

# ***The Book of Matthew***

## ***“Get Up and Walk!” Faith and Healing***

Lesson #4 for April 23, 2016

Scriptures: Matthew 8:1-9:8; Leviticus 13:44-50; Daniel 7:7-8; John 10:10; 1 John 1:9.

1. This lesson will focus on some of the more amazing miracles that Jesus performed—from cleansing lepers, to calming deadly storms, and casting out demons, Jesus reminded us that He had power over all forms of the Devil’s curses on human beings. Are diseases demonic?
2. Try to imagine the most dreaded things of which you can think. Surely, it would include your own death or perhaps the death of a family member; but, we need to raise our sights to include the possibility of losing the future life with God for eternity—a much greater tragedy!
3. If God were to make a list of what He fears most, what would that list include? It is really hard for us living on planet earth where death seems so final not to consider death a terrible tragedy. But, to God the first death is nothing more than a sleep because He will resurrect every single person who dies the first death—raising each either in the first resurrection or the second resurrection.
4. Jesus healed many, many people during His ministry on this earth. There were times when He walked through villages and healed every person who was sick. (*Steps to Christ* 11.2) Try to imagine that happening today! But, every one of those people eventually died, including Lazarus. However, there was a group for whom the outcome was very different!

But those who came forth from the grave at Christ’s resurrection were raised to everlasting life. They ascended with Him as trophies of His victory over death and the grave. These, said Christ, are no longer the captives of Satan; I have redeemed them. I have brought them from the grave as the first fruits of My power, to be with Me where I am, nevermore to see death or experience sorrow.

These went into the city, and appeared unto many, declaring, Christ has risen from the dead, and we be risen with Him. Thus was immortalized the sacred truth of the resurrection.—Ellen G. White, *The Desire of Ages*, 786.2-3.

5. There are many today who look back on the healing ministry of Jesus and wish they had the power to duplicate those healings. One Christian evangelist even stated that someday on live television, he would show a person being raised from the dead and that would result in his converting the world! But, as remarkable as that kind of healing would be, it does not prevent one’s ultimate death. More than that, we need to remember that the Greek word *sōzō* for *healing* is the same as the Greek word for *saving* or *salvation*.
6. Read Leviticus 13:42-46 and Matthew 8:1-4. These verses raise a serious question: Was Jesus contaminated by touching the leper? The man had leprosy! But, when Jesus touched him, he was cleansed/healed. So, did that make Jesus unclean? It is interesting to notice that when the man said, “You can make me clean,” the word he used was *dunamai* from which we get our modern word *dynamite*! Jesus had the power necessary to do what the man asked.
7. Notice these words from the *Adult Teacher’s Sabbath School Bible Study Guide*, page 54:

“Unclean, unclean” was the leper’s required cry in order to keep all passersby at a distance. Physical decay and deformity, social ostracism, and communal isolation made the lepers the living dead. They were society’s untouchables. According to rabbinical law, at least six feet of distance should separate them from any other human being. To break this boundary was to become unclean, requiring rigorous purification ceremonies, overseen by a priest. Against such a

background, our story is set. The leper knew that Jesus is the Lord and that He had the power to make him whole, but how would he bridge the gap? Six feet was a long and forbidden distance for a leper to cross in the journey to that saving point where healing stands. But the faith of the leper closed the space, and to his cry instantly came the answer: "I am willing; be cleansed" (*Matt. 8:3, NKJV*).

8. Think of all the people who were following Jesus in those days. What did they think when Jesus touched that leper? Surely, Jesus could have healed the leper by just speaking; so, why did He touch him?

The work of Christ in cleansing the leper from his terrible disease is an illustration of His work in cleansing the soul from sin. The man who came to Jesus was "full of leprosy." Its deadly poison permeated his whole body. The disciples sought to prevent their Master from touching him; for he who touched a leper became himself unclean. But in laying His hand upon the leper, Jesus received no defilement. His touch imparted life-giving power. The leprosy was cleansed. Thus it is with the leprosy of sin,—deep-rooted, deadly, and impossible to be cleansed by human power.—Ellen G. White, *The Desire of Ages*, p. 266.1.

9. Is it possible that by touching the leper, Jesus was showing that there was nothing that He could not do to cleanse from sin? Do you know any people in your society or among your fellow workers who feel that they are so sinful they could not possibly be forgiven? Wouldn't they be the "lepers" of sin in modern times?
10. Lepers become disfigured not by the infection of leprosy itself but by the fact that their nerves have been damaged by the infection and they do things which result in scarring of their hands and feet and sometimes their face.

