

Matthew 7-8:17 Chapter Study

INTRODUCTION

II. JESUS' GALILEAN MINISTRY 3-18

E. *The Sermon on the Mount* 5-7

We've already covered chs. 5 & 6, tonight finish off the Sermon with ch. 7.

Then . . .

F. *Jesus' Power 8-9*

Each of these passages that we're looking at tonight could very well occupy our earnest attention for the entire evening.

We're going to read of several healings and miracles Jesus performed in our study tonight – and each of them has its own grand lesson to impart.

But we're going to cover more ground tonight, only surveying these stories so that we might catch something that can only be gleaned by taking a step back and seeing the whole.

Have you ever seen an impressionist painting?

The impressionists were more concerned with the play of colors than they were with the specific details of a scene.

Monet, Seraut, Manet, Degas, Renoir, would use unbroken brush strokes of unblended colors to capture a moment in time.

Up till that point, artists tended to paint scenes that were drawn from history and would compose their work in a studio.

The impressionists went out of doors and sought to capture life as it happened.

They would simply stick their brush into a color on the palette, then mash the brush onto the canvas.

So, for much of impressionist art, if you stand close to it, all you see is color – no definite shape.

It isn't till you step back and your eye blends all the colors together that an image comes forth.

While each of the stories that we'll encounter tonight stand on their own right and have marvelous truths to teach us, there's an overarching purpose Matthew has for selecting them and including them at this point.

We begin with ch. 7 and the conclusion of the Sermon on the Mount . . .

We've already covered #'s 1-9 in our outline of The Sermon on the Mount

10. Righteous judgment • 7:1-6

¹ “Judge not, that you be not judged. ² For with what judgment you judge, you will be judged; and with the measure you use, it will be measured back to you.

This is probably *the* favorite passage of non-Christians for you hear it from them all the time.

Even Christians who are walking in the flesh and are being challenged by a fellow believer are heard to say something like, “Hey, who are you to judge me?”

What Jesus says here seems pretty straightforward – “Judge not.”

But don't miss the follow through; He said, “Judge not, that you be not judged.”

His statement curtailing our judging others is premised on the cause and effect it introduces; *if* we judge others, *then* we will be judged.

Conversely, and as He states it here – *if* we abstain from judging others, *then* we will not be judged.

Now, if we take v. 1 and elevate it to some place of solitary pre-eminence, then what Jesus goes on to in the rest of the chapter makes no sense whatsoever.

Look at v. 6 -

⁶ “Do not give what is holy to the dogs; nor cast your pearls before swine,

Look at v. 15 –

¹⁵ “Beware of false prophets, who come to you in sheep's clothing, but inwardly they are ravenous wolves. ¹⁶ You will know them by their fruits.

In these verses, Jesus calls on His followers to make some pretty serious and in some cases, *harsh* judgments!

But if all judgment is banned in v. 1, then how could they follow through on these other commands?

Jesus is not forbidding our faculty of critical judgment in v. 1 – what He’s condemning is **judgmentalism**, that attitude and mentality that sits in the place of judge and passes sentence on everyone else.

He says that we are not to be judgmental because the attitude and posture we adopt toward others is the attitude and posture that will be adopted toward us.

The criteria we use in judging others is the criteria that will be used on us.

² For with what judgment you judge, you will be judged; and with the measure you use, it will be measured back to you.

Jesus is not calling us to walk around with a totally undiscerning spirit or so passively uncritical that we would accept any and everything.

The letters of the NT are filled with exhortations to be on the lookout for false teachers and to exhort one another toward godliness.

In John 7:24 Jesus said that we are to judge with a righteous judgment.

So then, how are we to understand what He says here?

Well, He elaborates -

³ And why do you look at the speck in your brother’s eye, but do not consider the plank in your own eye? ⁴ Or how can you say to your brother, ‘Let me remove the speck from your eye’; and look, a plank is in your own eye? ⁵ Hypocrite! First remove the plank from your own eye, and then you will see clearly to remove the speck from your brother’s eye.

