

MatthewCh8v1-Ch9v34 - Reversing the Curse

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[0 : 00] So we're going to read Matthew's Gospel, Matthew chapter 8, from verses 1 through to 22.

So follow along with me as we read God's Word. When Jesus came down from the mountainside, large crowds followed him.

A man with leprosy came and knelt before him and said, Lord, if you are willing, you can make me clean. Jesus reached out his hand and touched the man.

I am willing, he said. Be clean. Immediately he was cleansed of his leprosy. Then Jesus said to him, See that you don't tell anyone, but go show yourself to the priests and offer the gift of Moses commanded as a testimony to them.

When Jesus had entered Capernaum, a centurion came to him, asking for help. Lord, he said, my servant lies at home paralyzed, suffering terribly.

[1 : 15] Jesus said to him, Shall I come and heal him? 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, 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.

When Jesus heard this, he was amazed and said to those following him, Truly I tell you, I have not found anyone in Israel with such great faith. 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.

But the subjects of the kingdom will be thrown outside, into the darkness, where there will be weeping and gnashing of teeth. Then Jesus said to the centurion, Go, let it be done just as you believed it would.

And his servant was healed at that moment. When Jesus came into Peter's house, he saw Peter's mother-in-law lying in bed with a fever.

[2 : 31] He touched her hand and the fever left her, and she got up and began to wait on him.

When evening came, many who were demon-possessed were brought to him, and he drove out the spirits with a word and healed all who were ill.

This was to fulfil what was spoken through the prophet Isaiah. He took up our infirmities and bore our diseases. When Jesus saw the crowd around him, he gave orders to cross to the other side of the lake.

Then a teacher of the law came to him and said, Teacher, I will follow you wherever you go. Jesus replied, Foxes have dens, birds have nests, but the Son of Man has nowhere to lay his head.

Another disciple said to him, Lord, first let me go and bury my father. But Jesus told him, Follow me and let the dead bury their own dead.

Well, keep your Bibles open there at Matthew 8, and let's pray and ask for God's help as we look at his word together. Let's pray. Amen. Father, thank you for the Gospel of Matthew, for this true historical account of Jesus.

[3 : 56] we pray that stories and accounts that may be familiar to us will become fresh. And if we've never heard them before, that we will equally be refreshed and amazed at the wonder of who Jesus is.

May our focus and our gaze be upon him. May our minds be pulled towards him. And may our hearts be changed so that we reflect him and do his will wherever we go.

In Jesus we pray. Amen. Well, every day we're reminded that we live in a broken and a disordered world.

Turn on the television today and we're reminded of that. Sinful choices and the sinful actions of others mean that we do indeed struggle.

We observe and experience all kinds of physical suffering and sicknesses. And in the midst of all of that we have to deal with the destructive schemes of Satan.

[5 : 21] The reality is wherever we go and wherever we look we see sin, suffering and Satan. And together they leave us crushed, broken and in despair.

And it's into this very world that Jesus steps. His mission has been crystal clear to announce to the world that he is God's King.

The Supreme King. And he has come to establish a new kingdom an eternal kingdom where everything will be put right. And in chapters 8 and 9 we're giving a preview of what this kingdom will be like.

In chapters 8 and 9 Jesus overcomes sin, suffering and Satan for us. And to help us see this Matthew has ordered his material deliberately and intentionally.

So just follow with me. Just use the headings that you have in your Bible. you'll see that there's three miracle accounts followed by a call to follow. So beginning of chapter 8 there's the healing of the man with leprosy.

[6 : 33] Then there's the centurion servant. And then Jesus heals many. And then there's this call to follow Jesus. Then after that we have three more miracles.

Jesus calming the storm. Jesus restoring the demon possessed men. Forgiving and healing the paralysed man. And then we have a second calling.

The calling of Matthew. And then if we read on we have Jesus raising a dead girl. Healing a sick woman. And then Jesus healing the blind and mute.

And followed that is the call to go into the harvest because it is plentiful. These miracle accounts have been written and ordered for an intentional purpose.

You can see it on the screen. Through these accounts Jesus displays his authority over all things and demands our allegiance in all things.

[7 : 35] The miracles that we read about are like a spotlight drawing our attention to Jesus and his kingdom. A king with absolute authority who demands nothing less than our complete allegiance.

So two things we're going to look at from our text this morning in Matthew chapter 8. Jesus displaying his authority and demanding our allegiance.

