

The Gospel of Matthew

Lesson 10: Healings and the Authority of Jesus -- Matthew 8:1–34

For three chapters we have listened to Jesus teach. The crowds came down from the mountain still astonished that He spoke “as one who had authority.” Now Matthew shows us that the authority was not just in His words. Jesus comes down the mountain, and the moment His feet touch the road, a leper falls at them. And the same voice that had reshaped the meaning of the law reaches out, touches the untouchable, and says, “I will; be clean.” The teaching and the touch belong together. The One who speaks with authority also heals, calms, and casts out with authority.

Matthew 8 is a gallery of impossibilities, and Jesus walks through it as if each one were nothing. A leper no one would come near. A servant dying in a soldier’s house. A fever burning through Peter’s mother-in-law. A whole town’s worth of the sick and demon-oppressed brought to one door at sunset. A storm so violent that seasoned fishermen were sure they would drown. Two men so torn by demons that no one could pass their way. One by one, Jesus speaks, and disease retreats, the sea lies down, and the demons flee. Watch closely, because Matthew is not merely collecting miracle stories. He is building a case.

The case is this: Jesus has authority over everything that ruins us. He has authority over disease, over nature, and over the powers of darkness. The sea obeys Him. The unclean spirits beg Him. The disciples ask the only honest question left: “What sort of man is this, that even winds and sea obey him?” Matthew wants us to feel the weight of that question, because the answer is the heart of the gospel. This is no mere healer or teacher. This is God walking among us, the Lord whom even the storm must obey.

But running through this gallery of power is a second thread, quieter and just as important. A Roman officer astonishes Jesus with his faith. A would-be follower is warned that the Son of Man has nowhere to lay His head. A man wants to follow, but later. The same chapter that displays Christ’s overwhelming authority keeps asking what we will do with it. Authority like this does not leave us as spectators. It calls us to trust, to follow, and to count the cost of belonging to the One the wind and waves obey.

Group Discussion: In the storm, the terrified disciples cry out and Jesus calms the sea with a word, leaving them to ask, “What sort of man is this, that even winds and sea obey him?” (8:27). Why do you think Matthew gathers so many different kinds of miracles into one chapter, and what is he trying to show us about who Jesus really is?

Personal Reflection: Jesus marveled at the centurion, a Roman soldier, saying, “with no one in Israel have I found such faith” (8:10). When you picture bringing your deepest need to Jesus, do you come expecting Him to act, or do you quietly assume He cannot or will not? Where is He inviting you to trust His authority more than you do?

Read Matthew 8:1–34

Study Questions

1. In one chapter Jesus heals a leper with a touch, a servant with a word, a fever, a crowd, calms a deadly storm, and casts out demons (8:1–34). What is Matthew teaching us about the identity of Jesus by showing His authority over disease, nature, and the powers of darkness all together?
2. Jesus reaches out and touches a leper, the very person the law and the crowd kept at a distance (8:2–3). Who are the people you instinctively keep at arm's length, and what would it look like for you to move toward them the way Jesus moved toward this man?
3. A Roman centurion says, "only say the word, and my servant will be healed," and Jesus marvels, "with no one in Israel have I found such faith" (8:8, 10). What does this soldier understand about Jesus' authority, and why does Jesus call it greater faith than He has found among His own people?
4. The centurion was an outsider, a Gentile, yet his faith astonished Jesus and pointed ahead to people coming "from east and west" into the kingdom (8:11). Where might pride in your own background or religious history be keeping you from the simple, trusting faith Jesus praises here?
5. Matthew says Jesus healed the sick so that Isaiah's words would be fulfilled, "He took our illnesses and bore our diseases" (8:16–17). What does it mean that Jesus' healings point back to His mission as the suffering Servant, and what does this teach us about why He came?
6. To one eager man Jesus says, "The Son of Man has nowhere to lay his head," and to another, "Follow me, and leave the dead to bury their own dead" (8:20, 22). Where in your

life are you holding back from Jesus because of comfort, security, or competing loyalties, and what is He asking you to put first?

7. In the boat the terrified disciples cry out, and Jesus answers, “Why are you afraid, O you of little faith?” before calming the sea (8:26). What is Jesus revealing about the relationship between fear and faith, and what does it mean that He is present and in command even when the storm is real?
8. The disciples were following Jesus and still ended up in a life-threatening storm. When have you assumed that following Jesus would keep the storms away, and how does this account change the way you read the hard seasons of obedience?
9. When Jesus arrives among the demon-possessed men, even the demons recognize Him, crying, “What have you to do with us, O Son of God?” and He casts them out with a word (8:29, 32). What does this passage teach about the deity and supreme authority of Jesus over every spiritual power, and why is that authority such good news for those who belong to Him?
10. Look back across the whole chapter, the leper, the centurion, the storm, the demons. Name one specific area of your life where you most need to trust the authority of Jesus this week, and what would it look like to bring it to Him expecting Him to act.

Now or Later

Reflect on these passages: Psalm 107:23–30, the Lord who stills the storm and brings sailors to their desired haven; Isaiah 53:4, the Servant who bore our griefs and carried our sorrows, quoted in 8:17; Mark 4:35–41, Mark’s account of the calming of the storm; Luke 9:57–62, the cost of following Jesus and the call to put nothing first; Colossians 1:15–17, Christ as the One in whom all things hold together and who is over every power.