

Jesus
IS
KING
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He will build his church
Matthew 16:18



Our Mission is to build a community of grace
committed to making disciples of Jesus.

Our vision is to be a faithful, adventurous and compassionate
church with an expanding influence on communities, cities
and nations with the hope and love of God.

Welcome

Belonging to a LifeGroup is one way of ensuring our life's journey is not done in isolation. I'm encouraged you are part of a LifeGroup and very thankful for the time and energy our leaders put into this important ministry.

What is contained in these pages?

This 7 week series will seek to bring ongoing clarity to our 2020 Vision as we explore what it means to have a growing confidence that Jesus will build His church as we continue to acknowledge Him as *King of Kings*. Let us have no doubts that Jesus is authoritative, and His authority exists in many forms. He is the King of all kings. He is the Lord of all lords. There is none like Him.

At the end of the day, every person and all things will be called to bow to King Jesus. May it be that our church grows to submit to Him in all things!

We acknowledge that while we do not have all the answers, while resources may be lacking, we will accept the challenge to ask God for the impossible. Our *Big Hairy Audacious Prayers* listed in the 2020 Vision book, encourage us to turn our attention away from ourselves to what it means to do all things for His glory.

Personal Note: I continue to be thankful to God for all He has done in and through our ministry, for the team He has brought together and for the many people who make us the family of God. I give thanks to Peter Clark for spending time once again to write this study for us.

Blessings,


Ian Barnett
Senior Minister

Jesus Has Authority Over Disease | Matt 8:1-17

Pray: That as we begin this new series, God will open our eyes to the truth of His Word and to His transforming power.

Read Matthew 8:1-17

As we continue this series in Matthew’s Gospel we will explore what it means to have a growing confidence that Jesus will build His Church as we continue to acknowledge Him as the *King of Kings*. In the previous chapters we witness the most amazing sermon ever. So what is going to happen next? It does not take long for the world and us to see Jesus do what is socially unimaginable – he touches a leper. Here is the first action of the King. He demonstrates He has authority to break down social barriers that create spiritual barriers, as He seeks to free society’s outcasts. His simple but moving, “*I am willing*” response says it all.

The next section, which includes two more healings (8:5-13; 8:14-17), pushes His authority further. He now breaks down ethnic and religious barriers. In the first account, not just any Gentile was healed, but the servant of one of the Jew’s military oppressors. With the final miracle, another barrier was broken – that of gender. These passages aim to grow our understanding that in the presence of the King, social and ethnic barriers are removed and suffering/diseases disappear. The Kingdom of Heaven offers us a present hope and a new future.

1. Put yourself in the place of the leper. What did he know? What didn’t he know? How is that reflected in his question to Jesus? What is the difference between Jesus’ power and Jesus’ will (that is, what Jesus can do and what Jesus does)?

2. Why was Jesus willing to heal the leper but not heal Apostle Paul in 2 Corinthians 12:7-10. What do you learn from this? Can you share of an experience of being healed/not being healed?

3. Jesus found the Centurion’s faith amazing. (v. 10) What was it about his faith that Jesus found astounding? How might you model that sort of faith?

4. In verse 12, what does Jesus say about the eternal destination of the Jews who thought they had a biological right to be a part of the people of God? What about the Centurion’s eternal destination? What is your eternal destination dependent on?

We have seen that Jesus has authority over disease. He has cleansed the physically unclean and healed the ethnically outcast, now He restores the culturally marginalized.

5. What was the big deal of Jesus healing Peter’s Mother-In-Law? Why is it recorded?

6. Does Jesus’ healing ministry guarantee the healing of those for whom we pray? Why or why not?

Through the coming week, reflect on your faith relationship with the Lord Jesus.

Pray that we (like the Centurion) might display a “just say the word” friendship with Jesus.

Jesus Has Authority Over Life | Matt 8:18-34

Pray: That as you study God’s Word this week, He might do something really amazing in your life.

Read: Matthew 8:18-34

It does not take us long to be confronted with the cost of following Jesus. As His followers, like the disciples, we need to be cautious about making bold promises without fully meaning it. It is important to keep in mind that it is not a future issue. Jesus wants us to follow Him NOW! Chapter 8:18-22 is quite shocking. Yet the point is that the spiritually dead should bury the physically dead and let the spiritually alive serve in God’s Kingdom.

Serious business indeed. The calming of the storm demonstrates Jesus’ authority further. His power is also over nature itself. Do you ever wonder how tired He must have been? However, with divine power Jesus quiets the storm by a mere word.(v.26) Yes, He is fully human and fully divine. Finally, from vs 28-34 we see Jesus demonstrate His authority over evil and demonic forces.

1. What was Jesus thinking in His dealing with these two potential disciples in vs. 18-22?

2. A Commentator (J.C. Ryle) once said, “Nothing, in fact, has done more harm to Christianity than the practice of filling the ranks of Christ’s army with every volunteer who is willing to make a little profession.” What did he mean?

