

Miracles of Jesus 12-07-15b

We pick up our study now by way of the demonized mute man in Matthew chapter 9, the end of Matthew chapter 9. We're looking at this section that really defines for us the early phase of the ministry of the Lord Jesus Christ to the people of Israel. He begins his public ministry and his proclamation is the kingdom. And we have this great inclusion that we saw, very easily, clearly defined in Matthew 4.23 and concluding at the end of chapter 9, verse 35, preaching and healing.

There is a clear message that God is ready to work, ready to fulfill His promises, ready to manifest His presence and His power and His glory. And that message is authenticated, it is reinforced, it is demonstrated, it is copiously made manifest through the healing and the miracles that Jesus performed, always accompanying and reinforcing, supplementing, illustrating, manifesting the message, the preaching, the teaching in the synagogues, on the hillsides, from the boat and so on. And at the center of this we find the reaction.

What is the reaction? Well, first of all, what is the reaction to his preaching? We looked at chapter 7, verses 28 and 29. People are astonished, they marvel, they're wowed, they're impressed. How do people get impressed today? What impresses us? Well, shows like Dancing with the Stars and American Idol and The Voice.

I haven't seen anything but the commercials for most of these shows, but my impression is that people are impressed and want to tune in week by week by the abilities that people have to move their legs around according to a particular pattern and dance and stay in step with somebody else and not trip them or kill them or otherwise maim and wound them on the dance floor, or they sing. And it seems to me in the last 15 or 20 years there's just been this huge emphasis on singing, making somebody an overnight sensation because of their singing, finding unknown people that can sing, and common and plain looking women in England, but they can sing, or here's some little girl that's four and a half years old, but she can sing. She sounds like somebody that's much older.

And so this is you giving voice to a thing, and everybody says, wow, listen to that. How can such a big voice come out of such a tiny person? How can somebody so young seem to sing with such maturity? And of course they've just listened for hours and hours, and they're emulating the experience of maturity that they have heard from others, and they don't necessarily have it themselves, but we're impressed with talent. America's got talent.

The other thing we're impressed with is freakish, silly stuff. You know, America's funny home videos and all of the offspring and going all the way back to candid camera. It surprises me when I, on my phone, one of the few Internet things I have figured out how to do with my phone is to get the news.

And so I hit a button on my phone, and it will go get the current news. And it says top stories, and it will show me a couple of those. And the very next category, they put it there according to the popularity, is oddly enough.

We like odd things. And I purposely don't push oddly enough, because I think I'm not going to be pandered to. I'm not going to be distracted by these people, because it's just bubble gum for the mind.

So there's somebody's cat that, you know, barks like a dog. I don't know what it is, what these oddly enough things are, but they're just peculiarities, weird things. Here's a guy who was found hanging upside down in his own chimney and was there for a couple of days or whatever it may be.

But to me, it's useless information. It's entertaining, but it's just bubble gum. It's just got a little sugar in it, and it occupies you.

It's kind of like a lot of series television. All it does is just burn time. Do I really have the need to get from, you know, seven o'clock to nine o'clock, or do I really have the need to get from 12.15 to 12.30, just burning my time away, and I have nothing to show for it? Entertain me, stimulate me, make me laugh, make me chuckle.

Well, what do I have to show for that? If you heard a really funny joke or watched a really funny story a year and a half ago, what have you got to show for it now? That's, you know, but pay no attention to me. That's personal opinion. I'm just sort of a stick in the mud when it comes to that.

But a little of it goes a long way. Everybody needs a spice of life, but it's like seasoning, humor and entertainment ought to be seasoning. They shouldn't be the main course.

We don't live on Cheetos, much as we like the way they taste. We don't live on cotton candy. You know, there ought to be meat and a little dessert once in a while, a little treat, a little entertainment.

It's great, but there's a balance. So what is our response? What is our reaction? What do we look for? Well, when Jesus said any of these things, the people were astonished. Wow, that's really something.

