"GREAT FAITH"

Matthew 8:1-17
8/20/2017

INTRODUCTION: V. 1

***Jesus can handle your problem -- Believe Him!**

Four examples of faith:

I. The <u>LEPER</u> believed that Jesus could overcome <u>DEFILEMENT</u> (v. 2-4)

II. The <u>CENTURION</u> believed that Jesus could overcome <u>DISTANCE</u> (v. 5-13)

III. The <u>DISCIPLES</u> believed that Jesus could overcome <u>DISEASE</u> (v. 14-15)

IV. The <u>TOWNSPEOPLE</u> believed that Jesus could overcome <u>DEMONS</u> (v. 16-17)

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"We have been introduced to the person of the King (Mt. 1-4) and the principles of the King (Mt. 5-7), and now we are ready for the power of the King. After all, if a king does not have the power to accomplish anything, what good are his credentials or principles?" (Wiersbe, p. 32)

"The mountain" **-**the Mount of Olives, from which He gave the Sermon on the Mount (Mt. 5-7).

"Great multitudes followed" **-**Because of His powerful, authoritative teaching, Christ commanded the respect of the people.

***Jesus can handle your problem -- Believe Him!**

Four examples of faith:

I. The LEPER believed that Jesus could overcome DEFILEMENT (v. 2-4)

V. 2
"A leper" **-** a horrible disease (described in Lev. 13)

SEE: the quote from the book Unclean! Unclean! by L. S. Huizenga (MacArthur, p. 7)

"Leprosy is an illustration of sin (Is. 1:5-6). The instructions given to the priests in Leviticus 13 help us understand the nature of sin: Sin is deeper than the skin (Lev. 13:3); it spreads (Lev. 13:8); it defiles and isolates (Lev. 13:45-46); and it is fit only for the fire (lev. 13:52, 57).

"There came a leper" **-**The fact that the leper ran up to Jesus and violated the law of quarantine, proved he believed that he would be cured and that Jesus would not be defiled.

The Jewish Talmud prohibited a Jew from coming closer than 6 feet to a leper, and if the wind was blowing, the limit was 150 feet (MacArthur, p. 6)

"Worshipped Him" **-** the word "worship" literally means to "kiss towards"; it means to do homage, to humbly show reverence to Divinity by bowing down in awe and demonstrating total affection and dependence.

NOTE: One of the clearest evidences of Christ's deity is His willingness to accept worship!

--Peter rejected worship (Acts 10:25-26), as did Paul (Acts 14:11-18)

--Angels rejected worship (Rev. 19:10), and rightly so, because only God was to be worshipped (Mt. 4:100.

But Jesus never rejected worship because He was not a mere man, nor was He an angel, but He was God Incarnate!

Note how often Jesus received worship: Ps. 2:8, 12; Mt. 8:2, 9:18, 14:33, 15:25, 28:9 & 17; Jn. 9:35, 38; 20:28-29; Lk. 24:51-52; by angels - Heb. 1:6; by all men - Phil. 2:10.

"Lord" **-**the leper recognized the deity, sovereignty, and majesty of Christ.

"If Thou wilt" **-**if you are willing. The leper did not question the ability of Christ but only His desire.

The question today is not whether God is able to heal, but whether it is always His will to do so (For Paul, it wasn't - II Cor. 12)

Our prayers should always be according to God's will (EX: Mt. 26:39, 42; I Jn. 5:14).

We don't demand anything of God! We simply request Him to do what His will decides.

"Thou canst make me clean" **-**lit. You are able! (cp. the faith of Daniel's 3 friends - Dan. 3:17-18)

"Thou canst make me clean" - the leper's faith was in the power of Jesus ***"Thou" -*** Jesus, unlike prophets like Elijah and Elisha, did not perform miracles through God, but as God! He had independent power and authority!

V. 3

"Touched him" **-**It was against safe precautionary medical procedure for one to touch a man with leprosy (since this disease was so contagious).

Lepers were isolated (quarantined) for the well-being of the community (Lev. 13:44-46).

But Jesus, knowing that his ailment would be immediately cured and to demonstrate compassion for the afflicted, touched him. Such empathy and love is often shown by Jesus (Mt. 8:3, 15; Mt. 9:29, 17:7, 20:34)

It was compassion that moved Jesus to touch a man that no one else would (Mk. 1:41 - *"And Jesus, moved with compassion, put forth his hand, and touched him, and saith unto him, I will; be thou clean."*

Though the Law forbade one to touch anything unclean (Lev. 5:3), Jesus, knowing that the defilement would not occur because of the impending instantaneous cleansing, touched him.

