

## **Informal Bible Study**

### **Discussion Guide for the Gospel of Matthew**

#### **Chapter 8**

#### **Overview**

After 3 chapters of giving us our Lord's teachings, the teachings of the King about the nature of Kingdom life and the journey to life, Matthew now returns to the narrative about Jesus.

After listening to the teaching of the King, we are now called up to consider His works. Chapters 8 & 9 feature the miracles of Jesus.

As chapter 8 begins, Jesus has just finished his teaching to His disciples. He comes down the mountain. Immediately he is confronted by a very sick man. As we proceed in Matthew 8, keep asking the question with each miracle: "Why did Jesus choose to heal this person?"

Let's begin by having someone read the 8<sup>th</sup> chapter of the gospel of Matthew.

#### **Big Picture Questions**

1. Write down a list of each of the miracles that Jesus performs in chapter 8 and who He performed them for. Write down anything you observe about these miracles at the outset.

2. What do all of the miracles have in common? What makes each different from the rest?
3. Now read Psalm 27. This is a Messianic psalm. That means that it describes the promised King of Israel. How does what we see about Jesus in Matthew 8 connect to the things said about the Messiah in Psalm 27?

### Questions, section by section

#### Verses 1-4

1. Read **Exodus 15:26**. Discuss how this passage relates to the condition of the people in Israel Jesus found when He began His public ministry. Skim over Matthew chapter 8 and chapter 9 or look at the handout on Jesus' miracles.
2. The first miracle in chapter 8 happens when Jesus **heals a leper**. Let's consider some facts about leprosy in the Bible. Leprosy was extremely contagious. It was to be avoided at all costs. The book of Leviticus spends 2 chapters discussing what to do about leprosy – Leviticus 13 and 14. These instructions to the priests show how to recognize leprosy and how to isolate the disease. Nowhere in the Bible is there any mention of how to cure leprosy. Only God Himself could cleanse the leper of his disease.

“Why did Jesus choose to heal this person?” Hint: what would this prove about who Jesus is?

3. Leprosy is considered a word picture or “type” for sin. It spreads on the flesh, and there is no cure. Explain how this plays out in this miracle of Jesus . What do sin and leprosy have in common? This is the first time in the Gospels that anyone calls Jesus “Lord”. Why is that significant? What does the healing of leprosy picture in the spiritual realm? Is it significant that the Law in Leviticus had no way to get that done...only Jesus can do it. What did the leper reveal about himself when He called Jesus Lord and asked Him if He were willing to heal him of his leprosy?
  
4. In verse 4, after Jesus cleansed the leper, what instructions did He give to the leper? Why? Is there any significance that Jesus wanted the priests and only the priests to know that He had performed this miracle? Discuss in view of the overall purpose of the Gospel of Matthew.
  
5. In Matthew 11:1-4 , John the Baptist is in prison. Jesus sends a report to John. He mentions that lepers are being cleansed. What question of John was Jesus answering?
  
6. In Matthew 10, does Jesus give His disciples the power to cleanse lepers? Where does He tell His disciples to go? To NOT go?

### **Verses 5-15**

1. The second miracle occurs when a Roman centurion comes to Jesus asking for help. His servant is paralyzed and is suffering greatly. Why did Jesus pick this person to cure? Hint: the first person was a Jew. This second person is a Roman commander. He also calls Jesus "Lord".
  
2. In verse 14-15, Jesus came to Peter's house, and saw Peter's mother-in-law lying in bed with a fever. Why did Jesus choose to heal this person? Remember: women were considered a lower class of citizen at this time in history.
  
3. What do these first three miracles reveal about our Lord Jesus Christ?

### **Verses 16-27**

1. What is the main point of verses 16-17?
  
2. Matthew quotes Isaiah 53:4 in verse 17 of chapter 8. What is Isaiah 53 mainly describing?

Here in chapter 8 Matthew ties Isaiah 53 to something else. What is it?

3. In verses 19-22, Jesus has conversations with two different disciples. What is the main point that Jesus makes to the scribe? See 2 Timothy 3:12 for more on this.
  
4. In verse 20, Jesus calls Himself by the title “Son of Man”., What is the significance of this? See Daniel 7:13.
  
5. The statement “First let me go and bury my father”, in verse 21, was a popular expression in that day. It meant that a person would hold off doing something until his father died. So the father here is still very much alive! 1 Timothy 5:8 tells us that we should take care of our family. So what is Jesus saying here? Relate this to Luke 14:26.
  
6. In verses 23-27, the disciples get into the boat with Jesus, and a great storm arose on the sea of Galilee. Yet Jesus is sleeping on the boat!! His disciples are overcome with fear and in their panic they wake Jesus up. He responds with two rebukes to two different groups. To whom, and then to whom? Why does he rebuke each group?
  
7. Instantly, the roiling sea becomes perfectly calm. Another miracle! What makes this miracle different from the earlier ones in chapter 8? Put yourself in the shoes of the disciples. Consider what Jesus had just finished teaching them in verses 19-23. What effect would this miracle have had on people who had just finished absorbing that message?

### Verses 28-34

1. Read the parallel passage in Luke 8:26-40. What additional things do we learn about this event when we read Luke's account?
2. What title do the demons call Jesus? What is the significance of that?
3. Note that Jesus only said one word to the demons. What was it? Why did Jesus perform this amazing work?
4. Why were the townspeople so afraid afterwards? What did they tell Jesus? What does this reveal about them?