

April 11, 2021

Introduce

Good morning Fathom. If we haven't met, my name is Eric Shelly and I'm one of the elders here at the church.

[I told the elders the last time I preached back in December that I wouldn't preach again unless people could take their masks... So, my turn came up to preach and masks are now optional! You're welcome for that.]

It's good to be able to see some of your faces and to be with you all this morning. A special hello to those of you streaming online also... thanks for tuning in from where ever you are this morning.

Let's start by praying together...

Re-Introduction to Matthew

If you've been with us through the spring, from January through Easter, we've been preaching through the book of 1 Samuel. Now that Easter is passed, and we move into the summer, we are going to switch gears to a new preaching series. We'll return to 1 Samuel again probably in the fall, but through the summer we're going to preach through some of Matthew's gospel. We're actually picking up mid-way in this book.

For the most part, at Fathom, we preach through books of the bible: Verse by verse, chapter by chapter. But we don't always plow straight through an entire book. We mix it up a bit.

- We've preached through Matt 1-2 several times during advent already. In fact, we taught out of Matthew this past advent in 2020
- Back in 2015, we preached through Jesus' Sermon on the Mount in chapters 5-7 of Matthew
- So this summer, we're going to resume teaching in Matthew in chapters 8-13
- This week is the first week of our series on Matthew, so I want to give a brief introduction into Matthew – both the book and the author
- The Gospel of Matthew was written by a guy named Matthew
 - He was also called Levi
 - And he was a Jewish tax collector before Jesus called him to be a disciple
 - He was a disciple of Jesus. An apostle. He lived and walked alongside of Jesus, and he's writing about what he saw

- He's writing his gospel account to a Jewish audience – and this is very important to our understanding of the context Matthew writes into
 - Matthew frames everything that he writes in a way a Jew living in those times would understand
 - Whether its referencing Old Testament prophecy or OT scripture references or Jewish customs, Matthew writes in a way that would be relevant Jewish understanding
 - He's trying to convince a Jewish reader about who Jesus is
- Matthew's writing differs from some of the other gospel writers in that his account isn't always in chronological order
 - Instead of writing the things Jesus did in the order in which He did them, Matthew instead presents ideas and themes
- So, his accounts are typically more concise and abbreviated than some of the other gospel writers because he's trying to convey a larger idea

Context of Matthew 8

One of themes of Matthew's book is trying to convey that Jesus Christ is the Jewish Messiah, the promised King of the Jews

So, Matthew's gospel sets out to convince Jewish readers of this

He starts his book by giving Jesus' credentials and qualifications as the Messiah

- And so, Matthew starts his gospel by telling us about Jesus the **Person**
 - Chapters 1, 2, and 3 of Matthew help establish who this King is
 - Matthew gives us Jesus' genealogy, his family line and his royal, kingly lineage
 - He tells us how, where, when, and to whom Jesus was born
 - Some accounts from his childhood; his baptism
 - These accounts all act as credentials to tell us that this guy has the family pedigree, lineage, background, and family line to be the king
 - Based on his lineage, Matthew says Jesus is qualified to be the Messiah
- Next, Matthew tells moves to tell us about the **Principles** that this king rules by
 - Chapters 4-7 of Matthew contain Jesus' first teachings and the start of his ministry
 - They contain his teachings from the Sermon on the Mount

- These are the principles that Jesus' entire ministry and kingdom are ruled by
- These teachings are so rich that they're an entire sermon series on their own – back in 2015 we spent 4 months just in these few chapters of Matthew
- In this section, Matthew says that based on principles that he rules by, Jesus is qualified to be the King
- Then, Matthew begins to tell us about the King's **Power**
 - In chapters 8-9 of Matthew, we're going to read 10 different miracle accounts in which the King's power is on display
 - So that's where we're going today, we're going to read and study some of Jesus' miracles and the power that He displays in those miracles
 - We're going to see that based on his Power, Jesus is qualified to be the King
 - So, we'll be starting in chapter 8 of Matthew