And it seems to be as far as they got. The Pharisees see this as a threat. So you flip the page over to Matthew 9, verse 3, and Jesus in the course of healing the paralytic man that was let down through the roof says, Son, be of good cheer.

Your sins are forgiven you. One of the things that happened during the Revolutionary War is that there was an initial conscription by the colonies, and they had their men sign one-year enlistments. And they came as colonial militia.

And these separate colonial militias from the various colonies retained their own uniforms, their own identity. And they said, General Washington, will you please organize these guys and be the supreme commander of these colonial militias? And so he did. Well, all of their enlistments ended at the same time.

And his army was about to completely disappear. And the British are all over the place. There are ships sailing out there, and they're occupying New York, occupying Boston, and so on.

And all these enlistments are ending, and Washington is sweating thinking, I can't just go out there on my horse with my sword and say, Begone ye British. He needs men. Well, these guys have been suffering along and getting picked off and suffering defeats.

They didn't have a lot of big victories after Lexington and Concord. It kind of took a turn for the worse. And so they managed to end it.

By the way, they weren't getting paid, and conditions were terrible, and sanitation was a problem, and kept trying to keep smallpox from breaking out. Washington was very farsighted in getting them inoculated. But he made great pleas and gave speeches.

And with his personal presence and his charisma and his appeal to their nature, to the future of the country and so on, he was able to get – he needed a force of about 20,000 men. The most he ever had under the first phase with these colonial militias was just over 15,000. But he almost immediately started losing some of those guys to desertion and disease.

And it got all the way down to where he only had about 9,000. Well, he made an appeal. He said, I know your enlistments are up, but think about your families, think about the future, and so on.

He got guys to reenlist. Well, this time they reenlisted, and it was the Continental Army. They're not colonial militias anymore.

These new enlistments were in the Continental Army. And one of the things he did is these enlistments expired on what would be my birthday, December 31st. And on January 1st, the new enlistments picked up in the Continental Army, a whole new thing.

And any offenses, any infractions, any imprisonments and fines and office hours, whatever you want to call it, the penalties for bad behavior, guys that were – all of that was forgiven. There was an amnesty. Washington said, if you come back and reenlist, I'll take you, and all is forgiven.

Doesn't matter what you've done. Slapped an officer, ran under fire, stole a biscuit, whatever you did, it's forgiven. You start fresh.

Well, you know, you could be hung in the British Navy for stealing food of your shipmates. All is forgiven. Well, this is what Jesus is proclaiming.

The kingdom is coming in, son. Sins under the law, the old economy, sin is forgiven. Jesus is declaring forgiveness of sin, and He has not gone to the cross yet.

What specifically is forgiven? Does it change the guy's identity or his guilt or his, you know, different forms of separation from God and lack of things that are part of that barrier we've studied here on Friday nights? When He says, son, your sin is forgiven you, what's He talking about? The penalty, the consequence in time, in life. Clean slate. You can start over today, and part of that appears to be this living death of leprosy, and it's emblematic.

It's a picture of the nation of Israel itself. We saw this when we looked at the miracle. The nation is in a living death.

Through the forgiveness of sin, there is new life, and the living death leaves. Now He walks out whole. He's not paralyzed.

He's not leprous. Whatever these guys have, this guy's paralyzed. He's unable to move.

Now He is free. He can act. He can obey.

He can move. He can do things. Son, your sins are forgiven you.

So that you may know that the Son of Man has power on earth to forgive sins, authority on earth to forgive sins, as a part of the proclamation of the kingdom. That's what helps us when we look at this inclusio. So, what is the response in chapter 9, verse 3, when Jesus declares, son, be of good cheer.

Your sins are forgiven you. Your personal sins. Number one in the barrier that we looked at.

The scribes said within themselves, this man blasphemes. Blasphemy. I'm not paying any attention to the manifest authority in the teaching.

I'm not paying any attention to the manifest authority in the healing, because this starts out being a teaching, right? No healing has taken place on this occasion, but the sons of the scribes know Jesus' reputation. They call Him a blasphemer. So that's their reaction.

