

SUNDAY HANDOUT FOR DISCUSSION AND APPLICATION

Authority to Restore (Matthew 8:1-17)

It's as if you can still hear the applause. Jesus has been on a mountainside teaching in a way that demonstrates authority like no other and the crowds are amazed. Now, in Matthew 8:1-17, as he comes down from that mountain, huge crowds still following him, he does the unthinkable – he does what no one would dare to do - he restores an outcast, commends an outsider and meets people in their deepest pain. The healings become a window into the restoration Jesus brings and the authority he has to bring it.

1. Jesus restores an outcast (Matthew 8:1-4)

2. Jesus commends an outsider (Matthew 8:5-13)

3. Jesus meets you in your deepest pain (Matthew 8:14-17)

QUESTIONS (Pray, read the passage and pick 4-5 questions to discuss. Trust the Holy Spirit to guide.)

1. Read Matthew 8:1-17. What stands out to you? Just enjoy making observations (Just “say” what you see.) From those observations, what stands out about Jesus? Does anything surprise you?
2. What do people you know – friends, neighbors, family, coworkers – say about authority? How do they (you) respond to it?
3. Leprosy meant not only sickness and disfigurement, but also social banishment. What does Jesus do that would have been shocking to everyone looking on? How does Jesus restore the leper as a full member of his community?
4. In Leviticus 13–14, touching a leper made a person ceremonially "unclean." Why does Jesus touch the man in 8:3 instead of just speaking a word? What does this tell us about Jesus' character and authority?
5. To anyone who is lonely or facing a season of life that is heavy. To anyone suffering under the weight of circumstances you didn't ask for – wondering “Does God see me? Does he care?” How does this story answer back? How might it encourage or challenge you?
6. Jesus marvels (is amazed) with the centurion's response. What makes the centurion a good example/model of faith? Why wasn't the centurion threatened by Jesus' authority?
7. What does it mean to recognize and submit to the authority of Jesus today, to call him Lord and go on living by that confession?
8. Matthew quotes Isaiah 53:4 in 8:17. Read Isaiah 53:4 on its own. Now read Isaiah 52:13-53:12. Looking at the context of Isaiah 53, how does this "Suffering Servant" prophecy change our understanding of what Jesus came to do? How do his healings point to the complete restoration Jesus would accomplish on the cross?
9. In what areas of your life do you need to put trust in the authority of Jesus?

Thank the Lord for the ways he has proved he is trustworthy and loving. Pray for the courage to surrender every area of your life to his authority.