

Sermon Notes for Matthew 8:14-17, Epiphany III

1. Read the parallel accounts at Mark 1:29-34 and Luke 4:38-41. These three Synoptic accounts supplement and corroborate each other.
2. Epiphany I manifested Jesus in the preaching of the Baptist (Matthew 3:11-12). Epiphany II manifested Jesus as the One Who seeks and saves the lost (Luke 19:1-10). Epiphany III manifests Jesus as the Messiah, the One who took our weaknesses and bore our diseases, those of all people.
3. According to Mark 1:29 Jesus, James, John, Peter and Andrew had just left the synagogue in Capernaum when they entered the house of Peter and Andrew. From this account we know that Peter was married. This is confirmed at I Corinthians 9:5.
4. Jesus healed the sick by a touch because He is the Messiah. It was not the touch of a magician but of Him who is called the Word of God. John 1:1. He is truly God. He can do all things. With him nothing is impossible.
5. Luke 9:39 informs us that Jesus "rebuked" the fever and that she arose immediately and waited on them. This is remarkable. Usually a fever leaves a person gradually, not immediately. Furthermore, the fever leaves the victim quite weak so that he can do very little. In other words, the power of Jesus restored Peter's mother-in-law fully and immediately.
6. At the end of verse 15 the older translations read: "she began to serve them", not "Him." Intense research into old manuscripts during the last 100 years has revealed such variant readings. But in not one instance do variant readings change the meaning of the text. "The Word of the Lord endures forever" says I Peter 1:25 and Isaiah 40:8. We have the very same Bible today as have all previous generations. The Word of God is like God Himself. It does not change.
7. Our text took place in the evening of a Sabbath Day. The Sabbath was over at 6 p.m. (1800 hours.) The Jews could not have a big meal during the Sabbath, 1800 hours Friday to 1800 hours Saturday. Therefore, scholars are of the opinion that, on this occasion, Peter's wife had prepared a big meal for Peter, Andrew, Jesus, James and John. When Jesus healed Peter's mother-in-law, she joined Peter's wife in serving the guests. This assumes that Peter's mother-in-law lived with Peter and his wife.
8. Verses 16-17 and the parallel accounts in Mark and Luke briefly describe one of the most amazing accounts in the life of Jesus. When the Sabbath was over (after sunset) the people of Capernaum brought all their demon-possessed and sick people to Jesus. The whole city had gathered at the door, says Mark. He laid His hands on every one of them. He cast out the evil spirits with His Word. He turned no one away.
9. The Word of God created the universe (Genesis 1; Hebrews 11:3; Psalms 33:6-9), forgave sins (Matthew 9:2), drove out evil spirits and healed the sick (our text), is the power of God unto salvation (Romans 1:16), and gives the church on earth the power to forgive sins (John 20:21-23). It gives baptism its power (Ephesians 5:26). Also the Lord's Supper (Matthew 26:28).
10. Jesus actually bore our sins (John 1:29) but did so as our Substitute. He was not a sinner. God made Him to be sin in our stead (II Corinthians 5:19) so that we might be righteous. Likewise, Jesus was not actually sick but He took our weaknesses and carried our diseases. He did this as our Substitute. We cannot understand any of this but it is true. We believe it for our salvation. There is no record of Jesus being ill.
11. From this account it is quite clear that people, at Jesus' time, could distinguish the demon-possessed from those who were ill.
12. Luke 4:41 says the demons cried out: "You are the Son of God!" But Jesus would not allow them to speak. There is no truth in Satan. John 8:44. He twists the truth to his own advantage. Therefore, Jesus would not accept the demons' testimony. The devils also believe but tremble. James 2:19. Their faith does not comfort but condemns them.

Sermon Outline for Matthew 8:14-17, Epiphany III

Theme: JESUS, OUR SUBSTITUTE

Introduction: When man fell into sin he earned the wages of sin: death, pain, grief, toil and sickness. Read Genesis 3:16-19; Romans 6:23; Romans 9:18-22; Romans 5:12-14, 18-19. In order to save all men, Jesus was made sin, II Corinthians 5:21. He died for all, II Corinthians 5:15. He was cursed in our stead, Galatians 3:13. And our text says that He took our weaknesses and diseases on Himself. He cares also for our bodies. He will raise us from the dead, John 6:39, 40, 44, 54. Because of sin, all people are cursed in soul and body. Jesus, our Substitute, became a man and suffered, died and rose in our stead. Our text is taken from Isaiah 53 which is quoted or alluded to forty-one times in the New Testament.