But in chapter 9, verse 8, when the multitude saw it, saw what? Saw the paralyzed man walk, they marveled, and they glorified God who had given such power to men. Now, they haven't made the connection. Jesus says, the kingdom is here.

The kingdom is upon you. This is the authority of God erupting, manifest into the national life of Israel. And they say, wow, I sure see God's power.

It's got to be from God, but He's given it to men. It's just here. They're not drawing any sort of conclusion.

The disciples at least say, what manner of man is this that this authority is invoked by Him? These people just say, wow, isn't it great that somebody can do this? And it's a lower case s. So the multitude saw it, they marveled. So we have marveling in 7.28, they're astonished. We have marveling in 9.8, and this is looking at His teaching and His miracles.

You look back in 4.24, His fame goes all around the region, and they bring in people, and they follow Him. Great multitudes followed Him in 24 and 25 of 4. So what are they doing? They're talking, they're taking advantage. Hey, I can get Aunt Lucy healed here.

I'll bring her in and her gouty foot will be restored or her bad ear or whatever it might be. Everybody that had any kind of a problem, they brought in and said, hey, here's the fix-it clinic, free repairs on your body. So fame, people are talking about all over the place, hey, there's a guy who can heal.

They bring people in and get healed, and there are people who want to watch Him do this. Pretty tame agricultural existence there. Here's a guy that does magic repairs on people.

Let's follow Him around and watch. So great multitudes followed Him. And the juxtaposition there in verse 25 makes us think they're following because of the miracles.

It doesn't say He preached in their synagogues and many came to synagogue every Sabbath. But when He's healing and people are bringing Him on, hey, what's He going to heal today? Let's go watch. It's like live television.

So that's the reaction. In chapter 8, verse 18, we're reminded again that they followed. Great multitudes are all around Jesus, and that's why He's going to depart to the other side.

Why would He depart when the great multitudes are there? Apparently, He's not happy with the reason that they are there. They're just gawkers. They're rubberneckers.

This is what slows down traffic when there's a flashing light on the other side of the highway. So annoying. Somebody has run into the guardrail and the cop has pulled up behind him and got his lights going.

Well, now my side of the highway that has no obstruction has an obstruction because people have to slow down. Is there any blood? Is there heads rolling around on the ground? How bad was it? Everybody wants to slow down and look. They're just gawkers.

In fact, I saw a huge wreck on my side the other day. There had been a little minor thing

happen on the northbound lane, and in the southbound lane, a guy had been looking at that and had plowed smack into the back of somebody else. So there was a three-car pile up on my side as a result of rubbernecking, looking at some guy with a flat on the other side.

I think this is why Jesus decides to go to the other side. Look at chapter 8, verse 16. When evening had come, they brought to him many who were demon-possessed.

He cast out the spirits with a word, healed all who were sick. They're availing themselves. Hey, let's get it fixed up.

Let's watch. That's great. In 18-22, Jesus saw the multitudes, gave a command to depart, and there are people who, when it comes to actually following for the right reasons, start to come up with excuses.

It's fun to watch Him heal people, but a certain scribe came and said to Him, Teacher, I will follow you wherever you go. Jesus said, Well, just bear in mind what the accommodations are here. It's not like I'm living in luxury.

And He seemed to be reading the man's thoughts. This scribe says, Hey, it's one thing to be a scribe of the law, but maybe I can get sort of a promotion here. I'll be a scribe for Jesus, and when He's famous, I'll be famous.

And Jesus says, Look, I don't even have a home. I don't have a place to lay my head. Another of His disciples came to Him, Lord, let me first go and bury my father.

When it comes to actually, you know, I'm a disciple, but I've got some business to attend to at home. I like to kind of be part-time. I've got some other stuff.

Let me do this first, and then I'll follow. And Jesus says, Follow Me, and let the dead bury their own dead. Follow for the right reasons.

If you go to the parallel in Luke, chapter 9, verse 57-62, there's a third conversation along this same line, where the disciples meet. The guy says, Let me first go and say goodbye to everybody at home. And Jesus says, No one, having put his hand to the plow and looking back, is worthy.