Miracles: Explain

- Before we turn to our passage, however, I want to talk a bit about miracles in general
- In 1980, one of the most iconic and famous moments in US sports took place
 - Do know what I'm talking about?
 - (If you guessed the Philadelphia Phillies winning the 1980 World Series, you know me well... but that's not the moment I'm talking about)
 - That's right... the *Miracle on Ice* took place **SLIDE**
 - The 1980 Winter Olympic Games; Lake Placid, NY
- The *Miracle on Ice* is the nickname given to the hockey game between the United States and the Soviet Union national hockey team¹
 - Back in 1980, professional hockey players were not allowed to play on US Olympic teams, while in the Soviet Union, they were
 - So, the Soviets were grown men and professional hockey players
 - The Soviet team trained together year 'round, with the goal of winning international hockey tournaments

¹ Multiple stats/facts on the game confirmed via: https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Miracle_on_Ice

- The US team on the other hand, was made up of amateurs – mostly teenage kids
 - college hockey players
 - they were the youngest team in US hockey history
 - The US team was just put together just several months before the Olympics
 - The Soviet Union team was far more experienced
 - They'd been there before
 - And they'd won before
 - In fact, the Soviets had won the Olympic gold medal in hockey in 5 of the previous 6 winter games
 - And, the Soviets were the heavy favorites to win the Olympic gold medal again in 1980
 - Not only were they heavily favored to win the gold medal, but they were heavily favored to win this game against the American teenagers
- But as we know, the US team upset the Soviets, winning 4-3
- And advanced to win the gold medal 2 days later
- Sports Illustrated called the *Miracle on Ice* the top sports moment of the 20th century
- One of the all-time great sportscasters, Al Michaels, was calling the television broadcast of the hockey game
- And as the game wound down, he gave the famous call of "*Do you believe in miracles!? Yes!*"
 - And that's where the name *Miracle on Ice* came from
- So, I was 1 year old in 1980. My parents watched the game live, but I clearly don't remember it at all
 - I am by no means an expert on this game. I've watched a lot of hockey in my lifetime, but I've not watched a replay of the entire 1980 hockey game
 - But I've watched several ESPN specials about the game
 - I've watched parts of the actual game broadcast and highlights from the game on YouTube
 - And of course, I've watched the Disney movie, *Miracle*;
 - Here's what I'm getting to... in all I've seen and heard and read about this game, it was a giant upset...

- But there was nothing miraculous that happened in that game allowing the US team to win!
 - There was no strange or lucky bounce off a skate that led to the winning goal
 - There was no instance of some extraordinary play or divine intervention that helped the US team win the game
 - The US team made plays, they skated hard, they were the better team that night and the scoreboard said so at the end of the game
- I'm not faulting Al Michaels for his call at all.
 - I think his "Do you believe in miracles" call was perfect. It's one of the all-time great sports calls
 - He nailed the call and captured the moment. The game is nicknamed the *Miracle on Ice* because of his great call **BLANK SLIDE**
- What I'm pointing out here is that this was a tremendous win. But that the win itself wasn't miraculous at all
- It's called *Miracle on Ice*, but I'm arguing that it wasn't a miracle. This game is mislabeled
- Because I don't think that our society truly understands miracles
- Now, our society uses the idea of miracles a lot. I mean *A LOT*.
- Here are some examples
 - Sticking with Sports... in addition to The Miracle on Ice, there's:
 - The Music City Miracle
 - The Monday Night Miracle
 - The Minneapolis Miracle
 - The Miracle at the Meadowlands
 - The Bluegrass Miracle
 - Those are just football plays that have been given the title or term 'miracle'... I'm not even listing other sports
 - Or how about in Movies...
 - An IMDB search yields a list of over 200 films with the word "miracle" in the title
 - That's a lot of movies!

