

Matthew 20-01-12b

Let's pick up our study now. We're looking at Luke, uh, at Matthew chapter eight, which is also recorded. Uh, this, this cleansing of the, of the leper is recorded in Luke chapter five verses 12 through 16 and in Mark chapter one verses 40 through 45.

And just to reinforce the idea because the healing narratives are wonderful in themselves. It's the compassion of the Lord Jesus on the sick and afflicted around about him. Uh, it is a testimony to God's power and dominance over disease and the things that cause disease.

And it's an encouragement to us that when we suffer physical maladies, God can sustain us through them or deliver us out of them. But the power of God is, uh, easily, uh, capable of, of dealing with these situations. But in this particular case, we're looking at the purpose of this narrative.

Why is this miracle put here? And we touched on it at the end of the first session, but, uh, you can gain a little bit of perspective on this. If you flip over to the next gospel, Mark chapter one, uh, let's read the account here. I was careful to be a somewhat discreet when we covered the gospel of Mark and the gospel of Luke that are available in our audio archives.

Um, I've generally adopted the policy when we work through a gospel, we've done Mark, Luke, and John to respect that narrative and its unity and really not sample the other gospels and, and get additional information. But since Matthew is, uh, our last gospel excursion, I am going to do that. And I'm going to compare and contrast the other gospels that we've already looked at as we go through Matthew, because it's fascinating on the one hand, especially to people like me who are just interested in the way a narrative works.

Um, there, there's a wonderful book. I think I've recommended it before. I know my brother Matthew has a copy, uh, that's called Mark as story.

It's just a little thin paperback book. Mark's a relatively short gospel, but if you want a really interesting perspective on how God used the inspired authors and the inspired text to convey content and to Mark what's important, get it? That's for Dan to Mark what's important. Um, or what's important to Mark.

Uh, Mark as story is a wonderful book. Uh, you can find copy for two bucks on Amazon used books or whatever. Uh, if you want a really interesting read something to, to, uh, help engage your spiritual gears in reflection, because most of what we're going to see in the gospel of Matthew is in the gospel of Mark, but it's called Mark as story.

I forget the author, but you can find it. There's only one book named that. Anyway, if you

look at Mark, notice that it begins it at one, one the beginning of the gospel of Jesus Christ, the son of God.

And then you have John the Baptist and you, uh, through verse 11, then you have the temptation of Jesus by Satan. And you remember that there's the three temptations, turn these rocks into bread, jump off the temple, uh, bow down and worship me the way the lepers just worship Christ. And I'll give you all the kingdoms of the world.

And you don't have to go to the cross just as sent to, you know, seed your authority to me. I'll give you all of that stuff. No cross, no, no horrible thing, you know, it's switch, switch sides and you can have the kingdoms.

But Mark summarizes that all in just two verses, 12 and 13 spirit drove into the wilderness. He was there in the wilderness, 40 days tempted by Satan. It was with wild beasts angels minister to him.

We're all done. Mark wastes no time. Now, Mark, as you may remember is, uh, we're confident he is the amanuensis for the apostle Peter.

Now John Mark, uh, was associated with the apostle Peter. And as Peter would recount his experiences as one of the top three disciples of the Lord Jesus, Mark wrote this stuff down. And so this is sort of the gospel of Peter.

Well, you Peter is an impulsive guy. He doesn't trivialize. He doesn't really mess around with a lot of detail.

The Lord's on the shore. I'm going to jump in and swim. And, and that's the kind of man that he is.

So I'm sure that, you know, the, the value of the longer version of the, uh, temptations is not lost on Peter, but he just dispenses with it too. Yep. The Lord went out tempted, survived it.

Angels ministered to him. Now he's ready to rock and roll. So then right after that, uh, John has been put in prison.

Jesus comes to Galilee preaching the gospel of the kingdom of God. Notice this is one 14 of Mark. He's preaching the gospel of the kingdom, the good news of the kingdom.

That's the detailed summary of our sermon on the Mount. So to speak, time is fulfilled. The kingdom of God is at hand.

Change your mind and put your faith in this good news. Then you have this, uh, 16 through 20, where he sees Simon and Andrew, uh, by the sea, they're fishermen says, follow me. I'll make you fishers of men.

