



The Gospel of Matthew - Chapter Eight

Summary of Chapter Eight

This chapter focuses primarily on Jesus as the healer, interspersed with instructions on discipleship.

The first healing is that of a leper, an affliction that was deemed probably the worst in their culture as it resulted in social isolation. This was a very personal occasion for the man, who recognised that Jesus had the power and authority to heal but all the man could do was to place his trust in Jesus that he would be willing to free him from his affliction.

Jesus followed this first miracle with another when he healed the servant of a Roman centurion without even coming near to the sick man. The importance of this event is more to do with the faith of the Gentile compared with that of God's chosen people and what Jesus indicates by it on the important issues of class, cultural and ethnic acceptance.

Jesus spent some time in Peter's Capernaum home, first healing the apostle's mother-in-law who had a fever and later curing many sick and demon possessed people who were brought to him.

After this, Matthew records Jesus' expectation of the required commitment that a person would need to show in order to be a true disciple. It would require giving up personal comforts and even family responsibilities.

As Jesus sailed across the Sea of Galilee a great storm arose, causing fear among his disciples in the boat, but Jesus demonstrated that he had the power to overcome even nature itself.

On his arrival at the other side Jesus cured two people of demon possession, with the demons choosing to be released from the people in order to go into a nearby herd of pigs, which subsequently charged into the lake and drowned. This proved very upsetting for the local townspeople who, instead of inviting Jesus into their lives, requested that he leave their region immediately.

V. Matthew 8:1-9:38 - The Authoritative Power of the Messiah: Kingdom Power Demonstrated

After completing Jesus' first major discourse, Matthew begins recounting signs reported in Mark and some other sources that Matthew shares with Luke. Matthew arranges these accounts about Jesus' authority in a special way by narrating a total of nine miracle stories, one of which contains two miracles that break into sets of three, separated by blocks of Jesus' teaching. The three sets are:

- Jesus' authority over sickness (vv.1-17).
- Jesus' authority over nature, demons and paralysis (vv.23-28).
- Jesus' authority over disabilities and death (Matthew 9:18-34).

Whereas these narratives demonstrate just how much authority Jesus has within and over creation, the intervening paragraphs teach that humans should also fully acknowledge and accept Jesus' rightful authority over them (vv.18-22 and Matthew 9:9-17).

The concluding summary of miracles (Matthew 9:35), also contains another declaration of Christ's authority: disciples must ask the Lord to send out workers to demonstrate Jesus' authority over these needs (Matthew 9:36-37). This final summary section (Matthew 9:35-38), like the one preceding the Sermon on the Mount (Matthew 4:23-25), could also be classified along with Matthew 10:1-5, as the narrative introduction for the major discourse that follows in Matthew Chapter 10.

V.a Matthew 8:1-9:8 - Healings, discipleship, and overpowering Satan's strongholds

Jesus' mission involves ministering to the marginalised (vv.1-17), disappointing the messianic expectations of some who wanted to follow him (vv.18-22), and overthrowing Satan's strongholds (Matthew 8:23-9:8).

Like all good biographers and historians, Matthew does not try to include everything that Jesus did or said, even if it were possible to do so: *<<But there are also many other things that Jesus did; if every one of them were written down, I suppose that the world itself could not contain the books that would be written>>* (John 21:25). Instead he provides specific examples to allow the reader to understand the power, authority, love and compassion of Jesus, both as a man and as the Christ.

In narrating events like Jesus' healings, Matthew encourages his audience that the Lord to whom they pray for their needs in the present day, has demonstrated his ability to meet those needs during his earthly ministry. While Matthew addresses particularly the need to trust Jesus to heal, the principles can apply to all other desperate needs encountered in life.

V.a.i Matthew 8:1-4 - Jesus Cleanses a Leper

This is Matthew's first detailed account of the many and varied healings that Jesus performed during his earthly ministry. It is interesting and understandable that

Matthew should choose the healing of a leper for it was an issue that was of significance for the Jews at that time and always has been.

Leprosy was a generic term for many contagious skin diseases that were relatively common during the period and required that an afflicted person become isolated from mainstream society by law, leading to deprivation as an outcast. Many Jews believed that leprosy was inflicted upon a person by God for their personal sin. Jesus seemed to pay particular attention in healing such people because of its social stigma and perceived root cause, going so far as to even touch such a person, something unheard of for a Jew, let alone a Rabbi!

¹ When Jesus had come down from the mountain, great crowds followed him;

Matthew 8:1

When Jesus had come down from the mountain links these events with the Sermon on the Mount that is recorded in the preceding three chapters: <<*When Jesus saw the crowds, he went up the mountain; and after he sat down, his disciples came to him*>> (Matthew 5:1).

Great crowds followed him. This would be a regular occurrence throughout Jesus' ministry, particularly in Galilee and on his final journey to Jerusalem. It foreshadows a time when, according to a dying Jacob prophesying over Judah: <<*the obedience of the peoples is his*>> (Genesis 49:10b).

² and there was a leper who came to him and knelt before him, saying, 'Lord, if you choose, you can make me clean.' ³ He stretched out his hand and touched him, saying, 'I do choose. Be made clean!' Immediately his leprosy was cleansed.

Matthew 8:2-3

Leper. The OT provided specific guidelines for the examination and treatment of those with a variety of skin diseases generally called leprosy, although not necessarily what is today called Hansen's disease, many of which were highly contagious. The treatment and required priestly examinations are recorded in Leviticus Chapters 13-14.

As already noted, the Jewish people often saw leprosy as a direct affliction by God for a person's sin. This comes in part from historical accounts recorded in Scripture, such as when Aaron and Miriam opposed Moses' God-given authority: <<*When the cloud went away from over the tent, Miriam had become leprous, as white as snow. And Aaron turned towards Miriam and saw that she was leprous*>> (Numbers 12:10); Elisha's servant Gehazi who sought a reward after Elisha had refused Naaman's gifts thus acknowledging that it was God and not Elisha that had healed him: <<*Therefore the leprosy of Naaman shall cling to you, and to your descendants for ever.'* So he left his presence leprous, as white as snow>> (2 Kings 5:27); and King Uzziah, who burned incense at the altar, something that was only permitted for priests to perform. When challenged he became angry with them: <<*Then Uzziah was angry. Now he had a censer in his hand to make offering, and when he became angry with the*

priests a leprous disease broke out on his forehead, in the presence of the priests in the house of the Lord, by the altar of incense>> (2 Chronicles 26:19). He spent the rest of his reign in isolation with effective rule undertaken by his son King Jotham.

