

Have You Been Moved By the Healer?

Matthew 8:1-17

Main Idea: Through authoritative teaching and miraculous healings, Jesus revealed Himself as Messiah which moved people to faith, service, and testimonies.

Good morning church, please open your bibles to Matthew chapter 8, verses 1-17 will be our passage.

What moves you? What really moves you? Is it technology or space travel? Do you require tragedy, disaster, or the loss of life to awaken your emotions? The deployed soldier surprising his son usually gets most of us. What truly moves you? What in your life deeply affects you, changes your state of being? What evokes enough emotion to drive you to action? If something truly moves you, you have been changed one way or another. Your perspective and understanding has been seriously altered. A paradigm shift in your reality has occurred.

Allow me to tell you a little about my mom. She is currently in the presence of the Lord enjoying a place without death, pain, crying or suffering. Before she entered this wonderful new reality, she lived in constant pain, her body failing from multiple health issues. My mom and I both **wrestled** in prayer for God to heal her. That prayer was answered only by **spiritual** healing and not physical. During my mom's declining health she received help from a nice lady named Sherrie Benson. Sherrie was not a believer. Near the end of mom's life, Sherrie marveled at my mom's faith in God. She marveled at her love for Jesus, in spite of the lack of physical healing, in spite of the suffering. Sherrie was moved to a saving faith in Christ. Not by a miraculous healing but by my mom's faith during physical suffering. To love God when your health and finances are great seems easy enough. But to love Him right through a painful trial was a love that caught Sherrie's attention. Later at my mother's memorial service, Sherrie was also compelled to give her testimony. God is at work in people's hearts through a variety of circumstances moving people to faith, testimony, and service. As we go through today's text, I hope this story of my mom will help open your mind and heart.

Let's read the text and see how God will speak to us through some of the healings Jesus performed. Jesus healed so many people and yet just a few were recorded in detail for us to ponder. Observe how these people were moved before and after being healed by Jesus.

READ Vs 1-4

When he came down from the mountain, great crowds followed him. ² And behold, a leper^[a] came to him and knelt before him, saying, "Lord, if you will, you can make me clean." ³ And Jesus^[b] stretched out his hand and touched him, saying, "I will; be clean." And immediately his leprosy was cleansed. ⁴ And Jesus said to him, "See that you say nothing to anyone, but go, show yourself to the priest and offer the gift that Moses commanded, for a proof to them."

Jesus finished His sermon on the mount and came down from the mountain toward Capernaum. His authoritative teaching was so moving the crowds continued following Him. Suddenly, a leper approached Him. We need to pause for a minute to put yourself in the leper's shoes. Let's say you are a Jew in Jesus's day, one day you notice a small blemish on your neck and you have your priest

look at it. He diagnoses you with leprosy and states you are unclean. Your whole life has just been completely wrecked. Lepers at this time were complete outcasts, labeled unclean by the law of Moses, and demanded to reside outside the camp of Israel. Lepers were never to approach healthy people, never to sneak up unexpectedly. This was a unique disease as it was labeled unclean instead of just sick. There was a strong assumption that you were cursed by God for some unrepentant sin. Today, there is effective treatment and the disease can be cured with 6-12 months of multi-drug therapy. In Jesus time lepers had absolutely no hope. There were zero options of drug therapy. God either healed them or they died a leper. **Lev 13:45** *“The leprous person who has the disease shall wear torn clothes and let the hair of his head hang loose, and he shall cover his upper lip^[b] and cry out, ‘Unclean, unclean.’⁴⁶ He shall remain unclean as long as he has the disease. He is unclean. He shall live alone. His dwelling shall be outside the camp.* Symptoms of Leprosy were small nodules on the skin, lungs and eyes. Lepers would experience a lack of pain leading to injury, infections, and loss of extremities such as ears, nose, finger etc.

