

THE GOSPEL OF CHRIST

SPREADING THE SOUL-SAVING MESSAGE OF JESUS

MATTHEW LESSON 4 (Chapters 8-11)

Introduction by narrator accompanied by a cappella singing:

THE GOSPEL OF CHRIST. Spreading the soul-saving message of Jesus. And now, Ben Bailey.

What are your thoughts on Jesus and what He was like? Many people think of Jesus as being hard nosed, straight laced, or rough around the edges. But in Matthew 8-11, we are introduced to the King Who is very, very compassionate. Part of Jesus was kind and loving. He was an extremely compassionate individual. Matthew 8-11 shows us just how kind and compassionate Jesus is as King. Matthew 1-3 introduced us to the marvelous birth of Jesus. Chapter 4 showed us Christ as the Master over Satan and temptation. In Matthew 5-7, we looked at the greatest sermon ever preached. Yes, some of Christ's statements in that sermon were stern. But let it be known that the Jesus Whom we serve today—the Jesus Who is the Lord of our lives—is a loving and compassionate King. He loves us so much that He wants us to go to Heaven to live with Him for eternity. Matthew 8 introduces Jesus to us as the compassionate King Who is the master healer. What makes Jesus so compassionate? In this context, Jesus heals a man of a dreadful disease that had never before been cleansed in such a manner. Jesus has just come down off of the mountain. No doubt He was tired after having preached the Sermon on the Mount. A leper comes to Him. Leprosy was a horrible disease. The skin would rot on the bones, producing a stench. Lepers were outcasts from the camp, and were not allowed to have a close association with others. This leper's only hope was to get to Jesus. He says to Jesus, "Lord, if You are willing, You can cleanse me." Notice what Jesus says in Matthew 8:3, and see the compassion of Christ. "Then Jesus put out His hand and touched him." Jesus touched a leper! He then said, "I am willing; be cleansed." And immediately the man's leprosy was cleansed. Here we see Jesus as the master healer. No doubt Jesus was tired. But this leper came to Him with a dreaded disease that was feared as being contagious. Yet Jesus took time to touch him, to heal him, and to cleanse him of this terrible disease. It took a lot of love from the heart of Christ to do these things.

There is a very practical lesson for us in Matthew 8:1-4. Jesus healed this man of a horrible disease. Yet Jesus is seen as a master healer for us today—because He has healed us of something far worse than leprosy. In view of the damage that sin can cause, and the eternal destruction that it can bring, leprosy is not seen as all that bad a disease. Yes, Jesus healed lepers. But that is not the main reason He came to Earth. Jesus came to seek and save that which was lost (Lk. 19:10). Jesus came to heal us of something far greater than leprosy. Sin is the disease with which we are faced today. The Bible teaches that sin is far more destructive and deadly than leprosy could ever be. Proverbs 13:15 says that "the way of the transgressor is hard." Living a life of sin is the hardest life a person could ever live. Sin is a deadly disease. Romans 6:23 says that "the wages of sin is death, but the free gift of God is eternal life." We are not talking about a **physical** death here. The wages of sin is so deadly and destructive because of the eternal results. What happens if a person catches leprosy and dies? They lose their physical body and pass from this life. But if that person had been faithful to the Lord, he or she could still go to Heaven. What happens, however, if a person is infected with the disease of sin, does not repent, and

passes from this life? Jesus said in Mark 9:44 that they would end up in a place called Hell—where the worm never dies and the fire is not quenched. Hell is described as being a place of eternal gnashing of teeth and of wailing. It is described as a lake of eternal torment and fire. What makes sin so much more deadly than leprosy is that while our physical bodies may die because of leprosy, with sin it will be our spirits that suffer forever. Sin, unlike leprosy, is not physically curable. There have been great strides in the medical field in regard to curing and preventing leprosy (which is almost unheard of today). But man has found no cure for sin. Jesus is still the only cure for sin. Paul said in 2 Corinthians 5:21 that God “made Him who knew no sin to be sin for us, that we might become the righteousness of God in Him.” John said in 1 John 2:2, “He Himself is the propitiation [substitutionary sacrifice] for our sins, and not for ours only but also for the whole world.” Jesus is the only cure or antidote for the sin problem that exists today. This is why the writer of Hebrews said, after talking about how the blood of bulls and goats could never take away sin (Heb. 10:3-4), “But this Man, after He had offered one sacrifice for sins forever, sat down at the right hand of God” (vs. 12). Jesus is the only cure for sin. We can see the passion and love of Christ in our own lives because He is willing to heal us of our greatest disease—sin.