So they left their nets and followed him. Peter dispenses with all of John's, uh, account of the wedding feast in Cana in John chapter two, all of the meeting Jesus and seeing him identified by John the Baptist, behold, the lamb of God that takes away the sin of the world, uh, spending the day with him, one brother going and finding another, here's a guy under a tree. Can we see a man who, you know, that all of that is, is dispensed with.

And so if you only had the gospel of Mark, you would think, well, this is, this is a Calvinistic effectual call. Jesus walks by and sees a guy about his business and with no knowledge and no previous exposure whatsoever, follow me. And like automatons, they just drop their nets and robotically start walking after Jesus.

He just went into a highway and byway and compelled them to come and they came. And it's not that at all. And, uh, it's an interesting argument for, uh, almost everybody in the textual critical world thinks Mark is the first gospel and that, uh, Matthew and Luke drew upon it.

And then they drew upon another, uh, common source that's no longer extant that they call quell or cue the cue source and the Mark source, because almost everything in Mark is also contained in Matthew and Luke. It's just been reworked. And then there are things that Matthew and Luke have in common that they seem to be drawing on a common source.

That's not in Mark, et cetera, et cetera, et cetera. But one of the interesting things is if Mark is in fact the first gospel, it seems to assume that, you know, some things in its account, it's not trying to tell you that Peter and Andrew and James and John just sort of mysteriously and magically dropped their nets and the, and followed the Pied Piper, not over the cliff, but away from the sea, that, that they just, Oh, well, when Jesus calls, I, with no prior knowledge, this gospel assumes, and it may just be a product of inspiration, but somebody here knows that you're going to get the rest of the story elsewhere. Either it is relying on your knowledge of oral tradition or relying on your knowledge of the other gospels because it is manifestly not the intent.

No point is made whenever there's a point made in scripture, you find it reinforced and, and other threads in the warp and the woof of the fabric are going to make that point. There's nothing that says, well, just wait for Jesus to give you an authoritative call. And you'll just drop what you're doing and go with no real responsibility of your own.

It never makes that point. So there is the tacit implication here that, you know, that this is not their first meeting. He's just saying Jesus is going by the sea.

I'll make you fishers of men. And so Peter, Andrew, James, and John, and, uh, then you come to verse 21. Jesus went into Capernaum and immediately on the Sabbath, he entered the synagogue and taught a teaching episode, but not the teaching on the hill.

He's in the synagogue in Capernaum on the Sabbath, completely different setting, right? They're astonished at his teaching for he taught as one having authority and not as the scribes. That is the same notation we have in Matthew after our chapter five, six, and seven, right? Taught as authority. And they're with authority is not as the scribes.

They're here in verse 23. There's a man in their synagogue with what unclean spirit. He's not a blind man.

He's not a withered hand man. He's not a lame man. He's not a deaf man.

He's unclean. Interestingly, he is in the synagogue with an unclean spirit. What does this tell you? It's possible to be in the synagogue and have an unclean spirit.

In fact, most of the people in the synagogue have an unclean spirit. In fact, most of the people in the whole religious hierarchy have an unclean spirit, but in Mark's telling under the inspiration of the Holy spirit, here's Jesus teaching with authority in the synagogue and Jesus presence there and his communication there is going to be the means of the opportunity for being purged of an unclean spirit. You see the narrative flow in Mark here teaching with authority.

You've got uncleanness and Jesus has the power to remove it. When we see uncleanness in ourselves, looking unto Jesus, the author and the finisher of our faith, the alpha and the omega, the beginning and the end of our faith, that's where we look for power. That's where we look for cleansing.

Neither is there deliverance in any other. There is none other name under heaven given among men whereby we must be delivered. When you see the word saved, if you really want to catch the import of it, saved has too much religious baggage.

Just substitute delivered because in Greek, Soterion, Soterios, Soter, all of the Soter words, that's what they mean. This is deliverance. When you say salvation, you think I'm not going to hell.

It's deliverance. And in Greek it has the same multiple applications. You need context to figure out what are you being delivered from.