This is a fun illustration Jesus gives to what He’s saying about judging.

‘Speck’ refers to a tiny little piece of wood, like a piece of sawdust or a splinter. ‘Plank’ is a board.

Jesus pictures a guy who has a 2X4 in his eye, and he sees a tiny piece of sawdust in his friend’s eye and gets all worked up about it, all the while oblivious to the fact that he’s got a 2X4 in his own eye.

The guy who’s so concerned for his friend who has the speck ought to first recognize and deal with the plank in his own eye.

Jesus uses this illustration for good reason; you see, the words he uses here for both the speck and the plank refer to a piece of wood.

One’s a splinter, the other’s a log, a board – but they are both made of the same material.

And Jesus’ point is that often times, the things we see in others that bother us so much are in fact the very thing we’re struggling with.

The reason we get so worked up about it when we see it in another is because of our frustration with **our sin**.

We turn a blind eye to our own fault and failure and feel better about ourselves because we condemn the same sin in another.

One day the prophet Nathan came to King David and told him of a rich man with many herds and flocks who received a visitor.

For dinner, the rich man, instead of taking one of the sheep from his own abundant flocks, stole from his poor neighbor his only sheep - the family pet, and prepared a mutton meal for his guest.

When David heard this, he was outraged and immediately passed sentence that the man who’d committed this crime was to be executed!

Nathan then said to David – “You are the man, for you, the King, with several wives already, you took Bathsheba, the only and beloved wife of Uriah your neighbor!”

David was so worked up as he listened to Nathan tell the original story because of his own sense of guilt.

It’s true that we’re often aware of the failures and sins of others because in fact, we fail in that same area.

If we would apply a bit more diligence in repenting of and overcoming those planks, those sins in ourselves, then it would create within us a greater sense of compassion, sensitivity, mercy and patience with those who also struggle and stumble.

Remember that in the Sermon on the Mount, Jesus was correcting the people's understanding about the nature of the Kingdom of God.

He was refuting the contemporary teaching of the Pharisees and scribes and showing how character was all important.

The Pharisees were only concerned with an external righteousness.

So Jesus showed how the one who's *truly* ruled by God will be *humble*, and his/her righteousness will be an inner thing of the heart that will work its way out.

The Pharisees & scribes were incredibly judgmental – sitting in the seat of criticism on any and everyone – telling them that if they wanted to be right with God, they needed to be like them.

Jesus nukes that idea here!

The one who's critical and judgmental is the one with a plank in his/her eye!

What Jesus is saying in these verses is that we must not take the role of judge in our relationship with others.

There is only one who is Judge – God the Father, and as John 5:22 says, He has committed all judgment to the Son.

And it is that Son who here tells us that we are not to sit in judgment on others, but instead to judge ourselves first, using the criteria of holiness.

If we've truly done that, it will move our hearts to be merciful and compassionate toward others.

And that mercy and compassion will then be the measure that are shown to us, both by the Lord and by others.

Then, within the framework and context of being told not to be judgmental, Jesus says . . .

6 “Do not give what is holy to the dogs; nor cast your pearls before swine, lest they trample them under their feet, and turn and tear you in pieces.

The Jews did not have dogs as pets; they were wild scavengers which roved the countryside in packs and hung out near the city dump, living off the refuse thrown there.

They were wild, fierce and nasty little curs.

And of course, pigs were an abomination to Jews; an unclean animal they were forbidden to eat, keep, or even touch.

The swine Jesus refers to here weren't the domesticated piggy of today, these were the wild hogs, with their tusks, which when cornered would charge their attacker and could leave a mortal wound.

People avoided wild pigs and the roving packs of wild dogs because they were dangerous.

Now – Jesus does not mean literal dogs and pigs here – He means people!

These are people who show no spiritual discernment whatsoever – on the contrary, they delight in taking what is precious to us as the followers of Christ, and they drag it through the moral muck and mire of their own perversion and decadence.

The only way you would know if a person was a spiritual “dog” or “pig” is by having already shared with them, and their gross treatment of you and what you share.