The leprous man in Matthew 8 revealed three things. 1. He submitted to Him as Lord, 2. He submitted to His will, and 3. He revealed faith that Jesus had the power to cleanse Him. By kneeling and calling Him Lord, He acknowledged Jesus as master, the one in control, the one to whom He belonged. He stated *if you will. He did NOT say “if you can”*. This is such a remarkable story. This man must have heard enough of Jesus’s teaching and heard the testimony of others that he was moved to a level of hope not known before. He was now determined to overcome his isolation, shame, fear, judgment, unworthiness and even risk stoning. He approached Jesus boldly, but completely humble, broken, and unclean. What a picture of coming to Jesus just as you are. Not trying to clean yourself up, because you cannot. But coming to Him unclean, asking Him to cleanse you and make you whole. Learn from the leper. Jesus is so full of life and love that He cannot be made unclean by touching the leper but instead cleanses just by His touch. Jesus is the light and life of the world, darkness and death are subject to Him. Don’t you want to be there with the leper, in this moment in time, watching him cry out, “if you will, you can cleanse me”? This scene closes with Jesus honoring the law and wants him to go to the priest with a gift to prove he had been healed and to prove Jesus is the great physician! Perhaps the priest he went to was used by God later to spread the gospel. The healed leper was moved with joy to obey Jesus and give testimony to the local priest. This man can now put on good clothes, fix his hair, move back to town, and no longer has to declare “UNCLEAN”! Praise God for his mercy! Jesus loves taking unclean and sinful people and making them whole, making them righteous, by His sacrifice, declaring them as clean.

I wish we could stop there but there are two more characters to consider. Let’s look next at an unexpected giant of faith.

Read Vs 5-8

⁵When he had entered Capernaum, a centurion came forward to him, appealing to him, ⁶“Lord, my servant is lying paralyzed at home, suffering terribly.” ⁷And he said to him, “I will come and heal him.” ⁸But the centurion replied, “Lord, I am not worthy to have you come under my roof, but only say the word, and my servant will be healed.

The next person moved by the healer is the Centurion in Capernaum. Now the centurion was not healed but only requested healing for his servant. Luke ch 7 gives us some additional insight. His

servant was lying sick, paralyzed, and close to death and suffering terribly. The centurion highly valued his servant and had compassion on him. He was moved to ask for help from the one he knew could give it. This centurion loved the nation of Israel and even built a synagogue in Capernaum. What is so unique about his request is his humility. As a Roman soldier, especially as a centurion, he could have demanded that Jesus walk with him a mile. Jesus would have gladly gone two right? I could hear a normal Roman soldier say, "here, carry my bag back to my house and see if you are able to heal my servant." This man loved the God of Israel and already had faith in Christ Jesus, that Jesus had all authority. Like the leprous man, he approached Jesus calling Him Lord. As a Roman soldier, he risked his reputation even going to Jesus for help, let alone calling Him Lord. Jesus, knowing this man's humility and faith quickly agrees to go to his home and heal the servant. The Centurion resists the offer, stating he is not worthy and then explains his understanding of Jesus power and authority in the spiritual realm; "Say the word." SAY THE WORD. He knew that was enough. He knew that was all that was needed.

Read Vs 9-13

⁹ For I too am a man under authority, with soldiers under me. And I say to one, 'Go,' and he goes, and to another, 'Come,' and he comes, and to my servant, 'Do this,' and he does it." ¹⁰ When Jesus heard this, he marveled and said to those who followed him, "Truly, I tell you, with no one in Israel have I found such faith." ¹¹ I tell you, many will come from east and west and recline at table with Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob in the kingdom of heaven, while the sons of the kingdom will be thrown into the outer darkness. In that place there will be weeping and gnashing of teeth." ¹³ And to the centurion Jesus said, "let it be done for you as you have believed." And the servant was healed at that very moment.

Jesus marvels at his response. This gentile Roman soldier had top tier faith, more than the Jewish disciples. The centurion uses his own life as example of being in authority to firmly state Jesus could just say the word. There was no need for Him to even show up and touch the sick servant. Jesus had absolute authority over all creation and this gentile Roman soldier somehow knew it. Jesus used this moment to remind the Jews that salvation is also coming for the gentiles. Jesus then further humbles and frustrates the Jewish people declaring that without Christ they will be thrown into darkness with weeping and gnashing of teeth. Being a Jew was not enough to have everlasting life. The Jewish nation was no longer the entrance point for a relationship with God, for salvation. It was now through Jesus alone, there is no other name by which we are saved. The centurion's faith reminds me of the Canaanite woman in Matthew 15 who cried out to the Lord to heal her daughter that was oppressed by a demon. After humbling herself Jesus states; "great is your faith, be it done for you as you desire." Another example of Jesus having mercy on the gentiles who looked to him.

The third person to consider in this passage is Peter's mother-in-law.

Read Vs 14-15

¹⁴ And when Jesus entered Peter's house, he saw his mother-in-law lying sick with a fever. ¹⁵ He touched her hand, and the fever left her, and she rose and began to serve him.