Since the disease was believed to come immediately from the hand of God it was believed it could only be healed in the same manner: <<*When the king of Israel read the letter, he tore his clothes and said, 'Am I God, to give death or life, that this man sends word to me to cure a man of his leprosy? Just look and see how he is trying to pick a quarrel with me'>> (2 Kings 5:7).*

That the leper came to him, given the cultural and legal restrictions placed upon him, shows the desperation that the man felt over what may well have been a lifelong affliction. He recognised in Jesus his only hope.

That he knelt before him indicates both a sign of great respect and also abject humility. This is reminiscent of those who desperately seek God's help in prayer. In addition, it was an acceptance that Jesus has the right to grant or refuse the request, which is not a demonstration of lack of faith but one that shows acknowledgement of the total reliance on, trust in and committed service to God: <<*Be strong, and let us be courageous for the sake of our people, and for the cities of our God; and may the Lord do what seems good to him>> (2 Samuel 10:12), and: <<Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego answered the king, 'O Nebuchadnezzar, we have no need to present a defence to you in this matter. If our God whom we serve is able to deliver us from the furnace of blazing fire and out of your hand, O king, let him deliver us. But if not, be it known to you, O king, that we will not serve your gods and we will not worship the golden statue that you have set up'>> (Daniel 3:16-18).*

Lord, the Greek word *kyrios*, is the title of respect similar to 'Sir' that people commonly used when they came to Jesus for aid, although in contexts that show knowledge of its OT background it can be an affirmation of deity, for it is used over 6,000 times in the Septuagint or Greek OT to translate *Yahweh*.

If you choose shows that there was no presumption on the part of the man or any doubt that Jesus had the power and capability to perform the healing. Jesus would demonstrate that he was willing, I do choose. Be made clean!; thus showing the all sufficiency of his righteousness and grace.

Make me clean. Not only was leprosy a disease, it made the leper as well as anyone who touched him ceremonially unclean: <<*The person who has the leprous disease shall wear torn clothes and let the hair of his head be dishevelled; and he shall cover his upper lip and cry out, 'Unclean, unclean.' He shall remain unclean as long as he has the disease; he is unclean. He shall live alone; his dwelling shall be outside the camp>> (Leviticus 13:45-46), and: <<Command the Israelites to put out of the camp everyone who is leprous, or has a discharge, and everyone who is unclean through contact with a corpse; you shall put out both male and female, putting them outside the camp; they must not defile their camp, where I dwell among them. The Israelites did so, putting them outside the camp; as the Lord had spoken to Moses, so the Israelites did>> (Numbers 5:2-4), with greater detail given throughout Leviticus Chapter 15; thus showing they accepted leprosy as an unclean affliction and not an*

illness. But when Jesus stretched out his hand and touched him, immediately his leprosy was cleansed, and Jesus did not become unclean. Although Paul's words go much deeper than this one instance they are still worthy of consideration: <<*For God has done what the law, weakened by the flesh, could not do: by sending his own Son in the likeness of sinful flesh, and to deal with sin, he condemned sin in the flesh*>> (Romans 8:3).

In touching the man Jesus was in breach of the law: <<*Or when you touch human uncleanness – any uncleanness by which one can become unclean – and are unaware of it, when you come to know it, you shall be guilty*>> (Leviticus 5:3). However, this does not mean that Jesus did not respect the law. What he will later go on to show is that the law was given to benefit God's people, rather than to inhibit them from serving God and thereby advancing his Kingdom on earth.

This account is related in Mark 1:40 and Luke 5:12, which would seem to place it chronologically before the Sermon on the Mount. It seems that Matthew wanted to provide a significant part of Jesus' teaching before he then grouped an account of several of his healings. The actual timing of the event plays no part in the purpose of the story, which was to demonstrate Jesus' power, compassion, authority and ability to deal with perceived sin.

⁴ Then Jesus said to him, 'See that you say nothing to anyone; but go, show yourself to the priest, and offer the gift that Moses commanded, as a testimony to them.'

Matthew 8:4

Say nothing to anyone. Some Rabbis viewed lepers as being condemned to a living death, thus healing a leper would be almost akin to raising the dead in Jewish society. Jesus did not choose to take the opportunity for the widespread publicity that this event could have brought, In fact, he carefully avoided stirring up a misunderstanding of his messianic identity. Although miracles attest to the authenticity of his message concerning the Kingdom's arrival, he did not want to draw crowds who would come simply for the sake of miracles. For other instances of what some have called the 'messianic secret', Matthew records: <<*And their eyes were opened. Then Jesus sternly ordered them, 'See that no one knows of this'*>> (Matthew 9:30), <<*and he ordered them not to make him known*>> (Matthew 12:16), <<*Then he sternly ordered the disciples not to tell anyone that he was the Messiah*>> (Matthew 16:20), and: <<*As they were coming down the mountain, Jesus ordered them, 'Tell no one about the vision until after the Son of Man has been raised from the dead'*>> (Matthew 17:9). In addition, Jesus was not seeking the honour for the work he was doing, all glory belonged to God the Father as far as he was concerned: <<*Jesus said to them, 'Very truly, I tell you, the Son can do nothing on his own, but only what he sees the Father doing; for whatever the Father does, the Son does likewise*>> (John 5:19).

Show yourself to the priest. Jesus instructs the man to do what the law required in order for lepers to be permitted to return to society: <<*This shall be the ritual for the leprous person at the time of his cleansing: He shall be brought to the priest*>> (Leviticus 14:2). This is a demonstration of Jesus' respect for and

compliance with the law, countermanding any claims to the contrary that may have come from him touching the leper.

The gift that Moses commanded refers to the sacrificial offering that was to be taken by the healed person to the priest, who would offer it in thanksgiving to God for the healing: *<<If the disease is healed in the leprous person, the priest shall command that two living clean birds and cedar wood and crimson yarn and hyssop be brought for the one who is to be cleansed>>* (Leviticus 14:3b-4), with one bird being slaughtered and the other being ritually released to celebrate the person's new God-given freedom.

As a testimony to them. When the leper appeared before the priests he would have had to explain his sudden healing, thus providing them with an account of Jesus' ability to perform miracles that could only be ordained or even performed by God. However, like the Pharisees who investigated the restoration of a blind man's sight on the Sabbath, they may have failed to grasp what was going on in their midst: *<<Some of the Pharisees said, 'This man is not from God, for he does not observe the sabbath.' But others said, 'How can a man who is a sinner perform such signs?' And they were divided>>* (John 9:16).