I. HE TOOK OUR SINS ON HIMSELF.

Read Isaiah 53:4-6 from which verse 17 in our text is taken. It mentions "we-our-us" ten times! The last verse reads: "The Lord has laid on Him the iniquity of us all." How many? ALL. The Baptist said: "Behold the Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world." John 1:29. II Corinthians 5:21: "God made Him, Who knew no sin, sin in our stead so that we might be made righteous in Him." Psalm 40 is Messianic (Hebrews 10:5-9). In verse 12 the Messiah says: "My iniquities have overtaken me, so that I am not able to look up; they are more than the hairs of my head; therefore my heart fails me." Luther rightly insisted that here Jesus as our Substitute speaks of Himself as a sinner. (Luther's Works, Volume 26, p. 279). Christ was made a curse in our stead to free us from the curse of sin, Galatians 3:13.

II. HE TOOK DEATH UPON HIMSELF.

Read Isaiah 53:7-9. These verses speak of the trial, the crucifixion and the death of Jesus. He died for all, II Corinthians 5:15. God did not will my death. He takes no pleasure in death. Ezekiel 33:11. I earned my death. Romans 6:23. God willed only one death, the death of His Son. Luke 18:31-34.

III. HE TOOK ALL GRIEF UPON HIMSELF

Isaiah 53 says: "He is despised and rejected by men. . . . a Man of sorrows and acquainted with grief. . . . Surely He has borne our griefs and carried our sorrows. . . . It pleased the Lord to bruise Him. He has put Him to grief." That's why He says at Matthew 11:28: "Come to Me, all you who labor and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest." That's why Psalm 55:22 says: "Cast your burden on the Lord, and He shall sustain you." That's why I Peter 5:7 says "Cast all your care upon Him for He careth for you."

IV. HE TOOK ALL SICKNESS UPON HIMSELF

Why did Jesus care for Peter's mother-in-law? Why did He drive out evil spirits with His Word? Why did He heal the sick who were brought to Him? Because it was prophesied at Isaiah 53:4: "He took our weaknesses and bore our diseases." Jesus did not heal ALL the sick people of His day. But He never turned anyone away. When a sick or possessed person was brought to Him, He healed that person.

Conclusion: But aren't many Christians still ill? Don't Christians get cancer and even AIDS? Yes. Then, is not our text untrue? NYET. Women still suffer pains at childbirth. The ground still brings forth thorns and thistles. Mankind toils and sweats. Genesis 3. The present age brings suffering. All creation groans. Romans 8:18-22. The Lord chastens those whom He loves. Hebrews 12:6. But my Substitute will deliver me from every evil work and preserve me for His heavenly kingdom. II Timothy 4:18. The faithful Lord will strengthen you and protect you from all evil. II Thessalonians 3:5. Paul could bear the thorn in his flesh because God's grace was sufficient for him. II Corinthians 12:7-9. Jesus IS mankind's Substitute. He proved it by becoming a man, suffering, dying, rising from the dead, and by going about healing the sick and the possessed.

Sermon Notes on Mt. 8:1-13, Epiphany III

1. Vss. 2-4 are paralleled at Mk. 1:40-45 and Lk. 5:12-16. Vss. 5-13 are paralleled only at Lk. 7:1-10. Some think that Jn. 4:46-54 also parallels Mt. 8:5-13, but that is not true. The nobleman in Jn. 4 was a Jew. The centurion in Mt. 8 and Lk. 7 was a Gentile Roman.
2. It is plainly implied that the leper of vss. 2-4 and the centurion of vss. 5-13 were already believers before they approached Jesus. How they became Christians we are not told nor need we know.
3. In both Mt. and Lk. these two accounts follow immediately after the ^{Mount} so-called Sermon on the Mt. in Galilee.
4. Both leprosy and paralysis, at that time, were considered incurable diseases. These healings show us Jesus' power when human help fails.
5. In the accounts of Mt. and Lk. some of the details in the account of the centurion differ somewhat. But the two accounts do not contradict each other. They supplement and verify each other. Mt. says nothing about the two deputations (Lk. 7:3 and 6) but puts the message of both into the mouth of the centurion himself who comes in person. But what a man does through agents he may be said to do himself.
6. For a full discussion on leprosy see Fahling pp. 223-226 or Ylvisaker p. 295 or any good Bible Dictionary. If caught in the early stages leprosy seems to have been curable, otherwise why have a priest examine a cured case? In the OT it first appears as a sign given by God to Moses (Ex. 6:4). Shortly thereafter Miriam, his sister, was stricken with leprosy. In the Law of Moses rules for its recognition, quarantine and ceremonial cleansing are given. (Lev. 13 and 14). Only priests could declare a victim healed. Their word was testimony to the people that the victim was cured. The cured victim had to offer sacrifices of thanksgiving for obvious reasons. Leprosy, a skin disease, was as frightening then as AIDS, a sexually transmitted disease, is today. The only accounts of cured leprosy in the Bible are those of Naaman (II Kings 5:14) by Elijah and the several miracles of Jesus in the Gospels. Mt. 8:17 quotes Is. 53:4 on Jesus bearing our diseases and taking our sicknesses. Mt. 11:5 tells us that cleansing lepers was proof that Jesus was the Messiah. Lepers were excluded from the church and had to live in colonies away from communities (II Kings 7:3; Lk. 17:12).
7. Ylvisaker quotes Sommer: "In the OT Church, the pure became unclean through contact with the unclean. Christ, the Founder of the NT Church, makes the impure pure through His touch." Jesus never disobeyed the Bible; He sent this man to the priests. He told him not to tell anyone because Jesus did not want the people to get the impression that He was only a Healer of the body, not of the soul.
8. The prayers of both the leper and the centurion were answered quickly. Even Christians are sometimes amazed at how quickly God answers prayer. See Acts 12:13-16 and Is. 65:24.
9. Like John the Baptist (Lk. 3:16) and Jesus (Php. 2:8) this leper and this centurion were humble. They claimed no worthiness of their own. True humility makes faith shine like a star.
10. The centurion is saying in vs. 9: "If I, a lower officer, issue words which are obeyed, how much more will not the Word of the God-man be obeyed." That is both humility and faith.
11. Note that "kingdom" is used twice in vss. 11 and 12. In 11 it means everlasting life and in 12 it means the Jews who should have known better.
12. Jesus' amazement in vs. 10 shows both His humanity and divinity. As a human being he is surprised. As true God He sees the true faith in this man's heart. A good Bible scholar always watches for these signs of humanity and divinity in the Gospel accounts of Jesus.
13. In the Gospels the greatest examples of faith are found in this centurion, vs. 10, and the Canaanite woman, Mt. 15:28. Both were Gentiles. That does not rule out St. Paul who came later. ^{OMIT}
14. The elect of God, vs. 11, from all parts of the earth will be found in heaven with Abraham, Isaac and Jacob. We look forward to that.