3. What does Jesus expect from those who follow Him? From us?

4. In vs. 23-27 we see Jesus’ authority over the pending disaster of the storm on the lake. What does v.27 tell us about the point of the story? The disciples would have been familiar with Psalm 89:9 and Psalm 107:29. What did this tell them about Jesus? What difference does this knowledge make to your life?

5. What is common to all these verses: Genesis 3:8a; Exodus 3:12, 6:7a; Matthew 1:23; John 14:16; Revelation 21:3? What comfort is there for us in the “disasters” of our lives?

6. Why did Jesus ask the question in v.26? How do vs. 28-34 encourage us not to fear? Why is there no need to be afraid of anything?

7. How does the defeat of Satan in these verses point to the bigger picture of Jesus’ mission? See John 12:31 and Colossians 2:15. What confidence does this give us?

Through the coming week, reflect on the things that usually cause you to fear and/or worry. Pray that you might be healed of that burden.

Pray: Be thankful that Jesus has authority over every aspect of life.

Jesus' Authority To Forgive | Matt 9:1-13

Pray: That as we study God's Word this week, we might come to know the amazing experience of forgiving and being forgiven.

Read: Matthew 9:1-13

In this passage we see the full impact of Jesus' authority revealed. *His authority and ability to forgive sins.* Those listening rightly understood that Jesus was making a claim to divinity. The crowds were a bit slower to understand this. There are huge consequences to all who listen to Jesus and who want to be His disciple. Our only response must be one of allegiance to Him in every aspect of our life. Interestingly, the passage says nothing about the faith of the paralysed man, only of his friends. As Jesus' journey continues, He continues to reach out to blatant sinners and social outcasts, even calling a tax collector to be an apostle.(10:4; Acts 1:13) In announcing His authority, Jesus also announces His mission.(9:12-13) It is interesting that the greatest miracle of all is possibly the least visible one; the one of forgiveness. We must remember that the way to God is along the path of mercy and forgiveness.

1. What does this passage (vs. 1-8) show as our greatest need? How does this fit with a cancer diagnosis, a family breakdown or a bad storm ripping through our neighbourhood?

2. Discuss the difference between suffering that is directly related to our own sin AND suffering that comes as a result of living in a fallen world?

3. Imagine someone says to you that Jesus never claimed to be God. How could you respond by using this account of the paralytic?

4. How do you think the call of Matthew is a demonstration of how Jesus pursues sinners? Share about your faith journey, of being pursued by Jesus.

5. Do you know people who seem so far away from a Christian understanding they appear unreachable? How might Jesus' calling of Matthew give us hope for them?

6. What is the irony in Jesus' response to the Pharisee's criticism? (vs. 12-13)

Through the week, reflect on how you might live in the light of being called like Matthew, after Jesus has "broken into" your life (like he did with the paralytic).
Pray: With thankfulness that Jesus addresses our greatest need – the forgiveness of our sin, and the call to follow Him.

Jesus Has Authority To Transform | Matt 9:14-26

Pray: For an increased awareness of our personal commitment to a God who transforms people's lives. Pray that He might be active in ours.

Read Matthew 9:14-26

The disciples of John the Baptist could not understand why Jesus' disciples did not fast as a sign of repentance or even as a sign of spiritual discipline. Jesus' reply is that He has not come to affirm traditional practices but to offer a new approach. Spiritual growth does not come from automatically observing a set of rules. It is worthwhile to ponder vs. 16-17.

We also see Jairus' daughter (see Luke 7:50) restored to life and a woman who had suffered much, healed. What we are called to understand, is Jesus continuing to show His authority over all things. He draws close to those who suffer, and as a result, is affected by their needs as He lives out His mission. Are we?

1. Why didn't Jesus disciples fast? What did Jesus mean in v. 15? When would the disciples fast? Why?

2. What does God promise in Hosea 2:16, 19-20? What is Jesus saying here?

3. Do we have any reason to fast?

4. How does, "unshrunk cloth" and "new wine/old wineskins" relate to fasting, the bridegroom and the Kingdom?

5. Both the synagogue leader and the woman were desperate (the leader's daughter was already dead, and the woman had suffered for 12 years). What is the relationship between desperation and faith? How would you describe Jesus' attitude to the leader and the woman? Can we expect the same attitude toward us?

6. What do Jesus' words in v. 24 tell us about our physical death? How does that make a difference to the way we live?

Through the coming week, reflect on how Jesus has transformed your life OR how He needs to transform your life.

Pray: That we might pray as Paul the Apostle did, "For to me, to live is Christ and to die is gain." (Phil. 1:21)

Jesus Has Authority To Send | Matt 9:27 – 10:4

Pray: That as we reflect on God’s Word to us this week, we might be open enough to “go” where He sends us.

Read Matthew 9:27 to 10:4

Jesus demonstrated the Good News of the Kingdom by His words of proclamation, deeds of healing and His life of compassion. He grieved over the multitudes who felt hopeless, helpless, harassed and leaderless. Rather than being discouraged by the extent of the needs of others, He recognized the great opportunity to bring hope. We see this in vs. 27-34. Blindness was a huge problem in the ancient world and lead most to become beggars. Jesus does not demand people follow traditions before He heals. He comes to offer mercy and grace to save us from our helpless state. This is also the work He calls His people to. But we need to remember that we are not called to do this work alone. We are to pray and ask for help from God who has commissioned us for our task. This is the “community of grace” in action. Is our life goal and purpose, His Kingdom?

