

Matthew 8:1-22

Disclaimer: this is an automatically generated machine transcription - there may be small errors or mistranscriptions. Please refer to the original audio if you are in any doubt.

Date: 24 June 2018

Preacher: Paul Levy

[0 : 00] Thank you.

A version of Psalm 15. We'll sing Psalm 98. To finish our service. But we want the word of God to set the agenda. It's easy as an expert. Preachers and leaders.

To have their own agenda that they're trying to get across. And so we preach through Matthew's gospel. To the end of chapter 7. And I hope to deal with chapter 8 and 9. And before the summer. And so what we'll see today.

Is we'll see the transforming joy of Jesus the King. The transforming joy of Jesus the King. It's been a couple of weeks since we were in Matthew 5 to 7. But you will remember there.

That Jesus was proclaiming the kingdom of God. The kingdom of heaven. And he was proclaiming it with power. So look at the last words of chapter 7. You'll see that when Jesus finished these sayings.

[1 : 19] That sermon. The crowds were astonished at his teaching. For he taught as one who had authority. And not as their scribes. Not as their preachers.

They were astonished at the authority of Jesus' words. And those verses at the end of chapter 7. They function as a marker. Of the end of the Sermon on the Mount.

All those teachings that Matthew has gathered together. That we know by that name. And Matthew is saying. You need to realise that the sermon by Jesus is over. But Matthew's sermon isn't over. Matthew's sermon doesn't stop for us there. It goes on right away through chapters 8 and 9. And we know that. Because as we go through Matthew's gospel. We see certain marker points.

If you go back a couple of chapters. Just look with me at chapter 4. Just before the Sermon on the Mount begins. And you can see the first marker point. It's in chapter 4 and verse 23.

[2 : 21] It says Jesus went through Galilee. Teaching in their synagogues. Proclaiming the gospel of the kingdom. And healing every disease. And every affliction among the people. Three things there.

Teaching. Proclaiming. And healing. Now click forward to chapter 9. And you find almost identical wording. In chapter 9 and verse 35.

Jesus went through chapter 9 and verse 35. Went throughout all the cities and villages. Teaching in the synagogues. Proclaiming the gospel of the kingdom. Healing every disease. And every affliction.

Teaching. Proclaiming. Healing. And in between those two markers. Are chapters 5 to 9. 5, 6 and 7. Are Jesus teaching. Jesus proclaiming the gospel of the kingdom. Chapters 8 and 9. Jesus works. Proclaim the kingdom.

[3 : 19] 5, 6 and 7. His words proclaim the kingdom. 8 and 9. His works proclaim the kingdom. His miracles. He gives a wonderful demonstration. Of what life looks like.

In the kingdom of heaven. And he tells us. That Jesus kingdom. Is all about the transformation. Of the whole earth. Of the whole universe.

Of the whole created realm. Of the spiritual realm. As well as the physical realm. Transformation. Nothing less than a whole new creation.

And at the same time. The transformation of men and women. And boys and girls. For that new creation. That is what the gospel is. It is about the power.

And the authority. That Jesus exercises. Over all the decay. And all of all. The enslavement. And the destruction. And the alienation. That affects our world.

[4 : 15] Because of the rebellion. Of man against God. Because of the tragedy. Of sin. Now that is what Jesus words were all about.

In the Sermon on the Mount. Were they? They were all about his perfect law. His perfect law. For his perfect new world. And now Jesus is showing us. By his works.

In the same way. He demonstrates. Unmistakably. Just how wonderful. The new kingdom will be. The new world is going to be. And Matthew has carefully ordered.

Everything. To show you this. To show you the wonder. And the transforming joy. Of Jesus kingdom. So let's look.

Just at Matthew chapter 8 and 9. And I've not really seen. The structure of Matthew 8 and 9. Before this. It's one sermon. We're going to do it in three. And it's a brilliant sermon.

[5 : 15] In three parts. Because every part. Of Matthew's sermon. Has three points. Three miracles. And then some teaching. About the life. Of discipleship.

