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MATTHEW

The Kingdom Displayed – Part 1
Matthew 8:1-13

I. Introduction

- a. ***Mat 7:28 And so it was, when Jesus had ended these sayings, that the people were astonished at His teaching, 29 for He taught them as one having authority, and not as the scribes.***
 - i. The Gospel of the Kingdom – that which is holy (sacred, set apart) – pearls
 - ii. Truth – specifically that truth of who God is and what His plans are for humanity – the good news of His coming Kingdom – there’s nothing like – it’s valuable, **weighty**, forces someone to examine themselves and their life’s trajectory
 1. Received, ignored, violently opposed
- b. Jesus preached the gospel of the Kingdom
 - i. Explained the people of the Kingdom
 - ii. Now He will display the power of the Kingdom

Mat 8:1 When He had come down from the mountain, great multitudes followed Him. 2 And behold, a leper came and worshiped Him, saying, “Lord, if You are willing, You can make me clean.” 3 Then Jesus put out His hand and touched him, saying, “I am willing; be cleansed.” Immediately his leprosy was cleansed. 4 And Jesus said to him, “See that you tell no one; but go your way, show yourself to the priest, and offer the gift that Moses commanded, as a testimony to them.”

II. What is Faith?

- a. Do you want to see the power of God in your life?
 - i. Do you want to see Him work? Make Himself known?
 - ii. One of the most difficult things about Christian walk is the hiddenness of God
 1. Critics of Christianity ask ***“If God is loving and wants a relationship with us, why doesn’t He make His existence more obvious?”***
 - iii. God’s hiddenness may serve a purpose in spiritual formation.
 1. If God were constantly obvious:
 - a. Trust wouldn’t develop
 - b. Perseverance wouldn’t form
 - c. Faith wouldn’t grow
- b. Last week Jesus concluded His Sermon on the Mount
 - i. Closed with a well-known parable about two builders
 1. Get used to these parables because Jesus tells a lot of them
 2. In this parable Jesus compares someone who “hears these sayings of mine and does them” to a wise man who builds his house upon the rock – and the rain fell and the floods came and the winds blew and beat on the house and it did not fall because it was founded on the rock.
 3. Then Jesus compares someone who “who hears these sayings of Mine, and does not do them” to a foolish man who builds his house upon the sand:

and the rain fell and the floods came and the winds blew and beat on that house; and it fell. And great was its fall.

- c. Jesus is establishing something at the very beginning of His earthly ministry – He is defining faith
 - i. Explaining what true faith and trust and belief in Him looks like
 - ii. Anyone who hears My sayings and does them – not agrees with them, or nods their heads as I say them, or shouts amen, or quotes me on x or facebook
 - 1. He who hears my sayings and does them!
 - iii. Why is it so important that we make this distinction?
 - 1. Whoever believes and is baptized will be saved, but whoever does not believe will be condemned. - And he said to the woman, Your faith has saved you; go in peace. - But as many as received him, to them he gave power to become the sons of God, even to them that believe on his name - And as Moses lifted up the serpent in the wilderness, even so must the Son of man be lifted up: that whosoever believes in him should not perish, but have eternal life. - For God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believes in him should not perish, but have everlasting life. - He that believes on him is not condemned: but he that believes him not is condemned already, because he has not believed in the name of the only begotten Son of God. - He that believes on the Son has everlasting life: and he that believes not the Son shall not see life; but the wrath of God abides on him. - Truly, truly, I say to you, He that hears my word, and believes on him that sent me, has everlasting life, and shall not come into condemnation; but is passed from death unto life. - And Jesus said unto them, I am the bread of life: he that comes to me shall never hunger; and he that believes on me shall never thirst.
 - 2. If faith in Christ is the means in which we are saved – if a belief in the risen Savior is what carries a man out of the grace and into eternal life we better have a firm grasp on what true faith really is!
- d. Easy to say – “I know what faith is – I know what it means to believe in something”
 - i. We need to make sure our understanding of faith is rooted in scripture and not shaped by our culture
 - ii. Going forward we will see the subject of faith at the heart of Jesus’ earthly ministry – He celebrates it when He sees it, He nurtures it where it is lacking (ye of little faith), and He exposes it when it’s an imposter