Over the years, the leprosy mission connected to Christian Medical College in Vellore, India, pioneered several ventures, including reconstructive surgery, to bring hope to thousands in nearby villages who suffered from leprosy. One venture was the creation of black sandals, made out of airplane tires, which were supposed to soft-cushion the feet and make walking less painful.

That good invention soon turned into an instrument of social ostracism. The distinctive sandals easily identified the lepers, which resulted in refusal by local restaurants and other eating establishments to service hundreds of these unfortunate men and women. Touched by the scandal these sandals generated, doctors, nurses, teachers, and students of Christian Medical College took up the practice of wearing the black sandals, sending the restaurant owners into chaos. The boycott eventually ended, and the sandals became a token of Christian love. (*Adult Teacher's Sabbath School Bible Study Guide*, p. 53)

11. I am delighted to say that we were able to import the technology to make those sandals to our hospital at Mwami in Zambia. I wore those wonderful "leprosy sandals" for years.
12. Read Matthew 8:5-13. Despite the longstanding hatred between Jews and Romans, we have the story of the Roman centurion who was a military officer in charge of 80 to 100 soldiers, living and working in the town of Capernaum which was Jesus's hometown during His ministry. The centurion had a servant that he trusted and liked very much.

The centurion's servant had been stricken with palsy, and lay at the point of death. Among the Romans the servants were slaves, bought and sold in the market places, and treated with abuse and cruelty; but the centurion was tenderly attached to his servant, and greatly desired his recovery. **He believed**

**that Jesus could heal him. He had not seen the Saviour, but the reports he heard had inspired him with faith. Notwithstanding the formalism of the Jews, this Roman was convinced that their religion was superior to his own. Already he had broken through the barriers of national prejudice and hatred that separated the conquerors from the conquered people. He had manifested respect for the service of God, and had shown kindness to the Jews as His worshipers....**

**Jesus immediately set out for the officer's home; but, pressed by the multitude, He advanced slowly. The news of His coming preceded Him, and the centurion, in his self-distrust, sent Him the message, "Lord, trouble not Thyself: for I am not worthy that Thou shouldst enter under my roof." But the Saviour kept on His way, and the centurion, venturing at last to approach Him, completed the message, saying, "Neither thought I myself worthy to come unto Thee;" "but speak the word only, and my servant shall be healed. 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." As I represent the power of Rome, and my soldiers recognize my authority as supreme, so dost Thou represent the power of the Infinite God, and all created things obey Thy word. Thou canst command the disease to depart, and it shall obey Thee. Thou canst summon Thy heavenly messengers, and they shall impart healing virtue. Speak but the word, and my servant shall be healed.**

"When Jesus heard these things, He marveled at him, and turned Him about, and said unto the people that followed Him, I say unto you, I have not found so great faith, no, not in Israel." And to the centurion He said, "As thou hast believed, so be it done unto thee. And his servant was healed in the selfsame hour."

... He trusted not to his own goodness; his argument was his great need. His faith took hold upon Christ in His true character. He did not believe in Him merely as a worker of miracles, but as the friend and Saviour of mankind.—Ellen G. White, *The Desire of Ages* 315.2-316.4. [Bold type is added.]

13. When that centurion needed to have something done, he would send one of his soldiers to accomplish the task. Jesus did not have any soldiers at His beck and call. What means did the centurion think Jesus would use to heal his servant? How did the centurion develop that great faith? What had he heard about Jesus? How had he responded? Faith comes by hearing.
14. We make choices each day. Some of those choices bring us nearer to God, and some of those choices take us away from God. The Bible describes those choices which bring us nearer to God as *growing faith*. How can we be more successful at growing our faith?
15. Read Matthew 8:23-34; Mark 4:35-5:20; and Luke 8:22-39. It was the belief of the Jewish people that only God can control nature and demons. So, in this passage we see Jesus calming a terrible storm and healing the demoniac(s). Who do you suppose was responsible for that storm? Don't you think that Satan was trying to destroy Jesus and His disciples as well as a number of other people who were in the nearby boats all at one time?

After He [Jesus] had dismissed the multitude, they took Him, even "as He was," into the boat, and hastily set off. But they were not to depart alone. There were other fishing boats lying near the shore, and these were quickly crowded with

people who followed Jesus, eager still to see and hear Him....

The sun had set, and the blackness of night settled down upon the stormy sea. The waves, lashed into fury by the howling winds, dashed fiercely over the disciples' boat, and threatened to engulf it. Those hardy fishermen had spent their lives upon the lake, and had guided their craft safely through many a storm; but now their strength and skill availed nothing. They were helpless in the grasp of the tempest, and hope failed them as they saw that their boat was filling....

