

8:1

When He (Jesus) was come down from the mountain, And what was He doing on the mountain? The Sermon on the Mount. Ministry often comes in the form of full days. I have found that the Lord seems to be finding busy people and using them. I am finding that people who have a hard time finding things to do continue to have a hard time finding things to do. It's been a full day already. The Sermon on the Mount has been preached. And He comes down and He heals a leper. He gives instructions to a leper. The leper goes off and now He is ready to go to a centurion's house. And the day keeps going.

We're going to find in weeks to come that He continually does things that are inconvenient. And He doesn't do it because He feels like it. For in one of these episodes we're going to find Him sleeping on a boat. He's not sleeping because it just feels like the right thing to do, and it's that time in the afternoon, and isn't it time for tea and crumpets and a nap? You know, He really is tired and He finds Himself doing ministry. And can I just say, it's ministry that matters.

8:5-6

5. And when Jesus was entered into Capernaum, there came unto Him a centurion, beseeching Him, 6. And saying, "Lord, my servant lieth at home sick of the palsy We find out from Luke's gospel that this is not the centurion himself coming to Jesus but messengers of the centurion. We would have no issue saying that the ambassador of a particular country speaks for a president. And so we don't have a problem when Matthew says it was the centurion that asked the Lord, but another way to look at the truth is from Luke's version that says the centurion sent his servants beseeching the Lord.

grievously tormented." In Luke 7 that it was Jewish elders that came and talked to Jesus for him and the Jewish elders said, "This centurion has built us a synagogue. Save his servant." This is an unusual centurion. This centurion was in charge of one hundred soldiers. He was an officer. He had much wealth and he was moved by the agony of his servant because you see in verse number 6 he says, **My servant is at home sick with the palsy. He's paralyzed and he's grievously tormented.** This is a servant that couldn't sleep, a servant that couldn't get comfortable. This is a servant that couldn't find a moment's rest, not one. And if I were Jesus I might have said something like, "Maybe you'll become a Christian now. Maybe you'll become a God-fearer now. Maybe you'll be monotheistic now." No, Jesus didn't do any of that. I'm so glad sometimes Jesus helps us despite ourselves.

8:7-8a

And Jesus saith unto him, "I will come and heal him." 8. The centurion answered and said, Luke says The centurion hears about it and sends more servants to stop Him on His way to the house. So the centurion is in the house, he sends one set of servants to get Jesus and he sends another set to tell Him to stop and to not come all the way to his house. And here's what the centurion says through those servants in verse 8.

8:8

The centurion answered and said, "Lord, I am not worthy that Thou shouldest come under my roof: but speak the word only, and my servant shall be healed. Now, could you please notice the order? Jesus is amazed first. And then in verse 13 He says, "Your servant will be healed." If it was a faith that knew the servant was going to be healed, then we could all sit back and say, "Yeah, I'd be amazed too." But the centurion expressed faith before the servant was healed and without any guarantee that the servant would be healed. It's the same thing as the leper, "Lord, if You want to You can make me clean." And Jesus said, "I want to. Be clean."

8:9

For 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.'" Here's this centurion saying, "Lord, don't even come into my house because I know how authority works. I'm

told to do stuff by my superiors and I do it. I tell the soldiers under me to do things; they do it. And I tell my servant to do things; he does it. I know the power of words. So Jesus, all you have to do is say the word and I know my servant could be healed." Now I don't know if you understand exactly what he was doing there, but think about it. Do I have the idea of the centurion? What sets us apart from the world in our view of authority? Do we always find a reason to complain about the president? About the pastor? About the police? About the boss? About the new rules? Do we find five minutes a day to pray for our representatives through social media, news viewing, etc.? Or do our children just find us consistently disrespecting authority? Can I just help us out with something here? Maybe the reason our children don't respect us the way they should is because we don't respect our authority the way we should.

When the centurion says, "You have the ability to heal people just speaking," he was actually calling Him the creator God, Who spoke all things into existence. I want you to notice please, this is an unusual Creator. I don't expect the Creator to respond this way. Please notice in verse number 10,

8:10-11

When Jesus heard it, He marvelled, he was amazed. Can you imagine the King of Glory being amazed? Amazed! We're talking about the One who spun Aurora Borealis in the air like it was a scarf around His neck, and He's amazed? We're talking about the One that chucked the stars in the sky like they were oysters! And He's amazed. We're talking about the One that scooped out the Grand Canyon with one little silly flood, and He's amazed. Eight times the book of Matthew says that somebody marveled. This is the only time that Matthew says Jesus marveled. He doesn't marvel when people weep before Him. He doesn't marvel when lepers bow before Him. No, He marvels when the silly, unqualified, Gentile soldier puts faith in Him. An unexpected and an unpredictable Creator! How in the world is anyone marveling at this man but yet Jesus is marveling! I'm amazed to think about how Jesus is amazed.