Certainly "lepers yearned for the touch of another human being in their isolation and social stigma, they no doubt would have given anything for even brief intimate contact with someone besides other lepers" (MacArthur, p. 9)

"I will; be thou clean" **-**All Jesus had to do was say the words, and the man would be healed. The One who is called the Word has infinite power in His words as evidenced by His creative power. Since He made the universe by simply speaking the words (Heb. 11:3; cp. Gen. 1-2).

"Immediately" **-**the instantaneous nature of this healing proves this to be a true, undeniable miracle. When Jesus healed, it was never a long,s low process,b ut was

sudden and complete!

V. 4
"Tell no man" **-**Why not?

Luke 4:42-43 teaches that so many came to Jesus for healing that they were preventing him from departing and preaching in other cities

Jesus wanted to do many more miracles to substantiate the validity of His message and mission (of His being Messiah). He wanted also to minister to Gentiles (Mt. 12:16-21)

If this news would have spread, many would have followed Him for healings and not for the right reason - to hear His message of salvation. Desperate people will always flock to healing services. Jesus did not want merely a reputation for being a healer but Messiah!

This leper, however, went out and published the healing, so that so many people swarmed to Jesus that He could not minister publically (Mk. 1:45 - *But He went out and began to publish it much, and to blaze abroad the matter, insomuch that Jesus could no more openly enter into the city, but was without in desert places; and they came to him from every quarter.")*

It's ironic how Jesus told this man to tell no one, yet He told everybody; and yet Jesus tells us to tell everybody (Mk. 16:15) and yet we often tell nobody!

"One thing is certain: Jesus did not perform miracles to 'get a crowd'." (Wiersbe, p. 32)

Publicity is not always what we need most!

"Go. . . show. . . offer" **-**This man was to follow the O.T. Law, which required these things to be done (See: Lev. 14).
Christ always upheld the Law and never violated it!

"For a testimony" **-**the leper's obedience to the law of Moses would be a great testimony to both the power of Jesus and to his conformity to the law! Perhaps, this would have been the very first time the priests would have seen a leper cleansed. This would be the first time they would have to perform the duties of Lev. 14. They would have to "blow the dust" off of that part of the scroll because finally, they are

actually required to carry out a passage of Scripture they learned at Rabbinical School but had never put into practice on a former leper.

II. The <u>CENTURION</u> believed that Jesus could overcome <u>DISTANCE</u> (v. 5-13)

V. 5

"A centurion" **-**an officer in the Roman army who commanded 100 men (a "century" is 100 years).

This man would have been a <u>Gentile</u>. (Matthew now shows that Jesus not only healed the Jews but also the Gentiles)

V. 6

"My servant" **-**note the compassion of this centurion. Most centurions couldn't care less for their servants; when one becomes useless, they would simply replace him with another one.

Faith always produces love! (Gal. 5:6)

"Palsy, grievously tormented" - the servant was a paralytic who could not move a muscle, but was trapped on a bed suffering great agony and pain.

V. 8

"I am not worthy" **-**a statement of humility which recognized the great importance of Jesus Christ (cp. John the Baptist said the same thing - Jn. 1:27; Mk. 1:7)

By faith, this man recognized something about Jesus which demanded respect (no doubt he recognized Christ's impeccable holiness and incredible power).

For a high-ranking Roman to say this to a Jew is incredible!

"Speak the word only" **-**This man recognized the power and authority of Christ's word.

He also recognized that Jesus was not limited by distance. Jesus did not have to be physically present to work!

Though Jesus ascended to Heaven and is seated at the Father's right hand, His arm

is not short that He cannot work right here in Port Charlotte, FL! (Is. 59:1)

"My servant shall be healed" - Note; Faith does not doubt. Faith recognizes that all God has to do is "say the word" and the thing (whatever it is) will certainly be done.

V. 9

The centurion is saying: "Even I, who am a lesser officer, can give orders and they are carried out. If one who has limited authority can give orders and see them fulfilled, then certain Christ, who has total authority, can!