- Or how about in Music...
 - Artists including U2, Queen, Coldplay, Whitney Houston, Foo Fighters, Rise Against, Bon Jovi, Barry Manilow, Kelly Clarkson, Kenny Chesney, and Ozzy Osborne all have written songs with “Miracle” in the name²
- So, our society thinks they know something about miracles. But my question is, do they really?
- A miracle is defined as
 - an extremely outstanding or unusual event, thing, or accomplishment³ ... that defies common expectations of behavior and subsequently is attributed to a superhuman agent⁴
 - OR... It’s an occurrence that demonstrates God’s involvement in the course of human affairs.⁵
- Too often I think our society focuses on the first definition – the extremely outstanding or unusual part...
- And it may not focus on the second definition – that part about God’s intervention
- **But I think that if we talk about miracles and leave out the part about God’s involvement, we’re missing a large aspect and a large point of *real* miracles**
- God performs miracles for a purpose
- When we read about Jesus performing miracles in the gospel accounts and specifically as we study Matthew, we need to ask ourselves: *Why did Jesus use miracles?*

How Jesus Used Miracles

- One commentator stated 3 reasons why Jesus used miracles
 1. The first is to meet **human needs** **SLIDE**
 - Jesus was concerned about the well-being of people

² <https://spinditty.com/playlists/Pop-Rock-and-Country-Songs-About-Miracles>

³ Merriam-Webster

⁴ Roberts, R. D. (2016). [Miracle](#). In J. D. Barry, D. Bomar, D. R. Brown, R. Klippenstein, D. Mangum, C. Sinclair Wolcott, ... W. Widder (Eds.), *The Lexham Bible Dictionary*. Bellingham, WA: Lexham Press.

⁵ Roberts, R. D. (2016). [Miracle](#). In J. D. Barry, D. Bomar, D. R. Brown, R. Klippenstein, D. Mangum, C. Sinclair Wolcott, ... W. Widder (Eds.), *The Lexham Bible Dictionary*. Bellingham, WA: Lexham Press.

- Jesus loves His creation and while He is concerned about our hearts and our souls, He also has concern for our bodies, for our health, and for our whole person
 - And we'll see this in our passage today. Christ performs miracles no matter who the person is
 - We're going to read about Jesus physically healing three social outcasts in Jewish society: a leper, a Roman, and a woman
 - Jesus cares about people – about our human needs
2. The second reason Jesus performs miracles is to show His power and **authority** as Messiah **SLIDE**
- Jesus uses miracles to show his authority – authority over illness or disease, over spiritual forces, over nature and natural forces, or over death
 - While the power to perform miracles alone, does not prove Jesus is God or that He is the Messiah, it certainly strengthens the argument
 - Jesus' miracles fulfill prophecies... we'll see that today as well
 - When coupled together with Jesus' authoritative teaching and his sinless lifestyle, miracles help strengthen the case that He's Messiah
3. The third reason for Christ's miracles is to **reveal saving truth** to people⁶ **SLIDE**
- Accounts of Jesus' miracles typically followed accounts of teachings
 - Miracles were like living sermon illustrations to people
 - They were often like his teachings lived out
- I think all 3 of these reasons will come out today as we talk about Jesus' miracles
 - I'm going to make 4 points about Jesus' power and authority through miracles this morning. They all start with the letter C, so pay attention for those
 - OK, I know that was a long introduction.
 - I wanted to set some context for us in the book of Matthew, as well as for talking about miracles
 - But let's do what we came here for, let's turn to our passage in Matthew

⁶ Wiersbe, W. W. (1996). [*The Bible exposition commentary*](#) (Vol. 1, pp. 32–33). Wheaton, IL: Victor Books.

- Please open your bibles or your bible apps... or, you may notice that we've placed Bibles back beneath the chairs again!
- Whatever form of Bible you choose, turn with me to Matthew 8 verse 1. Let's start there and read together

Verses 1-4 – Jesus Cleanses a Leper

¹ When he came down from the mountain, great crowds followed him. ² And behold, a leper came to him and knelt before him, saying, "Lord, if you will, you can make me clean." ³ And Jesus stretched out his hand and touched him, saying, "I will; be clean." And immediately his leprosy was cleansed. ⁴ And Jesus said to him, "See that you say nothing to anyone, but go, show yourself to the priest and offer the gift that Moses commanded, for a proof to them."

