



MONDAY 07 NOVEMBER 2016

SERIES: MATTHEW'S GOSPEL

Read: Matthew 8:1

Plug In...

The crowds were amazed at Jesus' Sermon on the Mount. As Matthew transitions the story to what happens next, he shows that crowds are following Jesus (*cf.* 8:18). This is not a mere segue, Matthew describes the crowds as *large*. Matthew's description puts the crowd in a positive light. Given some of the things Jesus has just said in the Sermon (7:13-21), it does however raise an implicit question about those following.

Chew It Over...

What is that implicit question? As we also become part of the crowd listening in to Jesus' words, what question pokes at us?

Prayer Suggestion

Pray that the Lord Jesus will sustain you day by day; enable you to build your life on the words he has said.



TUESDAY 08 NOVEMBER 2016

SERIES: MATTHEW'S GOSPEL

Read: Matthew 8:2 & Leviticus 13:45-46

Plug In...

Make sure you read Leviticus 13:45-46 for insight into the man before Jesus' predicament.

Chew It Over...

"Lord, if you are willing, you can make me clean."

Can you feel the passion behind this man's request? Pull apart the words and phrases used by this man. What do the words indicate he understands about Jesus and what, given Leviticus 13, he is asking from Jesus?

Prayer Suggestion

Pray that we never lose a right understanding of our position before God. Acknowledge now before Jesus that we need cleansing by forgiveness; acknowledge that Jesus is Lord and therefore able to do this.



WEDNESDAY 09 NOVEMBER 2016

SERIES: MATTHEW'S GOSPEL

Read: Matthew 8:2-4 & Isaiah 52

Plug In...

Soon Isaiah chapter 53 will be quoted by Matthew. The wider context includes Isaiah 52. This describes the problem of which Isaiah 53 yields solution. Isaiah 52 describes God's people as needing new clothes, a people infested with dirt and uncleanness. Jesus in his Sermon has spoken of coming to build a city on a hill, a new Israel, a sparkling Israel. The following stories bear this out. The city begins to sparkle.

Some Bible translations describe the leper's action as kneeling or getting on his hands and knees. The literal word is 'worship'. Remarkably the leper is *worshipping* Jesus – this should not be missed. First, the man, in such a condition, approaches a rabbi (esteemed in Jewish culture); second he's worshipping him (an act reserved for deity alone); third, he begs for this specific person to do what only God could do (heal – the sacrificial gift with the priest only happened after a healing).

The way this man acts towards Jesus and Jesus's response is told by Matthew to set up clearly *who* Jesus is.

Chew It Over...

Which are you more prone to doubt: Jesus' ability (i.e., he's God and therefore can), or his willingness (i.e., that he would have compassion towards you)? Review what's happened to you that now causes you to doubt one way or the other?

Shed this lie.

Understand again today the truth of who Jesus is. He is able and willing to forgive a person like you. Continue no longer to believe there is any barrier that prevents God's ability and willingness to come to you should you posture yourself humbly before Jesus.

Prayer Suggestion

Ask the Lord to restore you to his people. Praise God for Jesus' work on the cross showing the extent of his willingness that no sin would bar us from being in His future presence.



THURSDAY 10 NOVEMBER 2016

SERIES: MATTHEW'S GOSPEL

Read: Matthew 8:5-13

Plug In...

Apart from a leper, a Gentile was the most unclean person in the Jewish religious system. Yet this Gentile centurion approaches Jesus and calls him "Lord". The centurion recognises Jesus has been delegated authority. The delegation is analogous to this man's profession. The analogy shows that the delegated authority he sees in Jesus means that the centurion is confident Jesus can make things happen.

NB: Matthew 8:10 is the New Testament's first explicit mention of 'faith'.

Chew It Over...

Think about the phrase "but just say the word" (v.8). Given the context, how can this phrase help us explain that faith is *simple*?

Think about the phrase "such great faith" (v.10). Why is this *simple* faith then described as *great* faith?

Prayer Suggestion

Ask God that each day we will not presume upon the label “Christian” or heritage (Christian family). Each day may we place ourselves under the Lord Jesus, trusting him for our identity. May we live life looking forward that we will recline at the great banquet of the future.



FRIDAY 11 NOVEMBER 2016

SERIES: MATTHEW'S GOSPEL

Read: Matthew 8:12

Plug In...

Matthew has been explaining that now there is a light on in Israel. That Jesus is building disciples who will shine this light brightly. Part of shining the light includes warning others about the horrible eternal darkness for some. The threat is not to cast people out, rather hopefully draw them in.

Chew It Over...

Slow down, absorb, picture, and feel the language of this verse.

Do you struggle to talk about hell? Explore other words we sub-in or 'hell' (e.g., judgement). Why do we lean on words that might dial back some of the unsavoury language of hell? Why is it important to also embrace the heavy language Jesus used describing hell?

Prayer Suggestion

Pray for courage to keep warning our world of the reality of hell and the promise of being included in the joy of heaven should they trust in Jesus. Help us embrace that 'true love warns'.



WEEKEND 12-13 NOVEMBER 2016

SERIES: MATTHEW'S GOSPEL

Read: Matthew 8:14-17 & Isaiah 53

Plug In...

Isaiah describes Israel as sick: infested with disease and demons (Isaiah 35:5-6). Jesus has stepped into this sick Israel. Isaiah explains that the sickness of Israel is because of their sins. For the sickness to go, forgiveness of sins is necessary. The Servant in Isaiah 53 removes the pain of the sicknesses through his substitutionary death (Isaiah 53:4-9).

Matthew quotes Isaiah 53 after narrating many healings Jesus did. By quoting Isaiah he labels Jesus as the Messiah/Servant of Isaiah. This begs the question, well what then of the death spoken there in Isaiah?

Chew It Over...

We can often speak of our salvation only focussing on the substitutionary transaction. That transaction is the core of our salvation and indeed needs to be emphasised. If you are familiar with *Two Ways To Live* this emphasis is captured in the evangelistic tool. But Matthew shows there is more to story of salvation. This in no way is a knock on the helpful tool. *Two Ways To Live* captures the core of Christian theology - the atonement. It is the gospel zoomed-in to the centre. But in our evangelism we need to bring to bear the gospel zoomed-out. This is what Matthew is doing. The gospel-zoomed out are all the implications of because of what has happened

at the core. Here's some for starters: diseases and death now have a used-by date for the Christian; the devil and demons have been conquered, there is victory of evil; creation will be re-made; pain gone; relationships restored; abundance; joy. What more can you add.

To be clear, there is an order presented in Isaiah and Matthew's gospel: the gospel zoomed-in comes first and it is the atonement that kicks off the gospel zoomed-out benefits. Teach the order, but let's become better at including more of the *effects* as well as the *cause*.

Prayer Suggestion

Thank the Lord for all the benefits of our salvation through his atonement. Thank the Lord for reconciliation to God through the removal of the problem of sin. Thank the Lord for all the benefits: some that are on view right now (acquittal; freedom from the power of sin; the presence of the Holy Spirit); others that are yet-to-come (free of sufferings; the new heavens and earth; seeing Jesus face-to-face!).