III. Jesus Cleanses the Leper

- a. If you are willing
 - i. This man didn’t have leprosy, he was full of leprosy
 - ii. And when he falls at Jesus’ feet, he doesn’t beg to be healed. He says “Lord, if You are willing, You can make me clean.”
 - 1. Why did he ask this and not “heal me?” - I can’t stress enough how extensive and exhaustive the process was to be made clean in Jewish religious culture
 - iii. The list of things that defiled a man were seeming endless, and to have an incurable and visible and contagious disease like leprosy – there was no hope for this man
 - 1. Lepers were cast outside the city and forced to live in leper colonies – separated from friends and even family – can you imagine what that would

- say about an individual's worth, what it would cause you to believe about God and the way He views you?
2. No wonder this man breaks all the rules so that he can plead his case at the feet of Jesus.
 - iv. I don't know that any of us have wanted something more than this man
 - b. "Lord, if You are willing, You can make me clean." Then Jesus put out His hand and touched him, saying, "I am willing; be cleansed."
 - i. No ritual, no sacrifice, no ceremonial basin of water – Just a man who saw that he needed to be clean and wanted to be clean and knew who could make him clean.
 1. All of this is less about the physical healings and more about Jesus making His purpose known.
 2. *I've said I have come by the authority of God to heal the brokenhearted, To proclaim liberty to the captives And recovery of sight to the blind, To set at liberty those who are oppressed and now I am showing you I have the power to do exactly that.*
 - ii. We will focus more on the physical act of healing next week – but for now lets move on

Mat 8:5 Now when Jesus had entered Capernaum, a centurion came to Him, pleading with Him, 6 saying, "Lord, my servant is lying at home paralyzed, dreadfully tormented." 7 And Jesus said to him, "I will come and heal him." 8 The centurion answered and said, "Lord, I am not worthy that You should come under my roof. But only speak a word, and my servant will be healed. 9 For I also am a man under authority, having soldiers under me. And I say to this one, 'Go,' and he goes; and to another, 'Come,' and he comes; and to my servant, 'Do this,' and he does it." 10 When Jesus heard it, He marveled, and said to those who followed, "Assuredly, I say to you, I have not found such great faith, not even in Israel! 11 And I say to you that many will come from east and west, and sit down with Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob in the kingdom of heaven. 12 But the sons of the kingdom will be cast out into outer darkness. There will be weeping and gnashing of teeth." 13 Then Jesus said to the centurion, "Go your way; and as you have believed, so let it be done for you." And his servant was healed that same hour.

IV. The Faith of a Centurion

- a. Centurion – junior officer in the Roman military in command of 100 men
 - i. 80 of which were heavy infantryman and 20 were servants and support
 1. Important to point out that this Centurion was a non-Jew – Gentile
 2. So far Jesus has commissioned tax collectors and fishermen to be His disciples, He has traveled through Samaria and interacted with a Samaritan woman, He has come in physical contact with a leper, He has healed multiple times on the sabbath, He has shared the dinner table with sinners, and now He is taking interest in the needs of a Roman officer – a man who is a part of the very military that is oppressing the Jewish people
 3. If Jesus was on the campaign trail you would fire His campaign manager
 4. He is not scoring any points with the Jewish leaders
 5. Jesus is making it plain that He has come for all men – that no one is outside the reach of His saving grace
- b. Luke goes a little of further in his gospel and highlights the character of this centurion.

"He loves our nation and has built us a synagogue"

- i. Not a stretch to assume that this man believed in the one true God – that belief manifested itself in a love for the Jewish people and a recognition that the Messiah had come
 1. Not just a recognition of the Messiah but an understanding of the power and authority of the Messiah
 2. “Lord, I am not worthy that You should come under my roof. But only speak a word, and my servant will be healed. For I also am a man under authority, having soldiers under me. And I say to this one, ‘Go,’ and he goes; and to another, ‘Come,’ and he comes; and to my servant, ‘Do this,’ and he does it.”
 3. And Jesus marveled at this – and He turned around to face the crowds and said “Are you guys catching this? Are you seeing this? This is faith! This is what I have been talking about!”
 - a. “I say to you, I have not found such great faith, not even in Israel.”
 - b. He wasn’t saying that He hadn’t found faith in Israel, just not to this degree
- ii. There are only two mentions in all four gospels of Jesus marveling
 1. Here with the centurion and in Mark 6:6 when the people of Jesus’ hometown saw Him perform miracles and they still rejected Him
 2. “And He marveled because of their unbelief”
- iii. Jesus goes on to say to the crowds in Matthew 8 “many will come from east and west, and sit down with Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob in the kingdom of heaven. But the sons of the kingdom will be cast out into outer darkness. There will be weeping and gnashing of teeth.”
 1. Foreigners will place their trust in Me and will be adopted into the family of God but there will be those who assume they are sons by birth who will be cast out
 - a. Wide and narrow gate
 2. It wasn’t that this centurion just trusted Jesus as a healer – he trusted Jesus as one who has all authority over heaven and earth – he believed Jesus was God