- Now Jesus had just gotten done with preaching a sermon, it was the Sermon on the Mount
- I know, typically when I'm done preaching on a Sunday, I'm tired and I want to go home, get some lunch and relax
- But that's not what happens here for Jesus. Crowds of people are following him, wanting to see and hear more from him

Context: Leprosy

- Verse 2 says **And behold, a leper came to him**
 - This phrase by itself is remarkable
 - In those times, lepers were considered the ultimate outcasts of society
 - Lepers were not to be around other people
 - And I'm not talking 6-foot social distancing here!
 - I'm saying that they were forced to live outside of the cities, completely separate and apart from others
 - They were not allowed anywhere near the rest of society
 - And if they did for some reason, approach others, they needed to shout "Unclean! Unclean!" as they approached
- So, if it violated society's conventions for a leper to approach clean people, it was really an issue for a leper to touch clean people
- At the time they believed that if you came into contact with a leper that you yourself would contract the disease

- And on top of that, if you were a Jew who came in contact with a leper, you would become ceremonially unclean or defiled
- We don't know why the leper felt emboldened to approach Christ
 - Perhaps he had heard Jesus' Sermon on the Mount,
 - perhaps he'd heard about Jesus' other miracles or his authority
 - but for whatever reason, the man approaches Jesus and asks Jesus to make him clean
- So, when this leper approaches, most people at that time would have run away, or juked him, or dodged him, or done something so they wouldn't be defiled
 - They would avoid touching the unclean person at all costs
- But we read that Jesus **stretched out his hand and touched him**

Illustration: COVID-19

- Think back to about a year ago when we were first learning about COVID-19 and how contagious it was
- People were wearing latex gloves to do things like pumping gas
- I saw a dude at King Soopers with a full gas mask on – *I wasn't sure if he was being ironic or serious – I couldn't see his face* – But it was a full gas mask
- There were images of people giving Covid tests in hazmat suits with face shields
- There were videos making the rounds about how to safely bring groceries into your house and disinfect them
 - The steps they laid out for *cleaning your groceries* were a lot like preparing for surgery
- And if, God forbid, you knew someone who was positive for Covid at the time – especially early on – they were treated just like a leper
 - We'd want to have no contact with them
 - We wouldn't want them anywhere near us, nonetheless touch us
 - Thankfully, we've learned more about COVID-19 since then, and these extreme steps are no longer the case
- But the image here is of Jesus
 - stepping out of the hazmat suit, taking off the latex gloves, the face shield, and the n-95 mask
 - stepping inside of the 6-foot radius of the afflicted person

- taking the hand of the man with Covid
- and healing him
- Because Jesus' power has authority over society's **Conventions SLIDE**
 - In other words, Jesus' power doesn't care about society's conventions or norms
 - Or what our culture thinks is right or wrong
 - Or our traditions, standards, and customs
 - Or what the CDC or Tri-County Health or anyone else recommends
- Jesus operates using heavenly, Kingdom conventions
 - And if touching a leper in order to heal him,
 - demonstrates his power and authority and credentials as King,
 - then he's going to do it
- You see, if you put your faith in Jesus, it doesn't matter what society or culture says about you – Jesus's power is greater than that
- It doesn't matter what culture – even Christian or church culture – says. Jesus' power is greater
 - A person could be a Muslim
 - Or an atheist
 - Or a homosexual
 - Or an adulterer
 - Or a drug addict
 - No matter the former faith or former sin, and no matter the conventions or cultural thinking about them... Christ's power can is greater
- Christ's power has authority over all of society's conventions **BLANK SLIDE**
- One other thing to notice here... After healing the leper, Jesus tells him to do two things:
 - First, Jesus tells him not to tell anyone about the healing
 - Now Mark's account of this miracle tells us that the healed leper blatantly disobeyed this command...
 - the guy goes and tells everyone
 - Second, Jesus tells him to go to the priest, offer a sacrifice, and become ceremonially clean again

- This would be a testimony to the priests that someone had been cured of leprosy
- But more importantly, it would allow the man to re-enter society again, immediately, as a ceremonially clean person
- Here's where Jesus' concern for people's well-being comes in – he wanted this guy to plug back into his life and into society again
- Jesus cared for him

