



## The Gospel of Matthew

### Outline 22

## ***The Authority to Heal***

***I am willing; be cleansed. Immediately his leprosy was cleansed.. Matthew 8:3***

We have now started a new section of the Gospel of Matthew as we come down the mountain with the Lord into the valley of power and healing encounters. In this segment, I want to encourage you to receive BOLDNESS to copy Jesus and do what He does.

***When He came down from the mountain...*** Jesus' earthly life was a cycle of mountain tops followed by valley lows. One moment He would be on His way 'up' to the Presence of God, the next coming 'down' from divine heights with power and authority to address people's problems.

This simple principle of crests and troughs is the key to victorious Christian living. We need to obtain the discipline of climbing up to God on a daily basis; ***give us this day our daily bread***. Man can only truly live out destiny via a healthy diet of God. The regular dose of the WORD flowing from His Presence empowers and equips us to tackle life's tricky dips and turns. Those quiet moments with God are therefore crucial to your faith walk.

***Great multitudes followed Him...*** Anywhere Jesus is truly present, people naturally gather. There was something very attractive and magnetic about this man. It was beyond His words or miracles. Tax collectors, prostitutes, soldiers and the poor all found solace in this wonderful guy. There were no harsh rejections only acceptance and redirection and deliverance.

We are called to emulate this man in what He said and did. If we 'carry' the Presence of God through regular encounters, people will come after us. LEADERSHIP MEANS FOLLOWERSHIP. The definition of the term *Leader* assumes others are following. Note that Jesus was always being led by the Holy Spirit and followed by the people. That means every great leader is a good follower. If you allow yourself to be led by God, people will beat a path to your door.

***And behold, a leper came...*** In biblical times, lepers were outcasts. They lived in isolated colonies on the outskirts of townships away from the communities. People avoided them because they were deemed infectious. Lepers were of a lower social cast than beggars. Medically, Leprosy begins with pain in certain body parts followed by numbness. Skin discoloration commences until it becomes thick glossy and scaly. Ulcers and sores erupt due to poor blood supply culminating with fingers and toes dropping off. The leper emits a very unpleasant odor along with a grating hoarse voice. The sight of a leper with rags and wounds and the smell would have been quite frightful to many people. Lepers were culturally required to shout unclean! Unclean! When encountering people in the streets ***Lev 13:45-46***. Priests and Holy men would be made ceremonially unclean and unfit to perform their duties or approach God's Presence if they touched someone such as a leper ***Lev 22:3-6***



This is the context in which we read Matthew 8:2 Dewey Bertolli exclaims; *that this man believed Jesus could heal him was incredible; that he would dare to approach Jesus (something forbidden in Old Testament Law) was remarkable; but that Jesus would actually touch him was utterly unthinkable!!*

Here we see the compassion of Jesus overriding the legal and cultural norms of His day. The Lord was making a statement that in His Kingdom the Clean makes the Unclean CLEAN. By TOUCHING him, Jesus was healing the man not just physically but also emotionally. Think about it; when was the last time that man was touched by a normal person with such Love?!

*Jesus reached out and touched him, saying, "I want to. Be clean." Then and there, all signs of the leprosy were gone. Jesus said, "Don't talk about this all over town. Just quietly present your healed body to the priest, along with the appropriate expressions of thanks to God. Your cleansed and grateful life, not your words, will bear witness to what I have done."*

The Love of Jesus is quite overwhelming, relevant and radical. It touches the deepest needs of any soul irrespective of their past, present or peculiar deeds. It tears away the wrappings of discrimination, marginalisation and segregation without losing sight of what really lies at the heart of the matter. Jesus SEES people period. He sees beyond the external façade of hatred, anger, unbelief, hopelessness, frustration and shame.

*Immediately his leprosy was cleansed...* I have had the privilege of seeing miracles happen right before my eyes. I have seen legs grow, eyes opened, deaf ears healed and illnesses disappear through the power of the Holy Spirit.

One of the more significant healing meetings I have conducted was when I told a bunch of young people in Somerset to lay hands on each other for healing. The whole tent meeting erupted when there were spontaneous healings happening through the hands of young people who had never done anything like that before!! It was a really breakthrough experience for me.

*Still later, as the Eleven were eating supper, he appeared and took them to task most severely for their stubborn unbelief, refusing to believe those who had seen him rose up. Then he said, "Go into the world. Go everywhere and announce the Message of God's good news to one and all. Whoever believes and is baptized is saved; whoever refuses to believe is damned.*

*"These are some of the signs that will accompany believers: They will throw out demons in my name, they will speak in new tongues, they will take snakes in their hands, they will drink poison and not be hurt, and they will lay hands on the sick and make them well."*

You and I have been commissioned by the Lord to go and tell everyone everywhere about Him. One of the ways by which the Jesus helps us to tell the Gospel story is by throwing in some nice surprises. If people feel chased by ghosts, are sick or feeling heavily oppressed, we can help them by praying for them. Miracles and healings happen when we pray for people.

We shall continue with this theme in the next session....