Once they've done that, Jesus says it's best not to dole out more that which is precious to you, because they've proven themselves no more worthy of recognizing it's value than a pig would recognize the value of a pearl.

Some years ago, I loaded UPS delivery trucks.

There were a dozen other men I worked alongside and I made no secret of my being a Christian. At first, I shared openly about my faith, but it didn't take long before I realized that everything I said, they took and turned into a lude remark and perverse joke – everything!

Listening to their laughter reminded me of a pack of hyenas, and the snorting of pigs.

So I stopped doling out my spiritual treasures, and switched to asking questions that were aimed more at making them face their own spiritual emptiness and need.

11. Persistent faith • 7:7-11

7 “Ask, and it will be given to you; seek, and you will find; knock, and it will be opened to you. 8 For everyone who asks receives, and he who seeks finds, and to him who knocks it will be opened.

Time for a little Greek lesson –

An *imperative* is a command. If you say, “Stand up!” That would be a command, and imperative.

The Aorist tense refers to an action which takes place at a particular moment.

The Present tense refers to on-going action, and is often captured by the “-ing” ending on a verb.

If I come in your home and you say, “Shut the door behind you,” that would be an aorist imperative.

But if you say, “Whenever you come in the house, make sure you keep shutting the door,” that would be the present imperative.

Jesus uses the present imperative here when He says, “Ask, seek, and knock.”

“Keep asking – keep seeking, keep knocking”

The Jews loved prayer, and the rabbis taught that persistence in prayer was a good thing. Jesus endorsed that idea with these words.

He knew that His teaching on the nature of faith and their relationship to God as their Heavenly Father might cause them to wonder if their views on prayer needed to be reworked.

So He clears that up here – if a thing is worth praying for, then it ought to be worth holding fast to.

And God will always answer in His wisdom and His love.

9 Or what man is there among you who, if his son asks for bread, will give him a stone? 10 Or if he asks for a fish, will he give him a serpent? 11 If you then, being evil, know how to give good gifts to your children, how much more will your Father who is in heaven give good things to those who ask Him!

No parent is going to bring home a cardboard box from *Krispy Kreme* that looks like it holds a dozen, and when his son opens it, thinking it's got some nice warm original glazed in it, in fact it's got a dozen rocks in it.

No parent is going to say to his young'uns, “Hey, lets go out for fish and chips” and then serve up a plate of live rattlers.

Jesus' point is this – if a one of us who are fallen creatures wants the best for his/her child and works to make sure their needs are taken care of – then how much more will our perfect heavenly Father take care of us, and when we make requests of Him, He will not trick us and give us something other than the very best!!!

No matter what we pray for or how we pray – God will always answer in the very best way.

Growing up, if Lynn & I had only and always given our children what they wanted for breakfast, lunch and dinner, well they would not have grown up to be the healthy people they are now.

Our kids wanted nothing but pancakes, French toast, and Eggos covered with syrup and powdered sugar.

Cinnamon rolls with layers of sticky frosting.

For lunch, it would have been a cheeseburger and fries slathered with lots of ketchup.

For dinner – another burger, or a burrito & more fries.

For dessert, churros, ice cream, brownies, fudge.

There were many meals when they would sit at the table and look at their plate with a sad countenance – but they would eat it, and today, they are happy for it because it provided the nutrition they needed to grow to be the healthy specimens of humanity they are today.

All too often we are like little kids standing in God's kitchen asking for candy and ice cream when what we need is some protein and fiber.

God is concerned with our spiritual health- with growing us up into the image of Christ, not allowing us to continue being self-absorbed spiritual infants.

So when we pray, what we are really praying for, even though we may not realize it, is that God would do what is best for us.

And here's what's cool – He always does what's best!

12. The Golden Rule • 7:12

12 Therefore, whatever you want men to do to you, do also to them, for this is the Law and the Prophets.

As we all know, this is called *the Golden Rule*.

And it's something everyone can operate by because God has created us to want the best for ourselves.