Verses 5-13 – The Faith of a Centurion

Let's keep moving. Verses 5-13 give Matthew's account of a second miracle

⁵ When he had entered Capernaum, a centurion came forward to him, appealing to him, ⁶ "Lord, my servant is lying paralyzed at home, suffering terribly." ⁷ And he said to him, "I will come and heal him." ⁸ But the centurion replied, "Lord, I am not worthy to have you come under my roof, but only say the word, and my servant will be healed. ⁹ For I too am a man under authority, with soldiers under me. And I say to 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 this, he marveled and said to those who followed him, "Truly, I tell you, with no one in Israel have I found such faith. ¹¹ I tell you, many will come from east and west and recline at table with Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob in the kingdom of heaven, ¹² while the sons of the kingdom will be thrown into the outer darkness. In that place there will be weeping and gnashing of teeth." ¹³ And to the centurion Jesus said, "Go; let it be done for you as you have believed." And the servant was healed at that very moment.

- In this account, Jesus enters Capernaum and is approached by a Centurion who has a servant that is paralyzed. Matthew says the servant was "suffering terribly"
 - Luke's account of this miracle tells us that he was near death (Lk 7:2)

Context: Roman Centurions

- A Centurion was a Roman military officer
 - This was his full-time job, his career – he's like a career military man
 - He likely had about 80-100 men under his authority
 - His position as centurion was highly respected and esteemed in the Roman world⁷ – but probably not in the Jewish world
- Remember, the Roman forces were occupying Palestine and Israel at the time

⁷ Barry, J. D., Mangum, D., Brown, D. R., Heiser, M. S., Custis, M., Ritzema, E., ... Bomar, D. (2012, 2016). [Faithlife Study Bible](#) (Mt 8:1–17). Bellingham, WA: Lexham Press.

- The Romans were in charge
- But they were not wanted, not accepted, not liked
- To Jews, a Roman centurion would not be highly respected or esteemed
- So again, we've got another societal outcast approaching Christ
- A centurion approaching Jesus is far less controversial or remarkable than a leper walking up to him – Roman centurions could kind of do as they pleased
 - But a high-ranking centurion still would not have likely stooped to the level of approaching a lowly Jewish teacher or rabbi
 - And the word *appealing* used here in Greek means strongly urging or even begging
 - This wasn't the centurion simply asking Jesus to do him a favor
 - This was the centurion humbly pleading and begging Jesus to use his power
 - And just as a side-note church, we can take something from the way this Centurion approached Jesus
 - He is humble
 - He is earnest
 - And he is confident in Christ's authority
 - Do you pray this way? I usually don't
 - Sometimes I can just kind of go through the motions in praying to God – I present my requests to Him, but I at times I lack *intensity* the centurion shows
 - Or I lack *confidence* in my prayers. Pastor Chris has challenged us before to '*pray as if God will answer every single prayer exactly as you asked*'
 - Just as the centurion approaches Jesus with confidence, approaching your prayers with confidence will change how you pray!
- But let's get back to this miracle,
- He tells Jesus about his servant
 - And immediately, Jesus says that he will go and heal him
 - This is again remarkable because a Jew would not have defiled his or her self by entering a Roman or Gentile's home
- And here we come to our second point about Jesus' power

- Jesus says he'll go and heal him, but the centurion pushes back
 - The centurion says in verse 8 "Lord, I am not worthy to have you come under my roof, but only say the word, and my servant will be healed."
 - And then he talks about how the military chain of command works in the Roman army...
 - The centurion gives a command and those under his authority, obey
- The Centurion recognizes that Christ's power has ultimate authority no matter where or when it is used
- He recognizes that Christ's power has authority over both **Closeness and Distance** SLIDE
- In other words, it doesn't matter how *far off* you are or how *far off* you've been from the Lord...

Applications: Distance/ Far off:

- Jesus is powerful to restore and forgive and heal you... no matter your distance
- No matter how close you've been to him or how far off you've been...
 - *Maybe you've been far off* in terms of **time**
 - Perhaps you've spent your entire life without knowing or believing in Jesus
 - Your distance is measured in years: 20, 30, 40 years
 - *Maybe you've been far off* in terms of **belief**
 - you just can't come to accept that Jesus died *for you* and for your sin
 - you just can't come to accept that Jesus did what the Bible says he did
 - That he was born, crucified, resurrected... and all for you
 - *Maybe you've been far off* in terms of **theology**
 - perhaps you grew up in another religion and this Jesus thing is still new to you
 - or perhaps you come from no religious background at all
 - perhaps you've experienced some bad theology in your past
 - a friend of ours had someone tell them that their kids will go to hell if they aren't baptized