V.a.ii **Matthew 8:5-13 - Jesus Heals a Centurion's Servant**

Although the Gentile mission was central to many in the early church, this was not so for Jesus himself: *<<He answered, 'I was sent only to the lost sheep of the house of Israel'>>* (Matthew 15:24). The healing here of a Gentile was one of two that Jesus performed: *<<Then Jesus answered her, 'Woman, great is your faith! Let it be done for you as you wish.' And her daughter was healed instantly>>* (Matthew 15:28), both of which he did without coming into direct physical contact with the individual or even coming anywhere near to them.

⁵ When he entered Capernaum, a centurion came to him, appealing to him ⁶ and saying, 'Lord, my servant is lying at home paralysed, in terrible distress.' ⁷ And he said to him, 'I will come and cure him.'

Matthew 8:5-7

A centurion was a Roman officer in charge of a hundred men. In Luke's account: *<<After Jesus had finished all his sayings in the hearing of the people, he entered Capernaum. A centurion there had a slave whom he valued highly, and who was ill and close to death. When he heard about Jesus, he sent some Jewish elders to him, asking him to come and heal his slave. When they came to Jesus, they appealed to him earnestly, saying, 'He is worthy of having you do this for him, for he loves our people, and it is he who built our synagogue for us'>>* (Luke 7:1-5), the Roman requested that Jewish elders approach Jesus on the centurion's behalf, but Matthew does not mention them even though it showed an unusual level of respect for Jewish culture by a Gentile, especially given the authority he had. The accounts are not contradictory; Matthew, as is often the case, simply abbreviates the story. He actually reports what the **centurion** said through his messengers, based on the idea that what a person does through an agent is what the person himself does. This is best seen through God sending his Son and speaking through him: *<<Indeed, God did not send the Son into the world to condemn the world, but in order that the world might be saved*

through him>> (John 3:17), <<But when the fullness of time had come, God sent his Son, born of a woman, born under the law, in order to redeem those who were under the law, so that we might receive adoption as children>> (Galatians 4:4-5), and: <<Long ago God spoke to our ancestors in many and various ways by the prophets, but in these last days he has spoken to us by a Son, whom he appointed heir of all things, through whom he also created the worlds>> (Hebrews 1:1-2).

My servant is lying at home paralysed, in terrible distress. The centurion, probably the senior military officer based in the regional town of Capernaum, was clearly a man of compassion, caring for his servant as well as the local populace. The servant could have done no more for his master than the master was doing here for his servant! Given his position of authority it is also noteworthy that he should come before Jesus, a representative of a conquered race, in such humility, addressing him as Lord, requesting and not demanding his help.

Although this particular centurion was held in high regard by local Jews for the work he did in the their community and the respect he showed for their culture, in general Matthew's readers would have had a natural antipathy towards the Romans, who often ruled harshly and imposed high levels of taxation to pay for their governance. Here, Jesus was practising what he preached - love for neighbour and love for an enemy.

I will come and cure him. The Greek for / here indicates Jesus was meaning something like 'Shall I come and heal him?' thereby testing whether the Roman would expect Jesus, a Jew, to breach the law by entering a Gentile home. In doing this, Jesus demonstrates that an outsider who would entreat his favour must first acknowledge the privilege of Israel in the sight of God, a nation whom other peoples had oppressed or disregarded. This is similar in meaning to Jesus' conversation with a Samaritan woman at the well in Sychar: *<<You worship what you do not know; we worship what we know, for salvation is from the Jews>>* (John 4:22). Such initial apparent rejection was a common ploy for demanding greater commitment from the recipient of the favour.

⁸ The centurion answered, 'Lord, I am not worthy to have you come under my roof; but only speak the word, and my servant will be healed.'

Matthew 8:8

Addressing Jesus as Lord, as did the leper in v.2, the Roman centurion reveals a remarkable sensitivity for Jewish traditions, saying that he is not worthy of receiving Jesus into his Gentile home. A Jew who entered the home of a Gentile immediately became ceremonially unclean, as noted by Peter when he visited the centurion Cornelius: *<<And as he talked with him, he went in and found that many had assembled; and he said to them, 'You yourselves know that it is unlawful for a Jew to associate with or to visit a Gentile; but God has shown me that I should not call anyone profane or unclean'>>* (Acts 10:27-28). An alternative view to his sensitivity is that he had some idea who Jesus might actually be, or at least recognised that he had special powers from all the accounts that were spreading about his ministry. He certainly would have a better understanding once he returned home to find his servant cured.

But only speak the word. This would have been the key statement to which Jesus would show his amazement in v.10. Although Jews believed that God performed miracles, they recognised that such miracles performed from a distance, with only a word, were both rare and powerful. This was despite God's own declaration made through the prophet: <<*Am I a God near by, says the Lord, and not a God far off?*>> (Jeremiah 23:23).

This story has similarities to that where an official wanted Jesus to accompany him in order that his dying child might be saved, yet when Jesus cured the boy with a word, the official accepted it by faith, returned home and found the child had been healed at the very moment Jesus had spoken to him: <<*When he heard that Jesus had come from Judæa to Galilee, he went and begged him to come down and heal his son, for he was at the point of death. Then Jesus said to him, 'Unless you see signs and wonders you will not believe.' The official said to him, 'Sir, come down before my little boy dies.' Jesus said to him, 'Go; your son will live.' The man believed the word that Jesus spoke to him and started on his way*>> (John 4:47-50); a true act of faith and courage.

⁹ For I also am a man under authority, with soldiers under me; and I say to one, "Go", and he goes, and to another, "Come", and he comes, and to my slave, "Do this", and the slave does it.'

Matthew 8:9

For I also am a man under authority. As a professional soldier, the centurion would have been used to receiving and giving orders. This statement clearly shows that he recognised that Jesus was both a man under the authority of God but who also had authority given to him. A key difference is that Jesus came to serve those who were in reality subservient to him: <<*For who is greater, the one who is at the table or the one who serves? Is it not the one at the table? But I am among you as one who serves*>> (Luke 22:27).

¹⁰ When Jesus heard him, he was amazed and said to those who followed him, 'Truly I tell you, in no one in Israel have I found such faith.