It might be from eternal judgment, but it can also be from anything else we need delivering from any kind of deliverance we need. That's where it comes from either directly or indirectly. So, uh, you have that story, uh, be quiet and come out of him.

The unclean spirit had convulsed him and cried out with a loud voice. Jesus says, be quiet. The spirit cries out.

This is your disobedient rebellious spirits. He has to comply with Jesus authority, but he just goes to the very limits. Jesus says, be quiet.

And so he cries out with a loud voice. Then he's quiet. If you've ever messed with rebellious children, ones especially that are not your own, they'll just push you to the absolute limit of disobedience.

It just, it's just a sassy attitude, just a rascal attitude. That's what this spirit has. So they're amazed and they ask themselves in verse 27 of Mark one, what is this? What new doctrine is this with authority? He commands unclean spirits and they obey.

There is authority in the teaching. There is authority in the healing. That's the same pattern we're seeing in Matthew, but it's done in a different way.

It's done using a different healing episode, which is coming up in Mark chapter one. Notice after this, the mother-in-law is healed and this is a fever. And Jesus with a touch heals that in 31 verse 31, he came, come and he came and took her by the hand and lifted her up.

He doesn't use a word here. This is a touch. When he takes her by the hand and lifts her up, she's well, it's the touch.

Jesus can exercise his authority for healing. He can use his contact, which doesn't have an authority component except very indirectly, but it is the focus here is on contact. He is present.

He is close. He takes her by the hand and he pulls her up. He takes her weight, pulls her up out of the reclining position there, the bed fast position.

He reaches out and touches her. She didn't take his hand. He took her hand and lifted her up.

And so this is, this is another aspect. Do you have contact with the Lord Jesus? What do we know in the church age about this? What happens? We find this out in John chapter 14, 13 and 14 when Jesus is in the upper room discourse and what does he say? If you have my word and keep it, I and my father will come and make our home. Revelation 3.20 I stand at the door and knock.

If you'll open the door, I will come in. We've got contact. We've got presence and that personal presence.

It's one thing to appeal to the Lord Jesus in his authority to remove our own cleanness. We also have the advantage and the opportunity and the potential for his contact, his presence, and his touch in our lives. That requires cultivation.

He's not going to come into a dirty house. If he cleanses us by purging, remember the story of the demons that leave? Jesus tells it later and a demon returns and finds the house clean and swept, but there's no occupant. And so he moves in with seven of his

friends and the guys in, you know, seven fold worse shape than he was when he, when the unclean spirit was driven out.

We need cleansing, but then we need to do something positive to fill that void. If we purge out the leaven, what are you going to sit there in its place? Something needs to take its place or there's going to be a vacuum into which even worse things will be drawn. So it's the touch.

And then in verses 32 through 34, all who were sick and demon possessed came and the city was gathered at the door. He healed many who were sick and various diseases cast out. Many demons did not allow the demons to speak because they knew him.

And they are trying to upset the sequence of God's plan. Jesus has a plan and a strategy and a sequence for things to happen. And you don't get the full revelation of who Jesus is.

I know who you are, the Holy one of God. It's not time for that yet. God is manifesting the presence and power and authority of his son in a particular way, in a particular sequence.

And it is not to be messed with. And when Satan's minions try to mess up that sequence and mess up that revelation, Jesus silences them. He tells them do not speak.

Do you remember in our story, in Matthew chapter eight, Jesus' instructions to the leper include say nothing to anyone. Don't say anything to anyone, right? It's not time for that. There is a different kind of witness that needs to be made than your verbal testimony.

And by the way, even though Jesus said be clean and his leprosy leaves, he's not ceremonially clean yet. And until he is ceremonially clean pronounced clean by the priest, Jesus says, don't talk. Not only is it a strategic point, but it's a technical point that even though you are physically clean, you are not clean under the law until you are declared clean by God's structure through the priests.

There is authority from Jesus that removes the disease, but there's authority still granted to the corrupt and, and somewhat questionable priesthood. But Jesus says the guy is in the office and under the law, you're not clean until the priest declares you clean. And you're not qualified to say anything to anyone until you're clean.

And you're not clean until God's law says you're clean. Even the son of God says, you're still, I'm not setting aside the law. I'm fulfilling it.

