



METRO NEW YORK WORLD MINISTRY
ADULT SABBATH SCHOOL CONTRIBUTING NOTES
For the week of Apr 16 – Apr 22, 2016
Lesson #4: **The Book of Matthew**

Faith and Healing

Sabbath Afternoon

Memory Text: “For whether is easier, to say, Thy sins be forgiven thee; or to say, Arise and walk?” Matthew 9:5

The way Jesus formed the question, there is only one answer, “It is easier to say ‘Thy sins be forgiven thee.’”

Why would it be **easier**? To simply say the words, requires no outward test. But to say, “Rise take up thy bed and walk,” something visible must take place—a miracle would need to take place.

What was the **greater** thing to say, “Thy sins be forgiven thee.” We may have some thorn in the flesh, like Paul, but we can all be forgiven of our sins and receive a new heart and a renewed mind. What every person needs is that greater healing of the soul. We need to be born-again, even if we are not healed of our physical malady.

In the case of the paralytic, the healing of his body and the forgiveness of his sins could only be done by God. In the healing of his body we see divine power. In the forgiveness of his sins we see divine authority.

By healing the body of the paralytic, Jesus showed that He had the divine authority to forgive sins.

Sunday’s Lesson

Topic: Touching the Untouchable

Scriptures: Matthew 8:1-4

The same mountain that Jesus went up to preach, He came down to heal. Great multitudes followed Him. And behold a leper comes to Jesus and worships Him, and prayerfully requests to be healed.

In bowing down to Jesus, the leper not only shows respect, but faith in Jesus. His words also attest to his faith in Jesus, saying, “Lord, if thou wilt, thou canst make me clean.”

As explained in the quarterly, the word “can” comes from the Greek word *dunamai*, which can be translated as dynamite or full of power. The leper believed that Jesus was full of power to heal him.



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The leper not only showed respect to Jesus in bowing, and believed in His dynamite power to heal, but he expressed his faith that Jesus had the right to heal. He believed that Jesus had the right to grant or refuse to heal him. This is not a lack of faith, but just the opposite.

Remember the three Hebrew worthies who testified of their faith in God, and said, “O Nebuchadnezzar, we *are* not careful to answer thee in this matter. If it be *so*, our God whom we serve is able to deliver us from the burning fiery furnace, and he will deliver *us* out of thine hand, O king. But if not, be it known unto thee, O king, that we will not serve thy gods, nor worship the golden image which thou hast set up.” Daniel 3:16-18. The example of these three Hebrews worthies expressed the complete dependency and trust in God. When the leper said, “if thou wilt,” he was not expressing doubt, but respect to the authority of Jesus. Does the leper want to be healed? Certainly. But he places the decision in the hands of Jesus.

Now the law had forbidden the touching of lepers. See Leviticus 5:3. In fact, lepers were quarantined from the rest of society. See Leviticus 13:45, 46. Therefore, it was no small matter that Jesus touched the leper.

Did Jesus undermine the law of Moses? Absolutely not! He did just the opposite. He healed him.

In touching the leper, Jesus demonstrated compassion. Throughout His ministry Jesus showed compassion, whether people had leprosy or not. See Matthew 9:36

Matthew wrote that Jesus “took our infirmities, and bare our sicknesses.” Matthew 8:17. This is a quote from Isaiah 53:4

Peter explains why Jesus took upon our infirmities, saying “Who His own self bare our sins in His own body on the tree, that we, being dead to sins, should live unto righteousness; by whose stripes ye were healed.” 1 Peter 2:24

This type of the cleansing of the leper is to teach us God’s desire to cleanse us from sin. As Sister White wrote:

“The work of Christ in cleansing the leper from his terrible disease is an illustration of His work in cleansing the soul from sin. The man who came to Jesus was “full of leprosy.” Its deadly poison permeated his whole body. The disciples sought to prevent their Master from touching him; for he who touched a leper became himself unclean. But in laying His hand upon the leper, Jesus received no defilement. His touch imparted life-giving power. The leprosy was cleansed. Thus it is with the leprosy of sin,—deep-rooted, deadly, and impossible to be cleansed by human power. “The whole head is sick, and the whole heart faint. From the sole of the foot even unto the head there is no soundness in it; but wounds, and bruises, and putrefying sores.” [Isaiah 1:5, 6](#). But Jesus, coming to dwell in humanity, receives no pollution. His presence has healing virtue for the sinner. Whoever will fall at His feet, saying in faith, “Lord, if Thou wilt, Thou canst make me clean,” shall hear the answer, “I will; be thou made clean.” [Matthew 8:2, 3](#), R. V.