Now think of all that Matthew has described Jesus as seeing. He's healing through every sector of the Jews of every sect, every level of every conceivable economy within religion, society and culture. They're being healed. They're being changed. Families are reunited. Conversions, yes. Mass baptisms, yes. John the Baptist's disciples dropping all to follow Him. Businessmen following a novel rabbi. Yet this did not prompt Matthew to tell us that Jesus **was amazed**. No. He's amazed when the under-qualified have simple faith. I can do that. I can do that! I may not be able to do great things, but I can amaze Him if that's all it takes! And so can you.

and said to them that followed, "Verily I say unto you, I have not found so great faith, no, not in Israel. 11. And I say unto you, that many Unexpected people with less spiritual advantage and little opportunity. This is not a place for few and I'm glad He uses the word **many** because in Matthew 20:28 it says, "The Son of man came... to give His life a ransom for *many*." Everyone who enters the kingdom, enters the kingdom because their life has been paid for by the life of the great ransom, Jesus Christ. I'm one of the many. And you are too.

shall come Saints of all ages will be in that kingdom. Now isn't it interesting, here we are in a New Testament book, and I understand the New Testament according to Hebrews 9 begins when Jesus dies. So how much more significant is it for Jesus to tell His disciples, eleven of which will be born again in any case, that everyone from Adam forward who has been saved will be in the kingdom. Isn't that something? So think about all the people you're going to see there. Adam, Abraham, Abel, Eve, Noah, Shem, Noah's wife, think of all the people from before Calvary onward that we're going to be with in the kingdom. We could certainly have a discussion about what that is, but know this, Abraham of the Old Testament will be in the kingdom; Isaac will be in the kingdom; Jacob will be in the kingdom. We will be with them.

When you realize that the book of Acts just gives you a lot of highlights; it doesn't talk about all the days between the highlights. You read things in the book of Acts like Paul preached on Sabbath days for eighteen months, and you realize, "Wait a minute, I think there was still seven days a week back then, and that means that there were things, just normal things happening the other six days of the week." Normal

things. So while we're busy doing our normal things we are awaiting a kingdom, a good kingdom, a wonderful kingdom.

from the east and west, and shall sit down with Abraham, and Isaac, and Jacob, in the kingdom of heaven. The kingdom is still coming and it is symbolized by a meal. Now, often we hear of prophetic schemes in Scripture. And we hear things like, "Immediately upon the rapture comes the judgment seat of Christ and the marriage supper of the Lamb." I'm not opposed to believing that we're going to eat. I think we will eat in the kingdom to come. Let us not forget that this thing known as a marriage supper of the Lamb is mentioned for the very first time in Revelation's 19th chapter. We're not going to go there, but I think it's very strange at the marriage supper of the Lamb I don't actually find people eating. It is actually the the oriental way of referring to a continual time of fellowship and rejuvenation and relaxation. Again, with all of the wonderful songs out there that have taught us our prophecy for the last 150 years, that seems like it might be nigh unto heresy for me to say that the marriage supper of the Lamb is not actually a meal where you get to sit and gorge yourself without getting full.

The truth is we find Jesus mentioning to us this kingdom is a meal! Matthew 22:2,

The kingdom of heaven is like unto a certain king, which made a marriage feast for his son.

What are **they sitting** down for? Well, that is shorthand. That is another way of saying there will be great hospitality in the kingdom to come and yes, Jesus will be providing hospitality and we will be eating. And so all the way through the New Testament, all the way until we get to the reference of the marriage supper of the Lamb, will there be eating in the kingdom to come? Yes, but that is just shorthand for everything great that happens in the kingdom. Everything great. It's like a meal. It's like reclining at a meal with Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob.

And you might remember that in chapter 6 we're given right in the middle of the Sermon on the Mount, the Lord's Prayer of which part of it is,

Thy kingdom come. Thy will be done in earth, as it is in heaven.

And we found out at the end of chapter 7 there's a day coming when,

Many will say to Me in that day, "Lord, Lord, have we not prophesied in Thy name? And in Thy name have cast out devils? And in Thy name done many wonderful works?"

So, the kingdom is coming and it's pictured like a meal. And really it's just one of the many ways the kingdom is pictured in the Bible. Some people think that all we're going to do is be like a big choir in Heaven and I'm not against that idea, but that's just one of the things we'll be doing.

So, I don't know what's going on in our lives in here tonight. There is a great variety of issues represented with everyone who's anything like me, and it looks like we're all made of flesh and bones. That means that we all have those things that are deep in our heart and we wonder is it passed hope? Well, the centurion says, "No." The leper said, "No." I'm glad I serve a Christ who can be amazed at simple faith.

8:12

But children of the kingdom is an old Hebrew style figure of speech, saying, "the Sons of Israel." You've heard of the "Sons of the Revolution," you've heard of the "Children of Israel," you've heard of all these short-hand things that say "by right of your birth you belong in that group." Jesus says, "By your birth you do *not* belong in this group. As a matter of fact, if that's all you have, then you're not going into the kingdom." God doesn't have any grandchildren. No one gets to go into heaven here because mom was a great lady and dad was a preacher. No one gets to go to heaven because, "My family has always been Christian."