In Matthew 8, we also see the compassion, humility, and love of Jesus in His healing of the centurion’s servant (vss. 8-12). A centurion—a military leader—came to Jesus. He says, “Lord, I have a servant at my house. He is paralyzed, and he is in torment.” Jesus says, “I will come and heal him.” But the centurion tells Jesus, “No, there is no need for you to come to my house. I am a man over many people. You just say the word, and it will be done.” Jesus responded by commending this man’s faith. The centurion possessed two key qualities. He was humble, and he had a great deal of faith. He possessed the humility that allowed him to come to Jesus and say, “Lord, I know You can heal my servant. Please help him if You will.” He had the same humble mindset that we ought to have today. Luke 14:11 says, “For whoever exalts himself will be humbled, and he who humbles himself will be exalted.” The text of 1 Peter 5:6 says that we are to humble ourselves under the mighty hand of God so that, in due time, we might be exalted. James 4:10 carries the same idea. The centurion was a leader who was willing to humble himself and come to Jesus. But he also possessed great faith. His attitude was, “Jesus, there is no need for You to come to my house. I know that You are the Son of God, and that you are the master healer. You just speak the word, and it will be done.” That is the attitude that we ought to have. That represents the type of faith that we as Christians ought to possess today. We do not need to see a sign or miracle, because we know the power of God. We know that Jesus is God’s Son, and we trust that whatever God says will be done. “Faith comes by hearing, and hearing by the Word of God” (Rom. 10:17). We need to have the faith to take God at His word, do what He says, and follow wherever Jesus leads us. Proverbs 3:5-6 says, “Trust in the Lord with all your heart, and lean not on your own understanding; in all your ways acknowledge Him, and He shall direct your paths.”

In Matthew 8:14-15, we learn a very important principle about these people who were healed. A leper was healed, and a centurion’s servant was healed. In Matthew 8:14-15, Peter’s mother-in-law was sick, and Jesus healed her. But notice especially verse 15 where it says, “So He touched her hand, and the fever left her. And she arose and served them.” Those who have been healed—especially of sin—need to know that they have been healed to serve! We have not been healed to simply fill a pew. Nor have we been healed in order to go out and make a lot of money or to live the lives we want to live. Those of us who have been healed of sin have been healed so that we can serve God. That is what life is all about. Now that we have been set free from sin, we can live lives of real meaning. We can live lives of service to God. Jesus—the Great Servant—gives us an example of how we, too, need to be servant. In Mark 10:45 it is said of Jesus, “The Son of Man did not come

to be served, but to serve, and to give His life a ransom for many.” Today we need to be seen as servants who are workers in the kingdom of God. Remember 1 Corinthians 15: 58—“Therefore, my beloved brethren, be steadfast, immovable, always abounding in the work of the Lord, knowing that your labor is not in vain in the Lord.” We need to be faithful in our service even unto death so that we can receive a crown of life. Paul put it this way in Galatians 2:20, “I have been crucified with Christ; it is no longer I who live, but Christ lives in me; and the life which I now live in the flesh I live by faith in the Son of God, who loved me and gave Himself for me.” Paul no longer saw himself as the one who needed to be pleased. Rather, he was trying to please Jesus. The Bible says in 1 Corinthians 6:19-20, “Do you not know that your body is the temple of the Holy Spirit who is in you, whom you have from God, and you are not your own? For you were bought at a price; therefore glorify God in your body and in your spirit, which are God’s.” Our lives as Christians must be spent in faithful service to God every single day.