Verse 62 of chapter 9 in Luke, No one, having put his hand to the plow and looking back, is fit for what? The kingdom of God. The issue is the kingdom. The guy that said, Lord, let me first go and bury my father, look up there in verse 60 in Luke, let the dead bury their own dead.

But you go and preach the kingdom of God. And we tend to miss the fact that he's not saying preach the Messiah, preach salvation, preach righteousness by faith. It's the kingdom.

This is God's program for Israel. You've got to start on that foundation. Don't jump ahead.

A lot of bad theology has happened because people are trying to work on advanced things when they haven't got their basics straight. It's one of the reasons we've spent our last three weeks going back and looking at our salvation and what God's purpose is in it. So back to Matthew 8, verse 27, it says, The men marveled, saying, Who can this be, that even the winds in the sea obey him? That's the disciples marveling.

Chapter 9, verse 8, The multitudes saw it, and they marveled, and glorified God, who had given such power to men. Chapter 9, verse 33, They brought to him a demon possessed. The demon cast out, and the man speaks.

The multitudes marveled. It was never seen like this in Israel. Isn't this marvelous? Wowie zowie.

Cool. 3-D. Isn't it great? Listen to that 5-1 surround sound.

Look at that high definition. Look at what I can do in this video game. Look at my new phone.

Look at my new car. Look at my new flat screen TV. We love to be impressed, don't we? Well, even in the study of Scripture.

Wow. Look at that thing I hadn't seen before in the Word of God. It's great.

Nothing wrong with being impressed, but that shouldn't be where we stop. The problem in Israel is that's as far as they got, was marveling. They didn't draw any conclusions.

They didn't put two and two together. They didn't say, well, so what? If this man is able to do these things, if God has given this power to men, if this man in particular not only can do these things, but listen to his message, the kingdom is here, what should I do? How should we then live? One of the greatest book titles and one of the sorriest disappointments when you open the book and start reading it, Francis Schaeffer. Great book title.

How should we then live? Well, how do we live in the light of these things? That's the question we have to ask ourselves. They talked about it. Look at chapter 9, verse 26.

The report of the event. When the girl is raised from the dead, the report went out through all the region. They're talking about it.

Wow, the girl was dead and now she's alive. Even though Jesus told the father and mother and them not to talk about it, everybody's talking. And how do the Pharisees respond? Down in 934, just like the scribes, the man blasphemes.

Now you have the Pharisees in 934. He casts out demons by the ruler of the demons. So they reject it and they associate him with Satan instead of with God.

Well, preaching and teaching, Matthew 5-7. Ten miraculous manifestations of God's authority, authenticating, illustrating, manifesting, demonstrating the message. The kingdom is here.

God's authority is operative in Israel. Well, the Pharisees, they're demons are a part of this. And Jesus makes a distinction between healing and casting out demons.

Sometimes the two go together because the demon has produced an effect. What is the nature of this demon possession? This is point two. Number one, the big broad point that we spent our whole first session on was the context and how this fits into Jesus' mission.

Jesus knows why he's healing. Jesus knows why he's casting out demons. We should know it too.

Number two, demon possession. What does it do? Well, we have seven specific exorcisms by Jesus recorded in Scripture. We've already seen the man in the synagogue.

I know who you are, the Holy One of God. Come out of him, be quiet. Remember that? One of the first ones we looked at.

Mark 1-23, also Luke 4-33-36. Man in the synagogue. Mark 1-23, Luke 4-33-36.

Number two, the gurgosine, garrosine, gadarine, demoniac, parenthesis S. Matthew 8, Mark 5, Luke 8. Number three, the Syrophoenician woman's daughter. We haven't looked at this one yet. Syrophoenician woman comes.

Her daughter is demon oppressed. This is Matthew 15, Mark 7. Number four, remember Jesus goes up on the mountain with Peter, James, and John. Transfiguration.

When he comes down, there's a boy. The father comes to him, Lord, my boy's got an unclean spirit. Cast him around.

