

Life Group Questions

Can Everyone Come to Jesus / Pastor Ray / Matthew 8:1-4 / September 12, 2021

Having taught his disciples with unique authority (7:28-29), Jesus comes down the mountain to carry on his kingdom mission with unique authority. Matthew 8-9 offer a 'slice of life' view of Jesus' ministry. These chapters chronicle nine stories (10 miracles) demonstrating Jesus authority and power over all things. They show that the kingdom of heaven has truly arrived. The 9 stories are structured as 3 triads with a discipleship teaching at the end of each triad.

Jesus is the Messiah (from the line of David), the new teacher (like Moses), and Emmanuel (God with us). He is the Shepherd who has compassion on the harassed and helpless (9:36) and sends his disciples to lost sheep (10:6). The overarching theme of this section is Jesus' authority.

Pray to begin

Share responses to the sermon

1. What stood out to you most in this week's message?
2. What was the most meaningful thing that you heard in the message? Why?
3. What questions are still lingering?

Discussion questions

Read Matthew 8:1-4. Reflect on the text and the sermon by discussing the questions.

1. This is the first specific miracle in Matthew's Gospel. (By contrast, the first of Jesus' miracles in both Mark and Luke is casting out a demon.) Why do you think Matthew chose this as his first miracle story?
2. Share among yourselves about times when you may have felt like "a leper," excluded from a group for some reason.
3. If you are from another country, what were some of the common reasons for people to be divided into lower and higher classes?
4. Who are some of the "lepers" in Canada?
5. In Leviticus, leprosy was a physical problem that required ceremonial cleansing, and it is included along with moral failures (sin) that also needed to be clean. The Day of Atonement (Leviticus 16) was an annual cleansing ceremony. Even though you probably don't have leprosy, how can you see yourself in him?
6. Have you ever felt that your sin is too great to be forgiven?
7. How do you see the man with leprosy demonstrating faith in this story? That is, what risks was he taking?
8. In the miracle stories of Matthew 8-9, Jesus performs a miracle either through a touch or a word. Why do you think he used touch to heal the man with leprosy?

9. Again, place yourself in the position of the man with leprosy, and imagine Jesus placing a loving hand on your shoulder, and saying the words, "Be clean." Take a minute or so in silence to place yourself in the story and imagine yourself in this way. What is your response?
10. Jesus instructs the healed man to tell no one about it? On a few occasions he will tell either people he healed or his disciples to not tell others about his miracles. Why do you think that was the case?
11. Why was it important for the man to go to the priest after Jesus healed him?
12. Touch others *like* Jesus: Are there people (either people or life or a certain demographic) that you need to stretch out your hand to touch them like Jesus did.
13. Receive the *touch* of Jesus. Read 1 John 1:6-10 and be refreshed in the knowledge that Jesus has laid a cleansing hand upon your soul.
14. Reflection questions: At the end of his message, Pastor Ray provided three questions for reflection. If you reflected on these after watching the sermon, share your thoughts with the group? If not, take a few moments now to reflect and then share together.
 - a. If you had a personal conversation with Jesus today, what do you think he might say to you? What would you ask him?
 - b. In what area of your life do you need restoration (physical health, mental and emotional health, relationships with others, relationship with God)? Ask Jesus for his healing touch.
 - c. Who is Jesus inviting you to touch with compassion? Who is Jesus inviting you to include?

Ask a group member to close in prayer OR spend some time praying for one another.