

## Notes for Matthew - Chapter 8 (Page 6 of 6)

### Verses 28-29 (cont.)

2. These verses raise lots of questions about demons:
  - a. If they knew Jesus was God, why didn't they run away?
    - i. I believe the answer is that they are required to obey Jesus.
  - b. In the same way, people can understand Jesus is God, and still not obey him.
    - i. "You believe that there is one God. Good! Even the demons believe that – and shudder." (James 2:19, NIV).
  - c. The demons ask Jesus, "Have you come here to torture us before the appointed time?"
    - i. They understand that there is an appointed time when Satan and all his followers will be destroyed.
    - ii. Despite that knowledge, they still choose to follow Satan and not God.
  - d. The demons don't seem to understand why Jesus was there in the first place.
    - i. Theologians argue that demons can't read our thoughts base on verses like this.

Verses 30-31: Some distance from them a large herd of pigs was feeding. <sup>31</sup> The demons begged Jesus, "If you drive us out, send us into the herd of pigs."

1. Does this mean that a demonic spirit can enter an animal? Apparently so.
2. Apparently demons want (or need) to live inside people.
  - a. "When an evil spirit comes out of a man, it goes through arid places seeking rest and does not find it. Then it says, 'I will return to the house I left.' When it arrives, it finds the house unoccupied, swept clean and put in order. Then it goes and takes with it seven other spirits more wicked than itself, and they go in and live there." (Matthew 12:43-45b, NIV)
3. Another mystery is why did the demons ask to be sent in the herd of pigs?
  - a. We don't know the answer to the question. We do know that Jesus is there, and Jesus is in charge. They had to ask permission in His presence.

Verse 32: He said to them, "Go!" So they came out and went into the pigs, and the whole herd rushed down the steep bank into the lake and died in the water.

1. If you ever travel to Israel, you can find this exact location of the "pig-suicide". There is only one spot on the Sea of Galilee that has a steep bank.
2. Maybe Jesus did this to show his disciples that He has more power of a great number of demons. All Jesus has to say is "go" and they must obey Him.

Verses 33-34: Those tending the pigs ran off, went into the town and reported all this, including what had happened to the demon-possessed men. <sup>34</sup> Then the whole town went out to meet Jesus. And when they saw him, they pleaded with him to leave their region.

1. Luke's account of the same story: "When those tending the pigs saw what had happened, they ran off and reported this in the town and countryside, and the people went out to see what had happened. When they came to Jesus, they found the man from whom the demons had gone out, sitting at Jesus' feet, dressed and in his right mind; and they were afraid...Then all the people of the region of the Gerasenes asked Jesus to leave them, because they were overcome with fear." (Luke 8:34-35, 37 NIV)
  - a. Did the townspeople fear the demon-possessed men? We don't know.
  - b. Did they fear their economic loss? Again, we don't know. Some people are willing to follow Jesus, unless of course, it affects their source of income!
  - c. My conclusion that the fear in this case is simply a fear of change.
    - i. I believe that is the lesson for us. Some people will refuse to accept Jesus because they don't want to change their lifestyle. They ask Jesus to go away. By the way, Jesus never stays where he is not welcome. He respects our free will. He never says, "I am God, you must obey me". We have to come to Jesus out of free choice.

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Verses 21-22: Another disciple said to him, "Lord, first let me go and bury my father." <sup>22</sup> But Jesus told him, "Follow me, and let the dead bury their own dead."

1. The phrase "first let me go and bury my father" was an expression of that day.
  - a. This man's father was not even sick. This expression simply means that I will choose to follow you after my father passes away.
2. Jesus is not speaking against taking care of your father.
  - a. Paul expressly says in 1st Timothy 5:8 that Christians should be responsible to provide for their own family. This refers to parents as well.
  - b. Jesus' statement means to be a disciple is to follow Him now and not make excuses.
3. Here is a similar verse: Jesus said, "If anyone comes to me (Jesus) and does not hate his father and mother, his wife and children, his brothers and sisters – yes, even his own life – he cannot be my disciple." (Luke 14:26 NIV)
  - a. This does not mean for us to hate our family. It is making Jesus a priority over family.
  - b. For example, would you (as an adult) refuse being a missionary if your parents forbid it?
  - c. Or what if you wanted to convert to Christianity and your parents are another religion?