He throws fits. It's what I call the boy with fits. That's Matthew 17 and Luke 9. Remember the disciples tried to cast it out and could not.

Jesus says this kind comes out only by prayer. Lesson unto itself. Number five, the one we're looking at here, the mute man, Matthew 9. Number six, the blind and mute that we saw a couple of weeks ago, Matthew 12, paralleled in Luke 11.

Number seven, often overlooked. Some people, if you ask them, they say, well, there were six exorcisms. There are seven.

The seventh one is the woman with the spirit of infirmity. Jesus says Satan has bound

this woman. Remember her spine is pulled over and she can't stand up straight.

So I call it the bent woman in Luke 13. If you wanted a number eight, but we're talking about specific exorcisms, we have a mention made of Mary Magdalene, out of whom He had cast seven demons. We don't have the episode itself, but we have the note that it was done.

Of course, there's many other general references. It says Jesus cast out demons, He healed the sick, and so on. But those are the seven specific ones.

You can throw in eight, Mary Magdalene, that's mentioned in Mark 16, 9, and Luke 8. There's only one specific account in the New Testament of a demon being cast out by somebody other than Jesus. Specific account. We've got some general accounts that the disciples were sent forth to do so.

They came back and they said, the demons obeyed us, and so on. But specific accounts, there's only one. Can you think of it? It is the Apostle Paul, and it's in Acts chapter 16.

Remember the girl that prophesied because she had a demon? Paul cast it out and her owners are all upset, the slave girl. It's the only other account of demons specifically being cast out. Now, there is a specific account in the Old Testament, and I will be really proud of you if you can dredge this up.

There's one person in the Old Testament credited with exorcism in Scripture. Yeah, I know, I had trouble too. David, playing his harp for King Saul.

Remember that? David is the only Old Testament individual credited with casting out demons, and that's what he did when he played the spirit left. That's what you call exorcism. Point three, what are the effects? By the way, that's in 1 Samuel chapter 16.

If you're looking for it, 1 Samuel 16, 13 through 23. What are the effects recorded in Scripture of demon oppression? Here's an interesting thing. When I went and looked all these up and compiled my list of symptoms of demon possession, it is always destructive.

Scripture never says he had a demon, and behold, he built a great building. Behold, he planted a great vineyard. Behold, he could do the work of ten men.

Behold, he dug a well in two hours all by himself. It's never constructive. It's never beneficial.

Here are the effects. Number one, causes people to rave, to rant uncontrollably. This is Mark chapter 1, verse 24.

Mark chapter 5, verse 5. I don't have time to look all these up, which we did. Luke chapter 9, verse 39. You can compare that with John chapter 10, verse 20.

But raving, and the demons can speak on their own behalf. They can use the man's voice. They can use the girl's voice.

That's also Acts chapter 16. They can give prophecies that are not of the girl's own manufacture. They can rant.

They can rave. They can speak. Number two, self-destruction.

Now, it's hard to know if the demon is doing this or the person is overcoming the demon and trying to do a self-exorcism. I tend to think the latter is the case. But people with a demon have been or manifested a self-destructive behavior.

That, of course, is Mark chapter 5, verse 5. Mark 9, verse 18. You've got the guys bashing themselves with stones trying to get rid of the demon or demons. Number three, in some cases they run around naked, tear off their clothes.

These are your demoniacs in Luke chapter 8, Gerasene and Gadarene. Number four, seizures, like an epileptic fit type of thing. Mark 1, verse 26.

Mark 9, verse 18. Also, Mark 9, verses 20 and 26. Casts them out, throws them down, foams at the mouth, etc.

Seizures. Five, remove the power of speech. This is our passage, Matthew chapter 9. You all know this.

You also have Mark chapter 9, verse 25 and verse 32 and Mark 12, 22. Remember the blind and mute man, etc. Remove the power of speech.

Remove the power of hearing. Make someone deaf. Mark 9, 25.

Blind someone. Mark 12, 22. And finally, speaking out.

This kind of goes back to the raving of the demon. Speaking out. You've got kind of an inclusio there in my points.