Sermon Outline on Mt. 8:1-13, Epiphany III

Theme: TWO GREAT MODELS OF FAITH IN JESUS

Introduction: Our text presents two worshippers, one a Jew, one a Gentile; one with a personal malady, one with a sick servant; both call Him Lord; one appeals to His Will, one to His Word; both presented cases of illness which were incurable. We do not know how they became believers but they were believers. Both can teach us much about faith.

I-HOW THEY DIFFERED

The Kingdom of God is spread all over the world. There are many different kinds of people, needs and circumstances. But Jesus wants to be regarded as Lord of all.

A-They were of different nationalities. The fact that Jesus told the leper to go to a priest tells us that he was a Jew. The rules about going to a priest are found in Lev. 13 and 14. This was for Jews. Centurions were always Romans. They were stationed in Palestine to keep order. The Jews at that time were under the Romans.

B-They had different problems. The Jew was stricken with leprosy, a deadly disease. The centurion had a servant who was very ill with paralysis. This was painful for the centurion because the servant was valuable.

C-The leper approached Jesus with the words: "If it is your will." He was like Jesus in the Garden of Gethsemane. The centurion came to Jesus with confidence in the Word of Jesus. He was like Jesus at the time of Jesus' temptation when He constantly quoted the Word of God to the devil.

II-HOW THEY WERE ALIKE

We mentioned above that there are differences among Christians around the world. But there are also things which all have in common. We see that in our text too.

A-They were not afraid to approach Jesus. Notice that both of them called Him "Lord." This surely means that they knew of Him as the God-man. They did not yet know all about Him as we do in the catechism but they had faith.

B-They both felt their unworthiness. Their attitude reminds us of John the Baptist, Lk. 3:16, or of Jesus, Php. 2:8. Jesus did not appeal to His prerogatives as true God while on earth. The leper said: "If it is your will." In earthly physical things this is the way to pray. He also said "You are able." That implies his own inability. He made no claim to restore himself. The centurion is even more remarkable. In the Lukan account his friends call him worthy because of what he did. But the centurion says: "I'm not worthy, not even for You to come to my house." The centurion's line of thought is remarkable: "If I, a lesser authority, can cause immediate action by my word, how much more can You do so!"

C-They evidently already had forgiveness of sins. Both of these men came to Jesus with believing hearts. They were not asking for the forgiveness of sins but rather for a temporal, physical gift. The Lord might have said: "It is not my will" and they would have been satisfied in spite of this. The Lord commended the faith of the Gentile. He did this once before when He commended the Cananite woman, Mt. 15:28. His faith was great because he had the proper attitude of his own unworthiness and yet firm confidence that Jesus' Word was allpowerful.

Conclusion: Jesus promises in vs. 11 that many shall come from all parts of the earth, from all cultures and lands and join Abraham, Isaac and Jacob in the Kingdom of Heaven but that the unbelievers will suffer forever. Lord, help us to be like this leper and this centurion!