

JESUS HEALS MANY

Matthew 8:14-34

Key Verse: 8:16

"When evening came, many who were demon-possessed were brought to him, and he drove out the spirits with a word and healed all the sick."

Matthew 1:1-18:35 is the account of the earthly messianic ministry of Jesus. When we read Matthew's gospel, it is very clear that Matthew, the former tax collector, primarily wrote for himself. Thus, Matthew's Gospel has a strong impression that it was written for the sake of the Jews. Levi the tax collector was a spiritually dead man. He was humanly wealthy, but he was excommunicated by the Jews on account of his treacherous lifestyle. He was also very sick since his conscience was corrupt to the [degree](#) that he extorted money from his suffering people. But by the grace of God he was saved through Jesus' messianic ministry around the Galilean district. So he immensely emphasized Jesus' compassion, acknowledging that Jesus saved a man like him. Matthew wrote much about Jesus' healing of the sick. Today also we see that Jesus heals so many sick people. Let's get a glimpse of Jesus' compassion through this passage.

First, Jesus heals many (14-17). Jesus went to Peter's home and healed Peter's mother-in-law's fever. Probably Peter's mother-in-law was very bitter that Peter, her son-in-law, left his [job](#) of fishing and was going around as one of Jesus' band, getting no pay. So she got sick and her fever was very high, and her breathing tempo indicated that her life was going to stop. But Jesus, knowing why she was sick, visited her house and healed her by laying on a hand.

Usually the Galilean area was so hot during the noontime that they all enjoyed siestas until 4:00 p.m. and then ate supper. After that some went back to sleep again and some went to the fields to work. But all these people forgot about siestas and came [to Jesus](#) for healing. His disciples were furiously upset at the number of sick people who came. But Jesus did not refuse them. Jesus healed them one by one until everybody was healed and no one was left. This is the description of Jesus' compassion toward sinsick people. Jesus came into this world to heal us from our sinsickness of all kinds. Paul exclaimed in 1 Timothy 1:15, "Here is a trustworthy saying that deserves full acceptance: Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners of whom I am the worst." When we see men and women of infirmity, we are disgusted. We don't like anyone who burdens us. But Jesus accepted a whole village of people one by one until no one was left without being healed. Jesus came into this world to take up our infirmities. Jesus came to this world to carry our diseases. His healing ministry was out of his compassion. His healing ministry was life-giving. He did not have a siesta or sleep until a new day dawned in the eastern sky.

Second, the cost of following Jesus (18-22). When Jesus saw the crowd around him, he gave orders to cross to the other side of the lake. Then a teacher of the law came to him and said, "Teacher, I will follow you wherever you go." What was Jesus' reply? He said, "Foxes have holes and birds of the air have nests, but the Son of Man has no place to lay his

head" (20). We wonder why a teacher of the law wanted to follow Jesus in such an earnest way. We don't know. But in light of Jesus' answer, he wanted to work hard and then have a mansion house and be called "a great servant of God." He was blind to the character of gospel ministry. He did not know the cost of following Jesus. In order to follow Jesus to the end, he had to deny himself and overcome his selfishness. In order to follow Jesus, he had to forget about worldly dreams. To Jesus, he was a dreamy and selfish young man who had a selfish purpose. So Jesus gave a very poetic and sorrowful answer: "Foxes have holes and birds of the air have nests, but the Son of Man has no place to lay his head." The teacher of the law wanted to follow Jesus on the spur of the moment when he saw Jesus' great, miraculous work of God. But he did not count the cost. When he was going to follow Jesus, he needed to make a decision of faith to die for the glory of God and to save men from their sins. Another disciple stepped out and said to Jesus, "Lord, first let me go and bury my father." Jesus told him, "Follow me, and let the dead bury their own dead" (22). This man wanted to follow Jesus in his mind. But he had a family problem. He had to take care of his wife and children and his parents and his beautiful and huge lawn and garden. Suppose someone is going to take care of his family; then he must do it with all his strength. In short, to take care of his family is busy enough for him all his lifetime. So Jesus said, "Let the dead bury their own dead." This is the same as Deuteronomy 6:5: "Love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your strength." Sometimes we want to follow Jesus wholeheartedly and be shepherds for this nation and blessings to others. It is very difficult to make a decision of faith. But we must believe that when we follow Jesus and live according to his teachings, God will bless our families and children and make America a kingdom of priests and a holy nation. Therefore, we must repent of our double minds and follow him simply. Most of all, we must think of the cost of following Jesus. By following Jesus, we don't get anything. It is like having two jobs instead of just one job. But when we follow Jesus wholeheartedly, we can be great men and a blessing to our families and to other people. Here we learn that selfish ambition and anxiety about future security are the worst spiritual sicknesses. When we are going to follow Jesus, we must overcome selfish ambition and anxiety about our life security. Then surely God will bless us.

Third, Jesus calms the storm (23-27). After all these events, Jesus got into the boat and his disciples followed him. This was the Sea of Galilee. It is small, but it is 680 feet below sea level. On the west side, there are mountains with valleys which compress air and cause it to rush down on the lake with violence and with startling suddenness, so that the sea, though really calm when it is calm, can become stormy at any moment. Look at verses 24-25. "Without warning, a furious storm came up on the lake, so that the waves swept over the boat. But Jesus was sleeping. The disciples went and woke him, saying, 'Lord, save us! We're going to drown.'" The sea became very angry and the disciples became very fearful while Jesus was snoring peacefully after a day of hard work.