But instead of just ranting and raving that I gave you at the beginning, speaking out. This is also Mark 1, 24. Luke 4, 33.

A lot of these are parallels. And also your Acts 16 passage. Now, how are these demons removed? Point four.

But you notice all of those in point three there, the effects of demon possession, all they can do is degrade. And it appears that because these effects are various, that people have various forms of resistance. A demon doesn't always blind, doesn't always deafen, doesn't always, it seems that they find a vulnerability.

Their control and their oppression seems to be somewhat tenuous. They find a weakness

and they can limit someone. They can stop them from doing a thing.

They can tear down. But they don't seem to be able to fully dominate. There are only areas.

They can't stop someone from running and falling at Jesus' feet. Somebody who can see but can't speak. They manage to get control of the mouth, but they don't seem to be able to completely, you know, they don't just change it around at a whim.

Well, today he's deaf, tomorrow he's blind, the next day he's mute, the next day he's having a fit. They seem to probe for vulnerabilities and different people get affected in different ways. It is removed in one way.

Now this is particularly interesting to me. How are demons exorcised or removed? How did David do it in the Old Testament? He played music, but what kind of music does David make? It's the Word of God expressed in song, right? He plays his harp and the Psalms that we have, principles of the Word of God, promises from the Word of God, the power and the authority of the Word of God, which is living and powerful. The demon cannot stay in its presence.

Here is a man of God, with faith in God, playing the music of God, and the demon just can't stand it. I got to get out of here. I can't make Saul deaf.

I can't shut it off. I'm leaving. By the way, what did the demon do to Saul? What was the effect? Did it blind him, deafen him, give him a fit? What did it do? Depression.

Depressed him. Showed him the black darkness of death and destruction and just made him so morose he couldn't function. And when David would rehearse the Word of God in Saul's presence, that depression and that demon causing it would leave.

It is removed, point four, by the invocation of divine authority, specifically. It is the invocation of divine authority. This plays into our kingdom message, right? Mark 9, verse 40, when Jesus says things like, I say to you, come out of him.

Turn to Mark chapter 9 right quick. We just have a few minutes here, but this is really interesting. Under those general headings of people who we don't have a specific account, but we know the demons were cast out by them, such as the disciples.

Look at Mark 9, 38 through 41, actually. Overlooked a lot. John talks to Jesus and says, Teacher, we saw someone who does not follow us casting out demons in your name.

This guy is a successful demon remover. How does he do it? In Jesus' name. Now, let's just do a little quick visualization.

Everybody look up here. Brother Matt has a demon. I am going to cast the demon out.

So I say, demon inhabiting my brother Matt, come out of him. And the demon says, up your nose. What are you going to do to me if I don't? Does it not strike you, it strikes me, that a human being can say, in the name of Jesus Christ, I command you, come out of him.

And the demon has to leave. What are you going to do to him if he doesn't? I am a rebel. I am a demon, for crying out loud.

I don't pay any attention to the name of Jesus Christ. Who are you to tell me to get out? Remember the seven sons of Sceva that said, I cast you out in the name of the Christ that Paul preaches? And they didn't know enough about Jesus' name, and the demons cleaned up the floor with them. They came out all raggedy and bruised and bleeding.

The demon possessed guy beat up the seven sons of Sceva over there in Acts. That was Acts 19. So, why do the demons leave when a disciple, here's a guy that doesn't even walk with Christ, doesn't even follow with us, John says, he's successfully casting out demons.

It doesn't say he's trying to cast out demons, or he's attempting, it says he's casting them out in the name of Jesus. Jesus says, do not forbid him, no one who works a miracle in my name can soon afterwards speak evil. He who is not against us is for us, Jesus says in the parallel.

Whoever gives you a cup of water to drink in my name, there is power in Jesus' name, there is authority in Jesus' name. If you genuinely understand it, if you invoke it in a legitimate manner, demons, Jesus' authority, in other words, is delegated. If you're a military guy, you know about delegation and the difference between authority and responsibility, but you can delegate authority, you can't delegate responsibility.

