

The Healing Work of Jesus

Text: Matthew 8: 1-17

Series Overview: “Dead man walking.” It’s a phrase that has been used over the years to describe a person who has committed a capital offense walking to their impending death. Of course, the person is not literally dead (in contrast to your favorite zombie movie, dead people can’t actually walk), but the death the criminal is facing is so imminent, so certain, so real that it looms over every step they take toward their execution.

“Dead man walking” is a poignant way to describe the incarnate life and ministry of Jesus. His death was so imminent, so certain, so real that it loomed over every step he took toward Jerusalem and the cross. As the time drew closer, Jesus spoke about it with his disciples.

Overview: The cross is ultimately about restoring what is broken. On the cross, Jesus entered into our brokenness so that we might enter into his wholeness. What we often miss about all of the healings that Jesus performed is that they were all pointing to where he was going. On his way to the cross, he was providing glimpses of the wholeness the cross provides. A man with leprosy. A co-worker who was paralyzed. A sick mom. The spiritually enslaved. And so many more. Jesus saw them and he healed them. But it was just a glimpse. There was so much more to come.

Brokenness abounds in our world. And sometimes it can overwhelm us. We can’t fix it. But we can point people to the One who can. And already has. We can point people to the cross. But we can do more than that. We can do what Jesus did. As we are walking, we can open our eyes and see the brokenness that is around us. We can help the hurting and care for the sick and stand with the lonely. We can provide glimpses. And we can remind them that there is so much more to come.

Resources: Check out <https://thebibleproject.com/explore/matthew/> for more information on the book of Matthew.

WELCOME

DISCUSSION

A. Getting Warmed Up

- Brokenness all around us. What brokenness do you see? What are the pieces of brokenness that bother you the most?

B. Digging In

- Read aloud Matthew 8:1-17
- Did Jesus perform miracles to just show how mighty he was or was there a larger purpose?
- Beth said that every time Jesus performs a miracle, they point us forward and point us back. Talk about what that means.
- Discuss this statement: *"Jesus' miracles are actually the only natural thing in the world that is unnatural, demonic and wounded."*

C. Bringing It Home

- When Jesus looks at the world he doesn't say, *"Something should be done about this."* He says, *"Something is being done about this. This is being set right. This brokenness is being healed. This death is being conquered."* So while we are waiting for everything to be put back into place, what is our part in this healing as believers?
- An example was used about how the plague was so devastating that most people stopped helping and got away from the disease to save themselves. But it was the believers who stayed to help, never thinking of themselves. What would you need to clearly understand to put yourself in that position?
- Is there something that you (individually or as a group) can do to respond to that will show a glimpse of the one who heals all brokenness?

*NOTE: Although ideas may flow here, write them ALL down (no idea is a bad idea, nor is any idea too small) and pray over them tonight together. When you gather again, remember to revisit the conversation and start with something small and MAKE A PLAN. Ask for someone in the group to help oversee the plan.

Ideas: Maybe the elementary school could use some fresh school supplies as the year ends for students who don't have them (pencils, paper, tissues). Call the school and ask. Maybe there is an elderly neighbor who needs a spring cleanup? Are there meals to make for a family in need? A friend who needs company? A little free pantry that needs food? Does someone in the group know of a need at their workplace?

CLOSING PRAYER: Pray for your group to find an area of service in your neighborhood.

Talk about this...

- Here's the information if needed for the group about challenging your group to reading the book of Matthew during this series. Here's all the info you need:
 - Challenge them to read the book of Matthew using the 27 chapters as a backdrop to the weekend message and study in our group. Ask them to read five to six chapters a week. It won't work out evenly and the readings we will be doing won't always line up exactly with the study for the week. But we'll be reading together and sharing fresh insights as we read from the gospel of Matthew.

Week of March 16/17	Chapters 1-6
Week of March 23/24	Chapters 7-12
Week of March 30/31	Chapters 13-18
Week of April 6/7	Chapters 19-24
Week of April 13/14	Chapters 23-27

Resource: the bibleproject.com/explore/matthew