So, when in doubt about how to treat another, or how to act in any given situation, ask yourself how would YOU like to be treated?

Then use that as the basis for how you treat others.

It's interesting that many of the major religions of the world contain a basic rule of conduct similar to this –but they all cast it as a negative.

Instead of saying, “Do unto others as you would have them do unto you” – they say, “Whatever you do *not* want people to do to you, do *not* do such to them.”

These other religions and philosophies merely recognize man's fallenness and tendency to sin and seek with their greatest ethic to only restrain evil.

Jesus knows that through the regeneration of the Holy Spirit and His indwelling presence in the Life of His people, they will be enabled to not just halt sin, but do good.

Do you want to be treated with fairness and respect? Then be fair and respectful.

When you mess up and blow it, do you want to be shown mercy? Then be patient and merciful.

When you're being a stubborn fool and refusing to admit your error, do you want those closest to you to come and confront you, saying the hard but necessary thing? Then do that with those who are in that place.

13. Exercise Spiritual Carefulness • 7:13-29

As Jesus moves to conclude the Sermon, He issues some sober warnings about making sure were not just playing a religious game but are in fact, abiding under the rule of God.

This was an important warning because there was a whole group of professional religionists in that day who looked good, but who were in fact, lost!

The devil is real, and one of his chief weapons is deception.

He knows that if he comes to us unmasked, we'll not be inclined to listen to or be suckered in to His deceptions.

So he comes subtly, cloaking his lies behind a thin veneer of piety and religion.

Jesus calls the disciples to make an honest assessment of themselves.

Since we covered these verses last Sunday, we'll be far more summary with them tonight.

a. 13-14 • the way is narrow

13 “Enter by the narrow gate; for wide is the gate and broad is the way that leads to destruction, and there are many who go in by it. 14 Because narrow is the gate and difficult is the way which leads to life, and there are few who find it.

In John 14:6, Jesus made crystal clear what the narrow way was – Himself!

The broad way Jesus mentions here is the way of man-made religion.

Our fallenness charts a path to God based in good works, which is what all religion ends up boiling down to – man's attempt to reach up to God.

The narrow gate is the cross and the reason it's difficult is because it flies in the face of everything our fallen nature demands – death to self and total reliance of Christ.

b. 15-20 • the need for good fruit

15 “Beware of false prophets, who come to you in sheep's clothing, but inwardly they are ravenous wolves. 16 You will know them by their fruits. Do men gather grapes from thornbushes or figs from thistles? 17 Even so, every good tree bears good fruit, but a bad tree bears bad fruit. 18 A good tree cannot bear bad fruit, nor can a bad tree bear good fruit. 19 Every tree that does not bear good fruit is cut down and thrown into the fire. 20 Therefore by their fruits you will know them.

As we saw Sunday, the prophets of that day wore a standard uniform.

But Jesus said, the uniform did not make a man a prophet.

The test of a true prophet was the fruit of righteousness from his own life and the result of his teaching in the lives of those who heard him & his message.

This is one of the great dangers that we have today in the church – that with the acceptance of *celebrity*, and the isolation of a pastor or teacher from the context of his flock, he can hold a wildly successful and popular ministry without anyone ever knowing what kind of man he is, what kind of character he has.

He sequesters himself within the confines of his own hand selected assistants who often get caught up in his sins, or who feel they have no ability to make his moral failures public because it would mean the end of their comfy position.

The last 3 decades have seen some pretty sad examples of this.

The Church ought to demand that as a pastor or teacher becomes more and more successful with a wider and wider following, he at the same time lives a life of commensurate openness to investigation and observation.

A good and true servant of the Lord will produce good and true fruit.

A false servant, though it may take a while, he will eventually produce fruit that reveals who and what he really is.

One of the things I have so appreciated about Pastor Chuck over the years is that consistently good fruit born by his personal life and in the lives of those who listen to him.

And – the way he deals with new movements and new celebrities that rise within the church again and again.

He takes the approach that time will tell. Give it time.