“In some instances of healing, Jesus did not at once grant the blessing sought. But in the case of leprosy, no sooner was the appeal made than it was granted. When we pray for earthly blessings, the answer to our prayer may be delayed, or God may give us something other than we ask, but not so when we ask for deliverance from sin. It is His will to cleanse us from sin, to make us His children, and to enable us to live a holy life. Christ “gave Himself for our sins, that He might deliver us from this present evil world, according to the will of God and our Father.” [Galatians 1:4](#). And “this is the confidence that we have in Him, that, if we ask anything according to His will, He heareth us: and if we know that He hear us, whatsoever we ask, we know that we have the petitions that we desired of Him.” [1 John 5:14, 15](#). “If we confess our sins, He is faithful and just to forgive us our sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness.” [1 John 1:9](#). *Desire of Ages* 266

Monday’s Lesson

Title: The Roman and the Messiah

Scriptures: Matthew 8:5-13

The healing of the centurion’s servant was important to the mission of the early church. They needed the example of Jesus as one who reached out to the Gentiles.

Even the genealogy of Jesus expressed hope to the Gentile world. In the family history of Jesus, we find several individuals who came from other nations. Matthew 1:3, 5, 6. We have the account of the magi from foreign lands that came to welcome the new born king. Matthew 2:1, 2, 11. John the Baptist declared that God able to make children of Abraham from the stones, showing that ancestry is not a ticket to heaven. Matthew 3:9. And then was declared by Isaiah that prophet that the people would see a great light in “the land of Zebulun, and the land of Naphtali, by the way of the sea, beyond Jordan, Galilee of the **Gentiles**.” Matthew 4:15

Before we come to the story of the centurion, we already have the Gentile nations welcomed into the salvation narrative. In fact, while Matthew was inspired to write his gospels, thousands of Gentiles had already become part of the body of Christ.

To become a centurion, a man would need to serve for a number of years within the Roman legions, perhaps even twenty years. They were expected to participate in pagan religious practices and oaths. So the centurion is well aware of oaths. Therefore he could say to Jesus, “I am a man under authority, having soldiers under me: and I say to this man, Go, and he goeth; and to another, Come, and he cometh; and to my servant, Do this, and he doeth it.”

While many Jews would have hated the Romans, Jesus loved this centurion. After all, Jesus had just taught the multitudes to love their enemies. Matthew 5:44



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Now it was evident that the Holy Spirit was working upon the heart of the centurion. And it was crystal clear to the centurion that there were limits to the power of Rome. There was no power within the Roman empire to heal his servant. So he turns to the only One who could heal his servant sick of the palsy—he turned to Jesus.

By expressing his need, the centurion was in effect asking for help. Here is an important spiritual lesson. Those who feel no need, do not ask for help. If we do not sense our spiritual need for divine help, we will fall into the condition of Laodicea. Revelation 3:17, 18

Jesus makes a very important statement to break down a social barrier and to help the centurion in expressing his faith even more. Jesus said, “I will come and heal him.” In other words, Jesus was saying, “Shall I come to your house and heal him?”

In first century Palestine, it would be rare to find a Jew in the home of a Gentile, and vice versa. Jews saw Gentiles as unclean people. So when Jesus said, “I will come and heal him,” He was suggesting that He should come into the home of the centurion, a Gentile.

The centurion demonstrates his spiritual growth by saying, “I am not worthy that thou shouldst come under my roof: but speak the word only, and my servant shall be healed.” While many religious leaders saw Jesus as a threat and plotted to kill Him, the centurion saw Jesus as his only hope. In acknowledging his unworthiness, he was also acknowledging the authority of Jesus Christ.

He perceived the greatness of Jesus by saying, “but speak the word only, and my servant shall be healed.” He knew that all the legions of Rome could not help his servant, yet he recognized that this would be something very easy for Jesus. All He would have to do is “speak the word only.”

Do we have as much faith in the Word of God as did the centurion? Is anything too difficult for God?

Jesus acknowledges the faith of the centurion. Nay, more, Jesus “marveled, and said to them that followed, “Verily I say unto you, I have not found so great faith, no, not in Israel.”

In Mark 6:6, Jesus also marveled. He came to His own country, His own hometown, and “marveled because of their unbelief.” So Jesus marvels at the faith of the centurion, the Gentile, and marvels at the unbelief of His own hometown Jewish countrymen. Sad to say, often times it is those with the greatest amount of light who appreciate it the least, and those who have had less light who appreciate every ray of truth.

Could it be that our churches are diminishing because we keep preaching to the choir instead of to those who have never heard? While we need to keep investing in our own, we must not neglect those who have never heard.



