

THE GOSPEL OF MATTHEW; YOUR KINGDOM COME...ON EARTH

Week 5 – Who is This Jesus?

February 22, 2022

THE ONE WHO CALLS US TO FOLLOW HIM

What did Jesus teach about discipleship in Matt. 8? We answer that question from Jesus' exchange with two individuals....

Matt. 8:18-22 - *And when Jesus saw great multitudes about Him, He gave a command to depart to the other side. ¹⁹ Then a certain scribe came and said to Him, 'Teacher, I will follow You wherever You go.' ²⁰ And Jesus said to him, 'Foxes have holes and birds of the air have nests, but the Son of Man has nowhere to lay His head.' ²¹ Then another of His disciples said to Him, 'Lord, let me first go and bury my father.' ²² But Jesus said to him, 'Follow Me, and let the dead bury their own dead.'* We know that Jesus said that His yoke was easy and His burden was light (Matt. 11:30). Why are we now reading of rather stringent expectations of those wishing to follow Jesus as a disciple?

Matt. 8:18 - *And when Jesus saw great multitudes about Him, He gave a command to depart to the other side.* Where's the "other side"? Jesus and His disciples were departing from the northwest side of the Sea of Galilee to the east side of the Sea of Galilee...moving south – which was in the Decapolis area. (See separate map) Jesus desired to travel to the Decapolis area. I'm suggesting that Jesus departed *to the other side* for a divine appointment.

Matt. 8:19 - *Then* (after Jesus had commanded the disciples to depart to the other side of the Sea of Galilee) *a certain scribe* (one learned in the law, a teacher, an interpreter) *came* (approached Jesus) *and said to Him, 'Teacher, I will follow You wherever You go.'* Is this scribe in the process of making a break from his fellow scribes? It seems as if this scribe intercepted Jesus in the midst of His departure. Why? Impulsive? Excited? The text doesn't tell us.

CONSIDER: The scribe calls Jesus "Teacher." The Greek word means one who is qualified to teach! A scribe would know what discipleship meant re: following a Rabbi. Jewish idiom: "Covered in the dust of the Rabbi." Rabbis' disciples, talmadim, would follow their Rabbis so closely, following every mannerism of the Rabbi. The disciples would walk so closely behind their Rabbi that they would be covered by the dust that the Rabbi was kicking up as he walked.

Had this scribe considered the cost of following Jesus? Do we, as believers, consider the cost of following Jesus?

Matt. 8:20 - *And Jesus said to him, 'Foxes have holes and birds of the air have nests, but the Son of Man has nowhere to lay His head.'* Jesus didn't paint a glamorous picture. Was Jesus conveying that He and His disciples would constantly be on the move? A Jesus follower must be dependent upon God and live a life of faith.

WHY did Jesus specifically call Himself the "Son of Man"?

Dan. 7:13-14 - *I was watching in the night visions, and behold, One like the Son of Man, coming with the clouds of heaven! He came to the Ancient of Days, and they brought Him near before Him. ¹⁴ Then to Him was given dominion and glory and a kingdom, that all peoples, nations, and languages should serve Him. His dominion is an*

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everlasting dominion, which shall not pass away, and His kingdom the one which shall not be destroyed. The scribe knew the scroll of Daniel! The “Son of Man” is GOD. How can God have nowhere to lay His head? How would this be intriguing to the scribe?

NOTE: Jesus did not tell the man, “No, you cannot follow Me.” Jesus told the scribe the truth. How did the scribe view faith? Jesus knew!

How are we as believers to live this life of faith?

I Peter 1:1-8 - *Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who according to His abundant mercy has begotten us again to a living hope through the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead, ⁴ to an inheritance incorruptible and undefiled and that does not fade away, reserved in heaven for you, ⁵ who are kept by the power of God through faith for salvation ready to be revealed in the last time. ⁶ In this you greatly rejoice, though now for a little while, if need be, you have been grieved by various trials, ⁷ that the genuineness of your faith, being much more precious than gold that perishes, though it is tested by fire, may be found to praise, honor, and glory at the revelation of Jesus Christ, ⁸ whom having not seen you love. Though now you do not see Him, yet believing, you rejoice with joy inexpressible and full of glory, The power of God moves us forward as He causes us to be still and know that He is God!*

Matt. 8:21-22 - *Then another of His disciples said to Him, ‘Lord, let me first go and bury my father.’ ²² But Jesus said to him, ‘Follow Me, and let the dead bury their own dead.’* This man was *another of His disciples*? Are we getting a glimpse of a true disciple vs. one who is curious...having joined the great multitudes to witness the healings?