There have been times when many of us have wanted Church to say or do something in response to some new movement or some false teacher.

But his response more often than not is to just let time prove the value and validity of something. Most things come and then they go. That which is of the Lord, it lasts.

c. 21-23 • false professors

21 “Not everyone who says to Me, ‘Lord, Lord,’ shall enter the kingdom of heaven, but he who does the will of My Father in heaven. 22 Many will say to Me in that day, ‘Lord, Lord, have we not prophesied in Your name, cast out demons in Your name, and done many wonders in Your name?’ 23 And then I will declare to them, ‘I never knew you; depart from Me, you who practice lawlessness!’

Again, we covered this pretty well Sunday.

It isn't those who have the right words down, but those whose lives are lived in line with the words who are genuine.

Jesus makes it clear here – that it isn't *calling* Him Lord, but KNOWING HIM AS LORD that's the crucial issue.

d. 24-29 • foundations

24 “Therefore whoever hears these sayings of Mine, and does them, I will liken him to a wise man who built his house on the rock: 25 and the rain descended, the floods came, and the winds blew and beat on that house; and it did not fall, for it was founded on the rock. 26 “But everyone who hears these sayings of Mine, and does not do them, will be like a foolish man who built his house on the sand: 27 and the rain descended, the floods came, and the winds blew and beat on that house; and it fell. And great was its fall.”

Jesus pictures two houses standing near each other.

From a distance they look the same, but one is built on sand while the other is built on the rock.

When the storm comes, it's the house on the rock that will survive, the one on the sand will be destroyed.

Jesus' says that the one who only hears His word and does not follow through on them is like the one who builds in the sand.

It is only those who hear and follow through, doing what they hear, who will pass the Final day of judgment.

This is a message that needs to be boldly proclaimed from every pulpit today.

Hearing does not the issue – going to church doesn't cut it.

Going to church and hearing God's Word must be understood as just phase one of the disciples life – all of that is just preparatory to the *real life* of the disciple – which is living it *in*, then living it *out*.

28 And so it was, when Jesus had ended these sayings, that the people were astonished at His teaching, 29 for He taught them as one having authority, and not as the scribes.

As I mentioned a couple weeks ago, the itinerant rabbis who traveled from place to place, town to town and synagogue to synagogue did not teach the way Jesus had in the Sermon on the Mount. They would endlessly quote one another, rarely if ever saying anything out of their own initiative.

Jesus broke this pattern completely when he would say something like, "You have heard that it was said . . . but I say to you."

Jesus didn't rely on the authority of some long dead but respected rabbi.

He established His own authority, and spoke with such clarity about the OT law and principles of righteousness that when the people heard Him, what He said rang an unmistakable bell of truth in their hearts.

His words were like a breath of fresh air, clearing away the cobwebs and dust of centuries of dead tradition.

And His teaching revealed the shabbiness and threadbare self-righteousness of the Pharisees and scribes for what it was.

F. Jesus' Power 8-9

Matthew, working off the reaction of the people to Jesus' authority manifested in what He taught in chs. 5-7, now presses on to give several stories demonstrating Jesus' power.

Matthew meant these demonstrations of power to be validations and proofs of Jesus' authority.

But just as Jesus had just done a great job of upending the traditional views of righteousness,

Matthew shows Jesus using His power to effect some healings for the kind of people the Jews of that time thought were excluded from or least in the Kingdom of God.

1. Many are healed • 8:1-17

a. 1-4 • a leper

1 When He had come down from the mountain, great multitudes followed Him. 2 And behold, a leper came and worshiped Him, saying, "Lord, if You are willing, You can make me clean." 3 Then Jesus put out His hand and touched him, saying, "I am willing; be cleansed." Immediately his leprosy was cleansed. 4 And Jesus said to him, "See that you tell no one; but go your way, show yourself to the priest, and offer the gift that Moses commanded, as a testimony to them."

Leprosy was a loathsome disease considered to be the special judgment of God.

Either the leper was thought to have done something especially heinous, or his parents had, but it was considered so abhorrent, lepers were utterly shunned.