This beautiful account with the centurion, is a prelude to the great mission to the Gentile world in the first century and beyond.

This historical account highlights the great need of an experiential faith. The centurion had faith in Jesus. He had faith in the words of Jesus. We can see that salvation is not based on descent, but upon faith.

Tuesday's Lesson

Title: Demons and Pigs

Scriptures: Matthew 8:25-34

While Jesus had healed the sick, it wasn't until He calmed the stormy sea that His disciples saw that He had command over the forces of nature as well. What a scene that must have been; they feared that they would die in the storm, but then saw Jesus calm the sea.

When they would arrive to the other side in the "country of the Gergesenes," they would witness another storm and another calm.

In Matthew 8:28-34, we have the historical account of Jesus casting devils from two men. Not only could He heal the centurion's servant and calm the raging sea, but He has power over every principality and power in dark places. He is the Son of God who became the Son of man.

These demon-possessed men, lived among the tombs. When we think of tombs we think of death. Jesus would in His ministry demonstrate that He had power over death and the grave as well. He would do so in the raising of Lazarus and His own resurrection.

These demon-possessed men were "exceeding fierce," meaning that they were completely ungovernable. They were frightening, whereby no one would pass by them. This is an example of the malice Satan has toward the human family. If a man is fully possessed by demons and seeks to harm his fellow man, it only shows the hatred Satan has for the human race. In converse, Jesus came to die for the human race, which demonstrates His everlasting love for us.

When the demons addressed Jesus as "Jesus, thou Son of God," they acknowledged His divinity. They know that Jesus is God's Son. But this does not make them saints. They acknowledge His divinity, but they do not love Him. Rather, they hate Him. Their knowledge of His divinity will not save them. It will not save us, unless we are born-again.

Knowing that they will be judged, they cry out, "Art thou come hither to torment us before the time?"



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In other words, the demons were saying, “Are you going to cut our work short? Are you going to torment us before the judgment? Are you going to tie our hands from influencing the human family?”

The demons are familiar with the judgment to come. They know there will be a day of reckoning. Indeed, there will come the time when devils will be judged, sentenced, and destroyed. For the moment, that time was not yet. But as Peter wrote, “For if God spared not the angels that sinned, but cast them down to hell, and delivered them into chains of darkness, to be reserved unto judgment; and spared not the old world, but saved Noah the eighth person; a preacher of righteousness, bringing in the flood upon the world of the ungodly; and turning the cities of Sodom and Gomorrah into ashes,” what sort of people should we be?

Indeed, the demons know the judgment is coming. They believe and tremble, as James wrote, “Thou believeth that there is one God; thou doest well; the devils also believe, and tremble.” James 2:19

The demons made a request to be cast into the herd of swine. There Gergesenes, though living on the other side of Jordan, were Jews. What had they to do with swine? One can suppose that they lived on the outskirts of Palestine and thought that they might get away with swine bartering.

Do many of God’s professed people behave the same way today? When others are not looking, can we play the part of double life?

The demons sought to enter into the swine, because they are always inclined to do mischief. Their work is to cause dissension. They are always out to misled. They make it their work to cause the human family to fall. As Solomon wrote, “For they sleep not, except they have done mischief; and their sleep is taken away, unless they cause some to fall.” Proverbs 4:17. Such is the life of a demon.

While God rules over the affairs of our little world, He permitted them to enter into the swine, and Jesus said, “Go.”

The demons entered the swine and led the swine over the precipice into the sea and all the swine perished. In this simple example, we see two forces at work. The demons meant to cause harm and mischief. The Lord meant to deliver.

As Jesus delivered the men from demon-possession, He desired to free the swine owners from their intemperance and compromised business practices.

As the demons hurried into the swine to destroy them, so does the devil hurry men and women into sin, that they might be destroyed physically, mentally, and spiritually. Hence, the devil is known as Apollyon and Abaddon, the great destroyer.



The report of the loss of swine reached the city. The whole city came out to meet Jesus and asked Him to leave. They took no time to know Him. They had no affection for Him. They seemed to have no gratitude that the demon-possessed men were now free.

They did not covet righteousness, but mammon. Even though He healed the possessed, they saw Jesus as a destroyer, not a Healer. So they bid Him to leave. Tragically, many in our world prefer swine before the Savior.

As always, the devil is out to misrepresent the character of God. He sows mischief in and out of the church. Satan's design is to cause prejudice against Christ and the truth. He instills in man a love for this world. Tragically, men prefer property over their Savior.

Wednesday's Lesson

Topic: "Get Up and Walk"

Scriptures: Matthew 9:1-8

On Tuesday's lesson, the Gardarenes wanted Jesus to leave. In today's lesson, friends chose to bring the paralytic to Jesus. They desired His healing presence.