1. What two things do the blind men’s plea (v.27) tell us about Jesus? What might they be expecting from Him? See Isaiah 35:5. How did they show faith?

2. Why did Jesus want the men to keep quiet? (It has been suggested that this is one command of Jesus we are good at keeping.)

3. How do you account for the difference in the reactions to Jesus of the crowd and the Pharisees?

4. Verses 35-36 give us a glimpse into Jesus’ heart. How do Jesus’ actions prove the Pharisees wrong?

5. What does Jesus mean by v.38? What is He calling on us to do?

6. Is it possible for us to be partially blind or dumb spiritually? How can Jesus help us? How does this passage help you labour in the field where God has placed you?

7. How does what the disciples will be doing in 10:1 compare with what Jesus did in Chapters 8 & 9 – particularly 9:36 & 9:38?

Through the coming week, reflect on how you will practically apply Jesus’ summons to pray and to go. (Matthew 9:38)

Pray: That we might be open to ways to fulfil Jesus’ commission to “go into all the world...”

Jesus Has Authority To Instruct | Matt 10:5-16

Pray: For God’s mission as we come to study this passage, realizing that He could have chosen any method or instrument, but He chose us. Wow!

Read: Matthew 10:5-16

We are being instructed to go; to be sent. Jesus reminds us as He did in Matthew 6:25-34, that God will provide us with all we need. We are called to show, in both word and deed, the coming of the Kingdom. One (word or deed) without the other is ineffective. There will be times of rejection, however our attitude should be it is not us being rejected, rather, the one who has sent us. Let us not pretend, there will be tough times. Disciples will be as vulnerable as “sheep among wolves”. To serve the mission we need to be shrewd and innocent at the same time.

1. Why didn’t Jesus send the disciples to the Gentiles or the Samaritans?

2. Read Genesis 12:3; Isaiah 25:6; 56:3-7; Malachi 1:11; Acts 10:34,35; Romans 3:29. How is God’s message of salvation for all people revealed?

3. What does it mean “the Kingdom of God is near”? (v.7) How does (or should) that make life different for us?

4. What does Jesus’ summons “to go” actually look like? Describe it from these verses. What reception can the disciples look forward to? Who are we to go to? Why them?

5. Why did Jesus command the disciples to take nothing with them? (vs.9-10)

6. What does it mean for us that “the worker is worth his keep”? (v.10)
See 1 Corinthians 9:9,10 and 1 Timothy 5:17.

7. In vs. 11-17 does Jesus encourage us to play it safe OR to go into great danger? What does it mean for you to be “like a sheep among wolves”? (v.16)

8. What does it look like for us to be foolish as a sheep, smart as a snake and innocent as a dove? Remember this is in the dangerous context of being among wolves.

Through the week, think about how you should be living in the light of what Jesus says to us.

Pray: That we might have the courage of our conviction.

Jesus Has Authority Over Loyalty | Matt 10:17-42

Pray: That God would open up His word to us and that we will not compromise His meaning.

Read Matthew 10: 17-42

By now Jesus' mission is well established. He has announced His message (4:17); assembled His co-workers (4:18-22); spoken about His standards of discipleship (5-7); and demonstrated His authority (8-9). Now the time was right to instruct His followers and expand His influence. Jesus would send them first to Israel but then on a worldwide mission. In the second half of Chapter 10, He speaks openly about what to expect. He makes it clear that what is going to happen is on His account!

When conflict and persecution arise, we should not be fearful. We will be given the right word at the right time. However, the picture painted from v. 21 on is quite gut wrenching and its consequences far reaching. When you stop and listen to His words from v.34 on, many may simply give up. As hard as it is, we need to learn the cost of discipleship. To follow Jesus means that choices have to be made. Verses 40-42 provide some comfort.

1. Jesus is very definite about persecution coming upon us throughout these verses. See Acts 5:40 & 12:1-3. What help and encouragement are there for us in the passage? See v.22 for one example and also John 16:33.

2. What is the only way that we can be saved? See John 3:16, John 14:6, Acts 4:12. What does standing firm to the end (v.22) have to do with our salvation?

3. Jesus was accused (by the Pharisees) of using the prince of demons (Beelzebub) to drive out demons (Matthew 12:24). What point is Jesus making in v.24?

4. What is Jesus saying to you in vs. 29-31? What value does He place on you? What does this mean for us?

5. There are two ways for us to live in vs. 32 & 33. Give examples how these two ways might show up in your daily living.

6. What kind of peace DID Jesus come to bring? (vs.34-36)

7. Where does God fit into your priority of loving relationships? Where should He fit? (see vs. 34-39)

8. What does it mean for you "to take your cross and follow Jesus" (v.38) AND "to lose your life for Jesus sake"?

Through the week, think about what it means for you to be loyal to Jesus in an age when loyalty doesn't count for much.

Pray: That God will help us to authentically follow Jesus and lose our life for Him.



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