Verses 23-27: Then he got into the boat and his disciples followed him. <sup>24</sup> Without warning, a furious storm came up on the lake, so that the waves swept over the boat. But Jesus was sleeping. <sup>25</sup> The disciples went and woke him, saying, "Lord, save us! We're going to drown!" <sup>26</sup> He replied, "You of little faith, why are you so afraid?" Then he got up and rebuked the winds and the waves, and it was completely calm. <sup>27</sup> The men were amazed and asked, "What kind of man is this? Even the winds and the waves obey him!"

1. The disciples, who for the most part were professional fisherman. They understood storms. Yet here was a storm so bad, it frightened them. Jesus, who was asleep during this storm, "rebuked" the waves, and everything was calm.
2. I believe this miracle was performed to show the disciples why it is necessary to give up everything and follow Jesus. It is the reminder that Jesus is God.
3. We obey Jesus because He is God. Any material benefits we get in this life are secondary.
4. Let me give you something else to think about. Why was Jesus asleep?
  - a. Mark gives us a detail not mentioned here in Matthew's account.
  - b. "That day when evening came, he (Jesus) said to his disciples, "Let us go over to the other side." (Mark 4:35 NIV)
  - c. Jesus gave the command to go to the other side.
  - d. Jesus could fall asleep on the trip over knowing he knew he was going to get there.
  - e. Further, he was teaching the disciples to trust him through the storms of life.
5. Remember that the main purpose of the Gospel of Matthew is to present Jesus as the Messiah.
  - a. There are miracle stories in the Old Testament. Nobody ever commanded a storm to stop.
    - i. Remember Moses did not parted the Red Sea, God did. God's command Moses to step into the Sea, and then it parted for the Israelites.
    - ii. This is about trusting God that He is in control during the "storms of life".

Vs. 28-29: When he arrived at the other side in the region of the Gadarenes, two demon-possessed men coming from the tombs met him. They were so violent that no one could pass that way. <sup>29</sup> "What do you want with us, Son of God?" they shouted. "Have you come here to torture us before the appointed time?"

1. This same story is told in Mark Chapter 5 and Luke Chapter 8.
  - a. In those two accounts, they both say there was one demon-possessed man.
  - b. Here in Matthew we have two. This is not a contradiction. I believe there was two. It simply means that one was more predominate (a "spokesman"?) than the other.

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Verse 14-15: When Jesus came into Peter's house, he saw Peter's mother-in-law lying in bed with a fever.

<sup>15</sup> He touched her hand and the fever left her, and she got up and began to wait on him.

1. Here we have the third miracle located in this two-chapter section of Matthew.
  - a. Here we have the third miracle located in this two-chapter section of Matthew.
  - b. The first miracle was that Jesus choose to heal a Jewish outcast (a leper).
  - c. The second miracle was that Jesus healed a Gentile (A Roman soldier)
  - d. Now the third miracle is that Jesus healed a woman.
  - e. Remember that women were considered a lower class of citizen at that time.
2. One has to remember that like leprosy, a fever is a contagious disease.
  - a. Notice Jesus choose to touch her in order to heal her.
3. Peter's mother-in-law, after being healed, immediately got up and served Jesus.
  - a. First it shows that when Jesus heals, it is 100% cured.
    - i. She didn't have to wait for her strength to return in order to serve Jesus.
  - b. Second, this is a model of how we are to react to Jesus.
    - i. Out of gratitude for her healing, she began to serve Jesus.

Verses 16-17: When evening came, many who were demon-possessed were brought to him, and he drove out the spirits with a word and healed all the sick. <sup>17</sup> This was to fulfill what was spoken through the prophet Isaiah: "He took up our infirmities and carried our diseases."