Matthew 8:10

The centurion seems to understand what **no one in Israel** understands, even **those who followed him**: Jesus is the long-awaited Messiah. Jesus **was amazed**, commending the centurion for his exemplary **faith** and censuring Israel for their lack of faith. Jesus may have said this to the Jews in the hope of provoking some of them into believing in him, as did Paul: <<*Now I am speaking to you Gentiles. Inasmuch then as I am an apostle to the Gentiles, I glorify my ministry in order to make my own people jealous, and thus save some of them*>> (Romans 11:13-14), for where **faith** is absent there can be no fruit.

This is one of only two occasions in Scripture where Jesus showed his amazement. The other was at the lack of faith within his own hometown to the miraculous works he was performing and the words he spoke to them: <<*And he was amazed at their unbelief*>> (Mark 6:6). However, the reader should not

take this to mean that it had taken God by surprise, for this was almost certainly a reaction by Jesus in his fully human nature.

¹¹ I tell you, many will come from east and west and will eat with Abraham and Isaac and Jacob in the kingdom of heaven, ¹² while the heirs of the kingdom will be thrown into the outer darkness, where there will be weeping and gnashing of teeth.'

Matthew 8:11-12

Many will come from east and west. Despite Jesus' focus on teaching the Jews, his healing of the centurion's servant and this statement here seem to indicate Jesus' endorsement of the Gentile mission, with a clear acknowledgement that many more of them will show the same level of faith demonstrated by the soldier, while the Jews would continue in their unbelief of him. The expanse of God's reach had been prophesied before: <<*Nations shall come to your light, and kings to the brightness of your dawn. Lift up your eyes and look around; they all gather together, they come to you; your sons shall come from far away, and your daughters shall be carried on their nurses' arms*>> (Isaiah 60:3-4), and: <<*For from the rising of the sun to its setting my name is great among the nations, and in every place incense is offered to my name, and a pure offering; for my name is great among the nations, says the Lord of hosts*>> (Malachi 1:11).

Jesus had recently taught: <<*For the gate is narrow and the road is hard that leads to life, and there are few who find it*>> (Matthew 7:14), which indicates that few will come in comparison to the whole population of mankind, yet when they are all together they will be many: <<*It was fitting that God, for whom and through whom all things exist, in bringing many children to glory, should make the pioneer of their salvation perfect through sufferings*>> (Hebrews 2:10), <<*It was also about these that Enoch, in the seventh generation from Adam, prophesied, saying, 'See, the Lord is coming with tens of thousands of his holy ones*>> (Jude 14), and: <<*After this I looked, and there was a great multitude that no one could count, from every nation, from all tribes and peoples and languages, standing before the throne and before the Lamb, robed in white, with palm branches in their hands*>> (Revelation 7:9).

Rome, the current home of paganism at that time, lay to the west and the pagan Magi had come from the east, providing a brief glimpse just how the church of Christ was expected to break through cultural, social and racial barriers from the outset, showing there is no place for any form of discrimination or segregation within the church. That the centurion had become accepted by the local Jews, as noted earlier: <<*When they came to Jesus, they appealed to him earnestly, saying, 'He is worthy of having you do this for him, for he loves our people, and it is he who built our synagogue for us*>> (Luke 7:4-5), even if it was only as an exception to the rule, then this account shows that it is possible to accept people from other cultures, ethnic and faith backgrounds without prejudice. The more exceptions to the rule the better and stronger the church will become.

Eat or recline at table. The peoples of the earth who respond to Jesus' ministry will join the patriarchs Abraham and Isaac and Jacob at the end-time messianic

banquet in the Kingdom of Heaven: <<And the angel said to me, 'Write this: Blessed are those who are invited to the marriage supper of the Lamb.' And he said to me, 'These are true words of God'>> (Revelation 19:9), thus fulfilling God's promise to Abraham: <<I will bless those who bless you, and the one who curses you I will curse; and in you all the families of the earth shall be blessed>> (Genesis 12:3), and: <<Christ redeemed us from the curse of the law by becoming a curse for us – for it is written, 'Cursed is everyone who hangs on a tree' – in order that in Christ Jesus the blessing of Abraham might come to the Gentiles, so that we might receive the promise of the Spirit through faith>> (Galatians 3:13-14).

But the sons or heirs of the kingdom, a Semitic term for national Israel, will lose their claim to the Kingdom unless they follow the centurion's example of faith instead of basing their trust in a misinterpretation of the Law of Moses: <<but Israel, who did strive for the righteousness that is based on the law, did not succeed in fulfilling that law>> (Romans 9:31), or simply believing salvation is a matter of their birthright.

Weeping and gnashing of teeth. This description of terrible suffering in hell appears several times in this Gospel: <<and they will throw them into the furnace of fire, where there will be weeping and gnashing of teeth>> (Matthew 13:42), <<and throw them into the furnace of fire, where there will be weeping and gnashing of teeth>> (Matthew 13:50), <<Then the king said to the attendants, "Bind him hand and foot, and throw him into the outer darkness, where there will be weeping and gnashing of teeth">> (Matthew 22:13), <<He will cut him in pieces and put him with the hypocrites, where there will be weeping and gnashing of teeth>> (Matthew 24:51), and: <<As for this worthless slave, throw him into the outer darkness, where there will be weeping and gnashing of teeth>> (Matthew 25:30), as well as in the corresponding passage: <<There will be weeping and gnashing of teeth when you see Abraham and Isaac and Jacob and all the prophets in the kingdom of God, and you yourselves thrown out>> (Luke 13:28).

¹³ And to the centurion Jesus said, 'Go; let it be done for you according to your faith.' And the servant was healed in that hour.

Matthew 8:13

And the servant was healed in that hour. The power of God does not require Jesus to actually visit the servant and lay his hands upon him. He can do so either in person or from a great distance. Once again, the healing is miraculous and instantaneous, for that is the meaning of that hour. A further point can be noted from the account that Jesus should cure a lowly servant is that: <<There is no longer Jew or Greek, there is no longer slave or free, there is no longer male and female; for all of you are one in Christ Jesus>> (Galatians 3:28); God cares equally for all his children.

V.a.iii Matthew 8:14-17 - Jesus Heals Many at Peter's House

In just four verses Matthew reveals Jesus as the great healer. He started by healing the mother-in-law of Peter one Sabbath. Once evening came and the Sabbath movement restrictions were over, many more people were brought to Jesus with

both physical illnesses and demon possession, all of which Jesus healed. Once again, Mark and Luke place this incident before the Sermon on the Mount although its sequence makes no difference to the miracles recorded in this and the subsequent account of what happened that same evening.

