

Sent: Wednesday, November 13, 2019 3:24 PM  
Subject: Last Nite's MOB Study on Matthew 8

"The men were amazed, and said, "What kind of a man is this, that even the winds and the sea obey Him?" (Matthew 8:27)

Last week, our third lesson on the "Sermon of the Mount" closed with Matthew 7:28-29, about how the "crowds" of people that had been following Jesus and heard HIS teachings were "amazed" because "He was teaching them as one having authority, and not as the scribes!" In last nite's lesson, Jesus demonstrated that authority and validated His Messiahship (and more!) through the amazing miracles He performed; miracles that showed not only His great compassion for all kinds of people (Jews and Gentiles, and the "least of these"! ) but HIS divine power over all kinds of physical ailments, and His power over creation, and nature itself, as well as over the demonic world! What kind of "man" is this? (the disciples wondered!) The "Son of Man" as He Himself claimed! The "Son of God" sent by the Father, as Matthew would ultimately establish!

Matthew 8 begins with Jesus "coming down from the mount" and being confronted by a "leper" who called Jesus "Lord" and apparently believed that "if Jesus was willing, He could make him clean"! Mark's account (in Mark 1:41) says Jesus was "moved with compassion," while Matthew simply says that Jesus "stretched out His hand and touched him, saying, "I am willing, be cleansed"! And immediately his leprosy was cleansed!" Wow! To fully understand the significance of Jesus' action, one has to understand the seriousness of the Jew's view (and the Law itself) regarding a leper! They were considered "unclean," prohibited from entering the temple, ostracized from society and not to be touched! Hopeless and despairing, until encountering Jesus, the Messiah! A clear picture of "fallen humanity," his need for a Savior, and the reason for Jesus coming into this world! II Corinthians 5:21 says, "He (God the Father) made Him (Jesus) who knew no sin to be sin on our behalf (in effect to become the "leper"! ), so that we might become the righteousness of God in Him"!

Matthew next records how a centurion, a Roman military officer (who were generally "despised" by Jews because they "symbolized" Roman oppression), came to Jesus and "implored" Him to "just say the word" to heal his servant who was "lying paralyzed at (his) home"--and, by the end of his plea, had so impressed Jesus with "his faith" (a faith He had not as yet found "with anyone in Israel"! ) that He told him that it was to be done for him "just as he had believed"! The servant was healed "at that very moment"! (Matthew 1:13)

Then we learned, in Matthew 1:14, that Jesus healed Peter's mother-in-law who had been "lying sick in bed with a fever"--noting that Jesus simply "touched her hand" (Luke says, "rebuked the fever"! ) and that "the fever left"! Then that, that very evening, He healed "all who were brought to him," including "many who were demon-possessed"! All this to fulfill what Isaiah, the prophet, had written about: how He would "take on our infirmities and carry away our diseases"! (Isaiah 53:4)

Jesus was then ready to depart (with His disciples) to the other side of the Sea of Galilee, but was tracked down by – of all people – a "scribe" (a teacher of the Mosaic Law) who vowed to "follow Him wherever He would go" (Matthew 1:19), but, as it turns out, never made it into the boat, after he learned about the real cost of being a disciple! Another "so-called" disciple also expressed interest in following Jesus but wanted first to "bury his father" (interpreted as "waiting for his inheritance"! ) Note that neither the scribe nor the "other" disciple apparently made it "into the boat" to follow Jesus!

Interesting also that Jesus, in His conversation with the "scribe," referred to Himself as the "Son of Man"! A clear reference to Him being the "Messiah"! (You'd think a "scribe," a teacher of Law, would have gotten it!) Daniel, in Daniel 7:13-17, prophesied this! "I kept looking in the night visions, and behold, with the clouds of heaven, One like the "Son of Man" was coming, and He came up to the Ancient of Days and was presented before Him! And to Him was given dominion, glory and a kingdom, that all the peoples, nations, and men of every language might serve Him...."! Later, in Matthew 16:13-17, Jesus would ask His disciples: "Who do people say that the Son of Man is?" And "who do you (Peter) say that I am"? To which Peter replied: "You are the Christ, the Son of the Living God"! To which Jesus replied: "Blessed art thou, Simon Barjona...!"

Well, Jesus and His disciples made it into the boat. Jesus was obviously exhausted (as a man!) and even slept through a great storm, one that so terrified His disciples (most of whom were experienced fishermen!) that they thought they were "perishing"! And woke up, and cried out to, Jesus to "save them"! (Wow! There's a Gospel message there!) And so, what did Jesus do? He "got up and rebuked the winds and the sea, and it became perfectly calm!" And thus, our memory verse: Matthew 8:27 "The men (the disciples) were amazed (as the men of the MOB must be too!) and said, "What kind of man is this, that even the winds and the sea obey Him?" Again, Wow!

The point of the story is that Jesus was, and is, the Messiah (and God Incarnate!) and that He has authority over all His creation, including natural disasters! And the promise for the believer, not that we'll be delivered from all the storms and disasters of this life, but that He'll be with us in the midst of them! David Platt writes: "Faith is not confidence that trials won't come our way, but the confidence that no matter what winds and waves come our way in this life, the God of the Universe will be right there in the boat with us!"

Well, we're not done! There's the original "bay of pigs" incident, as Paul Logan called it! Jesus casting out the demons that possessed the two demoniacs ("before their time!") into a herd of "unclean" swine who promptly "rushed down the bank and into the sea and perished into the waters"! (Matthew 8:28-33) After which, verse 34 says, "the whole city came out to meet Jesus...and implored Him to leave their region"! Wow! How sad!

To sum up: Jesus is the Son of God, with all authority over disease, and disasters, and demons, and nothing can touch the believer apart from His sovereign power and in accordance with His sovereign will! We, as believers, are secure in the hands of the One who has authority over all and is committed to providing for us in the midst of all our struggles! We need not worry or fear. We can look forward to the day when there will be no more tears, or sorrow! His kingdom will come!

James Platt writes that there are four specific ways in which we should respond "in light of the realities of Jesus' authority demonstrated in Matthew 8: (1) Trust Him wholeheartedly! (2) Rest in Him peacefully! (3) Submit to Him completely! and (4) Rejoice in Him gladly!

And that's the amazing account of Matthew 8!

Go with God this week, men and play a part in allowing Jesus to "touch" someone today!

Lowell