The rabbis in particular decried lepers and often made them examples of how the righteous ought to treat sinners.

One rabbi boasted that he refused to even buy an egg on a street where he *saw* a leper.

Another bragged that he threw rocks at lepers when he saw them. ^[1]

As a disease, leprosy really is a prime symbol for sin.

It kills the nerves in the skin so that over time, the victim loses the sensitivity and because of trauma, they begin to lose their appendages.

You've seen pictures of lepers with their fingers and toes gone.

Sin does the same thing – it desensitizes a person until eventually they begin to lose bits and pieces of themselves to sin.

And just as the leper was shunned and isolated from others, except other lepers, so sin destroys relationships until all a person has left is the others who share that sin.

But there was something about Jesus that was different from the other rabbis and this leper was

encouraged to approach him, even though all social convention said he had to keep his distance. Matthew says this leper *worshipped* Jesus; he recognized that Jesus was more than just a man – He was the Messiah – He was God!

Then, he made his request – **“Lord, if You are willing, You can make me clean.”**

This leper was a man of real insight and faith.

He could perceive who Jesus was, and he had explicit faith in His ability to heal. It all hinged on Jesus’ will.

Matthew, a man who began his career as a hated tax-collector is tweaking the expectations of his Jewish readers.

Lepers were supposed to be utterly lost and hopeless sinners with no more spiritual sensitivity than they possessed in their lifeless flesh!

Yet here’s a leper with more spiritual insight and faith than the multitudes surrounding Jesus – he alone of all of them worshipped Jesus!

Note what Jesus did – He touched the leper, and healed him with a word!

It was prohibited to touch a leper for fear of contagion.

But it was His touch and word that brought healing!

For this leper, a man who had gone without the touch of another human being, probably for many years, Jesus’ physical touching of him brought as great a healing to his soul as His spoken word brought a healing to His flesh.

Jesus then told the cleansed leper to go and fulfill the required offerings at the temple that had been proscribed in the Law of Moses, Lev. 14.

Now, imagine the consternation that would have been created in the temple when this guy showed up and said he’d come to perform this rite of sacrifice.

The priests had never seen such a thing and there was no case in their memory of anyone having been healed of leprosy.

But now there’s an itinerant rabbi in Galilee who’s healing lepers!

This would stir some real debate and discussion among the priests as they would have to blow the dust off of Leviticus 14 and perform a rite none of them ever thought they would have to perform.

b. 5-13 • a Gentile servant

⁵ Now when Jesus had entered Capernaum, a centurion came to Him, pleading with Him, ⁶ saying, “Lord, my servant is lying at home paralyzed, dreadfully tormented.” ⁷ And Jesus said to him, “I will come and heal him.” ⁸ The centurion answered and said, “Lord, I am not worthy that You should come under my roof. But only speak a word, and my servant will be healed. ⁹ For I also am a man under authority, having soldiers under me. And I say to this *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 *it*, He marveled, and said to those who followed, “Assuredly, I say to you, I have not found such great faith, not even in Israel!** ¹¹ And I say to you that many will come from east and west, and sit down with Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob in the kingdom of heaven. ¹² But the sons of the kingdom will be cast out into outer darkness. There will be weeping and gnashing of teeth.” ¹³ Then Jesus said to the centurion, “Go your way; and as you have believed, so let it be done for you.” And his servant was healed that same hour.**

Matthew tells us first about a leper; a despised and shunned supposed object of divine wrath who exhibits more spiritual insight and faith than the supposedly good and godly people.

Next he tells us about a despised Gentile – a Roman centurion of all people!

This man wasn’t just a Gentile – He was a hated Roman, and an officer of the loathed Roman occupiers!

As far as hatred ran, and as far as being distanced from any favor with God, this guy would have been considered at the very bottom of the ladder.

But Matthew tells us of Jesus’ commendation of this man – in fact, He says His faith is greater

than any Jew He's met so far!