¹⁴ **When Jesus entered Peter's house, he saw his mother-in-law lying in bed with a fever;**

Matthew 8:14

Jesus entered Peter's house. The home located in Capernaum, see the image, belonged to both Peter and his brother Andrew: *<<As soon as they left the synagogue, they entered the house of Simon and Andrew, with James and John>>* (Mark 1:29). These men would become the core group within the apostles, especially Peter, James and John.



The remains of Peter's home

Peter's mother-in-law was afflicted with a fever. This statement is one of two that indicates Peter was married: *<<Do we not have the right to be accompanied by a believing wife, as do the other apostles and the brothers of the Lord and Cephas?>>* (1 Corinthians 9:5). Since Peter also paid the temple tax: *<<However, so that we do not give offence to them, go to the lake and cast a hook; take the first fish that comes up; and when you open its mouth, you will find a coin; take that and give it to them for you and me>>* (Matthew 17:27), and was a boat owner, he was probably more than 20 years old, whereas the majority of the apostles were probably still in their mid teens.

It was quite common for a Rabbi to have a disciple who was slightly older than the others and who would act as their natural leader, although there would be no hierarchical structure within the group of apostles.

This account shows that Jesus had no issue with his chosen ministers being married, something the Roman church forbids for its ministers. This is not intended as a criticism on that particular church tradition but to comment that all of us can and should review our beliefs and their applications in light of what Scripture actually reveals.

¹⁵ **he touched her hand, and the fever left her, and she got up and began to serve him.**

Matthew 8:15

He touched her hand. In contrast to the centurion's servant, Jesus used physical intervention, making this healing more intimate but no less miraculous.

That she got up and began to serve him indicates the completeness of the healing, for normal recovery from fever leaves a person feeling weak for many

days at least. Her desire to serve the men in her house would have been the cultural norm for all women.

¹⁶ That evening they brought to him many who were possessed by demons; and he cast out the spirits with a word, and cured all who were sick. ¹⁷ This was to fulfil what had been spoken through the prophet Isaiah, 'He took our infirmities and bore our diseases.'

Matthew 8:16-17

This event took place on a Sabbath day: <<*He went down to Capernaum, a city in Galilee, and was teaching them on the sabbath*>> (Luke 4:31), and: <<*After leaving the synagogue he entered Simon's house. Now Simon's mother-in-law was suffering from a high fever, and they asked him about her*>> (Luke 4:38). Therefore, the statement that evening is significant for after sunset the restrictions on movement were lifted and so it was legal for people to bring their sick and demon possessed people to Jesus.

Cured all who were sick is by itself a remarkable statement showing the ability of Jesus as healer as well as his truly compassionate nature. This is further highlighted by Luke, who wrote: <<*As the sun was setting, all those who had any who were sick with various kinds of diseases brought them to him; and he laid his hands on each of them and cured them*>> (Luke 4:40), which shows that this was no mass group healing but that Jesus cared so much that he took the time at the end of a busy day to touch and probably speak to each individual.

The fact that not all sicknesses have a demonic origin is seen in the distinction between the healings of the sick and the casting out of spirits from those possessed by demons. Illness and death are a symptom of living in a fallen world.

With a word is reminiscent of the Son's role in creation and ever since: <<*Then God said, 'Let there be light'; and there was light*>> (Genesis 1:3), and: <<*In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. He was in the beginning with God. All things came into being through him, and without him not one thing came into being. What has come into being in him was life, and the life was the light of all people*>> (John 1:1-4). There is further confirmation in: <<*He whom God has sent speaks the words of God, for he gives the Spirit without measure*>> (John 3:34), and: <<*Do you not believe that I am in the Father and the Father is in me? The words that I say to you I do not speak on my own; but the Father who dwells in me does his works*>> (John 14:10).

This was to fulfil. Once again, Matthew takes the opportunity to impress upon his readers just how many of Jesus' words and actions, as well as his very existence, fulfilled that had been promised by God through his prophets.

He took our infirmities and bore our diseases is a reference to Isaiah's prophecy of the servant recorded in Isaiah Chapter 53, focusing on Jesus' messianic role as healer: <<*But he was pierced for our transgressions, he was crushed for our iniquities; the punishment that brought us peace was on him, and by his wounds we are healed*>> (Isaiah 53:5 NIV), a prophecy fulfilled on the Cross: <<*He himself bore our sins in his body on the cross, so that, free from sins, we*

might live for righteousness; by his wounds you have been healed>> (1 Peter 2:24). Refer also to comments made on Matthew 11:3-5, where John the Baptist sent his disciples to ensure that Jesus was the Christ. There is a summary document on Isaiah Chapter 53 on the website.

V.a.iv Matthew 8:18-22 - Would-Be Followers of Jesus

Here, Jesus teaches that the choice for those who would wish to be his disciples would not be an easy one. He shows just how much of a commitment it is and how he expects his followers to place their discipleship commitments above anything else, including their personal comfort and family responsibilities, something of significant cultural importance in Jesus' day.

¹⁸ Now when Jesus saw great crowds around him, he gave orders to go over to the other side.

Matthew 8:18

He gave orders to go over to the other side. Jesus was on the predominately Jewish western side of the Sea of Galilee and would head over to the eastern, mainly Gentile side. Although it appears from Matthew's statement that he needed a break from teaching and healing the great crowds, it would also transpire that the journey would serve other key purposes.

¹⁹ A scribe then approached and said, 'Teacher, I will follow you wherever you go.'

Matthew 8:19

A scribe or Teacher of the Law was an expert in handling written documents. In Israel, scribes' duties included teaching, interpretation, and regulation of the law. King Herod had enquired of such men as to where the Messiah was to be born as commented on in Matthew 2:4.

I will follow you wherever you go. This was the strongest possible assertion to discipleship made by a religious leader in the account of Jesus' ministry on earth. This unequivocal promise to serve is exactly that which any disciple should be prepared to make. There were several men who stepped forward to follow Jesus on his intended journey across the lake.

²⁰ And Jesus said to him, 'Foxes have holes, and birds of the air have nests; but the Son of Man has nowhere to lay his head.'