So you're clean. Go fulfill the law. We'll get to that same thing here.

So he tells the demons not to speak, even though they know him, wouldn't you think, wow, this will really impress the crowds. Even the demons believe in trouble, but God

doesn't need the testimony of the unclean and fallen spirits. In fact, it's counterproductive.

So in the morning, having risen a long while before daylight, he went out and departed to a solitary place and there he prayed. And this is going to be coming up in our Matthew context, but it's given here, Simon and those who are with him searched for him. When they found him, they said, everyone is looking for you.

Isn't this great? Jesus has begun his public ministry and he's done these healings. Now he's got the attention of the press. He is trending on social media, right? What does he say? Let's leave.

You're never going to get this in big church, popular entertainment, Christianity, as it is practiced today in this country. When crowds come, they're not going to say, Oh, let's, let's shut the doors and go have a private Bible study with a handful of us. Or let's close this church and go start a new one in another town.

Once the people are coming, we've got it made. Now we're, we've got a budget. We can expand.

We can add more to the light show. He says, let us go to the next towns that I may preach there also because for this purpose, I have come forth. He doesn't say, let's wait for more people to come so that I can heal them.

He has declared his message to these people and he's done. And the fact that there's a huge popular response to come and see him, he knows what they're coming for and they're not coming to hear the message again. They're coming to be dazzled by the signs.

And he says, everybody's looking for me. Let's leave. Notice they don't say everybody is listening to you.

They say everybody is looking for you. They're not listening to you. He says, I need to go where people will listen.

I need to go preach. So he's preaching in the synagogues throughout Galilee and casting out demons. Notice preaching and casting out demons, preaching and purging uncleanness.

Purging the uncleanness is what provides the first step to following the preaching, comporting their behavior to the preaching. Now in verse 40, we come to the story that is in Matthew chapter eight. Now a leper came to him, imploring him, kneeling down to him and saying to him, if you are willing, you can make me clean.

Then Jesus detail, not in Matthew moved with compassion. You see this several times in

Mark and in Luke moved with compassion. Notice when it said worshiped in Matthew, we have the details of that worship.

He is imploring him and kneeling down and saying to him, this is repeated more than once. Lord, if you will, you can make me clean. I know you can make me clean.

You've got the authority to make me clean. If you will declare me clean, I will be clean. If you cleanse me, I will be clean.

Lord, if you're just willing. And Jesus has compassion on him. Jesus is not robotic.

He's not insensitive. He's not clinical. He's not just a complete left brain.

I must get the plan done person. Jesus has emotions. Emotions are a healthy component of life.

Nothing wrong with them. We're going to be seeing this in our song of Solomon study song of Solomon. There is no more emotional book in the Bible than song of Solomon.

There is no more raw, exposed, intimate emotion than you find in the song of Solomon. Jesus is emotional. He's going to cry.

He is going to be moved with compassion on a number of occasions. And this is one of them. First one in Mark, if you're willing, you can make me clean.

Jesus moved with compassion, stretched out his hand and touched him. Not a detail we have in Matthew, but remember in Mark, he's already reached out his hand and touched someone hasn't he? Peter's mother-in-law. And so you see that Mark has an interest, that the story as it is told in Mark has an interest in the presence and the contact.

And when you have contact and close intimacy, you also read each other's feelings, right? And so feelings are a component of Jesus presence here in this story. And in compassion, he reaches out his hand. And this of course, for an unclean, defiling person, if you go back to Leviticus chapter 13, I wish we had time to go there this morning.

We may do it, or we may not. It just depends on how far I get. But if I don't go back and read Leviticus 13, and the components of the law that deal with skin disease and with corruption that is of a visible nature.

This is not the modern day leprosy. All the thing about the leper colony in Hawaii and the rest of it, forget all that. This is not what is called leprosy in the modern day.

This is any, this could be scabies, this could be hives, this could be eczema, seborrhea, psoriasis. This could be anything you treat with Selsun Blue. This could be the kind of thing that you have to take medicine for now that gives you purple blotches.

Any visible skin problems. It could be super bad acne. Anything that created blisters, bumps, non-normal skin, that's what leprosy means.