V. 10

"Twice in the Gospels it is recorded that Jesus marveled: here, at the great faith of the Gentile centurion, and in Mk. 6:6 at the great unbelief of the Jews" (Wiersbe, p. 33).

"I have not found so great faith" **-**This man's faith was unique among his contemporaries, even among those who should have had such faith -- the Jews (who had God's Law)!

V. 11

"The east and west" **-**Gentiles (like the centurion) from all over the world will share the Messianic Kingdom with the patriarchs because of their faith!

But "***the children of the Kingdom"*** (i.e. the Israelites who were showered with so many blessings and promises regarding that future kingdom) shall be prohibited from eating because of their unbelief.

V. 12

Physical descent from Abraham does not get one into God's Kingdom! (cp. Rom. 3:1-2)

"Cast out" **-** hell will be a place of total separation (from God and heaven)

"Outer darkness" **-** hell will be a place of total darkness (no light at all)

"Weeping" **-**Hell will be a place of total sorrow

"Gnashing of teeth" - hell will be a place of total conscious torment
V. 13

"As thou hast believed" -In the same way as the Centurion believed that Jesus would work, so Jesus did it that way!

NOTE: Many receive little from Jesus because their faith is little. The proportion of our faith will largely determine the proportion of our blessings.

Without faith we cannot please God (Heb. 11), and without faith we cannot receive answers to prayer (Mk. 11:24 - *"Therefore I say unto you, What things soever ye desire;, when ye pray, believe that ye receive them, and ye shall have them."*; cp. James 1:6, 7).

III. The DISCIPLES believed that Jesus could overcome DISEASE (v. 14-15)

Mark 1:30 says that it was some of the disciples who spoke to Jesus about healing Peter's mother-in-law (cp. Lk. 4:38).

V. 14

"His wife's" **-**Peter had a wife (I Cor. 9:5) and contrary to RCC tradition, he was not the first pope! (Note: the popes are forbidden to marry).

"Sick of a fever" **-** no matter how small an ailment is, Jesus cares!

V. 15

"He touched her" **-**all it took was a touch of the Master's hand and the fever fled from her body.

Jesus also rebuked the fever (Lk. 4:39) and then lifted her up (Mk. 1:31)

"She arose and ministered" **-** When God cures us it is not so that we can selfishly enjoy the benefits of being healthy, but it is to serve our Lord. Many use past ailments as excuses to justify why they can't come to church, can't perform certain ministries,b ut this woman did not lazily lie around the house and complain about how terrible her headache was, she got right up and got busy for Christ!

"Her ministering" **-**no doubt included preparing dinner, etc.!

IV. The TOWNSPEOPLE believed that Jesus could overcome DEMONS (v. 16-17)

V. 16

"They brought unto him" **-**the townspeople (Lk. 4:40) who had spiritually afflicted friends and relatives brought them to Jesus. They had faith that Jesus could perform the miraculous!

"They brought unto him" **-**People will often never come to Jesus unless someone brings them.

"He cast out" **-**he expelled; he ordered them to leave!

"With his word" **-**The same power that cured the leper (v. 3) and the paralytic (v. 8) is the power that exorcised demons!

"Healed all" **-**Christ's power is not limited to some cases, but all.

With God, *"nothing shall be impossible!"* As the hymnwriter said, "God specializes in things thought impossible, He does the things others cannot do."

In Matthew 8:1-17, Jesus specifically heals a leper, a Gentile, and a woman. Three types of people who were viewed as outcasts by many Jewish people in Jesus' day. "Many Pharisees would pray each morning, 'I give thanks that I am a man and not a woman; a Jew and not a Gentile; a free-man and not a slave'." (Wiersbe, p. 33)

V. 17

Note: This paraphrase of Isaiah 53:4 is fulfilled not by Christ's death, but by His life Contrary to the teaching of some that "healing is in the atonement", the Bible does not say that Christ died for sickness, but for sin.

This prophecy of Isaiah was fulfilled by Jesus curing His days of ministry as He compassionately cared for the physical needs of the suffering!

- Jesus healed simply (not by formulas or gimmicks)
- Jesus healed instantly (not gradually)
- Jesus healed totally (not partially)
- Jesus healed impartially (no favoritism)

"Physical health, race, social status, or gender make no difference to Him"

(MacArthur, p. 15) (i.e. there is no distinction between Jew & Greek - Rom. 10:11-12)