1. The next set of miracles lumps a group who were "demon possessed" and "all the sick".
2. Matthews point in Verses 16-17 to show that Jesus healing touch is a fulfillment of prophecy.
  - a. In Verse 17, Matthew quotes Isaiah 53:4. Isaiah was written approx. 600BC; Chapter 53 predicts the Messiah paying the price for our sins.
  - b. The implication of Isaiah Chapter 53 and this verse is not only that Jesus cured these diseases, but also took them upon himself.
  - c. For Jesus to "take up our infirmities and carried our diseases" simply means he carried them away, never to return.
3. Matthew seems to be implying that Isaiah 53:4 has a double-fulfillment.
  - a. First it refers to Jesus performing miracles to validate who he is.
  - b. Second it also refers to Jesus taking our sins upon himself as payment.
  - c. "God made him who had no sin to be sin for us, so that in him we might become the righteousness of God." (2nd Corinthians 5:21, NIV)

Verses 18-20: When Jesus saw the crowd around him, he gave orders to cross to the other side of the lake. <sup>19</sup> Then a teacher of the law came to him and said, "Teacher, I will follow you wherever you go."

<sup>20</sup> Jesus replied, "Foxes have holes and birds of the air have nests, but the Son of Man has no place to lay his head."

1. Here was a guy who saw all of these miracles and wanted to follow Jesus.
2. Notice Jesus does not say, "Great, come join me". Instead he gives this "foxes have holes..." line.
3. Jesus meant is simply count the cost before declaring your willingness to become a follower.
  - a. It means that Jesus now rules over every aspect of your life.
  - b. One should ponder the cost of being a disciple before making that commitment.
4. Eternal salvation waits for those who choose to follow Jesus. God want everyone to choose that route. One simply has to understand that there will be suffering in this lifetime for that choice.
  - a. "In fact, everyone who wants to live a godly life in Christ Jesus will be persecuted," (2nd Timothy 3:12, NIV).

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Verse 7: Jesus said to him, "I will go and heal him."

1. I believe Matthew specifically picked this second miracle as to show Jesus is not only Lord of the Jews, but Lord of the Gentiles as well.
  - a. If Jesus can help those who the Jews consider offensive, imagine what he can do to help those we consider offensive!
2. This is interesting to read this from the perspective of the Roman Centurion.
  - a. Roman law states that if a soldier's servant is sick, the soldier had the right to kill him.
  - b. This Roman centurion turns to a stranger, a Jew no less, who the soldier recognized had the power of healing, to save his servant's life.

Verses 8-9: The centurion replied, "Lord, I do not deserve to have you come under my roof. But just say the word, and my servant will be healed. <sup>9</sup>For I myself am a man under authority, with soldiers under me. I tell this one, 'Go,' and he goes; and that one, 'Come,' and he comes. I say to my servant, 'Do this,' and he does it."

1. Notice that the centurion called Jesus "Lord" in Verse 8.
  - a. We don't know what he meant by that, but he obviously thought of Jesus as superior to him. That is saying something for a Roman commander.
  - b. As a soldier, he understood chain of command. He treated Jesus like a "superior officer".
2. Verses 8-9 are among the most powerful in the bible on the topic of obedience.
  - a. Imagine saying to the God of the Universe in effect, "You don't have to come to my house, just say "it's done" and I know it will be so".
  - b. Anyone who's in the military understands that once a superior officer gives an order, you don't question it, you act upon it. You can speculate later if it was a good order or not, but in the meantime, you just do it. God wants that type of obedience for our lives too!

Verses 10-12: When Jesus heard this, he was astonished and said to those following him, "I tell you the truth, I have not found anyone in Israel with such great faith. <sup>11</sup> I say to you that many will come from the east and the west, and will take their places at the feast with Abraham, Isaac and Jacob in the kingdom of heaven. <sup>12</sup> But the subjects of the kingdom will be thrown outside, into the darkness, where there will be weeping and gnashing of teeth."