Telling you what it means. To follow Jesus. In the now. In this world. Let me just show you that. So look at. At 8 and 9. You'll see. There's three miracles. Cleansing of a leper.

Faith Vincent Centurion. And Jesus healing many. That's the first point. Of the sermon. And then you have the cost. Of following Jesus. And then again. You have the same structure. You have the calming of the storm.

The healing of the people. With demons. And the paralytic. And then you have a section. Of teaching. On what it means. To be a disciple. And then you have. Verse 18 of chapter 9. A girl restored to life. Jesus heals.

Two blind men. And he heals. A man unable to speak. And then he teaches you more. On what life is like. On the kingdom. And as he works up.

[6 : 11] To the end of chapter 9. There are two great conclusions. That we'll see. He challenges the crowds. Who are listening. Remember that Jesus is speaking. To his disciples. But the crowds are listening in.

And he's challenging them. To make a decision. For his kingdom. He's challenging the crowds. Join the kingdom. And at the same time. All the way through. These two chapters. He's calling you and I. As his disciples. To see the significance. Of what life is like. Living. In the kingdom of heaven. So all the way. Through 8 and 9.

The emphasis is C. It's one big point. Jesus is the king. Jesus is the king. And Jesus is the one. Who has the authority. And the power. Over every single.

Manifestation. Of power. And sin. And curse. In the world. He is the one. Who's got the power. And the authority. To drive out sin. He's got the authority.

[7 : 07] And the power. To reverse the curse. And to bring about. That great restoration. That God has promised. From the very beginning. And that all human beings. Have looked for. Through history.

And so. So today. We're going to look at the first part. Verses 1 to 22. And it's all about. Jesus power. And authority. Over the hopelessness. Of sin. The message is.

That Jesus. And his kingdom. Reverses. The tragic. Hopelessness. Of sin. In the world. And in the lives. Of human beings. And the emphasis.

If you look at these. Three sections. With me. The emphasis. Is. On Jesus. Miracles. To show. His authority. Over the power. That sin has.

To exclude. To exclude. Human life. Human beings. From a life. As it's meant to be. So in each of these stories. You see. A man.

[8 : 02] Or a woman. And you see. A man. Or a woman. Made in the image of God. And yet. That image of God. Has been somehow. Reduced.

Is something. Far less. Far. Far less. Than God. Meant for human life. To be. And therefore. Because of. The results. Of sin.

These people. Are excluded. From full. Participation. In the life. Of God's people. And it's as a result. Of the curse of sin.

And each. Picture. That we're given. By Jesus. Is a picture. Of what sin. Does to human life. To your life. And to mine. Because the whole message. Of the Bible. Is that humankind.

You and I. Are under a curse. That we are. Separated. From God. Because of the tragedy. Of man's rebellion. Against God. God created you.

[8 : 59] For intimate. Fellowship. With him. And yet. What is the truth. Of our lives. The truth of our lives. Is we've been excluded. We've been. Diminished. We human beings.

We are pale. Shadows. Of what true. Humanity. Is meant to be. We're not at all. As how God. Created us to be. We know that. Don't we? Every year.

We get older. Every year. We grow. We grow. Weaker. And because one day. Of course. Every one of us. Will die. And that is not. How we were created. To be. Death.

And old age. Is a terrible. Intrusion. But the gospel. Of the kingdom. Is that Christ. The king. Has come. To put an end. To that exclusion. To that alienation.

And he's come. To call. Men and women. And boys and girls. Back into a true humanity. That God created at the beginning. And destined us for.

[9 : 59] And that is the glorious message. That is acted out. In chapters 8 and 9. Three people. Who by their nature. They are excluded. From full access to God. In the religious life of Israel.

And yet. Jesus. Jesus has the authority. To bring everyone. Back into intimate. Friendship. And fellowship. With the son of God himself. So first of all.

Here's a man who is unclean. Look at verses 1 to 4. Chapter 8. Here is a man who is unclean. He is a leper. Now. I asked the children.

What is a leper? The first question was. Something with spots. And that's able to run very quickly. So we asked again. What is a leper? And somebody said.

