

Life Group Questions

Can Authority Ever Be a Good Thing? / Pastor Ray / Matthew 8:5-13 / September 19, 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 8:5-13. Reflect on the text and the sermon by discussing the questions.

1. What are some of the most positive or negative experiences you have had with authority? Take time to share your experiences with one another.
2. The centurion felt the burden of his suffering servant. Have you ever felt the pain of watching someone close to you suffer?
3. Why do you think Jesus offered to go to a Gentile's house even though he knew that would make him ritually unclean?
4. The centurion said, "Lord, I am not worthy to have you come under my roof." Jesus marveled at the centurion's humble response. Why did the centurion consider himself unworthy?
5. What did the centurion understand about authority? In what way was this Gentile's understanding different from that of others in Israel?
6. In what way does the centurion's understanding of authority help you in your own discipleship? That is, do you ever feel like you lack authority in some way, such as sharing your faith or praying for others?
7. Jesus looks to a time when people from all nations will join together to enjoy God's banquet. How would that have challenged his fellow Jews? How does it challenge you today?

8. Pastor Ray said that “Jesus has the authority to reverse the expectations of insiders” in regards to God’s justice. There is currently much discussion in society about social justice. Do you see any difference between the world’s view of justice and that of Jesus?
9. Pastor Ray gave five reasons for why we can trust Jesus’ authority: he is always good, he has power to act in love, he has power to heal, he can place us at his table, and we are made to live under his authority and trust him. Which of these is most meaningful to you at the moment?
10. Why would some people view Jesus’ authority as a threat?
11. Reflection questions: At the end of his message, Pastor Ray provided five questions for reflection. If you reflected on these after watching or listening to the sermon, share your thoughts with the group. If not, take a few moments now to reflect and then share together.
 - a. How have you struggled with authority in the past?
 - b. How has your struggle with authority affected your personal well-being?
 - c. What decisions do you need to make today in relation to Jesus’ authority? What area of your life have you not surrendered to his good rule?
 - d. In what area of your life do you need a healing word from Jesus today?
 - e. In what way does Jesus’ exercise of authority change the way you will exercise authority?

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