We are going to see that disciples in Jesus’ day were either the curious (having been attracted to Jesus out of curiosity), or disciples could be the convinced (those who came to faith in Jesus [John 2:11]). Jesus is requiring that the convinced would make a commitment. These would be the committed.

Lord, let me first go and bury my father – yes, I’ll follow You Jesus, but not just yet. This man essentially told Jesus, “Let me wait until I receive my inheritance”! We can assume that what the man requested was permission to stay with his father until the day he died and then his father would be properly buried.

Jesus’ response, *Follow Me*, was an invitation to a continuous relationship with Jesus. This man displayed hesitancy and reluctance.

But Jesus said to him, ‘Follow Me, and let the dead bury their own dead.’ Jesus told the man to follow Him now! The spiritually dead can bury the physically dead. The spiritually dead are not followers of Jesus the Messiah.

THE ONE WHO CALMS THE FIERCEST STORMS

Matt. 8:23 - *Now when He got into a boat, His disciples followed Him.*

Mark 4:38 - *He was in the stern, asleep on a pillow.*

Luke 8:23 - *as they sailed He fell asleep*

This is the only time the gospel record speaks about the sleep of Jesus. Jesus rested in the boat on the beautiful Sea of Galilee. Set in the hills of northern Israel, the Sea of Galilee is nearly 700 feet below sea level and, in places, the sea plunges to depths of 200 feet. From May to October, strong winds often suddenly sweep from the heights of Mount Hermon (over 9,000 ft.) through the narrow surrounding gorges into the Jordan

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Valley and drop into the Sea of Galilee causing cyclonic storms which carry violent winds, torrential rain, high waves and, in some cases, destructive storm surges.... And so we read...

Matt. 8:24-25 - *And suddenly a great tempest arose on the sea, so that the boat was covered with the waves. But He was asleep. ²⁵ Then His disciples came to Him and awoke Him, saying, 'Lord, save us! We are perishing!'* The disciples had not yet come to understand that Jesus is the Lord over nature. Jesus, when awakened by the disciples...

Matt. 8:26 - *said to them, 'Why are you fearful, O you of little faith?'* How would we react if Jesus spoke those words to us? Shouldn't we desire to be rebuked by God if we are not pleasing Him? Jesus called the disciples to faith in His person and in His word.

Amid this storm, Jesus demonstrated the same authority that was His at creation. As the boat was wildly tossed about, Jesus...*arose and rebuked the winds and the sea, and there was a great calm.* CONSIDER: always after a storm of this magnitude, the swell remains for a time after the wind has died down. What are we reading in this passage? ...*there was a great calm.*

Matt. 8:27 - *So the men marveled, saying, 'Who can this be (what sort of man is this), that even the winds and the sea obey Him?'* What convincing proof of Jesus' deity!

THE ONE WHO CONFRONTS THE ENEMY

Jesus had told the disciples, *Let us go over to the other side* (Mark 4:35). This was Jesus' will! NO force could prevent the accomplishment of Jesus' will!

NOTE: believers cannot be possessed by demons.

I John 4:4 - *You are of God, little children, and have overcome them (false teachers), because He who is in you is greater than he who is in the world.*

Col. 1:27 - ...*Christ in you the hope of glory.*

John 17:21-23 - *I do not pray for these alone, but also for those who will believe in Me through their word; ²¹ that they all may be one, as You, Father, are in Me, and I in You; that they also may be one in Us, that the world may believe that You sent Me. ²² And*

the glory which You gave Me I have given them, that they may be one just as We are one: ²³ I in them, and You in Me; that they may be made perfect in one, and that the world may know that You have sent Me, and have loved them as You have loved Me.