Well it's something that you grab hold of. And pull down. Meaning a lever. But that's not a leper. A leper is someone who is excluded from society. But more importantly here.

[10 : 57] A leper is excluded from the temple. The place where. The Jews went to meet with God. And the synagogue. Where they went to hear of God. So look at verse 1.

When he came down from the mountain. Great crowds followed him. And behold a leper came to him. And knelt before him. Saying. Lord. If you will. You can make me clean.

And Jesus stretched out his hand. And touched him. Saying. I will. Be clean. And immediately. His leprosy. Was cleansed. And Jesus said to him.

See that you say nothing to anyone. But go and show yourself to the priest. And offer the gift that Moses commanded. For a proof to them. Now you see here. The disease. Whether it's what we call leprosy today.

Or some other kind of skin disease. That they called leprosy in those days. Doesn't matter. The issue is more than having a disease. But the issue is really clear. When you look at the words that is used.

[11 : 59] Can you see? The words that I use. Is that. He was unclean. That's why in verse 2. Matthew. Doesn't say healing. He doesn't want you to think healing. He wants you to think cleansing.

That is what he wants. That's the most important thing. That everybody knew. That in that day. To have leprosy. To have leprosy. Was a hopeless condition. Only God.

Only God. Could cure leprosy. There was no other way. Than divine intervention. But notice what Jesus does to this man. What does he do? Can you see in verse 3.

He touches him. That is something. That no one else. Had ever done. Since this man's diagnosis. Lepers were apart. No one went near them.

Let alone touched them. And then with his word of power. In verse 3. He says be clean. And then he says to them. Go to the priest. Why go to the priest?

[12 : 57] Go to the priest. To show them. As a proof to them. That you've been made clean. So he will allow you. To have access to God. That he would be allowed.

To have access to the synagogue. All over again. And he was to go to them. As proof. To proclaim to them. This testimony. I've been cleansed from leprosy. And I have access to God.

And this can only mean one thing. That the kingdom of God. Has come. Because everybody knew. In those days. That the only thing. That could bring a cure.

For lepers. Was that God had come. So here is a man. Who is unclean. But he's no longer hopeless.

He's been cleansed by Jesus. And he has access to the life. That he'd been denied before. Look at verse 5. Not only. Do we have a man. Who is unclean.

[13 : 55] But there is a man. Who is untouchable. There is a man. Who is untouchable. Because he's a Gentile. He's a Gentile. Look at verse 5. When he entered Capernaum.

A centurion. Came forward to him. Appealing to him. Lord my servant. Is lying paralyzed. At home. Suffering terribly. And I think there should be.

A question here. I think the ESV gets it wrong. And he said to him. Am I to come and heal him? Am I to come and heal him?

And there's a very definite question there. But the centurion replied. Lord I am not worthy. To have you come under my roof. But only say the word. And my servant will be healed.

Try to have a man. Under authority. With soldiers under me. I say to him. 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 this. He marveled. And said to those who followed him.

[14:52] Truly truly. With no one in Israel. Have I found such faith. I tell you many will come. Many will come from east and west.

And recline at table. With Abraham, Isaac and Jacob. In the kingdom of heaven. While the sons of the kingdom. Will be thrown into the outer darkness. In that place. There will be weeping. And gnashing of teeth. And to the centurion. Jesus said.

Go. Let it be done for you. As you believed. And the servant was healed. At that very moment. So here is a man who is untouchable. He is a Gentile. A centurion.

Probably not a Roman. Probably Lebanese. Or Syrian. And he was excluded. From God's presence. And his people. By his race. And I think that's what Matthew is drawing.

Our attention to. In the description. He comes in. Verse 6. Not with. Not with a direct question. Can you see that? For Jesus. But there is a hesitant statement.

[15:48] He is unsure. Even if he is going to be heard. By Jesus. He says. My servant is lying. Paralyzed. At home. Suffering. Terribly.

There is not a question there. And Jesus answers him. Am I to come and heal him? And verse 8. If you look there. Shows you. This man knows. That he is.