So first Jesus displays his authority and he does it in three ways. First overcoming sin. Look at verse 2. A man with leprosy comes and kneels before Jesus and he cries out to Jesus Lord if you're willing you can make me clean.

Now this man has a terrible skin disease which deadens the nerves and knocks off your limbs. It means you can't feel pain. It results in infection and ultimately death.

Treatments now but certainly back then there was nothing. Physically this man is in a hopeless situation which is why his request is surprising. He doesn't say to Jesus heal my leprosy.

[8 : 54] He says can you make me clean? You see under Jewish law under Jewish religious law someone with leprosy was considered spiritually unclean.

in other words your physical condition left you excluded and outside of God. Here's what the law said you can read it there on screen. Anyone with such a defiling disease must wear torn clothes let their hair be unkempt cover the lower part of their face and cry out unclean unclean as long as they have the disease they remain unclean they must live alone they must live outside the camp.

In other words you can't come close to God which also meant that if you touched someone or came into contact with someone who had a similar skin disease you became contaminated you became unclean and you were excluded from God.

So you have to be very careful if you came in contact with a leper. So what would Jesus do? Well look at verse 3 Jesus reached out his hand and touched the man I am willing he said be clean immediately he was cleansed of his leprosy.

Now do you see what's happened? Something extraordinary has taken place. Instead of Jesus being the one who becomes unclean the leper becomes clean.

[10 : 45] Instead of the leper's uncleanness being passed on to Jesus Jesus' cleanness is passed on to him. By a simple word be clean the leper has his life restored.

He's no longer excluded and unclean. He is included and made clean. It's a beautiful picture of a greater healing that we all need.

The external disease that we see here reflects the internal sin that we all have. Just as the man needs to be made clean outwardly so we need to be made clean inwardly. And through Jesus by just a simple word, a simple command, all our uncleanness, all our impurity, all our sin can be removed, we can be forgiven, made clean.

Jesus overcomes sin and makes us clean so that we can come to God. But not only that, Jesus overcomes suffering.

[12:02] Look at verse 5, when Jesus had entered Capernaum, a centurion came to him asking for help. Lord, he said, my servant lies at home paralyzed, suffering terribly.

Now a centurion was a soldier of considerable authority within the Roman army. He was captain over at least a hundred men. But he was also a despised outsider.

Being in the Roman army meant he was part of the unwanted occupying forces. Through their military might, the Romans had expanded their empire, swallowing up smaller nations like Palestine.

He was an enemy, someone to be despised and hated. So a centurion who comes asking for help, well here was an opportunity for payback.

The context here is like a Ukrainian helping a Russian soldier. It was a chance to let him experience pain.

[13:09] Let him suffer. How would Jesus respond? Well look at verse 7. Jesus said to him, shall I come and heal him?

I mean what an extraordinary gracious thing to do, to reach out to your enemy like this. Not only does Jesus go to where the servant is, he offers to heal him.

He reaches out to the despised outsider. He shows compassion towards his worst enemy. The centurion didn't need a second offer.

Verse 8. Lord, I do not deserve to have you come under my roof, but just say the word and my servant will be healed. Verse 13.

Then Jesus said to the centurion, go, let it be done just as you believed it would. And his servant was healed at that moment.

[14:14] It's extraordinary, isn't it? Jesus isn't even in the home of the centurion. He's not even present with the suffering servant.

Jesus just says from a distance, go. And immediately the servant is healed and freed from his life of suffering. Now incredible as this is, let's not miss the greater healing and restoration that's taking place.

Because Jesus uses this moment to teach about all those who can be welcomed into his kingdom. Look at verse 10.

When Jesus heard this, he was amazed and said to those following him, truly I tell you, I have not found anyone in Israel with such great faith.

For what was so different about the centurion's faith to anybody else's faith that he's come across. Well, look back to what the centurion has just said, verse 9.

[15:25] He says, I myself am a man under authority, with soldiers under me. I tell this one go, and he goes, that one come, and he comes, I say to my servant, do this, and he does it.

You see, he understands authority, yet he recognises a greater authority in Jesus. He knew that Jesus just had to say a word, and it would be done.

You see, here's what Jesus is teaching us. He's saying, I have come to enemies like you, so that you could be welcomed into my kingdom. I have come to welcome outsiders, to those who oppose me, and stand against me.

Verse 11, 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.

Look, he's saying, if you just come in humble faith, just like the centurion, if you come relying and depending on the words of Jesus, you too will be welcomed into my kingdom.