- that's bad theology!
- Listen, we want Christians to get baptized... it's a declaration of faith in Christ and an important moment in the life of a Christian
- ... but it's not a ticket into heaven! Only faith in Christ can provide entry into heaven
 - So different theology or bad theology may have created distance for you
- *Maybe you've been far off* in terms of **commitment**
 - you believe and you read God's Word...
 - but you're not willing to commit to church regularly, or to a d-group,
 - or you're not willing to commit to giving to the church, or commit to other disciplines to help you grow
 - You're content to stay arms-length away
 - Your distance is in your level of buy-in or commitment
- Or *Maybe you've been far off* in terms of **sin**
 - there is a long track record of sin and struggle and turning away
 - or there is *the sin*... the one you're most ashamed of,
 - the one you work to hide from others
 - the one where you can't stop or can't overcome it yourself under your own power
- Our distance from God can come in a lot of forms. But Christ's power has authority over that – Closeness or distance doesn't matter to him
- He can bridge that gap, that span, that distance, no matter how big or how small. No matter how far off we've been
- His power can overcome any distance and draw us to him **BLANK SLIDE**

Verses 14-16 – Peter's Mother-in-Law

The third miracle Matthew presents is in verses 14-16. Let's read this section

14 And when Jesus entered Peter's house, he saw his mother-in-law lying sick with a fever.
15 He touched her hand, and the fever left her, and she rose and began to serve him.
16 That evening they brought to him many who were oppressed by demons, and he cast out the spirits with a word and healed all who were sick.

- This account is similar to the others in that again, Jesus heals someone in society that wouldn't have high standing among Jews: a woman
 - We've talked before about how in that culture and that time
 - Women were treated like second-class citizens
 - But again, Jesus doesn't pay attention to that. He simply heals her
- One thing I want you to notice the immediacy that Matthew uses in this account:

Jesus entered Peter's house,
he saw [her]
He touched her hand,
the fever left her,
and she rose and began to serve him

- This isn't a drawn-out event – it happened one thing after another. She's sick, Jesus shows up, she's healed, and she goes into hostess mode
- There's not a lot of discourse here like there was in the other two accounts
 - And so, I think it's easy to skim over this account as less important and move on
 - But I think the simplicity of this miracle account that Matthew gives here might be intentional
- The two other miraculous healings in this section are pretty remarkable – leprosy and paralysis
 - But this sickness is pretty common - it's a fever
 - Raise your hand if you've had a fever at some point
 - *Hopefully not today...* because you shouldn't be here in the room if you've got a fever...
 - But a fever is a common sickness – I'm guessing that no one here this morning has had leprosy or been paralyzed
 - But we've all had fevers
- So, the third point about Christ's power is that it has authority over both the **Common and the Remarkable** SLIDE
- God can certainly perform remarkable miracles – the Bible is full of them
 - Creating the heavens and the earth
 - Parting the Red Sea
 - Manna from heaven
 - Feeding the 5,000

- Healing leprosy or paralysis
- Raising from the dead
- I could go on and on
- But God also works and also performs common miracles
 - He heals common fevers
 - He answers common prayers
 - He forgives common sin
- Now observe what happens here in Matthew's account of this miracle
 - Jesus heals Peter's mother-in-law
 - And immediately, she gets up and begins to serve him
 - I'm going to go out on a limb here, but *I'm pretty sure that if Anne just got over a fever, she wouldn't be thrilled if I invited a bunch of ya'll over for a dinner party a few hours later*
 - Probably none of us would be up for it. Most of us, if we have a fever, need some time to recover
 - Even after the fever breaks, we're still not 100%
 - But Jesus' healing of her fever was so complete and so immediate that she is able to get up and serve right away
- And this allows for a stream of people to come into the house and encounter Jesus. In verse 16:

That evening they brought to him many who were oppressed by demons, and he cast out the spirits with a word and healed all who were sick

- Mark's account of this miracle says the whole city showed up outside her door (Mk 1:32-34)
- And Jesus was able to heal many and drive out many demons. He was able to do some extraordinary things
- After he first healed Peter's mother-in-law of her common fever
- That day, Jesus used a healing of a common fever to do big, important, and miraculous things for the kingdom **BLANK SLIDE**

Verse 17 – Prophecy Fulfilled

Matthew ends this account with verse 17. Which reads.