The other gospels tell us this centurion had come to faith in the God of Israel while serving there and had contributed a vast sum of money to build the synagogue in Capernaum.

And while servants were considered to be at the bottom of the social pecking order, this Roman had great compassion on his servant and when he was ill, dared to break social convention by going to a Jewish rabbi – Jesus, and asking him to heal him.

When Jesus consented to come to the centurion's house, the Roman, knowing that this was totally against the Jewish custom of acceptable behavior – because a Jew would NEVER have any contact with a Gentile – replied that Jesus didn't need to bother Himself.

No – His physical presence wasn't necessary – all He needed to do was speak the word and the servant would be well.

The centurion explained that he understood all about authority because he was in the army. He had men under him and commanders over him.

He understood all about rank and power and if he was told to do a thing by those over Him, or told someone under him to do something – it got done; that's just the nature of authority.

The centurion, being a man who lived obediently within the realm of authority and submission was able to discern where Jesus ranked in spiritual authority and power – at the top!

He could see that for all of Jesus' humble appearance, He was in fact the King of the Kingdom of Heaven, and that healing his servant was no magical rite or special formula. It was all about power and authority.

So he said – “Just speak the Word! And it'll be done – I know that.”

Jesus used the centurion's faith and his profound grasp of spiritual truth as a way to upend the Jews' expectations about who the Kingdom of God was for.

In vs. 11 & 12 He said –

11 And I say to you that many will come from east and west, and sit down with Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob in the kingdom of heaven. 12 But the sons of the kingdom will be cast out into outer darkness. There will be weeping and gnashing of teeth.”

Remember that the Jews thought all of the Jews, the physical descendants of Abraham through Jacob would inherit the kingdom while the Gentiles were good for nothing but to stoke the fires of hell. Here Jesus says that there are some serious surprises coming.

There would be oodles of Gentiles from the far East & West in the kingdom, while the heirs of the kingdom, those the kingdom had been intended for, would be sent to eternal torment!

Let's not miss this lesson!

It's been said that there are three surprises awaiting us in heaven:

- 1) Those who made it.
- 2) Those who *didn't* make it.
- 3) And the greatest surprise of all – that *we* made it!

These first two healings and the faith demonstrated by these sure outsiders ought to make us extremely cautious about our assumptions of who's approved and accepted by God.

And if these two don't teach us that – then the 3rd is sure to.

So far we've had a leper's faith confirmed, a Roman centurion's spiritual insight praised, and now we see a *mother-in law* healed!

c. 14-15 • a mother in law

14 Now when Jesus had come into Peter's house, He saw his wife's mother lying sick with a fever. 15 So He touched her hand, and the fever left her. And she arose and served them.

Matthew uses these three examples of Jesus' power because they were typical of the way He operated – to minister to those society typically overlooked & despised.

The Pharisees would daily pray this prayer: “Lord, thank You I was not born a dog, a Gentile, or a woman.”

Yet Matthew highlights Jesus' ministry to these very people!

In the archaeology of Capernaum, they think they've discovered Peter's home, which would have been the scene of this miracle.

What's interesting here is that this reveals that Peter was married – and if Peter was the first of the Popes as Rome contends, then they have a problem.

d. 16-17 • many more

¹⁶ When evening had come, they brought to Him many who were demon-possessed.

And He cast out the spirits with a word, and healed all who were sick, ¹⁷ that it might be fulfilled which was spoken by Isaiah the prophet, saying: "*He Himself took our infirmities And bore our sicknesses.*"

This is from Isaiah 53.

What we could easily miss here is the way in which Jesus freed those who were demon possessed; Matthew says he did it with a word.

Matthew intends this to be a demonstration of Jesus' power!

You see, there were Jewish exorcists who did have a limited measure of success.

But their ritual for exorcism was lengthy and elaborate.

Deliverance only came after hours and hours of intense spiritual warfare.

Jesus just spoke a word and the victims were free!

This would have rocked every back on their heels and made them overwhelmed with His power and authority.

[\[1\]](#) Guzik, David *On-Line Commentary*