In Matthew 9, we once again are introduced to the love and compassion of Jesus. Here we see that Jesus is One Who has the power to forgive sins. We see a man who is sick in sin, and who therefore comes to Jesus. Jesus is able to heal this man of his sin. As a result, we learn that Jesus has the power to forgive sins. While Jesus was here on Earth, He had the power to forgive the man’s sin. We today need to know that He likewise has the power to forgive **our** sins. What makes Jesus so compassionate and loving? It is the fact that He made the ultimate sacrifice for us, and He makes the way possible for us to be forgiven. Listen to what Jesus said in Matthew 26:28. He was instituting the Lord’s Supper, and said of the fruit of the vine, “This is My blood of the new covenant, which is shed for many for the remission of sins.” Think of the words of Hebrews 9:22—“Without the shedding of blood, there is no remission.” Jesus’ blood—which came as a result of His sacrifice on our behalf—gives us forgiveness. Without it, there would be absolutely no hope for us because Jesus is the only One Who has the power to forgive our sins. In 1 Peter 2:24, Peter spoke clearly of Christ’s sacrifice when he said that Christ “Himself bore our sins in His own body on the tree, that we, having died to sins, might live for righteousness—by whose stripes you were healed.” When we think of the sacrifice of Jesus, we need to know that He is the only One Who can save us. Little wonder, then, that it is said in Acts 4:12, “Nor is there salvation in any other, for there is no other name under heaven given among men by which we must be saved.” Jesus is the only way that we can have our sins forgiven. Even today, He has the power to forgive our sins and heal us.

Another interesting passage is found in Matthew 9:27-31. In this context, there are two blind men who come to Jesus to be healed. They request of Jesus that He touch their eyes so that they can be healed. Jesus does exactly that. He touches the men’s eyes, and immediately they receive their sight. Can you imagine what it would be like to have been blind all your life? What a horrible thing that would be! Imagine never seeing a sunrise. Imagine never seeing flowers. Imagine what it would be like to never see a cloud in the sky. Can you imagine living your whole life like that? What a dreadful thing that would be! These two blind men came to Jesus, and out of love and compassion (no doubt for the greater good—so that people could see that He was the Son of God and go to Heaven) He healed these men of their blindness. There is a practical lesson in this for us today as well. Jesus can open our eyes **spiritually**. Jesus opened the eyes of these two men **physically** so they could see. But today, if we will let Him, Jesus can open our eyes in a spiritual sense. Those who are in sin are blindly walking around in darkness. They have no realization of what life is all about. They do not understand what the Gospel can do in their lives. But as they come to understand and obey the Gospel, as they read the Word of God, and as they come in contact with the life of Jesus, hear it, and obey it, their eyes can be opened in a spiritual sense. They can understand what life is all about. In Ecclesiastes 12:13, the

Bible says, "Let us hear the conclusion of the whole matter: fear God and keep His commandments, for this is man's all." The best life can be found only in Jesus Christ. In John 10:10, Jesus said, "I have come that they may have life, and that they may have it more abundantly." When we obey Christ, we can see clearly that there is only one road and one path to the Father. Jesus said, "Enter by the narrow gate; for wide is the gate and broad is the way that leads to destruction, and there are many who go in by it. Because narrow is the gate and difficult is the way which leads to life, and there are few who find it" (Mt. 7:13-14). When our eyes are opened, we can see clearly that Jesus is the One Who saves. In John 14:6, Jesus said, "I am the way, the truth, and the life. No one comes to the Father except through Me."

In Matthew 9, we also are introduced to the love and compassion of Jesus for the lost in the last few verses. Notice Matthew 9:36-37, and let's see what Jesus says about those who are lost—and especially our need to reach out to the lost. A great multitude had surrounded Jesus. As He looked at the people, He said, "The harvest truly is plentiful, but the laborers are few" (vs. 37). He then went on to say, "Therefore pray the Lord of the harvest to send out laborers into His harvest" (vs. 38). Jesus looked at these people and saw them not as people, but as souls. He saw them as sheep without a shepherd, and as those who needed someone to lead them to the truth. Jesus' prayer was not that they would have food or be satisfied with worldly things, but that God would send laborers to take the Gospel to them so that they could be a part of the Christian harvest. Today, we need to realize the importance of spreading the Gospel. As Christians who have been healed to serve, one of the best ways for us to serve is to spread the message of Jesus. Of course, Jesus wants us to live correctly. But He also commands us to take what we have heard and learned so that we can teach it to others. That is what Jesus came to this Earth to do. In Luke 19:10, the Bible says, "The Son of Man has come to seek and to save that which was lost." In Matthew 28:19-20, shortly before Jesus ascended back into Heaven, what was the one thing that He wanted to impress upon the minds of His disciples? He said, "Go, therefore, and make disciples of all the nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, teaching them to observe all things that I have commanded you." There is a pressing need for us, as Christ's disciples, to spread His message. If you know someone who is lost and who has never heard the Gospel (someone like a friend or a neighbor), more than anything you need to point them toward the Bible and show them how much Jesus cares for the lost.