Suddenly a flash of lightning pierces the darkness, and they see Jesus lying asleep, undisturbed by the tumult. In amazement and despair they exclaim, "Master, carest Thou not that we perish?" How can He rest so peacefully, while they are in danger and battling with death?....

Never did a soul utter that cry unheeded. As the disciples grasp their oars to make a last effort, Jesus rises. He stands in the midst of His disciples, while the tempest rages, the waves break over them, and the lightning illuminates His countenance. He lifts His hand, so often employed in deeds of mercy, and says to the angry sea, "Peace, be still."

The storm ceases. The billows sink to rest. The clouds roll away, and the stars shine forth. The boat rests upon a quiet sea. Then turning to His disciples, Jesus asks sorrowfully, "Why are ye fearful? have ye not yet faith?" Mark 4:40, R.V.

A hush fell upon the disciples. Even Peter did not attempt to express the awe that filled his heart. The boats that had set out to accompany Jesus had been in the same peril with that of the disciples. Terror and despair had seized their occupants; but the command of Jesus brought quiet to the scene of tumult. The fury of the storm had driven the boats into close proximity, and all on board beheld the miracle. In the calm that followed, fear was forgotten. The people whispered among themselves, "What manner of man is this, that even the winds and the sea obey Him?"—Ellen G. White, *The Desire of Ages*, p. 334.1-335.4. [Content in brackets is added.]

16. How do you understand the story of the two, reading Matthew—or one, reading Mark or Luke—demon-possessed men—or man—whose demons were cast out and sent into the 2000 pigs? It is important to look at the whole picture.
17. Even though the people came out and initially asked Jesus to leave, we have these words from Ellen White:

But the purposes of Christ were not thwarted. He allowed the evil spirits to destroy the herd of swine as a rebuke to those Jews who were raising these unclean beasts for the sake of gain. Had not Christ restrained the demons, they would have plunged into the sea, not only the swine, but also their keepers and owners. The preservation of both the keepers and the owners was due alone to His power, mercifully exercised for their deliverance. Furthermore, this event was permitted to take place that the disciples might witness the cruel power of Satan upon both man and beast.—Ellen G. White, *Great Controversy* 515.1.
18. Those men asked to follow Jesus, but Jesus told them to go back and tell their neighbors and friends what had happened to them. How long did they have to learn doctrine? The next time Jesus came to that area, a huge crowd came out to see Him. It was at that time that He miraculously fed the 4000 primarily-Gentile men, not counting women and children.
19. If we stop and think for a moment, Satan is hoping to control the whole world at the end of this earth's history. (Revelation 13:3-4,7-8) Will those people who are under Satan's control behave

in any way like those demon-possessed men? There are a number of places in Scripture where it says clearly that there will be only two sides at the end. (Luke 11:23; John 10:10) The huge majority will be on Satan's side. What kind of satanic behavior will be manifested? Has the time come for us to think very seriously about these stories and also about our own future?

20. Read Matthew 9:1-8 and Luke 5:17-26. Why do you think Jesus first forgave the man's sins and then healed him physically? The Jews believed that any serious illness was a result of sin either of the person himself or of his parents. (John 9:1-2) See what the LORD said as recorded in Leviticus 26 and Deuteronomy 7 and 28. Thus, it would be impossible to heal someone unless One first dealt with the sin problem. Notice these words from Ellen White:

It was not physical restoration he desired so much as relief from the burden of sin. If he could see Jesus, and receive the assurance of forgiveness and peace with Heaven, he would be content to live or die, according to God's will.—Ellen G. White, *The Desire of Ages*, p. 267.4.

21. Ellen White went on to tell us that the men who had brought the paralytic to Jesus tried again and again to get him into the presence of Jesus. But, they had not been able to succeed. Finally, he suggested that they take the stairs up to the roof and open up a hole and let him down at the feet of Jesus. (DA 268.1) Jesus's discourse was interrupted. He took one look at the paralytic and said, "Son, be of good cheer; thy sins be forgiven thee."

22. But, there is more to the story.

The rabbis had waited anxiously to see what disposition Christ would make of this case. They recollected how the man had appealed to them for help, and they had refused him hope or sympathy. Not satisfied with this, they had declared that he was suffering the curse of God for his sins. These things came fresh to their minds when they saw the sick man before them. They marked the interest with which all were watching the scene, and they felt a terrible fear of losing their own influence over the people.