1. You have to comprehend how offensive all of this was to a Jewish audience.
2. Their view was that salvation was only for the Jews. Jesus is saying Gentiles will be in heaven.
3. Jesus also states there is a literal hell, and many Jews will be there.
  - a. A common view in Judaism at that time is that all Jews are "automatically" admitted into heaven because they are Jewish.
4. Some of these same views are also prevalent today.
  - a. People falsely assume that because they "go to church twice a year" and basically believe in Jesus (but don't do anything about it) they are "automatically saved for eternity.
5. The Roman soldier says in effect, ""Lord, just give the command, and I take it on faith the situation is taken care of".
  - a. How many of us, after praying, can walk away and say, "OK, I've now prayed about it, it is now up to God, and I don't have to worry about it anymore"?

Verse 13: Then Jesus said to the centurion, "Go! It will be done just as you believed it would." And his servant was healed at that very hour.

1. The important thing as far as the healing of the Roman soldier's servant is to remember is to show that Gentiles were not beyond the reach of Jesus, and that faith is simply about trusting God's will, will be done.
2. This miracle also showed that Jesus didn't have to physically "be there" to heal someone.

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Verses 1-2 (cont.): Why is the first miracle of the New Testament the healing of a leper?

4. The first recorded miracle is a disease of which the bible never speaks of how to cure.
  - a. There are only a few recorded instances of cured leprosy in the bible.
  - b. When Moses sister Miraim rebelled against Moses, she temporarily got leprosy and then after Moses prayed for her, it went away. (Numbers 12:10-15)
  - c. The only other instance was when a Syrian general who had leprosy was cured based on the instructions of the Hebrew prophet Elisha. (2nd Kings 5:10-14)
5. Leprosy is considered a word-picture for sin.
  - a. Because it spreads on the "flesh" and there is no cure. We are to avoid it at all cost.
  - b. The word-picture being displayed is that Jesus "touched what we cannot touch".
  - c. He took the sin upon himself so that the leper is now cured of his disease.
  - d. The word-picture being displayed is that the "law" as taught in Leviticus only teaches us how to recognize leprosy and how to contain it. It never teaches how to make it go away.
  - e. Jesus is needed to actually remove "leprosy" (again, a word-picture for sin).
6. This is also the first time in the Gospels where anyone calls Jesus "Lord".
  - a. We have a word-picture of the gospel message of salvation.
  - b. Here is a word-picture of person "covered in sin" turning to Jesus as Lord for his cure.

Verses 3-4: "Jesus reached out his hand and touched the man. "I am willing," he said. "Be clean!" Immediately he was cured of his leprosy. <sup>4</sup> Then Jesus said to him, "See that you don't tell anyone. But go, show yourself to the priest and offer the gift Moses commanded, as a testimony to them."

1. The man who had leprosy asked Jesus if he was willing to cure him.
  - a. We approach Jesus "hat in hand". We can't approach Jesus saying, "I will only follow you under the following conditions".
  - b. This man approached Jesus saying in effect, "Jesus, it's up to you. I have no other options but to continue living my life this way. I put my life, my disease, my ills in your hands".
  - c. At that point, and under those conditions the man was immediately cured.
2. In Verse 4, Jesus tells the ex-leper not tell anyone, but go show himself-as-cured to the priest.
  - a. In the Gospels, Jesus discourages people to tell others about their miracle cure.
  - b. Jesus can't teach if he is being thronged by people trying to touch him.
3. Why did Jesus tell this guy to "show yourself to the priest"?
  - a. Notice the last part of Verse 4: "As a testimony to them".
  - b. The "them" is the religious leaders. Jesus not only cares about the salvation of the leper, but also the people around him, and the religious leaders who later condemn him.
  - c. Leviticus 14-15 teaches of how to spot and deal with leprosy. Part of that ritual is if you have it, or in this case "had it", to show yourself to the priest.
  - d. Because the person cured was a Jew, Jesus instructed him to follow the prescribed rituals.
4. Also notice in Verse 4 that Jesus says Moses wrote Leviticus.
  - a. There are those who deny Moses wrote the first five books of the bible.
  - b. If you believe Jesus is God, then you have to believe Moses is the author of the first five books of the bible.