In Matthew 10, Jesus taught about the importance of endurance, and about how, as Christians, we should remain faithful unto the end. In verse 22, Jesus said, "You will be hated by all for My name's sake. But he who endures to the end will be saved." As the compassionate King, Jesus teaches us what we need to do to be saved and go to Heaven. The basic principle is that we must be faithful to the very end of our lives if we want to go to Heaven to be with God. This is what Jesus told the suffering saints in the Book of Revelation when He said, "Be faithful until death, and I will give you the crown of life" (Rev. 2:10). We need to make the decision that, no matter what, we are going to serve God. Regardless of what happens or what comes up, we are going to serve God. We need to be like Joshua who said, "If it seems evil to you to serve the Lord, choose for yourselves this day whom you will serve, whether the gods which your fathers served that were on the other side of the River, or the gods of the Amorites, in whose land you dwell. But as for me and my house, we will serve the Lord" (Josh. 24:15). We must make a determination today that we are not going to give up on Christ. He loved us enough to come to the Earth and die for us. So, we must decide to stay true to Him and to be faithful all the way to the end. If we do, there is a great reward awaiting us. In Revelation 14:13 the Bible says, "Blessed are the dead who die in the Lord from now on...that they may rest from their labors, and their works

follow them.” If we will remain true to Christ to the very end, then we can spend eternity with God in a place where there will be no sorrow, sickness, death, or crying (Rev. 21:3-4). We will be in the presence of God and all the saints of old. Heaven is truly going to be worth it all. In Romans 8:18, Paul said, “For I consider that the sufferings of this present time are not worthy to be compared with the glory which shall be revealed in us.” If we stay true to the end, the Bible says that it will be worth it.

In Matthew 10:32-33 we find another important text. Here, Jesus teaches us about confessing Him. He said, “Therefore whoever confesses Me before men, him I will also confess before My Father who is in heaven. But whoever denies Me before men, him I will also deny before My Father who is in heaven.” The point that Jesus was making (although the passage does relate to the plan of salvation when we initially confess Christ—Romans 10:10) was that we confess Him by living faithfully every day. If we are going to endure to the end, we must confess Christ during every waking moment that we live. Yes, we confess Christ with our lives. But we also confess or deny Him by the way we live. Matthew 5 teaches us that others see Christ in us by the type of life that we live. In Matthew 5:16, Jesus said, “Let your light so shine before men, that they may see your good works and glorify your Father in heaven.” We need to be sure that everything we do in this life brings honor and glory to the name of God. In 1 Corinthians 10:31 we are told, “Whether you eat or drink, or whatever you do, do all to the glory of God.” Even small things can be used to bring glory to God. We have been created for God’s glory. In Isaiah 43:7, Isaiah wrote, “Everyone who is called by My name, whom I have created for My glory; I have formed him, yes, I have made him.” Yes, we must confess Christ when we are saved initially, but our purpose in life is to confess Him every waking moment that we live by remaining faithful unto death.

Matthew 11 introduces us to a stalwart preacher of the Gospel—John the Baptist. John played a very important role in the life of Christ. His role, according to Matthew 3 and Isaiah 40:1-2, was to prepare the way for Christ. He was all about paving the road so that Jesus could one day walk down it. That was John’s duty. Jesus had a great respect and compassion for John. In Matthew 11:1-19, Jesus asked the people, “Did you go out to hear a reed shaken in the wind? Did you go out to see someone dressed in fine clothes?” No, not at all. John was dressed in camel’s hair. He was a stern, tough fellow. But Jesus had a great deal of respect for John because he fulfilled his duty. John stayed true to preaching the Word, and because of what he did, Jesus was able to come to people who were, for the most part, ready to hear Him. True, there were some people whose lives were not prepared. But many of them were ready to receive God’s kingdom. Today we need people like John who will stand up and preach the Gospel plainly. In 1 Peter 4:11, the Bible says, “speak as the oracles of God.” In 2 Timothy 4:2, Paul told Timothy, “Preach the word! Be ready in season and out of season. Convince, rebuke, exhort, with all longsuffering and teaching.” I can guarantee you that people do not want to hear a bunch of stories or funny quotes. People want to know what Jesus said and what the Bible has to say. In Mark 12:37, the Bible says (in a great compliment to Christ), “And the common people heard Him gladly.” Think about that for a moment. Why did the common people hear Jesus gladly? It was because Jesus told them what God said, and He made it applicable to their lives. That is what people want today. We do not become a person’s enemy by telling him the truth. Galatians 4:16 teaches us that we are his friend if we do that. In Matthew 11, the chapter closes by teaching us that if we will follow Christ (the compassionate King) wherever He goes, we can have that great rest that has been promised for all of God’s followers. Look at what Matthew 11:28-30 where Jesus says, “Come to Me, all you who labor and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest. Take My yoke upon you and learn from Me, for I am gentle and lowly in heart, and you will find rest for your souls. For My yoke is easy and My burden