Matthew 8:20

Son of Man combines in one person both human and divine traits, and is used in Scripture to indicate that such a person is much more than a merely gifted mortal, when passages such as: <<*what are human beings that you are mindful of them, mortals that you care for them?*>> (Psalm 8:4), and: <<*He said to me: O mortal, stand up on your feet, and I will speak with you*>> (Ezekiel 2:1), where the Hebrew for mortal is *ben adam*, literally son of man, are linked with the mysterious 'son of man' in Daniel's vision of heaven: <<*In my vision at night I looked, and there before me was one like a son of man, coming with the clouds*>>

of heaven. He approached the Ancient of Days and was led into his presence>> (Daniel 7:13 NIV).

Son of Man is Jesus' favourite self-designation: <<*And he said to him, 'Very truly, I tell you, you will see heaven opened and the angels of God ascending and descending upon the Son of Man'*>> (John 1:51), indicating the true meaning of his identity and ministry as:

1. The humble servant who has come to forgive common sinners: <<*'But so that you may know that the Son of Man has authority on earth to forgive sins' – he then said to the paralytic – 'Stand up, take your bed and go to your home'*>> (Matthew 9:6).
2. The suffering servant whose atoning death and resurrection will redeem his people: <<*Now when Jesus came into the district of Caesarea Philippi, he asked his disciples, 'Who do people say that the Son of Man is?'*>> (Matthew 16:13), and: <<*'For the Son of Man is to come with his angels in the glory of his Father, and then he will repay everyone for what has been done. Truly I tell you, there are some standing here who will not taste death before they see the Son of Man coming in his kingdom'*>> (Matthew 16:27-28).
3. The glorious King and Judge who will return to establish God's Kingdom on earth: <<*When the Son of Man comes in his glory, and all the angels with him, then he will sit on the throne of his glory*>> (Matthew 25:31), and: <<*Jesus said to him, 'You have said so. But I tell you, From now on you will see the Son of Man seated at the right hand of Power and coming on the clouds of heaven'*>> (Matthew 26:64).

Nowhere to lay his head. Since believers can expect to be treated as Jesus was: <<*If the world hates you, be aware that it hated me before it hated you*>> (John 15:18), and: <<*I have said this to you, so that in me you may have peace. In the world you face persecution. But take courage; I have conquered the world!*>> (John 16:33), the Christian life will not be one of ease or comfort and Jesus ensures that he clarifies this from the outset.

²¹ Another of his disciples said to him, 'Lord, first let me go and bury my father.'²² But Jesus said to him, 'Follow me, and let the dead bury their own dead.'

Matthew 8:21-22

First let me go and bury my father. A man would have been expected to perform such a function for his father and therefore the request seems perfectly reasonable. However, the high priest was specifically not permitted to bury his own father: <<*He shall not go where there is a dead body; he shall not defile himself even for his father or mother*>> (Leviticus 21:11), as were all those under a Nazirite vow: <<*All the days that they separate themselves to the Lord they shall not go near a corpse. Even if their father or mother, brother or sister, should die, they may not defile themselves; because their consecration to God is upon the head. All their days as nazirites they are holy to the Lord*>> (Numbers 6:6-8). Jesus clearly sees service to him in the same vein.

Let the dead bury their own dead. This may seem an unusual statement that most likely refers to leaving the spiritually dead to bury either the like-minded or the corporally dead. While Jesus clearly upholds the biblical command to honour father and mother, refer to Matthew 15:1-9, the call to follow him rises above all other allegiances. Anything that hinders unqualified commitment to Jesus and to the new covenant family of faith must be set aside. Jesus makes this even more explicit when a third man offered a similar promise as recorded in Luke: <<*Another said, 'I will follow you, Lord; but let me first say farewell to those at my home.'* Jesus said to him, *'No one who puts a hand to the plough and looks back is fit for the kingdom of God'*>> (Luke 9:61-62).

V.a.v Matthew 8:23-27 - Jesus Stills the Storm

Jesus decided to cross over the Sea of Galilee to the eastern shore, taking many of his disciples with him. During the crossing a great storm arose, causing his disciples, many of them experienced local fishermen, to fear for their lives. Yet Jesus was asleep in the boat. When they woke him up he rebuked them for their lack of faith before calming the storm, showing his great power even over the natural elements.

²³ And when he got into the boat, his disciples followed him. ²⁴ A gale arose on the lake, so great that the boat was being swamped by the waves; but he was asleep.

Matthew 8:23-24

He got into the boat. It is not clear if this was Peter and Andrew's boat that was used on other occasions: <<*He got into one of the boats, the one belonging to Simon, and asked him to put out a little way from the shore. Then he sat down and taught the crowds from the boat*>> (Luke 5:3), or if it belonged to other fishermen. See the image.

That **his disciples followed him** indicates that some had accepted his teaching on discipleship (vv.18-22), and that there were several boats involved in this crossing.

A gale or **great storm**, is the Greek word *seismos*, which can also mean violent shaking or earthquake. Although the Sea of Galilee is located in the earthquake-prone Jordan Rift Valley, Matthew also mentions winds (v.26), which points in the direction of a powerful storm



A typical Jewish fishing boat

that created large waves that swamped the boat. A fishing boat like this was discovered near Lake Tiberius in 1986.

Despite this tempestuous storm and the great shaking of the boat, Jesus was asleep, an indication of both his human nature and the great peace he felt through the trust he had in his Father. David shared in that trust: <<*I lie down and sleep; I wake again, for the Lord sustains me. I am not afraid of tens of thousands of people who have set themselves against me all around*>> (Psalm 3:5-6), and: <<*I will both lie down and sleep in peace; for you alone, O Lord, make me lie down in safety*>> (Psalm 4:8). Peter, too, would come to know such inner peace because of Christ: <<*The very night before Herod was going to bring him out, Peter, bound with two chains, was sleeping between two soldiers, while guards in front of the door were keeping watch over the prison*>> (Acts 12:6). It provides a direct contrast with the fear demonstrated by his disciples.

²⁵ And they went and woke him up, saying, ‘Lord, save us! We are perishing!’ ²⁶ And he said to them, ‘Why are you afraid, you of little faith?’ Then he got up and rebuked the winds and the sea; and there was a dead calm.

