor have the gospel preached to them. Those were his credentials.

Those were to assure that he was the one that John was looking for. He was doing the works of the Messiah. And so it was confirmation and to be confirmation to John that he indeed was the Messiah, the one that they were anticipating and looking for.

And so Jesus speaking of John saying, those that were born of women, there hasn't been a greater than John the Baptist, but yet he who is least in the kingdom of heaven is greater than he. You have greater privileges than did John the Baptist. You have a greater power given to you than did John the Baptist.

The indwelling presence of Jesus Christ in our lives, the power of the Holy Spirit working in us and through us, greater privileges than John the Baptist. So he that is least in the kingdom of heaven, the least of us here tonight, are really greater in privileges that we have than John the Baptist. And so Jesus is here commending John to them.

And so in verse 20, Jesus begins to speak the judgment against the various cities. Then began he to upbraid the cities where most of the mighty works were done because they did not repent. Woe to you, Chorazin! Woe unto you, Bethsaida! For if the mighty works which were done in you have been done in Tyre and Sidon, they would have repented long ago in sackcloth and ashes.

But I say unto you, it will be more tolerable for Tyre and Sidon in the day of judgment than for you. And now Capernaum, which are exalted unto heaven, shall be brought down to hell. For if the mighty works which have been done in thee have been done in Sodom, it would have remained until this day.

But I say unto you that it shall be more tolerable for the land of Sodom in the day of judgment than for thee. And at that time Jesus answered and said, I thank thee, O Father, Lord of heaven and earth, because thou hast hid these things from the wise and the prudent, and you revealed it unto babes. Even so, Father, for so it seemed good in thy sight.

All things, he said, are delivered unto me of my father. And no man knows the son but the father. Neither knows any man the father except the son, and to whomsoever the son will reveal him.

So then this beautiful invitation, come unto me, all ye that labor and are heavy laden, I will give you rest. Take my yoke upon you. Learn of me, for I am meek and lowly of heart, and ye shall find rest for your souls.

For my yoke is easy, my burden is light. And so Jesus talking to them now, and as he pronounces the woes upon these various cities, and he'll tell us in another chapter or two that these people from these cities will rise up in the day of judgment with this generation, and they'll condemn it because they repented at the preaching that they received, and a greater than Jonah is here. So the men of Nineveh will be condemning this generation because they repented at the preaching of Jonah, but a greater than Jonah is here.

And so Jesus then, the invitation, and this is to you tonight, come unto me, all ye that labor and are heavy laden. Does the load sometime get so heavy that you become weary of trying to carry it? All ye that labor and are heavy laden. He said, come to me.

I will give you rest. I will give you peace. Take my yoke upon you.

The yoke was the thing they put on an ox so it could pull the plow. What Jesus is saying is, let me have the reins to your life. Let me begin to guide and direct you into my way, into my path.

Take my yoke upon you, and then learn of me. The invitation to learn about Jesus Christ. You know, there's nothing in the world that is more important to know than the truth of Jesus Christ.

Learn of me. It's interesting how that we learn of so many people. We read our history books and we learn of those who have done outstanding things in history, but none have equaled what Jesus did.

There's no one in history that has had the same effect upon the history of mankind than Jesus. He had more impact upon the history of our world than any other individual. And yet, it's amazing, though he has impacted each of our lives in impacting the history of our world, yet people know so little about him.

And that's to me great mystery. Surely if someone had had the impact on history that Jesus has had, everyone would want to know about him. How is it that he could impact and change history and alter history as much as he did? He had to have something special.

And surely it should have sort of created an interest in our minds and in our hearts. How is it that he could have such an influence? What did he teach? What was he like? How much do you know him? How well do you know him? And, you know, it's interesting that you probably know more about Madonna than you do about Jesus. But what you know about Madonna won't get you a pass into one of her performances.

But what you know about Jesus will get you a pass into heaven. So, you know, let's learn about him. That's what he said, learn of me.

For I am meek and lowly in heart. And he said, you will find rest unto your souls. That beautiful peace that comes when you know Jesus Christ.

Rest in your souls, no longer concerned about your relationship with God. That's all been established now through Jesus Christ. Rest for your souls.

What a wonderful thing. For he said, my yoke is easy. My burden is light.

Be careful of those people who keep talking about heavy, heavy burdens. Oh, God laid such a heavy burden on me. I don't know if I can handle this.

If the burden is too heavy for you to handle, it's not his. He didn't lay it on you. You've taken something on yourself.

And that's something that we often do. Take upon ourselves burdens, but God didn't put them there. We accepted them ourselves and we took them upon ourselves.

But he said, my yoke is easy. My burden is light. So be careful if you're complaining about a heavy burden that you're trying to carry, because it's not his.

It's one that you've taken yourself. He's not requiring it of you. So the words of Jesus, how rich and full they are.

And let's just continue as we go through the gospels, studying the life of Jesus. And that's what we're going to be doing. He said, learn of me.

And that's what this is all about. As we go through these gospels, learning about him, learning what he has done for us, learning who he is, and the provisions that he has made for us to spend eternity with him in his kingdom forever, forever, and evermore.

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