Excluded. No. I am not worthy. To have you come into my house. I know I am on the outside. Maybe there is more than. Just a consciousness. Of being a part.

As a Gentile. Maybe there is a consciousness. Of sin. Isn't it? I am not worthy. To have you come into my house. But he displays. Doesn't he? Astonishing faith.

This outsider. Grasps the power. And the authority. Of Jesus. In a way that no one else. Seems to have. And it. Astonishes. Jesus. You have this.

[16:47] Amazing faith. Jesus. Is amazed. Sometimes it does amaze us. As Christians. Doesn't it? Especially if we have been Christians. A long time. When somebody.

Who's got no background. In the church. And no Bible background. No years. Of understanding. And yet. They come into a situation. Of being in the church.

And they come to the Lord Jesus. And they mature. And they grow. So quickly. And very quickly. They outstrip. Those of us. Who've grown up. And had all the kind of advantages.

That they never had. It's often true. To be a real encouragement. To you. If you've someone. If you're someone. Who's come to church recently. If you're someone.

Who's come from. The outside. So to speak. To the Lord Jesus. And you might think. Well I don't know very much. I don't know very much. And all these people.

[17:44] In this church. Well they've been coming to it. For years. Since they were young. But I don't know very much. Well this same Tyrian. He didn't know very much. Did he? But Jesus acclaim him.

Above all the people of Israel. Who knew the word. Inwards. Outwards. And backwards. And forwards. So be encouraged. Jesus loves to answer. Faith and trust. Even in people.

Who haven't got. A great deal. Of theological. Understanding. But he wants. You and I. He wants people. To know their own sin. And more importantly. The power.

Of their saviour. And to know. Where to come for answers. Jesus. And that was this man. So the unclean man. Is cleansed. And the untouchable man.

Is commended. By Jesus. The son of God. Above everyone else. And the people of Israel. And if that isn't. Staggering. What about the third story. In verse 14. The unclean.

[18:41] Is cleansed. The untouchable. Is commended. By Jesus. And then we have. The unnamed. I love. And verse 14.

When Jesus. Entered. Peter's house. He saw his mother-in-law. Lying sick. With a fever. The lady. With no name. If you go to Swansea.

I am known as. Steve's brother. Or Alan's boy. If they come to London. They are known as. Paul's brother. Or Paul's dad.

But here is this lady. We know nothing of her. Just. She is Peter's mother-in-law. The lady with no name. Lying sick. With a fever. And it says.

Doesn't it. That he touched her hand. Verse 15. And the fever left her. And she rose. And she began to serve. And that evening.

[19 : 43] And they brought to him. Many who were oppressed. By demons. And he cast out the spirits. With a word. And he healed. All who were sick. Now again.

We need to know. Don't we. That women were very. Second rate citizens. In those days. In the world of that day. Actually. They were much better. Treated in Israel. Than in any of the. Other surrounding nations. That's still true today. In the Middle East. They were better treated. In Israel. Than they were. In the surrounding.

Pagan lands. And yet still. Women weren't permitted. To come into the heart. Of the temple. Were they? Certainly. No rabbi. Or teacher. Of standing.

Would speak. Or bother. With a woman. But do you notice. In verse 15. Jesus touches her hand. Jesus doesn't need.

[20 : 42] To teach. To heal. Doesn't need. To touch. To heal. Does he? How do we know that? Well we know that. Because in the previous story. He healed the servant. From a distance.

With a word. And he could have done that. With Peter's mother-in-law. But he didn't. He touched her. And as well. As well as healing her. He is saying to her.

Isn't he? You matter. He is saying to her. You're not a nobody. You're not unnamed. Peter's mother-in-law.

And verse 16. Suggests. That the same example. Was repeated. Over and over. And over again. As all the people. With demons. And all the people. With illnesses. Were healed. And demons. Were driven out.

And verse 17. Explains what's going on. This was to fulfil. What was spoken. By the prophet. Isaiah. He took our illnesses. And bore our diseases. It's one of the great themes.