It's, ooh, you've got a skin problem. And interestingly, if you read Leviticus, you find that these folks are not allowed within the city limits. And if you go to the Luke account over in Luke chapter five, keep your finger in Mark chapter one.

You can lose Matthew for the moment. Keep Mark chapter one and turn over to Luke chapter five. Luke chapter five, first verse.

Multitude pressed about him to hear the word of God. And you have the episode of letting down the net. You'll be fishers of men.

You come to verse 12. It happened. Now here's a detail that wasn't in Matthew and wasn't in Mark.

It happened when he was in a certain city. In Matthew, if you, if you were trying to take it literally and consecutively, as soon as he comes down from the mountain here, this guy comes up to him and you seem to be at the foot of the mountain. But this is, it happened when he was in a certain city that behold, a man who was full of leprosy and Luke being a physician describes it in a bit more detail.

The guy is covered with this stuff. It's not just acne on his face and his shoulders. Maybe he's got some kind of a problem all over.

He's covered with it. Full of leprosy. He saw Jesus fell on his face.

Now we saw the guy kneel and implore in Mark. We saw him worship in Matthew here. It explicitly says he fell on his face and implored him saying, Lord, if you are willing, you can make me clean.

The one thing that is perfectly consistent across all three gospels is what the man said. He doesn't say, please make me clean in all three cases. The important central component is Lord.

I know that it is up to you in the same way that Jesus in the garden is going to say to his father. I know that it's up to you. If you are willing, this cup can pass from me.

And in that case, it was a necessary part of the father's plan that Jesus suffer here. The man acknowledges that it's in the Lord's purview to grant or deny this request if you are willing. And it is an acknowledgement of the overriding authority in Jesus plan and the overriding authority in his purpose.

If you're willing, you can make me clean. Jesus put out his hand and touched him. We had this in Luke and Mark rather saying, I am willing be cleansed.

Same words in all three gospels, be cleansed, not be healed. There's no difference. Immediately the leprosy left him and he charged him to tell no one, but go and show yourself to the priest and make an offering for your cleansing as a testimony to them, just as Moses commanded.

So it's so interesting that what Moses commanded featured prominently in the teaching on the hill, the sermon on the Mount. And yet we have a different context in Mark and in Luke. And we have a different context in Luke, but it is manifestly and explicitly the exact same healing.

So now let's quickly in the last five minutes of our study here, let's look at the results. Let's look at them first in Luke and we'll work our way back through Mark to Matthew. So here we are in Luke and in verse 15 of Luke five, after Jesus cleanses him and gives him this instruction, go show yourself to the priest.

Luke says, however, the report went around concerning him all the more and great multitudes came together to hear, to be healed by him of their infirmities. Notice just as in Mark where he says, we need to leave. Peter says, everybody's looking for you.

And he says, we got to get out of here. Same thing here. And it tells you in Luke that the multitudes are coming to be healed of their infirmities.

What's missing? What's missing? What have we seen in our Matthew context? Here is the teaching. You assent to the teaching. You agree with the policy, but you don't find the power to accomplish it.

And you go to the Lord Jesus to be cleansed in the light of the teaching, right? What's missing here for all of these multitudes coming to be healed? They haven't done the first part. They're not falling down in worshiping. This is the next big band-aid.

This is the new ibuprofen. This is the, this is the magic serum for hepatitis C. You get the shot and, and you're cured. Here's the remedy for your ailment.

And there's no component of recognition of authority. There's no component of worship. There is no component of understanding the essentials of the law as Jesus authoritatively re presents it represents it.

Right? So, and this is a negative thing. They, they great multitudes came together to hear and to be healed by him of their infirmities. But he himself often withdrew into the wilderness and prayed.

So when Luke says they come together to hear, now it says he himself often withdrew into the wilderness and prayed. It doesn't say that he left these great multitudes, but it says he had to get quiet time by himself to deal with the multitudes. That's, that's what's attached to the story in Luke.

It doesn't say that it was necessarily a negative thing because you have that component to hear and to be healed. When you go back to Mark chapter one, verse 45 offer the cleansing the things Moses commanded as a testimony to them. However, he went out and began to proclaim it freely.