is light." This text is often referred to as "the great invitation of Christ." Christ says, "Come to Me, all you who labor and are heavy laden." What does it mean to "labor and be heavy laden"? One of the heavy burdens that we may be bearing is that of sin. The psalmist said in Psalm 38:4, "My iniquities have gone over my head; like a heavy burden, they are too heavy for me." If you are burdened with sin, Jesus wants to give you rest. If your life is not what it ought to be, and if you do not have the love of Christ and His compassion in your life, then you need to bring Jesus into your life. The only way to live a good life in the here and now, and in eternity, is to be sure that you are a Christian. I cannot stress to you strongly enough the importance of being right with God. Nothing else in this life matters if you are not right with God. It does not matter how many good or moral things you may have done. It does not matter how many things you may have said to encourage others. It does not matter how many accomplishments you have accumulated in this life. If you are not a child of God, all of those things are in vain.

But you need to know that God does love you, and that He wants you to go to Heaven. The Bible says in 1 Timothy 2:4 that God "desires all men to be saved and to come to a knowledge of the truth." Jesus loved you so much that He left Heaven, came to Earth, was placed on a cross between two thieves, and died in agony so that you could have the hope of Heaven. Thus, you need to take advantage of the sacrifice of Christ. Look at His compassion. Look at His love. How do you respond properly? Jesus said in John 14:15, "If you love Me, keep My commandments." Maybe you have never obeyed the Gospel. If you have not, you can do it today. If you are willing to hear God's Word, believe that Jesus is the Son of God, repent of your sins and turn to God, confess Christ as the Son of God, and be baptized in water for the remission of your sins, then you can become a Christian. Where is it that our sins are washed away? It is in the waters of baptism. In Acts 22:16, after Paul had asked, "Lord, what would you have me to do?," he was told, "Arise and be baptized, and wash away your sins, calling on the name of the Lord." Today, if you are not a child of God, let us ask you, "Why are you waiting?" The Christian life is the very best life. Take advantage of Jesus, the compassionate King.

Narrator accompanied by a cappella singing:

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STUDY QUESTIONS FOR MATTHEW LESSON 4 (CHAPTERS 8-11)

1. To whom are we introduced in Matthew 8 through 11?
2. In the first few verses of Matthew 8, who came to see Jesus?
3. What was the specific purpose of the visit made to Jesus by the person mentioned in question 3 above?
4. What was Jesus' reaction to the request made by the person who came to visit Him?
5. What is the message contained in Matthew 8:1-4 for us today?
6. What does Proverbs 13:15 say about "the way of the transgressor"?
7. According to Paul's statement in 2 Corinthians 5:21, what did Jesus do for us?
8. According to 1 John 2:2, what is Jesus?
9. What is a "propitiation"?
10. In Matthew 8:14-15 we see Jesus healing a centurion's servant. According to the text, why did Jesus honor the centurion's request?
11. What message is contained in Proverbs 3:5-6 for us today?
12. According to Matthew 9:6, what lesson was Jesus trying to teach the people who saw Him heal the lame man?
13. In Matthew 9:27-31, Jesus healed two men who were physically blind. What message is contained in that text that applies to us today?
14. According to Ecclesiastes 12:13, what is man's "all" (or "duty")?
15. What do we learn about Christ from Matthew 9:36-37?
16. What message is contained in Matthew 9:36-38 that applies to us today?
17. What important message for Christians of all ages is contained in Matthew 10:22?
18. What important message for Christians of all ages is contained in Revelation 2:10?
19. According to Matthew 5:16, what can we do that will help us "confess Christ" as we are commanded to do in Matthew 10:32-33?
20. In Isaiah 40:1-2, Isaiah prophesied of someone who is discussed in Matthew 11. Who was that individual?
21. What promise did Jesus make His disciples in Matthew 11:28-29?