

Matthew Ch.8

Faith, Healing, and Miracles: and the human ability to always miss the point.

Regardless of how intelligent, talented, gifted, benevolent you may be, your efforts are a waste of precious time if you do not love as God loves (1 Cor. 13). In petty desire, unredeemed humanity seeks ego comforts such as happiness, wealth, and power, and sacrifices true joy to possess them. The desires of immature Christians can be likewise ego fulfilling, and thereby miss God's passion for us. The primal faith which God most honors is humble and trusting, seeks no self glorification, and acts out of authentic love.

After the Sermon on the Mount

- **The first miracles.** *Though Matthew's account doesn't record the earliest known miracle, turning water into wine, he devotes this passage to the early public miracles of Jesus, and the human response to them. There is exhibited a knowledge of the person and capacity of Jesus by those he encounters, although this knowledge is primitive. Yet we see primal faith along with the volitional power of Jesus to both heal and control nature.*
 - Healing the leper, 8:1-5
 - Lord, if you are willing, you can make me clean. An implied belief in Jesus' power. _____
 - An expression of simple faith, without full knowledge of Jesus. _____
 - The Centurion's servant, 8:6-13
 - Just say the word. Implied trust in the authority of Jesus. _____
 - An expression of faith in the authority of Jesus. _____
 - Peter's mother-in-law, 8:14-15
 - A volitional act of compassion. _____
 - Restored her health, and also her simple dignity as the hostess in her household. _____
 - Receiving the demon possessed and ill for healing, 8:16-17
 - In fulfillment of prophecy, v.17. _____

The N.T. issue of "demon-possessed". It is primarily in the Gospel accounts that we see scripture address "demons," also assumed to be fallen angels. Beyond this, and one or two other instances, we have little reliable information regarding them. Yet the lore of demonology has developed a massive library of anecdotal information. _____

- **Qualifying true discipleship, 8:18-22.**
 - The scribe who wanted to follow Jesus. _____
 - _____
 - Are you willing to give up your worldly comfort and risk rejection from those you love? _____
 - _____
 - Follow me and let the world go about its business. _____
 - _____
 - **Two more miracles.**
 - Calming the storm, 8:23-27.
 - Jesus addresses the disciples, *you men of little faith.* _____
 - _____
 - He rebukes the wind, an act of volitional power over nature. _____
 - _____
 - The Gadarene demoniac(s), 8:28-34.
 - Varying accounts, Mk. 5:1-17, Luke 8:26-37. _____
 - Something about pigs? _____
 - The locals respond with fear. Go away! _____
- Exploring the purpose of Jesus' actions in this chapter?**
- Was this a natural extension of his nature? _____
 - Did he have a goal? _____
 - What was communicated about faith? _____
 - Is faith limited by greater biblical/religious knowledge? _____

*There are many more miracles to appear, and the human response is usually confused or selfish. Some want more of the magic show while others want the power, and precious few seek the gift of healing and restoration with sincere hearts. **The point is not personal empowerment, that's what the world seeks in its religiosity. The real point is that miracles are the sole property of God. We humans are merely one of many vehicles for them.***