17 This was to fulfill what was spoken by the prophet Isaiah: "He took our illnesses and bore our diseases."

- Matthew quotes from Isaiah 53:4. I'll put it up on the screen.
- The English Standard Version that we use says

SLIDE Surely, he has borne our griefs and carried our sorrows. Isaiah 53:4a

- Here, Matthew is showing his Jewish audience another way that Jesus fulfills Old Testament prophecy... again, that's one of Matthew's themes throughout his gospel
 - Isaiah prophesied that the promised Messiah would bear or take our illnesses and diseases
 - So, Matthew is pointing out here at the end of this account that:
 - Jesus has power over sicknesses and physical ailments, like leprosy, paralysis, or fever
 - He can take them on and take them away from us
 - Just like the prophet Isaiah said he would
 - But in addition to pointing that out, I think Matthew is also making one other point
 - I've looked at Isaiah 53:4 across several Bible versions and translations and these are some of the other phrases used:
 - Griefs and sorrows, sicknesses and pain, infirmities and sorrows, pains and disfigurement, weaknesses and sorrows
 - These are all in some way about physical illness or sickness. Just like the three miracle accounts in this passage are about physical illness or sickness
 - I think Matthew is trying to show us here that Christ's power prevails over sickness
 - In other words, Jesus's power has authority over our sickness or our **Corruption**
- SLIDE.**
- And I think the corruption that Matthew is getting it is not just physical corruption or sickness, but also spiritual corruption sickness
 - Physical sickness here is a metaphor for spiritual sickness
 - Another word for spiritual sickness is sin⁸.

⁸ Wiersbe, W. W. (1996). [The Bible exposition commentary](#) (Vol. 1, p. 33). Wheaton, IL: Victor Books

Application: Sin and Sickness:

- You see, in the Bible times, sickness and illness and diseases were commonly associated with sin
 - This was especially true of leprosy, but also other diseases
- It was commonly believed back then that lepers had committed some grave sin that caused their leprosy
- And writers in the Bible spoke to this – they often used sickness such as leprosy as an illustration of sin

Here's the passage that was read over us, again from Isaiah, this time chapter 1. I'll put it up on the screen **SLIDE**

⁴ Ah, sinful nation, a people laden with iniquity, offspring of evildoers, children who deal corruptly! They have forsaken the Lord, they have despised the Holy One of Israel, they are utterly estranged.

⁵ Why will you still be struck down? Why will you continue to rebel? The whole head is sick, and the whole heart faint.

⁶ From the sole of the foot even to the head, there is no soundness in it, but bruises and sores and raw wounds; they are not pressed out or bound up or softened with oil. Isaiah 1:4-6

- By showing Jesus' power over sickness, Matthew is drawing on something that his Jewish readers would automatically pick up on:
- Sickness is parallel to sin. Sickness is parallel to corruption
 - Just like sickness, our sin goes **deep**
 - Sin is not a skin or surface level illness
 - Sin isn't something we can just wash off with hand soap... even if you scrub for the recommended 20 seconds
 - It penetrates deeper than that
 - Sin is living inside of us and must be removed
 - Like sickness, sin **isolates**
 - Just like Adam and Eve hiding from God way back in Genesis, sin isolates us from God
 - And isolates us from others
 - We know all about isolation after over a year of Covid-19, right?
 - It's not healthy, it's not good for you