But there is authority granted, and demons, it's interesting to me, what is the mechanism, what makes the demon actually, I say to you in the name of Jesus, Matt, inhabiting demon, get the hints, and he has to go. He has to go. What makes him go? What compels him and impels him out? Is God the Holy Spirit? Whatever it is, it is activated by the invocation of divine authority in Jesus' name.

What does John 1.12 say? As many as received him, to them gave he power to become the sons of God, even to those who, what? Believe on his name. Authority to be called sons of God, authority and power to become sons of God in his name. It's not a light thing to pray in Jesus' name.

His name reflects divine authority, and there is power in it when you properly understand it. Don't be a son of Sceva. But it's removed by divine authority.

Jesus, of course, invokes his own authority. The disciples go forth in Jesus' name, cast out demons in his name. Even David, singing about the power and the authority and the

majesty and the glory of God, drives a demon out.

And that great discussion in Matthew 12, I don't have time to get into it, but they're accusing Jesus of casting out demons by Beelzebub, the prince of demons. And he says, house divided cannot stand. And he says, if I'm casting them out by Satan, then by whom do your sons cast them out? And, of course, their sons aren't casting them out at all.

But notice he says, by whom. He doesn't say by what. By whom.

It is the personal authority of God that is obeyed when demons leave. Now what is the application of all of this? There's not a lot of detail about this man who was deaf and then can hear because Jesus cast it out. But the discussion that follows, the accusation that follows, is pertinent.

What should our response be? What is our message? The message in Matthew 5-9 is, the kingdom has come upon you. What's the message to us? What should our response be in the light of the invocation of divine authority, the imminence of God's kingdom? For us, where is the kingdom? Is it in national Israel? No, it's in us. Christ should rule in our hearts.

The kingdom, the preview of the kingdom should already be happening in our hearts. We should be responding. We should be what? Not just talking about, not just amazed by, but obedient.

Do the things written in the word. I say to one, come and he comes, the centurion says. I say to another, go and he goes.

The issue is authority. The word of God is our authority. Do we meditate on it? Do we review our mission? Do we review and examine ourselves and give ourselves a grade on how well we're performing that purpose? These people saw a lot, were amazed a lot, did a lot of talking, even did some following.

But when it came to actual obedience and actual traveling with Jesus, well, I've got to go bury my father. Well, I've got to go say goodbye to some people. I've got to finish plowing my field, then I'll come.

We ask ourselves this great illustration we have in the obedience of demons. We're supposed to be living in Jesus' name, praying in Jesus' name, bearing fruit of righteousness by faith in Jesus' name. Are the demons more obedient than we are? What is our response to divine authority as it comes to us in the promises and the principles and the doctrines of the word of God? It is a question we have to ask ourselves.

This is not just the Sunday morning sermon. It's not just water to flow by and be gone. It's not just a momentary image in the mirror that we walk away and straightaway

forget.

Every day we need to spend time remembering who we are, why we're here. What is the response in my heart? Is the kingdom being implemented in my heart? Am I responding to and functioning under and obeying the authority reflected in the truth of the word of God that I hear every week? Not enough to hear, not enough to be impressed and amazed, not even enough to follow and observe. It is the obedience.

It is the response. It is the conclusions that we draw. If this is true, how should I live? That's the question we ask ourselves.

That is the great application for us. Well, let's close our study this morning in a word of prayer. Father, thank you for the truth of your word.

Thank you for the wonderful example and the episodes recorded for us from the life and ministry of the Lord Jesus Christ himself. We pray that this will truly be a light that shines in the dark corners of our souls and illuminates for us those areas where we can be more fully obedient, more centered in the light, more faithful to our calling. We know that as we have your word and keep it that you will come and dwell with us and be in us as will the Lord Jesus, as does God the Holy Spirit.

We pray that those presences will be with us, will be effective in us, that your word will constantly circulate in our minds and our hearts and in our thoughts so that we will live and walk in a way that is pleasing in your sight and glorifying to the Lord Jesus. We pray these things in his name. Amen.