

ENCOUNTERS WITH THE LORD JESUS CHRIST
Lesson Eight
“DO ALL LIVES MATTER?”
(Matthew 8:1-13) (Mark 1:40-45) (Luke 7:1-10)

We can learn a great deal about the spiritual heart condition of others when we observe their legitimate concerns for people who are of a different ethnicity, belief system, gender, and socio-economic status. Certain people groups are marginalized by the dominant cultures in every nation, and therefore it is often necessary to call attention to those who are being mistreated. This should not mean that all lives are not equally important, but it does mean that equal value is not being evidenced. Our lesson today reminds us that Jesus cares about everyone, and that biblical faith can tear down the walls of hostility between people groups.

I. LARGE CROWDS NEVER KEEP THE LORD JESUS FROM MEETING INDIVIDUAL NEEDS IN MIRACULOUS WAYS. HE SEES YOUR REAL CONDITION AND WANTS YOU TO APPROACH HIM. (Matthew 8:1-4)

A. Leprosy is a disease that usually resulted in a slow, painful death. Lepers were isolated from other humans and suffered a complete loss of dignity. Leprosy is used to illustrate the effects of sin, which always takes a miracle cure.

The whole appearance of the face is changed, till the man loses his human appearance and looks, as the ancients said, "like a lion or a satyr". The nodules grow larger and larger. They ulcerate, become staring. The voice becomes hoarse, and the breath wheezes because of the ulceration of the vocal chords. The hands and the feet always ulcerate. Slowly the sufferer becomes a mass of ulcerated growths. The average course of the disease is nine years, and it ends in mental decay, coma, and ultimately death. The sufferer becomes utterly repulsive -- both to himself and to others. (W. Barclay)



B. The leper broke the law to have an encounter with Jesus, the only Person that had the power to heal him. Do you realize you will die without hope unless you bow before Him?

C. In spite of what you hear from popular preachers and the “Word of Faith” movement, it is not wrong to ask the Lord to heal you “if it is His will”! (*Matthew 8:1*) We never question God’s ability to heal, but we must recognize that He may have a purpose in allowing an illness or condition to continue.

D. Jesus showed compassion and power as He touched and healed the leper. Do you care enough to touch others whose lives matter to God and should matter to you?

E. The leper was supposed to present himself to the priests, who would confirm his healing and permit him to reenter normal society life. (*Lev. 14:1-32*) This evidence of healing by Jesus would force them to acknowledge God at work in their midst since leprosy was incurable. His disobedience, even as he praised God, interfered with the ministry of Jesus. Everyone wants relief, but many do not want Jesus! **Lesson:** *Do what He says, not what you think is right!* (*Mark 1:40-45*)

II. SERVING OTHERS IS A PROVEN WAY OF TEARING DOWN THE WALLS THAT DIVIDE US, AND HELPS US BUILD BRIDGES THAT MAKE HEART CONNECTIONS. (Matthew 8:5-13; Luke 7:1-10)

A. Many groups that normally did not value one another (Jews, Romans, Religious leaders) came together because of mutual needs, concern for others, and the recognition of the power of Jesus Christ. That formula still works today if we will put it into practice.

B. The Jewish leaders felt the centurion was worthy of help because he had helped them. The centurion felt he was not worthy of Jesus coming to his home. It is great to serve others, yet it is better to recognize how unworthy we are to receive the abundant blessings of God. (*Luke 7:1-7*)

C. The centurion knew what many Jews did not yet believe, and that was the authority that rested in the Person of Jesus Christ, over spirits, diseases, time, and distance. There is power in the Word of God! (*Psalms 107:17-21*)(*Matthew 8:5-9*)

D. Jesus applauded the faith of a Gentile, and acknowledged that the Israelites did not have that level of faith. How does He respond to your level of belief? (*Matthew 8:10*)

E. The statement of Jesus proves that life continues after death, and many who experienced the kingdom of heaven on earth will miss out on life in the Eternal Kingdom. Will you be one of those who miss their opportunity to enjoy life forever?



THE PERSON WITH BIBLICAL FAITH SEES WHAT IS OTHERWISE INVISIBLE, LAUGHS AT WHAT OTHERS THINK IMPOSSIBLE, GIVES THANKS BEFORE THE ANSWER TO PRAYER IS SEEN, AND KNOWS THAT EVERY LIFE HAS ETERNAL VALUE. DOES YOUR FAITH MATTER?

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BIBLE STUDY QUESTIONS

- 1. Describe a time when you realized your life (lifestyle) was like an incurable disease, and you cried out to the Lord for deliverance. Were you confident that He would answer your prayers?**
- 2. Do you struggle to esteem others as having equal value in the sight of the Lord? Do you wrestle with feelings of being unworthy to ask and receive from the Lord? Describe how you learned to see others properly.**