If you wonder if you're going to heaven you are still ignorant of the gospel. If you're doubting your salvation tonight let me make it very clear: it's because you doubt the gospel. Either Christ paid for all your sins or He didn't. And if He died for all your sins then the only thing left for you to do to go to heaven is say, "Thank you," and be on your way. And when you do that, God changes your heart like He's changing mine, day after day, glory to glory. "I don't struggle with that as much as I used to." And it's not drastic. Sometimes I have to look over three years to see, "I really am getting victory over that." But it all started with a day of faith in the work of Jesus on the cross. And if there's ever a day when you doubt your salvation, here's what you're doubting: that Christ paid for your sins. You don't need another prayer, you don't need to retread, you don't need to rededicate.

You must believe the gospel. It hasn't changed. It's not going to change for you. You say, "Well, I don't know how to determine whether or not my children have trusted." I know. It's a frustrating thing, isn't it? So what you do is you keep preaching the gospel. When there's a lack of forgiveness, you preach the gospel. When there's a lack of understanding, you preach the gospel. When there's doubt, you preach the gospel. When they're afraid to die, you preach the gospel. When they're afraid to live, you preach the gospel. When they come to you asking questions, you preach the gospel. In every way, every sin has been crushed on Calvary and we will not serve our sin. But if we sin, 1 John 2:1,

...we have an advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous: 2. And he is the propitiation for our sins: and not for ours only, but also for the sins of the whole world.

The difference between someone who's been cast into outer darkness and the person who sits down with Abraham is one of them believed and one of them didn't.

I'm glad it's that simple. I cannot tell you how many evenings I woke up in the middle of the night wondering if I missed the rapture. I can remember as a sixteen year old, now folks, I can remember walking to my parent's door, I'm talking sixteen, I'm not talking about twelve, I'm not talking about six, I'm talking about sixteen. When I woke up in the middle of the night and I'd hear a siren off in the distance... I heard the old rapture idea, you know where when the rapture happens everyone's missing out of their cars, all the planes crash and all that, so I went and stood by dad's door and if I could hear him snoring I knew I didn't miss the rapture, because I knew dad was saved.

That's what believing praying a prayer saves you will do for you. In five years you'll be doubting your salvation because you wonder, "Did I mean it? Did I turn from all my sin? Did I really mean it?" You're not going to do anything more for your sins than has already been done by Jesus. Hallelujah.

shall be cast out into outer darkness: Inside the house you have full light, full celebration, a meal, a celebration. It's wonderful. It's in the evening of the day, it's at the end of the world and there is nothing but light in the house. But those to whom the door is shut, they are left outside in darkness. And you would think that that would push them to weeping and repentance but it doesn't. It turns them to **weeping and gnashing of teeth**, which is saying that they start cursing the One who put them outside. You would think that if a person wakes up in outer darkness, or a person has the door slammed in their face, you would think that they would say, "Whoa, whoa, whoa, whoa, whoa! What do I have to do to make this right?" That is not the nature of fallen man. The nature of fallen man is to, when they miss out on a privilege, they immediately get angry at the person that rightfully put them outside. And this is a theme in scripture. Just in Matthew, five times, "Wailing and gnashing of teeth," "wailing and gnashing of teeth," "weeping and gnashing of teeth," "weeping and gnashing of teeth," "weeping and gnashing of teeth," and two of those five times you find outer darkness in concert with it. You can say all day every day how unfair you think it is that people get to go to hell, but hear me well, the unfair thing is that Jesus would die for anyone's sins and that they would go to heaven. That is unfair.

The marvel is not that not everyone gets to go to heaven. The marvel is that anyone gets to go to heaven. And Jesus paid the price for the sins of the whole world. So when you find that scoffer that wants to talk about "the pygmy over in wherever that just loves God," they have a wretched heart like Bill Sturm's was, and it will be proven on that day when after a lifetime of living for themselves and

fornicating in their tribes, and hating the God of heaven that created them and gave them life, when they are put out into outer darkness they will gnash their teeth against the One who put them outside. Do not give some sort of quality virtue to the person who will never hear the gospel.

“I don’t like hell.” Well, you want to spend forever with people with unregenerate hearts? It is quite a righteous thing and I can’t think of anyone in this room that I hate bad enough that I want for you to go to hell. It doesn’t matter what I think. It doesn’t matter what you think. It matters what the owner of the house thinks. And He’ll shut the door on those whom He wants outside.

8:13

And Jesus said unto the centurion, “Go thy way; and as thou hast believed, so be it done unto thee.” And his servant was healed in the selfsame hour. If Jesus were against war at all times, at all costs, this would have been a good time to tell the centurion. Two centurions in the book of Matthew: one of them is standing at the foot of the cross giving us a profession of Jesus being the Son of God and this is the other one. I would think that if Jesus was this pacifist that always hated war, and always hated the armies, and always hated government, and always thought that we should just sit in a circle and wear tie-dye and smoke hemp and wear flip-flops and sing “Kumbaya,” this would have been a great time to tell the centurion. “You know, now that I’m here, I think I’ve earned a hearing. I just healed your servant. Let me tell you about war. Can’t you give peace a chance?”