These dignitaries did not exchange words together, but looking into one another's faces they read the same thought in each, that something must be done to arrest the tide of feeling. Jesus had declared that the sins of the paralytic were forgiven. The Pharisees caught at these words as blasphemy, and conceived that they could present this as a sin worthy of death. They said in their hearts, "He blasphemeth: who can forgive sins but One, even God?" Mark 2:7, R. V.

Fixing His glance upon them, beneath which they cowered, and drew back, Jesus said, "Wherefore think ye evil in your hearts? For whether is easier, to say, Thy sins be forgiven thee; or to say, Arise, and walk? But that ye may know that the Son of man hath power on earth to forgive sins," He said, turning to the paralytic, "Arise, take up thy bed, and go unto thine house."

Then he who had been borne on a litter to Jesus rises to his feet with the elasticity and strength of youth. The life-giving blood bounds through his veins. Every organ of his body springs into sudden activity. The glow of health succeeds the pallor of approaching death. "And immediately he arose, took up the bed, and went forth before them all; insomuch that they were all amazed, and glorified God, saying, We never saw it on this fashion."....

The paralytic found in Christ healing for both the soul and the body. The spiritual healing was followed by physical restoration. This lesson should not be overlooked. There are today thousands suffering from physical disease, who, like the paralytic, are longing for the message, "Thy sins are forgiven." The

burden of sin, with its unrest and unsatisfied desires, is the foundation of their maladies. They can find no relief until they come to the Healer of the soul. The peace which He alone can give, would impart vigor to the mind, and health to the body.—Ellen G. White, *The Desire of Ages*, p. 268.5-270.1.

23. But, miraculous healings do not happen very often in our day. Why do you think that is? Are there people who need to be healed? Don't we have even Seventh-day Adventist hospitals full of people who would rejoice in miraculous healing. After thinking about this for some time, one SDA pastor said it might actually take more faith to trust God and not be healed.
24. Read Matthew 8:18-22. In these verses there were two men approaching Jesus. Notice that the first man was a teacher of the law. He was, in other words, one of the scribes. Surely, he could have been a great asset to the followers of Jesus. Why did Jesus respond the way He did saying: "Foxes have holes, and birds have nests, but the Son of Man has nowhere to lie down and rest"? Was Jesus making it clear that the sheltered and privileged life that the teacher of the law had lived was not anything like the life that Jesus lived? (See Luke 8:1-3.)
25. A second man who already described himself as a disciple of Jesus said: "Sir, first let me go back and bury my father." "Follow Me," Jesus answered, "and let the dead bury their own dead." Don't those words sound very harsh? There are several things we need to be aware of in understanding Jesus's response to those two men. Read again Luke 8:1-3. It is interesting to notice that some women were apparently providing for the needs of Jesus and His disciples. We do not know how extensive that provision was; but, it is very interesting to note. Jesus was certainly suggesting that His life was not a life of privilege.
26. If the second man needed to go and bury his father, did Jesus really deny him that "privilege"? We need to recognize that in ancient Jewish times, funerals were almost always held within 24 hours of death. So, what Jesus was saying was: "You must not wait until your father dies at some future date; come and follow me now."
27. We have already studied how Jesus called the four fishermen—Peter, Andrew, James, and John—from their boats. And they left all and followed Him. Now we notice another call as recorded in Matthew 9:9-13. Try to imagine how the people of Capernaum responded when Jesus called one of the hated tax collectors to be His disciple. It is likely that Matthew had a tax booth beside the road in Capernaum. Matthew, like the earlier four, left everything and followed Jesus.
28. Read Matthew 9:13 and Hosea 6:6. What is implied by these verses? These verses need to be compared to Micah 6:6-8 and other passages in the Old Testament. Jesus was telling us that it is not a continual round of religious ceremonies or practices that makes us savable but rather doing God's will.
29. We do not always know God's will for physical healing; but, we do always know His will for spiritual healing. Don't we know for sure that Christ is calling us to join the winning side in the great controversy? Doesn't He want us to be fully and completely on His side?
30. So, why did Jesus perform so many miracles of healing? It was certainly a way of attracting attention. But, as we have studied in a previous lesson, His most important mission was to represent His Father correctly. How does that go along with the healing ministry? Read Matthew 8:27. It is quite clear that people were amazed by Jesus's miracles. That certainly resulted in the news of His miracles spreading far and wide.
31. There were many miracles performed by Jesus when He was on this earth. Will miracles be performed once again as we approach the end of this earth's history?

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