[16:43] But where Jesus' authority is ignored and rejected, look at verse 12, the subjects, those who think they are in, will be thrown outside into the darkness, where there will be weeping and gnashing of teeth.

You see, Jesus frees us from a greater suffering, the suffering of hell itself. It doesn't matter who you are, what you've done, your background, your experience, hear the welcome of Jesus.

There is a seat at the king's table for all who will come in humble faith to Jesus. He overcomes suffering to welcome the outsider in.

sin. So he overcomes sin, he overcomes suffering, and Jesus overcomes Satan.

Look at verse 16, when evening came, many who were demon possessed were brought to him.

Now we should never ever ignore the reality of Satan and his work.

[17 : 59] From the first time of when he rebelled against God, Satan has been on a mission to disrupt and destroy God's kingdom. In fact, his work can leave us feeling hopeless.

You see, in our culture and experience, I would imagine, most of us think of demon possession as unreal. It's the stuff of horror movies.

But no, demons, the servants of Satan are very much active. We should be alert, we should be attentive. Sometimes it comes in the way of temptation, other times it can come in the way of torment.

We're given an example of what it might appear to be. Verse 28, when Jesus arrived on the other side in the region of the Gadarenes, two demon possessed men came from the tombs, met him.

They were so violent that no one could pass that way. Here were two people overcome, their lives ruined and destroyed. They wrecked people's lives, causing mental and physical anguish.

[19 : 18] And for all those that came to Jesus back in verse 16, whatever the impact, they were unable to change their situation. they were powerless, they were hopeless. And how is Jesus going to respond to them?

Well, look at the rest of verse 16. Let's read it again. When evening came, many who were demon possessed were brought to him, and he drove out the spirits with a word, and healed all who were ill.

With just a word, the spirits left. at his command, they fled. You see, Satan may tempt and torment, but he is no match for the authority of Jesus.

Jesus rules over the kingdom of darkness. He has power over demons. Satan has no hold over you if you have Jesus. If we're followers of Jesus, we do not need to fear.

In fact, scripture tells us that Satan requires the permission of Jesus before he can do anything.

Jesus reigns supreme over all things.

[20 : 35] And when Jesus has finished speaking to these spirits, not only do the spirits leave the people, but their lives are restored. They no longer live in fear, they've got hope.

They're no longer living in torment, they have peace. You see, scripture is clear that we've all been born following the ways of Satan.

We're all part of this great big rebellion against God, but through Jesus we're set free and restored. Jesus overcomes Satan and restores the hopelessness.

sins. So Jesus overcomes sin, suffering, and Satan. He cleans, he welcomes, and he restores.

And he does it all through his work on the cross. You see, what Jesus has done for these few people that we get to meet in chapter 8, Jesus has done for all who will trust in his work on the cross.

[21 : 46] Look at verse 17. All these healings, all that has happened. Verse 17, this was to fulfil what was spoken through the prophet Isaiah.

He took up our infirmities and bore our diseases. Now, to help us understand that, we need to read it in its whole context.

It comes from Isaiah 53. It's a well-known passage. And in that chapter, chapter 53, the prophet Isaiah is looking forward to the coming of a servant king, Jesus, who would die on the cross.

And this is what he says. You can follow on screen here. Quoting, what we have here in Matthew.

Surely he took up our pain and bore our suffering.

Yet we considered him punished by God, stricken by him, and afflicted. But he was pierced for our transgressions. He was crushed for our iniquities.

[22 : 49] The punishment that brought us peace was on him. And by his wounds we are healed.

You see, when Jesus died on the cross, he was overcoming sin, suffering, and Satan.

He took your sin and was punished and crushed for you. He suffered the hell for you that we deserve so that we don't have to.

Jesus faced the deceiving and destructive schemes of Satan and won. Jesus took it all to the grave and he triumphed over it all as he rose from the dead.

Jesus overcame everything so that we could be made clean, welcomed, and restored. Now, does this mean if we're trusting Jesus we live a life free from sin, suffering, and Satan?

That it's all done with once and for all? Well, yes, our sin has been paid for, but we still live in our broken world.

[24 : 03] We still suffer the consequences of sin. Yes, God can still heal and he does, but we still have broken bodies and we will all die of some disease or some disaster.

Yes, Satan has been defeated and disarmed, but he is still scheming through his temptation. You see, what Jesus is showing us here, what he did for these people, he is giving us a glimpse of what is to come.