[21 : 40] Of Matthew's gospel. That everything Jesus does. Is fulfilling. The hopes and fears. Of all the years. That Jesus is fulfilling.

The prophet. Isaiah. The things that the prophets. Pointed to. And pointed forward to. And if you read. Isaiah's prophecy. Like when we preached through it. And you look at those last. Twenty chapters or so. You'll see that it's all about. The hope of a new world. A world that is going to be transformed. And freed from the curse of sin. And that is what we'll sing to close.

We'll sing. Joy to the world. The Lord has come. No more let sins. The sorrows grow. Or thorns infest the ground. He comes to make his blessings flow.

Far as the curse is found. And that's what explains. Doesn't it. Verses 11 to 12. About the great banquet. He's referring back to Isaiah the prophet. Listen to what the prophet Isaiah says.

[22 : 39] He says. On this mountain. The Lord will make for all peoples. A rich feast of food. A feast of well aged wine. And rich food. Full of marrow. And aged wine. And he will swallow up the covering.

That is cast over the peoples. The veil that is spread over the nations. He will swallow up death forever. And the Lord God will wipe away all tears. From their faces. This is the beginning. Of the cosmic transformation. That the prophets promised. A transformed world. With every hint of the curse gone. And all the blocks on our world.

All the uncleanness. And all the sickness. And all the things that exclude us. From the presence of God. They are banished. By the Lord Jesus at his coming. The veil that is spread over the nations. Is gone. The covering of sin. That has cloaked humanity. And the shadows that follow. From the very beginning. That turn us into half people. Turn us into half people.

[23 : 45] Of tarnished images. Of what God meant us to be. Is swallowed up forever. Says the prophet. And that is the gospel of the kingdom. That Jesus has shown you and I.

The hope of the gospel. Is the hope of a world transformed. Of a humanity transformed. In its true integrity. To its true humanity. In the Lord Jesus Christ.

And you are excluded. In the world. And you are excluded no more. And that is how big the gospel is. It is not just about you and me.

And a few of us. It is about a world transformed. And remade. But notice how Matthew tells us. This will happen. Look at verse 17. He took our illnesses. And he bore our diseases. You see Jesus drives out.

[24 : 48] The curse of sin. By bearing the curse. For us. And Matthew is quoting. Isn't it from that passage. That if you have been in church. Any amount of time. You know from Isaiah 53.

The servant of the Lord. Will be the sin bearer. And don't forget. That is what Matthew's gospel. Is about from beginning to end. You will call his name Jesus.

For he shall save his people. From their sins. And it ends. At the cross. Of him dying. For our sins. That verse that Matthew quotes.

In Isaiah 53. The one before. The verse before that. Is he was despised. And rejected by man. He was a man of sorrows. Unacquainted with grief. He was excluded.

He was excluded. That we might be included. He was shut out. That we might be brought in. And that's a great paradox.

[25 : 47] The great exchange. At the heart of this kingdom. That Jesus is transforming. A world. The world in joy. But he does that.

By bearing the curse. The illnesses. The diseases. The sicknesses. The consequences of sin. Are taken on himself.

And you see. That is why Matthew applies. This message to Christian disciples. In verse 18 to 22. He tells us there. The cost of discipleship.

To Jesus. You see. Two would-be followers. They are confronted. By him. And they're told. What does it really mean. To follow Jesus. Into that transformed world. Look at verse 18.

When Jesus saw a crowd. Around him. He gave orders. To go over. To the other side. And a scribe. Came up to him. And said to him. Teacher. I will follow you. Wherever you go.

[26 : 46] Jesus said. Foxes have holes. Birds of the air have nests. But the son of man. Has nowhere to lay his head. And another of the disciples. Said to him. Lord. Let me first go and bury my father. And Jesus said to him. Follow me.

And leave the dead. To bury their own dead. The transformed world. Comes through. Jesus' rejection. The son of man.

Will have nowhere to lay his head. He will have no home. In this world. So that you can have a home. In the next world. He's called the son of man. His glory is veiled.