V. Two Sides of the Same Coin

- a. The leper’s and the centurion’s faith help us better understand what Jesus means by faith.
 - i. When you look at the Greek word we translate “faith” – specifically in Matthew 8 – “I have not found such great faith, not even in Israel”, it is “pistis” similar to the Greek word “pisteuo” which we translate belief (John 3:16 whoever believes in Him) – reliance, assurance, loyalty, and fidelity
 - ii. A more helpful translation would be allegiance
 1. This makes far more sense in light of the reality that we are part of the Kingdom of God and Jesus is our King
 2. Faith in king Jesus means allegiance to king Jesus – saving faith is saying yes with our lives
- b. ***Mar 8:34-38 When He had called the people to Himself, with His disciples also, He said to them, "Whoever desires to come after Me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross, and follow Me. For whoever desires to save his life will lose it, but whoever loses his life for My sake and the gospel's will save it. For what will it profit a man if he gains the whole world, and loses his own soul? Or what will a man give in exchange for his soul? For whoever is ashamed of Me and My words in this adulterous and***

sinful generation, of him the Son of Man also will be ashamed when He comes in the glory of His Father with the holy angels."

- i. This is the language of faithfulness, loyalty, and fidelity – adultery is unfaithfulness and Jesus used this kind of terminology often to describe an unbelieving people
- c. That is where we often miss it as a culture
 - i. In our Western civilization belief, faith, hope, and trust take on a different meaning
 1. Can you make it tonight? I believe so. Is he going to be okay? I hope so.
 2. Belief is often just a mental nod, an intellectual agreement – subscribing to a set of stated beliefs
 3. Here is the problem with that – our stated beliefs are not always our actual beliefs
 - ii. Story of a daredevil crossing a cable over Niagara Falls – asked the crowd “who believes I can walk across this cable to the other side?” The crowd of course yelled “we do!” – Grab a wheelbarrow – “with this wheelbarrow?” “We do!” “With a man inside of it?” “We do!!!” “Do I have any volunteers?” Silence
- d. Faith is saying yes with our lives, not just with our words.
 - i. Remember Jesus’s teaching just before the parable of the wise and foolish man - ***Matt 7:21-23 “Not everyone who says to Me ‘Lord, Lord’ will shall enter the kingdom of heaven, but he who does the will of my Father. Many will say to Me in that day, ‘Lord, Lord, have we not prophesied in Your name, cast out demons in Your name, and done many wonders in Your name?’ And then I will declare to them, ‘I never knew you; depart from Me, you who practice lawlessness!’***
 1. *Then Jesus says who ever hear these sayings of mine and does them – he is like a wise man who builds house on the rock.*
 2. Jesus makes no distinction between belief and obedience because it is one in the same v.
 - ii. A.W. Tozer *"The Bible recognizes no faith that does not lead to obedience, nor does it recognize any obedience that does not spring from faith. The two are at opposite sides of the same coin."*
 1. That is why it is essential that we have a clear understanding of Biblical faith, belief and trust as Jesus defines it, not how our culture defines it
 2. It is not a mental affirmation, it is not a feeling, it is a confidence in God and in turn, submission to the authority of His Word
- e. ***“If God is loving and wants a relationship with us, why doesn’t He make His existence more obvious?”***
 - i. He has – in the person of Jesus Christ
 1. *“The Word became flesh and dwelt among us.” (John 1:14)*
 - ii. And He invites everyone – come, see, and believe
 1. The Leper – Centurion – you and me