It's a preview of his eternal kingdom, a kingdom where there will be no more sin, suffering, or Satan. And that kingdom has been secured for us by Jesus through his death on the cross.

So, Jesus displays his absolute authority by overcoming sin, Satan, and suffering. And he does it all by his cross.

allegiance. Because when we consider the authority and the power of Jesus, the question is, what am I going to do about it?

[25 : 19] How am I going to respond to who this Jesus is? Well, the only right response is complete allegiance. three things very briefly that ought to be expressed.

Here's the first. Unwavering loyalty. Look at verse 19. Then a teacher of the law came to Jesus and said, Teacher, I will follow you wherever you go.

You see, if Jesus is the supreme king with absolute authority, there is nothing that he cannot ask of you. Like the soldiers under the centurion, we are soldiers under the king of kings who says to this one, go and he goes, to this one, come and he comes, to this one, do this and he does it.

We don't get to do deals with the Lord Jesus. We can't come to him and say, I'll follow you, but just know this, this area of my life is off limits. You cannot do anything with this.

You cannot have my days off, my trips away, and my time. This is for me. Everything else, over to you. No, it's all or nothing.

[26 : 42] It's an unwavering loyalty. If you are in his kingdom, you give up rights to self. You follow wherever and whatever he commands.

That is the response to his authority. Also, unconditional trust. verse 20, Jesus replied, Foxes have dens, birds have nests, but the Son of Man, speaking of himself, has nowhere to lay his head.

You see, if Jesus has authority over all things, and if he is calling us today to follow him, then it means I can trust him. We don't need to fear the future.

I don't need to worry about my health. If Jesus is Lord over sin, suffering, and Satan, he calls for unconditional trust.

Following Jesus may mean lack of material comfort and financial security. Jesus knew this. He says, I have nowhere where I can call home.

[28 : 01] He had made the universe. He owns everything, but he made no claim on it. He trusted his heavenly father for all things. So we too, if we follow him, are to trust that he will provide us for all that he asked us to step into.

He will sustain. He will keep. Unwavering loyalty, unconditional trust, and undivided devotion.

Look at verse 21. Another disciple said to him, Lord, first let me go and bury my father. But Jesus told him, follow me and let the dead bury their own dead.

Seems a bit harsh, doesn't it? A bit cruel. But Jesus isn't saying, don't go to your parents funeral or don't visit them.

Jesus is saying, your love for me is to be greater than your love for your own family. I come first. I want your undivided devotion.

[29 : 21] family. You see, one of the obstacles people have to following Jesus is family. Family is so important. And parents can put a huge expectation, not just on little children, but even adult children.

There's unspoken demands within families that must always be obeyed. Emotional pressures that must always be followed. Family traditions that must be upheld.

No, says Jesus. You obey me. You follow me. You see, if Jesus has absolute authority over sin, suffering and Satan, if Jesus has given his life for you and for me so that we could be made clean, welcomed and restored into his kingdom, the only right response is to bow down and say, I will follow you.

But know what he is calling us to. He demands complete allegiance, nothing else, a life of unwavering loyalty, unconditional trust, an undivided devotion. Him. He is king. We follow him. Let's pray. Let's pray. Father, there is so much that trouble us in this world, not least our own struggles with sin and putting self first.

[31 : 29] Each of us, I'm sure, has a story to tell of personal suffering. And we all face the schemes and temptations and torments of Satan.

And yet you, Lord Jesus, have come and have proved your authority over it all, your supreme power, welcoming us into a new kind of kingdom, offering us eternal life, offering us glories to come, peace today, and a glorious God who will walk with us.

So, Father, would you help us follow you as we should, to give up our claims to ourself, our claims to our comfort, our claims to our rights.

And would we bow in humble, humbleness before you and say, Lord, here, here am I. Help me that I may follow you and go where you call and do as you ask.

Help us, we pray, in Jesus' name. Amen. We're going to sing together a song that I hope brings together our thoughts today.

[33 : 05] What grace is mine, the grace that has come to us, and the chorus is, so I will go wherever he is calling me.

I lose my life to find my life in him. I give my all to gain the hope that never dies. I bow my heart, take up my cross and follow him.

May this song be our prayer, our response to the authority and power of Jesus. Let's stand as we sing. praise his light, let's he who dwells in endless light, call through the night to fight his love.

And from his heart for mercy that would be for me, that I might live and in his pain be poor.

So I will go wherever he is calling, I do my life to