What did Jesus say to his disciples when they woke him up? Jesus rebuked them, saying, "You of little faith, why are you so afraid?" The disciples were very sick with fear because they had no faith. Here we learn that when we are going to follow Jesus, we must overcome fear in

our hearts. The disciples were afraid at the sound of roaring waves of the sea. But Jesus rebuked them, saying, "You of little faith." Jesus rebuked them because they had no faith, even though Jesus was with them. Jesus is the Creator God who rules man and nature. The world in which we live can be compared to a billowing sea. In this hard world, people's most serious problem is fear. Non-Christians pretend to be happy. But they are the slaves of fear. Fear comes from the devil. He is like various forms of ferocious animals without hands; they are nothing but shadows of many kinds. When we trust and obey, there is no fear in our hearts. Our God is ruling the world. After Jesus' rebuking, the disciples became courageous. Then the wind was completely calm.

Fourth, Jesus heals two demon-possessed men (28-34). Look at verse 28a. "When he arrived at the other side in the region of the Gadarenes, two demon-possessed men coming from the tombs met him." This account is similar with that of one Gerasene demoniac in Mark chapter 5. Mark said that there was one Gerasene demoniac. But Matthew said that there were two demon-possessed men. Anyway, in the world of demons, number is not important. In their world, one can be 6,000 and 6,000 can be one. Where demons were, nobody could pass because they were so violent. These two demon-possessed men were living among the tombs. Probably, they did not like anybody around them except their partner. Maybe one was a male demon and the other was a female demon. Still, we don't know what their real problem was. But the fact was that they left their society and lived among the tombs like mountain dogs. Probably, they wanted unlimited human freedom. Probably they were out of themselves. So they came to the grotesque graveyard to live there. Probably they claimed that they were absolutely free, so no policeman could give them a parking ticket. This might be the reason they came to the tombs, where there was no interference. But they could not enjoy unlimited freedom. At night mosquitoes visited them too frequently with beautiful singing voices. Every morning early birds came and woke them up regularly. So they became even more angry. There they had nothing to see but tombs. They were miserable because they had no one to talk with except their own sinful inner men. Plainly speaking, they were mentally sick men incurably. They were dead men. Romans 8:6 says, "The mind of sinful man is death."

Now the Son of Man was coming near to them. But they thought that he was going to torture them and said, "What do you want with us, Son of God? Have you come here to torture us before the appointed time?" When we observe them, they were not psychiatric patients, for they acknowledged who Jesus was and they knew that they would perish at the appointed time. Matthew saw their misery as demon-possession. The power of the devil was in them. They felt as if they were dying moment by moment because of the devil's torture. We see so many young people who are doing something beyond our comprehension. But in reality it is not they who do such terrible things, but the demons in them and the power of the devil. The devil always makes people dirty, lazy and selfish. The devil always gives people unlimited misery instead of unlimited freedom. The devil always torments people; he never heals. So Paul, acknowledging the existence of the devil, said in Romans 8:15, "For you did not receive a spirit that makes you a slave again to fear, but you received the Spirit of sonship. And by him we cry, 'Abba, Father.'" Here we learn that there is nothing to fear but fear itself as Franklin Roosevelt said. That's true. We must really fear the devil. We must

pray that we may not be misguided by the devil's scheme. Many people think they are fearful because they don't have a secure job or they don't have enough savings. Many students think that they are fearful that they didn't get good enough grades to graduate. Many girls think that they are fearful that there are not many handsome boys who could be their husband candidates. Those girls are immoral. Those boys are groundlessly proud. They are all under the deception of the devil. We must know that there is the Spirit of God as well as the devil. Let's go back to the text. What happened because of these two demon-possessed men? Look at verse 30. There was beautiful scenery. Some distance from them a large herd of pigs was feeding. The demon begged Jesus, "If you drive us out, send us into the herd of pigs." Here we learn that the demons or devil want a ransom payment. Jesus said to them, "Go!" So they came out and went into the pigs, and the whole herd rushed down the steep bank into the lake and died in the water. According to Mark's Gospel, there were two thousand pigs (Mk 5:13). These pigs were possessed by demons. Now their joy of eating was gone and the sky looked dark. Next, their minds became dark and stormy, and they became very miserable. So they had a community meeting and made a decision to commit mass suicide, falling down from a bank to the lake water. The whole herd rushed down the steep bank into the lake and died in the water. Jesus sacrificed a multitude of pigs. In this way, Jesus saved two demon-possessed men.

Those tending the pigs ran off, went into the town and reported all this. Then the whole town went out to meet Jesus. When they saw him, they pleaded with him to leave their region. In reality, the pigs were the possession of the townspeople. Without permission, Jesus sacrificed the pigs, which were their business resources. Actually, Jesus had to have a retreat with his disciples. But he and his company were driven out from the town. Jesus' healing ministry is indeed messianic and full of compassion.

Today we studied Jesus' healing of many people. Among the healings, Jesus' visiting Peter's house and healing his mother-in-law's fever was very impressive. She must have been very offensive because of her daughter's insecurity. But Jesus visited Peter's mother-in-law and healed her. When she was healed, she got up and waited on them. His disciples, who were afraid of going to Peter's house because of his mother-in-law, were very happy to eat to their fill. In this passage Jesus' healing the two demon-possessed men was really an amazing story. In order to save two souls, he sacrificed the whole town's pig industry. We want to save many souls. But life-saving requires life-giving. Today's passage mainly tells us that man's major problem is not a marriage problem; it is a demon possession problem. Demon possession makes many men extremely fearful. Praise Jesus that he has the power to drive out demons from our hearts. Praise Jesus who saved us from the fear problem.