Peter's mother-in-law has a very short part of this story but still impactful. No one went to Jesus for her. Peter was most likely with Jesus when they arrived to find her sick. The story doesn't reveal much about her before this instance but let's look at the simple beauty that Jesus finds her sick, takes her by the hand, and lifts her fully well and ready to serve. Imagine being Simon Peter's mother-in-law during Jesus's time of ministry. You would feel so close to Jesus, so close to the Messiah's activity and yet here she was, laying ill with a fever. Have you ever felt close to the Lord, involved in ministry, and then you feel taken out of the action, even forgotten? She may have thought, "Oh Lord, if only I went up the mount with the disciples before I was sick –or why did they take so long - Why did He allow me to be sick when He knows I want to serve? The Lord knew about her and raised her up in His time without her going to Him and humbling herself. He pursued her and she was moved to serve Him on a very busy night.

Read Vs 16-17

That evening they brought to him many who were oppressed by demons, and he cast out the spirits with a word and healed all who were sick.¹⁷ This was to fulfill what was spoken by the prophet Isaiah: "He took our illnesses and bore our diseases."

Mark's gospel tells us that night at sundown, the whole city was gathered together, word had gotten out, "Jesus Saves". Jesus healed all that were sick and cast out many demons that night. I could see Peter's mother-in-law serving water and bread to those who were there and rejoicing over the mercy and compassion of Jesus. Saying "I too was touched by the healer!" Everywhere He went He moved people in one way or another.

Through Jesus's authoritative teaching and deliverance of those that were sick or oppressed by demons, He revealed Himself as the **WAY**, the **TRUTH**, and the **LIFE**. His ministry 2000 years ago did not stop but has flourished through to now. His teaching, His gospel continues to stand apart from all other religions. The story of His miraculous life has endured history's attempt to quench the flame of the Holy Spirit pointing people to Christ. His compassion and love moved people to serve Him then and now. His power and authority built amazing faith in those who were broken and humble. People have testimonies of God working in their lives in such ways that they have to tell others of His love. Not all who went to Him for healing continued with Him. Some took from Him health, freedom, and even food without worshiping Him, without serving Him. In Luke 17 ten lepers were healed by Jesus and only one returned to worship Him. The goal of Jesus Christ was to seek and save the lost. To preach the gospel and the kingdom of heaven. That He would build His church, and through the church He would make known His manifold wisdom to all rulers and authorities in heaven. I really appreciate the correct perspective in this quote by Brett McCracken.

If humanity can be so compelled by sending man from earth to the heavens, shouldn't we be even more compelled by the Maker of the heavens becoming a man and coming to earth?

My final thought is that of 1 Peter 2:24-25. In the first part of verse 24 you can see Jesus bore our sins in His body on the cross, that we would die to sin and live to righteousness. The context is spiritual healing and new life. The very next sentence reveals we have been healed by His wounds. He was wounded by our sin. He took the punishment we deserved and purchased us with his blood. His

Pastor Mark Idol
March 31st, 2019

purpose was for us to return to Him as our Shepherd, our overseer. To enjoy Him forever. My dear mom turned to Christ in the last year of her life and was used by God to move others, more than Sherrie. I challenge you today to ask yourself, does the story of Jesus move me? Does the gospel message move me? Do I have a testimony of God working in my life? Is my faith growing? Am I compelled by His love to serve Him? Brothers and sisters, don't settle for a life that drifts away from the powerful reality that the creator of heaven and earth wants to deeply affect you. Humbly ask Him to move you closer to Him, He will answer. Trust Him with your entire life and serve Him, for He is worthy!

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What really moves you?

Mom and Sherrie

Testimony of the Healer

Faith in the Healer

Healed to Serve

Healed to Return / 1 Peter 2:24-25

Family Life Groups

“Have You Been Moved By the Healer?”

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- 1) Does anyone in your group have testimonies of Jesus using healing or using suffering to build faith/salvation in others?

- 2) Can anyone relate to the Leper? Did you overcome isolation and self-condemnation to come to the Savior?

- 3) Have any of you never told your testimony of salvation before? Please do so to give God glory and to point others to Christ.

- 4) Are you surrendered to God’s will like the leper and the Centurion? What does it look like to be surrendered in real life, day to day issues?

- 5) Are you compelled to serve God because He is worthy and you sense His joy, or do you serve because that is what Christians are supposed to do?