- With sin, you think you're alone or the only one who deals with this issue or the only one who struggles with it
- That no one else struggles with what you go through
 - Maybe its porn
 - Maybe its gluttony with food or alcohol
 - Maybe its greed or envy
 - Maybe its.... you can fill in the blank
- I don't know what it is for you... but the lie is that no one else goes through what you're going through
 - And so you think that no one will understand
 - Or no one will have your back and support you
 - Or no one is there to help
- Its why accountability is so important, but also so hard. Because like sickness, sin isolates
- Like sickness, sin **spreads**
 - If it isn't contained and eliminated, it will spread
 - Corruption corrupts further
 - If not contained and eliminated, one sin leads to another
 - Back in the 80s, rock star Axl Rose sang, "I used to do a little, but a little wouldn't do it, so the little got more and more."
 - He's saying that a little sickness or a little sin leads to more sin.
 - ... if it's not stopped. Like sickness, sin spreads
- And, like sickness, sin **must be removed**
 - At all costs, it must be removed
 - Its why Jesus tells us to cut off our hand, or cut off our foot, or tear out our eye if they cause us to sin
 - It's also why God sent Jesus
 - Because where we are powerless over sin, He has power over sin

Conclusion

- That's the good news for us this morning, church! **The good news is that Jesus has miraculous power over our corruption, over our sickness, and over our sin**

- When the leper approaches Jesus, Jesus doesn't run away or keep his distance
 - He reaches out and touches the leper
 - In doing so, Jesus likely contracted leprosy. He contracted the leper's defilement, corruption, and sickness. He took it on
 - But in taking that on, he also healed him
- Just as Isaiah says that Jesus bears our griefs and carries our sorrows, Jesus also takes on our sin so that he can heal us
- This is what Jesus did for us on the cross church!
 - Just last week on Good Friday, this is what we remembered
 - How on the cross, Jesus took on our corruption, our sickness, our sin
 - *He* took on the punishment for the sin – not us
- **This is Christ's ultimate miracle:** that in his perfection, he took on our sin, so that he could heal us of our sin
- Paul says in 2 Corinthians 5:21 that **SLIDE**

For our sake he made him to be sin who knew no sin, so that in him we might become the righteousness of God.

Church, Jesus has miraculous power and authority

- Society's **Conventions** do not matter
- **Closeness** or distance doesn't matter
- **Commonness** doesn't matter
- Our level of **Corruption** doesn't matter

Jesus came to heal us of our **Corruption**, of our sin, and he's got the power and authority to do so.

But let's not lose sight of the fact that we have a part to play also:

- The leper *approached* Jesus to heal him
- The centurion *came to* Jesus and *begged* Jesus to heal his servant
- Peter's mother-in-law *immediately got up* and began *servicing* him after he healed her

I think there is a relationship between faithful willingness and miracles. The leper, the centurion, and the mother-in-law were all willing to act in faith.

Are you?

Do you believe in miracles? Do you believe in kind of miracles that change lives?

Do you believe in the power that Christ possesses?

Are you willing to approach him in faith today?

- It doesn't matter what society says about you
- or how far away you are from him
- or how big or small your corruption or your sin is.

His power to forgive is greater. His authority to heal is greater.

Let's pray.

RESPONSES:

Well, every week at Fathom we respond in 4 ways:

The **first** is Communion –The crackers and juice represent Christ's body broken and his blood shed on the cross for those who proclaim Christ as Lord and Savior.

The **second** way we respond is by Giving – We believe in giving to God our tithes and offerings – our first and our best – because in Jesus, God gave us His first and His best. **fathomchurch.org/give**

The **third** is Prayer –Right now if you're in need of prayer or would like someone to pray for you, go to **fathomchurch.org/pray**

The **fourth** response is Singing – Singing moves what we've heard in God's Word from our heads to our hearts.

So, I'm going to read the Words of Institution from the Apostle Paul, we'll take communion, and then we'll sing:

1 CORINTHIANS 11:23–26 –WORDS OF INSTITUTION

²³For I received from the Lord what I also delivered to you, that the Lord Jesus on the night when he was betrayed took bread, ²⁴and when he had given thanks, he broke it, and said, "This is my body, which is for you. Do this in remembrance of me." **TAKE**

²⁵In the same way also he took the cup, after supper, saying, "This cup is the new covenant in my blood. Do this, as often as you drink it, in remembrance of me." **TAKE**

²⁶For as often as you eat this bread and drink the cup, you proclaim the Lord's death until he comes.

Thanks church. Love you guys. Let's sing together.