



Faith into the Future

Jesus as the Servant
of God in the Gospel
of Matthew

Session 4
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Bridge From Discourse to Narrative (7:21-29)

- 7:21-23
a stark warning on the need to grasp the connection between this word and the “will of God”.
- 7:24-27
A parable on hearing the word and acting on it.
- 7:28-29
the response of the crowds who are astounded / amazed at his teaching – speaking as one with authority, not like their scribes.



The Kingdom Deeds of Jesus (Matt 8-9)

- **Nine miracle stories found in this section**
- **Grouped in 3x 3**
- **Followed by sayings relating to discipleship**



**“He took our infirmities and
bore our diseases”**

(Mt 8:17/Is 53)

8:1-17

- Cleansing of a leper
Healing of Centurion’s Servant
Cure of Peter’s Mother-in-law
(The demands of discipleship 8:18-22)

8:23-9:8

- Calming of Storm at Sea
Healing of the Gadarene
Demoniacs
Healing of a Paralytic
(The call of Matthew (9:9-17))

9:18-32

- Healing of child and woman
Healing of the Blind
Cure of a Mute person
(Need for labourers! 9:35-37)



**Kingdom Miracles:
Not Proofs of Power but
Evidence of God's Zedeqah**

- Leper – (8:1-4)
Excluded by virtue of his medical condition and also by a reading of the Torah (Lev 13:45).

Jesus re- reads Torah in the light of God's zedeqah and welcomes the excluded one into the community of the faithful. "I want to!"

- Centurion – (8:13)
A rabbinic reading of Torah requires that contact with Gentiles be avoided.

Jesus is unconcerned with such restrictions because he is rooted in a grasp of God's righteousness extending to all.

Also "amazed" at the faith of the man. This openness to Gentiles as people of authentic faith is important for Matthew's community.



The Power of God over Nature and the Gentile World

(8:23 – 9:1)

The Calming of the Storm

They are in the boat heading into pagan territory when the storm (seismos!) arises. In contrast to the excluded leper and the foreign centurion the disciples display a lack of faith.

The Gadarene Demoniacs

Power of evil in foreign places evident in the ferocity of the possession. Jewish tradition was that demons were free to possess until the time of judgment – hence their question!

The proclamation of the Kingdom is the time of God's visitation and even in this unbelieving realm Jesus has the power.

Forgiveness, Healing and Calling (9:2-13)



First time in Matthew that Jesus forgives as part of his ministry, though it has been central to his teaching (6:14)

The paralytic is presumed to be a sinner since all people are but no doubt behind this lies a perception of link between sin and suffering. (Lev 26:14-16)
Jesus has come to save his people from their sins (1:21)

His authority to do so is questioned – only God forgives!
("God with us" in the ministry of the Son of Man)

The interior healing is accompanied by an exterior one.

The Call of Matthew 9:9-13

- Matthew (= Levi in Mark and Luke)
- Call similar to that of Peter, James and John (4:18-22)
- A tax collector: (someone to be shunned according to Pharisees) yet here someone invited and central to Jesus' mission (10:1-4)
- Jesus again portrayed as re-interpreter of Torah using prophetic texts to rediscover what lies at the heart of Torah:

"Come, let us return to the LORD; for it is he who has torn, and he will heal us; he has struck down, and he will bind us up.

After two days he will revive us; on the third day he will raise us up, that we may live before him. Let us know, let us press on to know the LORD; his appearing is as sure as the dawn; he will come to us like the showers, like the spring rains that water the earth.

"What shall I do with you, O Ephraim? What shall I do with you, O Judah? Your love is like a morning cloud, like the dew that goes away early. Therefore I have hewn them by the prophets, I have killed them by the words of my mouth, and my judgment goes forth as the light.

For I desire steadfast love and not sacrifice, the knowledge of God rather than burnt offerings. (Hos. 6:1-6)

Faith and Deeds of Power (8:1-9:38)

- Narrative is attentive to faith and the lack of it in those who are in the story.
- The Leper
- The Centurion
- The Disciples and the Gentile crowds
- The Friends of the Paralytic
- Matthew
- The Woman with the haemorrhage
- The Blind men
- The Pharisees
- **Faith in The Bible: A relationship of trust in God. A willingness to trust that God is at work in, and being revealed through, the person of Jesus.**
- **This narrative begins with faith (8:1-4) and ends with unbelief (9:34). Miracles are not a guarantee of faith.**
- **What is Matthew saying to his readers then and now about faith and what God wants?**



**How Did
Caravaggio
Read
Matthew
9:9?**