This is the disobedience of the cleansed leper and to spread the matter so that Jesus could no longer openly enter the city, but was outside and you indirectly get the detail that Luke includes in the verse that he was in a city and Jesus could no longer openly enter the city, but was outside in deserted places and they came to him from every direction. So different emphasis in Mark and it's the disobedience and the openly proclaiming it sort of, you know, the demons are more compliant than this man is. When Jesus tells the demons to be quiet and not identify him, they shut up.

But the man openly proclaims him and it's negative. Now return to our passage in Matthew chapter eight. What is the aftermath here? See that you tell no one, go your way, show yourself to the priest, offer the gift that Moses commanded as a testimony to them.

Then you have Jesus entering Capernaum. If you remember, he's already done the Capernaum teaching in Mark and when he goes to Capernaum, this is where he finds Peter's mother-in-law and so on. After he teaches in the synagogue and addresses the man that has the unclean spirit in the Capernaum synagogue.

Here, Capernaum same episode is after this story. So it is purposely relocated and we want to catch the reason for that relocation. And now we know what it is.

There is the presentation of righteousness, recognition that we're not able to meet that standard, but hearing and knowing the standard is first and then looking to the Lord Jesus for the power to comply and to fulfill. When he says strive to enter by the narrow gate, walk that narrow way. There's a lot of people going the wrong way.

We need help to walk that way. We need help to identify that gate. We can learn what it is.

We can hear it described and then we need power to implement it. Lord, if you are willing, you can make me clean so that I can endeavor to fulfill the teaching in five, six, and seven. That's the thing to remember.

When you think about the Sermon on the Mount and you think about doing to others as you would have others do unto you, there's actually a higher standard. Do unto others as the Lord would have you do unto others, right? We're actually distancing ourselves from our needs, from our requirements, for what we will eat, what we will drink, what we will wear, justice from others. We can do unto others as we wish they would do to us, but we're not worried about it when they don't.

That's all in that teaching section. But the power to accomplish this has not yet come to Israel because the king has not yet come and the kingdom has not yet come. Thy kingdom come.

It's not here yet. It's in the prayer. For us, the power that drives the kingdom of the son has come.

And so it is a matter for us of listening to the teaching. We come like the multitudes in Luke to hear and to be healed, to understand the standard and then be given the power to comply, to be freed from what we cannot free ourselves from, to be cured from what we cannot cure. We have that now.

It's the Holy Spirit of God never mentioned in the Sermon on the Mount because they didn't have access to it. We do. Presence for the Lord Jesus to reach out and touch us with his hand, to sit down at the table and eat a meal with us.

Not mentioned there, mentioned in the upper room, mentioned in the epistles. Why? Because we have that now. So what is the answer to fulfilling the righteous requirement of the law? Paul says the righteous requirement of the law is fulfilled in us who do not walk after the flesh, but after the spirit.

Romans eight, the righteous requirement of the law, the righteous requirement of Matthew chapter five, six, and seven is met in us when we do not walk after the flesh, but after the spirit. That's the wonderful gift that's been given to us. That is the power by which what we hear becomes what we do.

And it's a wonderful juxtaposition of material here at the end of seven and the beginning of eight in Matthew to make that point for us. Well, we'll pick up our study next time with the centurion servant, another fascinating emphasis on the authority of the Lord Jesus that the centurion recognizes, even as many in Israel do not. We'll pick up at that point next time, but let's close here in a word of prayer.

Father, we thank you for the wonderful truth of your word. It's inspired power to expose the innermost thoughts and intents of our heart to enable us to judge ourselves so that we are not judged, to motivate us and encourage us to look to the Lord Jesus as the one who has made our faith possible and has made the presence and power of the comforter possible. Your presence and his can join the Holy Spirit in our souls to give us that contact for application and for fulfillment of this righteousness that is so clearly described by the Lord Jesus himself.

We pray that as we reflect on these things, your Holy Spirit will energize them and activate them in our thinking, enable us to see clearly, motivate us and strengthen us to reach that righteousness that is reflected in your right hand as you sustain us through these wonderful provisions that are all available because of the wonderful sacrificial work

of the Lord Jesus on our behalf. We pray these things in his name. Amen.