He is scorned by the world. He is the son of man. He's the man of the cross. And that was so shocking. To the Jews of Jesus day. They were full of great hopes. For their own salvation of course.

Not for lepers. Not for gentile dogs. Not for outcasts. They were full of hope. Of a glorious Messiah. Of a king. But not for someone. Who would suffer and die.

[27 : 45] And this world's religious hope. Has always been the same. There's no time is there. For a scorned. Suffering Messiah. This world wants glamour. And hope.

And power. And something to see. Of glory now. But Jesus says. My kingdom is not of this world. The feast of heaven. Is where the great banquet will be.

And that's the glory. And the hope of the gospel. And many will come. And they'll come from the east. And the west. Verse 11. And they will sit at my kingdom. In the glory of my kingdom. But here is a very.

Very harsh reality. But the old creation. Doesn't want anything to do. With the new creation. And this world.

This world. Will exclude Jesus. From its table. Even though. Jesus wants to invite people. Of this world. To his table. In the kingdom. And the world.

[28 : 41] Rejects the Lord Jesus Christ. As the man of sorrows. And that is why. Jesus says. If you're going to be. One of mine. It will be like that for you. Verse 22. It shows the starkness.

Of the divide. Doesn't it? Verse 22. Seems so thoughtless. Leave the dead. To bury their own dead. And you can follow me. There's a kingdom of life. And a world of death.

And you cannot be at home. In both places. There's a kingdom of life. Or there's a world of death. And you're in one or the other. This morning. And if you are in the kingdom of life.

It means. That you will be excluded. In this world. But to be a disciple. In this world. Means that you will be. An alien. And a stranger. And a mistreat.

And when you get to chapter 10. Jesus says. Like master. Like servant. They called me the devil. How much more will they call you the devil? And Matthew is writing. Because you and I need to know.

[29 : 44] Because in your office. Or in your college. Or in your work. Or in your school. That if you belong to Jesus. You are going to be a misfit. And you won't have a home. And you won't have a place to lay your head comfortably.

With the people of this world. That is the reality. Because Jesus was. A misfit. And a stranger. And an alien. Especially. Let it be said. Amongst the religious of his day. And so often. It will be for the disciples. And certainly for you. If you will be a true servant. And if you and your gospel.

Is truly at home. In Christ's new creation. Then by definition. You will never fit in happily. In this world. There is a cost.

In this world. To having your citizenship. In heaven. With Jesus. So don't be naive. Do not be naive. You've got to be realistic.

[30 : 45] That if you want to follow Jesus. Where he's going. You will go the same way he did. But on the other hand. Don't be blind.

Don't be blind. Don't forget. These three marvellous stories. Of healing. That Jesus is remaking the world. Don't miss. The transforming joy. Of his kingdom. And those who are excluded.

Who are hated. Who are scorned. For his sake. In the world. Those who have no place. In this world's affections. And estimations. Rejoice. Because one day. You will sit. At the table.

With a great host. From east and west. And you will sing. The praises of the king. Forever. Because Jesus Christ. Has got the transforming. Power and authority.

Over the tragic. Helplessness. Of sin. In all its forms. He's come. To break. The power. Of cancelled sin. To set the prisoner.

[31 : 42] Free. He has great power. To transform us. And power. To make us. Fit for the kingdom. Because even. The unclean.

In the world's eyes. And even. The untouchable. In the world's eyes. And even. The unnamed. And the unimportant. Of the world's eyes. Are welcomed. And when you know that.

And when you've grasped that. It won't be easy. It won't be hard. But you will follow him. Wherever he goes. Won't you? Because you belong.

To another world. But Jesus Christ. Has the power. And authority. To reverse. The tragic. Helplessness. Of sin.

And when he comes again. When his kingdom. Comes with power. Everything you see. In Matthew 8. You will see around us.

[32 : 37] Forever. In all those. He's come to change. And that is what the gospel. Of the kingdom is about. In this world. Jesus says. You will have tribulation. But be of good cheer.

Because I've overcome the world. Let's pray. Amen. Amen. Amen.