Matthew 8:25-26

Lord, save us! There is nothing inherently wrong with such a prayer and at Pentecost Peter confirms the answer: <<*Then everyone who calls on the name of the Lord shall be saved*>> (Acts 2:21). However, there are times when Christ calls his followers to make a stance in their faith and simply trust him by facing whatever comes up against them. Just as a disciple is called to trust God for the basic provisions of life, they are also to trust God for their safety. This does not mean that they will not face danger and even death but need to trust God to do what is best for them in Kingdom terms. Jesus would again remind them just how much he cares for them all: <<*Are not two sparrows sold for a penny? Yet not one of them will fall to the ground unperceived by your Father. And even the hairs of your head are all counted. So do not be afraid; you are of more value than many sparrows*>> (Matthew 10:29-31). The fact that a believer has turned to God through faith in Christ means the Lord has saved them for all eternity.

Little faith is the Greek *oligopistos* and is not ‘no faith’, the Greek *apistos*, but is ineffective, defective, or deficient faith, and was used in the first discourse: <<*But if God so clothes the grass of the field, which is alive today and tomorrow is thrown into the oven, will he not much more clothe you – you of little faith?*>> (Matthew 6:30). Jesus did not rebuke his disciples for calling on him, just for their lack of trust in his presence. How often since then has the church and its members called out in similar fashion on a stormy day? Jesus calls his disciples to a clearer understanding of just who he is.

Rebuked the winds and the sea. Jesus is able to command even the forces of nature, just as God in the OT rebukes the sea, showing his sovereign control over the natural world: <<*Then the channels of the sea were seen, the foundations of the world were laid bare at the rebuke of the Lord, at the blast of the breath of his nostrils*>> (2 Samuel 22:16 and Psalm 18:15).

There was a dead calm indicates this was not just a coincidental calming of the storm but a complete reversal of the natural weather pattern to indicate that Jesus did in fact have control over the elements. Some commentators make an association where Jonah slept through the storm: <<*But the Lord hurled a great wind upon the sea, and such a mighty storm came upon the sea that the ship threatened to break up. Then the mariners were afraid, and each cried to his god. They threw the cargo that was in the ship into the sea, to lighten it for them. Jonah, meanwhile, had gone down into the hold of the ship and had lain down, and was fast asleep*>> (Jonah 1:4-5), with God calming the sea once Jonah was ejected from the ship: <<*So they picked Jonah up and threw him into the sea; and the sea ceased from its raging. Then the men feared the Lord even more, and they offered a sacrifice to the Lord and made vows*>> (Jonah 1:15-16). However, a key difference is that Jonah was fleeing from God's calling on his life, whereas Jesus always sought to do his Father's will: <<*Consequently, when Christ came into the world, he said, 'Sacrifices and offerings you have not desired, but a body you have prepared for me; in burnt-offerings and sin-offerings you have taken no pleasure. Then I said, "See, God, I have come to do your will, O God" (in the scroll of the book it is written of me)'*>> (Hebrews 10:5-7).

There are plenty of myths and legends that report humans or gods exerting power over nature. There are several accounts in Scripture such as the parting of the Red Sea, when Moses held out his rod (Exodus 14:21); the parting of the Jordan under Joshua to allow the people to cross on dry ground, because of the presence of the Ark of the Covenant (Joshua 3:13); and again that same river was parted twice using Elijah's cloak (2 Kings 2:8 and 2:14). What is remarkable in the Gospel accounts of Jesus' actions over nature is that the accounts came into circulation while eyewitnesses were still alive and there are no recorded disputes over the claims made. This is something the opponents of the Gospel would have sought to highlight had there been any counterclaims.

²⁷ They were amazed, saying, 'What sort of man is this, that even the winds and the sea obey him?'

Matthew 8:27

They were amazed is the Greek *thaumazō*, which also means marvelled or to wonder. It is different from the term used to describe the reaction of the crowds, who were astounded by Jesus' words: <<*Now when Jesus had finished saying these things, the crowds were astounded at his teaching*>> (Matthew 7:28), yet even the disciples do not yet fully grasp Jesus' identity, as seen by their statement what sort of man is this.

V.a.vi Matthew 8:28-9:1 - Jesus Heals the Gadarene Demoniacs

On the eastern shore of the Sea of Galilee Jesus encountered two people in a pitiful state due to demonic possession. However, the demons recognised Jesus as the Son of God, immediately realised the superior power he had over their spiritual realm and requested that he allow them to transfer into a herd of pigs nearby. Jesus granted their request, then the pigs immediately stampeded into the lake

and were drowned, an event that caused the pigs' owners great distress, motivating them to ask Jesus to leave their region.

28 When he came to the other side, to the country of the Gadarenes, two demoniacs coming out of the tombs met him. They were so fierce that no one could pass that way.

Matthew 8:28

The other side often marks the movement from a Jewish to a Gentile territory and vice versa: *<<Immediately he made the disciples get into the boat and go on ahead to the other side, while he dismissed the crowds>>* (Matthew 14:22), and: *<<When the disciples reached the other side, they had forgotten to bring any bread>>* (Matthew 16:5).

Gadarenes refers to both the town of Gadara, modern day Umm Qais, which is about 6 miles or 9.7 km southeast of the Sea of Galilee, and also the surrounding

region: *<<They came to the other side of the lake, to the country of the Gerasenes>>* (Mark 5:1). See the image.

In Luke 8:26 it is referred to as the region of the Gerasenes. A 5th Century church excavated in Kursi possibly marks the traditional location of this event on the eastern shore of Galilee. The region was originally allocated to the tribe of Gad: *<<To the Reubenites, the Gadites, and the half-tribe of Manasseh Joshua said, 'Remember the word that Moses the servant of the Lord commanded you, saying, "The Lord your God is providing you a place of rest, and will give you this land"'">>* (Joshua 18:12-13).

Matthew refers to the existence of two demoniacs, whereas Mark 5:1-20 and Luke 8:26-39 refer to just the one man. This does not necessarily mean that Mark and Luke are in error for there is a strong possibility that the pair may have been husband and wife. The other two Gospels probably focus on the one man who wanted to become a disciple of Jesus but was sent instead to tell his testimony to the people of the region. Thus all three accounts are totally factual.

The tombs represented a place of uncleanness for the Jews and Jesus used this fact in his condemnation of the religious leaders: *<<Woe to you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! For you are like whitewashed tombs, which on the outside look beautiful, but inside they are full of the bones of the dead and of all kinds of filth>>* (Matthew 23:27). They were also associated with a place inhabited by demons and sorcerers with their magic arts. The imagery of this as the place where these poor people lived is both powerful and disturbing.



