

Expository Thoughts On Matthew - Matthew

15:29-39

by J.C. Ryle

Transcript

The beginning of this passage contains three points which deserve our special attention. For the present let us dwell exclusively on them. In the first place, let us remark how much more pains people take about the relief of their bodily diseases than about their souls. We read that "great multitudes came to Jesus having with them those that were lame, blind, dumb, maimed and many others." Many of them, no doubt, had journeyed many miles, and gone through great fatigues. Nothing is so difficult and troublesome as to move sick people. But the hope of being healed was in sight: such hope is everything to a sick man. We know little of human nature if we wonder at the conduct of these people. We need not wonder at all. They felt that health was the greatest of earthly blessings; they felt that pain was the hardest of all trials to bear. There is no arguing against sense. A man feels his strength failing; he sees his body wasting and his face becoming pale; he is sensible that his appetite is leaving him: he knows, in short, that he is ill, and needs a physician. Show him a physician within reach, who is said never to fail in working cures, and he will go to him without delay. Let us, however, not forget that our souls are far more diseased than our bodies, and let us learn a lesson from the conduct of these people. Our souls are afflicted with a malady far more deep-seated, far more complicated, far more hard to cure than any ailment that flesh is heir to. They are in fact plague-stricken by sin. They must be healed, and healed effectually, or perish everlastingly. Do we really know this? Do we feel it? Are we alive to our spiritual disease? Alas, there is but one answer to these questions! The bulk of mankind do not feel it at all. Their eyes are blinded. They are utterly insensible to their danger. For bodily health they crowd the waiting-rooms of doctors; for bodily health they take long journeys to find purer air; but for their souls' health they take no thought at all. Happy indeed is that man or woman who has found out his soul's disease! Such an one will never rest till he has found Jesus. Troubles will seem nothing to him. Life, life, eternal life is at stake! He will count all things loss that he may win Christ and be healed. (Philippians 3:8). In the second place, let us mark the marvelous ease and power with which our Lord healed all who were brought to him. We read that "the multitude wondered when they saw the dumb to speak, the maimed to be whole, the lame to walk and the blind to see; and they glorified the God of Israel." Behold in these words a lively emblem of our Lord Jesus Christ's power to heal sin-diseased souls. There is no ailment of heart that he cannot cure. There is no form of spiritual complaint that he cannot overcome. The fever of lust, the palsy of the love of the world, the slow consumption of indolence and sloth, the heart-disease of unbelief, all, all give way when he sends forth his Spirit on anyone of the children of men. He can put a new song in a sinner's mouth, and make him speak with love of that Gospel which he once ridiculed and blasphemed. He can open the eyes of a man's understanding and make him see

the kingdom of God; he can open the ears of a man, and make him willing to hear his voice and to follow him whersoever he goeth; he can give power to a man who once walked in the broad way that leadeth unto destruction to walk in the way of life; he can make hands that were once instruments of sin, serve him and do his will. The time of miracles is not yet passed. Every conversion is a miracle. Have we ever seen a real instance of conversion? Let us know that we saw in it the hand of Christ. We should have seen nothing really greater if we had seen our Lord making the dumb to speak and the lame to walk, when he was on earth. Would we know what to do if we desire to be saved? Do we feel soul-sick and want a cure? We must just go to Christ by faith, and apply to him for relief. He has not changed: 1800 years have made no difference in him. High at the right hand of God, he is still the Great Physician. He still "receiveth sinners." (i.e. Luke 15:2). He is still mighty to heal. In the third place, let us remark the abundant compassion of our Lord Jesus Christ. We read that "He called his disciples and said, 'I have compassion on the multitude.'" "A great crowd of men and women is always a solemn sight. It should stir our hearts to feel that each is a dying sinner, and each has a soul to be saved. None ever seems to have felt so much when he saw a crowd, as Christ. It is a curious and striking fact, that of all the feelings experienced by our Lord when upon earth, there is none so often mentioned as "compassion." His joy, his sorrow, his thankfulness, his anger, his wonder, his zeal, all are occasionally recorded. But none of these feelings are so frequently mentioned as "compassion." The Holy Spirit seems to point out to us that this was the distinguishing feature of his character, and the predominant feeling of his mind when he was among men. Nine times, over to say nothing of expressions in parables, nine times over Spirit has caused that word "compassion" to be written in the Gospels. There is something very touching and instructive in this circumstance. Nothing is written by chance in the Word of God: there is a special reason for the selection of every single expression. That word "compassion," no doubt, was specially chosen for our profit. It ought to encourage all who are hesitating about beginning to walk in God's ways. Let them remember that their Saviour is full of "compassion." He will receive them graciously; he will forgive them freely; he will remember their former iniquities no more; he will supply all their need abundantly. Let them not be afraid. Christ's mercy is a deep well of which no one ever found the bottom. It ought to comfort the saints and servants of the Lord when they feel weary. Let them call to mind that Jesus is "full of compassion." He knows what a world it is in which they live; he knows the body of a man and all its frailties; he knows the devices of their enemy, the devil. And the Lord pities his people: let them not be cast down. They may feel that weakness, failure and imperfection are stamped on all they do; but let them not forget that word which says, "His compassions fail not." (i.e. Lamentations 3:22).

Source: <https://sermonindex.net/speakers/jc-ryle/expository-thoughts-on-matthew-matthew-1529-39/>

Grow in Your Walk with Christ

Listen and read messages that will stir your heart for Christ and point you to deeper repentance and devotion.

- 50,000+ Sermons from speakers past and present
- 3,900+ Classic Christian Books freely readable online
- 1,200+ Bible Translations and Commentaries
- Over 450k forum posts — Join our vibrant online Christian forum

www.sermonindex.net