I Cor. 6:19 - *Or do you not know that your body is the temple (the dwelling place) of the Holy Spirit who is in you.*

Matt. 8:28 - *When He had come to the other side, to the country of the Gergesenes (also known as the Gadarenes).... Jesus and His disciples had come to one of the cities of the Decapolis - pagan cities to the east of the Sea of Galilee and east of the Jordan River (See map). If Jews lived in this area, they were heavily influenced by Greek Philosophy. This was a divine appointment!*

Isa. 49:6 - *It is too small a thing that You should be My Servant to raise up the tribes of Jacob, and to restore the preserved ones of Israel; I will also give You as a light to the Gentiles, that You should be My salvation to the ends of the earth.'*

Who is this Jesus? He is the Messiah for the world! And, Jesus confronted the darkness of the pagan world in choosing to visit its people. The mostly Gentile

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population probably accounted for the presence of a large herd of swine. Within the Mosaic Law, pigs were unclean.

Jesus had just stilled the violent storm on the Sea of Galilee, which the disciples probably believed was fueled by the powers of evil. To the Jews, the powers of evil were connected to the depths of the sea considered the "abyss" (Luke 8:31). The abyss was the underworld, either the abode of the dead (sheol [OT]; hades [NT]) or eventually the realm of the rebellious spirits (Hell). The abyss was often seen as a prison for demons who disobeyed – those in Noah's day (II Pet. 2:4; Jude v. 6).

The devil was unable to prevent Jesus from crossing the sea to enter the pagan territory, so his demonic power confronted Jesus when He came ashore.

Matt. 8:28-29 - (Mark 5:1-20; Luke 8:26-39) - *When He had come to the other side, to the country of the Gergesenes, there met Him two demon-possessed men, coming out of the tombs, exceedingly fierce, so that no one could pass that way. ²⁹ And suddenly they cried out, saying, 'What have we to do with You, Jesus, You Son of God? Have You come here to torment us before the time?'* Consider: what we are reading is the most exaggerated form of raging madness which has been attributed to demoniacal possession. The hosts controlled by demons were monstrously dangerous. They were driven to these holes along the rocky hillsides which were used as burial chambers.

These men were beyond the possibility of control. They had supernatural strength. In Mark 5:4 and in Luke 8:29, the demoniac pulled apart his shackles and chains.

They recognized Jesus as the Son of God and expressed fear that He had come to torment them before their time. The demons not only recognized the deity of Jesus but also knew there was a divinely appointed time for their judgment and Jesus would be their Judge. The demons knew the truth. They did NOT love the truth.

Mark 5:8-20 – (READ)

Jesus gave the delivered man a graphic, visible, and powerful lesson on the **immensity of the evil** from which he had been delivered! As we read this, do we realize the extent of brutality and butchery there will be in the tribulation?

The demons were sent into the abyss where they had implored Jesus not to send them!

WHO IS THIS JESUS?

Matt. 8:18 - Jesus departed from the northwest part of the Sea of Galilee for the other side – to rescue/deliver one man from an eternity apart from God! Who is this Jesus? He is the Redeemer, the Savior of the world! We see such a glorious transformation in the life of this one man who had been possessed by 6,000 demons and was delivered!

And the people who witnessed the expulsion of 6,000 demons from the man... who saw the delivered man sitting – no longer violently enraged...now clothed and in his right mind...these people were afraid?! They pleaded with Jesus to depart! Why? Had they been frightened by Jesus' display of supernatural power?

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Mark 5:18- *And when He got into the boat, he who had been demon-possessed begged Him that he might be with Him.* Can you hear this redeemed man's love for the One Who loved him?

Mark 5:19-20 - *However, Jesus did not permit him, but said to him 'Go home to your friends, and tell them what great things the Lord has done for you, and how He has had compassion on you.'*²⁰ *And he departed and began to proclaim in Decapolis all that Jesus had done for him; and all marveled...at this Jesus!*

QUESTIONS

Who is this Jesus?

How has God impacted you through what He has revealed to us in these passages?

Have these passages provoked you to change the way you follow Jesus? What would that look like?

Do you understand that believers cannot be demon possessed?

Has God placed people in your life w/ whom you want to share these accounts?

SUGGESTED HOMEWORK

Reread Week 5's handout with the Bible references.

Jot down your observations and questions.

Add your current observations, questions, and answers to your journal.

Share with at least one person what you have gleaned from Matthew 8:18-29 and Mark 5:8-20.

Read Week 6 when you receive it.

ISRAEL AT THE TIME OF JESUS

1ST CENTURY AD