Verses 5-6: "When Jesus had entered Capernaum, a centurion came to him, asking for help. <sup>6</sup>"Lord," he said, "my servant lies at home paralyzed and in terrible suffering."

1. Notice the time gap. The text does not say this miracle immediately followed the first one.
2. Again, a question to ask is, "Why did Jesus pick this person to cure?"
  - a. Instead of a Jew, we now have a Roman commander, a "Centurion" (leader of 100 men).
  - b. The Romans were hated as the oppressors over the Jews.

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### Introduction- Jesus the Miracle Worker

1. We have 10 miracle-stories in Chapters 8-9.
  - a. A key question with each miracle is, "Why did Jesus choose to heal the people he did"?
  - b. Each miracle story has some special significance other than the miracle itself.
2. As Christians, we should not have any trouble believing Jesus can do miracles.
  - a. If you believe Jesus is God, then you should believe Jesus is capable of doing anything.
  - b. Jesus is the creator of the universe (See John 1:2, or Colossians 1:16)
3. So why doesn't God perform more miracles today, like we read in these stories?
  - a. How can "God get all the glory" when we can turn to doctors, technology, etc. to solve our problems? This is not a put-down of these other things. God gives us the gifts of say, hospital care and financial resources so through those methods he can heal us. The point is God obligated to perform a special miracle when He has already provided alternatives?
  - b. I have also seen God do some of his "best work" when we are fully dependant upon Him and have exhausted all our other resources. God doesn't like competition. ☺ He will often let you try every other possibility before performing the miraculous just to demonstrate how we are fully dependent upon Him for our lives.
  - c. When I pray, I like to assume that God wants to heal and perform miracles.
  - d. God often says "no" or "wait" to our prayer requests because he has some greater purpose than what we can see at the present moment.
4. Does God the Father give us the power to do "greater" miracles than Jesus?
  - a. "I (Jesus) tell you the truth, anyone who has faith in me will do what I have been doing. He will do even greater things than these, because I am going to the Father." (John 14:12, NIV) Jesus made this statement within the last week prior to the cross.
  - b. Is Jesus saying that He has given us the power to heal deaf, dumb, blind, cure leprosy, cancer or fill-in-the-blank? The answer is yes he does, and yes he can.
  - c. The "greater" miracles can also mean that we get to witness people getting saved.
    - i. "However, do not rejoice that the spirits submit to you (casting out demons), but rejoice that your names are written in heaven." (Luke 10:20, NIV)
  - d. All the people Jesus cured of diseases, performed miracles upon, etc., eventually die.
  - e. We need to remember that our salvation should bring us greater joy than any miracle.
5. Healing miracles are not enough for Christian conversion.
  - a. "He (Jesus) said to him, 'If they do not listen to Moses and the Prophets, they will not be convinced even if someone rises from the dead.'" (Luke 16:31, NIV)
  - b. Many people accept the idea of God, but don't do anything about it. People are willing to accept that God can do miracles, but it is not enough to change their lifestyles.
  - c. With that said, we should pray that people's hearts will be opened to God's truth and they accept the Gospel message.

Chapter 8 Verses 1-2: "When he came down from the mountainside, large crowds followed him. <sup>2</sup>A man with leprosy came and knelt before him and said, "Lord, if you are willing, you can make me clean."

1. When he came down from the mountainside" is a reference to Jesus coming down off the mountain where he gave the 3-chapter long "Sermon on the Mount" speech.
2. Why this miracle first? What is so significant about the healing of leprosy?
  - a. The book of Leviticus spends 2 chapters discussing what to do about leprosy.
  - b. Leviticus focuses on how to recognize leprosy and how to isolate it so it doesn't spread.
  - c. The interesting thing is nowhere in the bible is any mention of how to cure leprosy.
3. It is against Jewish law to touch a leper. Note that Jesus touched him in order to cure him.