One important lesson we should draw from these two accounts, is that we should not become discouraged when others, like the Gardarenes, do not want the truth and do not want Jesus. We do need to respect their decision, while we continue to keep them in prayer. But out there in the world, are people who desire the presence of Jesus. We need to pray that God will bring us into contact with the seekers of truth, that we may share the present truth for these last days.

So Jesus comes into His own city of Capernaum. The first thing recorded is the healing of the paralytic.

The paralytic could not bring himself. But he had faithful friends who would bring him to Jesus. Jesus saw their faith. They had the faith that Jesus could and would heal their friend.

Imagine if you were sick of the palsy, and the first words you heard Jesus say was, "Son, be of good cheer; thy sins be forgiven thee."

The true healing of the body began with the healing of the soul. "Thy sins be forgiven thee."

But certain of the scribes thought Jesus was speaking blasphemy. There was now a perfect opportunity for Jesus to prove His divinity. Though the scribes kept these thoughts within and to themselves, Jesus knew their thoughts. Jesus said, "Wherefore think ye evil in your heart?"



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There is much evil in our world, and it all begins with wrong thoughts. Consider the antediluvian world whose thoughts were continuously evil. Genesis 6:5. Their evil thoughts led to outright apostasy and rebellion against God. The result was the Flood. This punctuates the need for pure thoughts and a knowledge of the truth as it is in Jesus.

Jesus now lays out the truth in such a way that it could not be controverted. In other words, the words of Jesus could not be proven false. The common folk were glad to hear the words of Jesus, for they “marveled, and glorified God.”

Yet, there would be those who would still believe a lie. What do we call that? We would say that they had been deluded by error.

What is a delusion? It is “a false belief held in spite of invalidating evidence.” The American Heritage Dictionary.

Now consider the argument put forth by Jesus. “For what is easier, to say, Thy sins be forgiven thee; or to say, Arise and walk? But that ye may know that the Son of man hath power on earth to forgive sins, (then saith He to the sick of the palsy,) Arise, take up thy bed, and go unto thine house.”

Is it not easier to SAY, “Thy sins be forgiven thee,” than to perform an immediate miracle by speaking the words, “Arise, and walk”?

To prove that He had the power to forgive sins, He simply spoke the words “Arise, and walk,” and the man was healed. Jesus has the power to forgive sins because He is the Son of God, who became the Son of man.

As Paul wrote, “Him [Jesus] hath God [the Father] exalted with His right hand to be a Prince and a Savior, for to give repentance to Israel, and forgiveness of sins.” Acts 5:31

The fact that Jesus was standing just before them in human flesh, proves that the Son of God had to become the Son of man for us to be forgiven of our sins. And the miracle of the crippled man shows that God is able to heal us of every spiritual disease. How long does it take to be forgiven and to receive a new heart? It is as immediate as the healing of the man with the palsy.

Thursday’s Lesson

Topic: “Letting the Dead Bury the Dead”

Scriptures: Matthew 8:18-22

The title of today’s lesson could have been entitled, “Following Jesus.”

In these verses, we have two men who wanted to be part of the inner circle of disciples. The first was a scribe who said, “I will follow thee whithersoever thou goest.” Then Jesus explains to him that the life of a full-time disciple is one that includes temporary housing. Foxes have hole, and birds have nests, but the Son of man hath not where lay His head.”



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The scribe was enthusiastic in following Jesus as a full-time disciple after hearing the Sermon on the Mount, but had not counted the costs. It seems that the scribe was given to impulse and would soon become weary of the life of a full-time disciple.

Fisherman on the other hand, would likely find it more agreeable to go from place to place. They were likely more prepared for the hardship that followed that of an itinerant preacher in first century Palestine.

The other man also wanted to follow Jesus, but he could not come right away. He needed to first bury his father when the time came. That this man's father was still in decent health is evidence from the fact that he was at the time following Jesus and not at home tending to the needs of his father. For if his father were died, he would be at home preparing for his father's funeral. If he was near death, he would also be at home. Hence, his father was older but still in decent health. So Jesus tells him, "Let those who are spiritually dead wait upon your father until he dies, and let them bury him. But come and follow Me, that we may reach out to people who are spiritually dead that they may receive eternal life."

It was important that Jesus encouraged these men to consider the cost of discipleship and to think about their requests. If Jesus would have readily accepted the first man, He would have encouraged impulsive behavior. With the second man, He would have been encouraging procrastination.

There is a cost to discipleship, but it is well worth it. Heaven is cheap enough.

Sabbath School Notes prepared by Pastor Jeff Wehr