The map shows the surrounding region

They were so fierce yet Jesus showed no fear for his personal safety and had compassion on them. It appears their restoration was the sole purpose of his arduous sea crossing and break from teaching the people about the Kingdom; although the experience of both the crossing and the healings would have been significant lessons for his disciples and those who read about them.

²⁹ Suddenly they shouted, ‘What have you to do with us, Son of God? Have you come here to torment us before the time?’

Matthew 8:29

Suddenly indicates that the demons were not initially aware or forewarned as to who it was that was coming to them. When they did recognise him they shouted, ‘What have you to do with us’. The demons had no way of turning to Christ as humans can, or naturally serving him as the faithful angels do. Therefore, these fallen angels can have nothing to do with him anymore or Jesus with them, except to expose them and their master for what they are.

Son of God. The demons recognised that one of Satan’s strongholds, the spirit world, is being invaded and overpowered. All demons seem to be able to recognise Jesus for who he truly is, which makes an interesting comparison with the majority of humankind, who fail to recognise him or perhaps choose not to, thereby not appreciating the power for good he could and would exert over their lives if they did submit to him. Such failure to recognise Jesus also means they will never understand that the Kingdom of God can be witnessed in the present time, even though it will not be fully revealed until the end of the age when Jesus returns to restore all things.

Torment us before the time. The demons knew that they will be judged and punished at God’s appointed time: <<*For if God did not spare the angels when they sinned, but cast them into hell and committed them to chains of deepest darkness to be kept until the judgement*>> (2 Peter 2:4), although like all creation they do not know what day that will be: <<*He replied, ‘It is not for you to know the times or periods that the Father has set by his own authority’*>> (Acts 1:7). The spirit world accepts this fact quite readily: <<*You believe that God is one; you do well. Even the demons believe – and shudder*>> (James 2:19), but most humans seem sceptical at best about it.

³⁰ Now a large herd of swine was feeding at some distance from them. ³¹ The demons begged him, ‘If you cast us out, send us into the herd of swine.’ ³² And he said to them, ‘Go!’ So they came out and entered the swine; and suddenly, the whole herd rushed down the steep bank into the lake and perished in the water. ³³ The swineherds ran off, and on going into the town, they told the whole story about what had happened to the demoniacs. ³⁴ Then the whole town came out to meet Jesus; and when they saw him, they begged him to leave their neighbourhood.

Matthew 8:30-34

The large herd of swine or pigs would have been raised for food in this Gentile region on the east shore of the Sea of Galilee, for it was the cheapest source of meat during that era and very popular throughout the Roman Empire. It may well have been to this region that the Prodigal Son went (Luke 15:11-32). The demons required a sizeable herd for they were many as noted when Jesus conversed with them: <<*Then Jesus asked him, 'What is your name?' He replied, 'My name is Legion; for we are many'*>> (Mark 5:9).

Some distance from them. This indicates that demons do not need to come into close contact in order to have some influence or to be able to enter into those whose hearts are not guarded.

That the demons should beg to enter the swine and that Jesus should allow them to perish would have made full sense to 1st Century Jews who believed in the mortality of demons or at least God's power to bind them eternally. However, it appears that Jesus cared more for the wellbeing of the demoniacs than he did for the pigs. The owners clearly viewed it quite differently, for their care was for the world and its possessions rather than having love for a neighbour in such dire conditions as these two people had been in. This and the fact they may have viewed the miracle as the work of a magician may well be the main factors why the miracles performed in their land failed to bring them to at least want to hear what Jesus had to say, let alone come to saving faith through him.

Go is the simplest yet most powerful of commands for the demons immediately obeyed and left the demoniacs without further harm to them.

The pigs' fate in the lake thus prefigures and pictures the final fate of all demons when God defeats Satan and throws him into the lake of fire: <<*And the devil who had deceived them was thrown into the lake of fire and sulphur, where the beast and the false prophet were, and they will be tormented day and night for ever and ever*>> (Revelation 20:10). Jesus accomplished the decisive defeat of Satan in his earthly ministry during his time of testing in the wilderness, as recorded in Matthew 4:1-11, Mark 1:12, and Luke 10:18-19. Ultimately, it will be through Jesus' crucifixion and resurrection that Satan will truly know his fate is sealed: <<*Now is the judgement of this world; now the ruler of this world will be driven out*>> (John 12:31), <<*He disarmed the rulers and authorities and made a public example of them, triumphing over them in it*>> (Colossians 2:15), and: <<*Since, therefore, the children share flesh and blood, he himself likewise shared the same things, so that through death he might destroy the one who has the power of death, that is, the devil, and free those who all their lives were held in slavery by the fear of death*>> (Hebrews 2:14-15).

The swineherds ran off. It may seem they had little choice when they were dealing with demon and spiritual forces. However, it also reminds the reader of the contrast between the hired hand and the good shepherd: <<*I am the good shepherd. The good shepherd lays down his life for the sheep. The hired hand, who is not the shepherd and does not own the sheep, sees the wolf coming and leaves the sheep and runs away – and the wolf snatches them and scatters them. The hired hand runs away because a hired hand does not care for the*>>

sheep. I am the good shepherd. I know my own and my own know me>> (John 10:11-14).

They told the whole story about what had happened shows that their subsequent actions were not committed in ignorance.

The local people were very upset for the whole town begged him to leave at the loss of this large herd, which was about 2,000 pigs according to Mark 5:13. It is interesting that it was not just the owners but all the people who came out to see Jesus, although none of them it seems would come to know him.

It is unlikely that the demons or their master could outwit God by causing the people's reaction, thinking that Jesus was responsible for the loss of their precious herd. However, it shows how God does permit the good and bad to coexist in this life, like tares among the wheat: *<<Let both of them grow together until the harvest; and at harvest time I will tell the reapers, Collect the weeds first and bind them in bundles to be burned, but gather the wheat into my barn>> (Matthew 13:30).*

Luke provides the rationale for their request that Jesus leave them: *<<Then all the people of the region of the Gerasenes asked Jesus to leave them, because they were overcome with fear. So he got into the boat and left>> (Luke 8:37).* While fearful reverence and awe are appropriate in the presence of Jesus, the fear of these townspeople is negative and seems to be a wrongful superstitious fear of Jesus' mysterious power. Perhaps it was a fear of further loss of their property, for their fear does not draw them to Jesus.

The orderly fashion of their departure in Luke's account shows that Jesus is never intimidated by people's reactions to him but he doesn't impose himself either. He waits patiently for people to come to him.