

ADULT BIBLE STUDY IN SIMPLIFIED ENGLISH

STUDY GUIDE

Miracles in The Gospel of Matthew

WRITERS

Janet Roberts Amy Barker Jennifer Carson Phyllis Merritt Emily Martin

BAPTISTWAY PRESS • Dallas, Texas • baptistwaypress.org

Adult Bible Study in Simplified English Study Guide

Miracles in the Gospel of Matthew

Copyright © 2019 by BAPTISTWAY PRESS®
All rights reserved.

First edition: November 2019

Permission is granted for a church to make as many copies of this publication as needed for use within its ministry. Copies of this publication are not to be sold, distributed, or used in any other manner whatsoever without written permission except in the case of brief quotations.

BAPTISTWAY PRESS® is registered in U.S. Patent and Trademark Office.

Unless otherwise indicated, all Scripture quotations are from the New Life Bible, Copyright © 1969, 1976, 1978, 1983, 1986 by Christian Literature International. Used by permission. All rights reserved. Abbreviated as NLV.

Adult Bible Study in Simplified English is published by BaptistWay Press. These quarterly studies follow the same curriculum plan as the BaptistWay Adult Bible Study curriculum.

Teachers may wish to purchase BaptistWay Adult Bible study materials as additional resources. These may be ordered through your church or directly:

Order online at: baptistwaypress.org

Order by phone: (U.S. toll free): 1-866-249-1799

Mon to Fri, 8:30 a.m. to 5:00 p.m. (Central Time)

Order by email: baptistway@texasbaptists.org

Additional contact information:

Baptist General Convention of Texas

7557 Rambler Road, Suite 1200

Dallas, TX 75231-2388

(888) 244-9400

Twitter: [@texasbaptists](https://twitter.com/texasbaptists)

Facebook.com/texasbaptists

This free, online curriculum is made possible by your gifts to the [Mary Hill Davis Offering®](#) for Texas Missions

BAPTISTWAY PRESS®

MANAGEMENT TEAM

Executive Director, BGCT

David Hardage

Associate Executive Director, BGCT

Steve Vernon

Director, Great Commission Team

Delvin Atchison

Publisher, BAPTISTWAY PRESS®

Bob Billups

Marketing Coordinator

Stan Granberry

Director, Office of Intercultural Ministries

Patty Lane

LANGUAGE MATERIALS TEAM

Study Guide Writers

Lessons 1-4: Janet Roberts

Hunters Glen Baptist Church, Plano, Texas

Lessons 5-7: Amy Barker

First Baptist Church, Belton, Texas

Lessons 8-10: Jennifer Carson

First Baptist Church, Arlington, Texas

Lessons 11-13: Phyllis Merritt

Columbus Avenue Baptist Church, Waco, Texas

Christmas Lesson: Emily Martin

Park Cities Baptist Church, Dallas, Texas

Study Guide Editors

Lessons 1-4: Amy Barker

First Baptist Church, Belton, Texas

Lessons 5-7, Christmas Lesson &

Team Coordinator: Cindy Dake

First Baptist Church, Arlington, Texas

Lessons 8-10: Emily Martin

Park Cities Baptist Church, Dallas, Texas

Lessons 11-13: Jack Merritt

Columbus Avenue Baptist Church, Waco, Texas

These lessons use the New Life Version (NLV) of the Bible. You can read it online at www.biblegateway.com and at www.studylight.org. BibleGateway has a free app available for iPad, iPhone, Android phones, and Kindle Fire. If you prefer a hard copy of the NLV, go to barbourbooks.com (search for "New Life").

Miracles in the Gospel of Matthew

Introduction

Have you heard or said one of these things recently?

That is a miracle!

It would be a miracle if that happened.

We are praying for a miracle.

It is not unusual to hear someone use the word *miracle* in daily talk. The English word *miracle* comes from the Latin word *miraculum*, which simply means “something that causes wonder.”

The New Testament was written in the Greek language, but it does not have just one word for miracle — it has four words! These are not different kinds of miracles but different ways to explain what happens in a miracle:

- *Ergon* means works.
- *Teras* means wonders.
- *Dunamis* means powers.
- *Semeion* means signs.

One Bible study book said this: *A miracle is a wonderful work that only God can do by His power.* When a person receives a message directly from God’s messenger (an angel), we say that is a miracle, too.

For all of human history, people have wanted, looked for, or prayed for miracles to

help fix problems in their lives. In the New Testament:

- Miracles always showed Jesus’ power.
- Jesus’ miracles rescued people from sickness, danger, or even death.

This 13-lesson study looks at the miracles of Jesus in the Gospel of Matthew. And in the Christmas Lesson, we will study when God came to earth as a tiny baby born in Bethlehem: Jesus Christ. That was “The Grand Miracle!”

About the Writers

Janet Roberts wrote lessons 1-4. She has taught ESL since 1976, trains teachers in Plano, Texas, and enjoys traveling to teach English overseas.

Amy Barker wrote lessons 5-7. She is a wife and a homeschool mom. Her family lives on a farm near Moody, Texas.

Jennifer Carson wrote lessons 8-10. She is a high school English teacher and freelance writer/editor who lives in Saginaw, Texas.

Phyllis Merritt wrote lessons 11-13. She lives in Waco, Texas, and has taught ESL since 1970 in the U.S. and she also teaches English overseas.

Emily Martin wrote the Christmas Lesson. She is a librarian at Park Cities Baptist Church in Dallas and is a freelance writer and Bible teacher.

Miracles in the Gospel of Matthew

Lesson Overview

Lesson 1	Tempted Without Sinning	Matthew 4:1-11
Lesson 2	Jesus Teaches and Heals a Leper	Matthew 8:1-4
Lesson 3	Jesus the Healer	Matthew 8:14-17
Lesson 4	The Perfect Storm	Matthew 8:23-27
Lesson 5	Desperate Faith	Matthew 9:18-19, 23-26
Lesson 6	Persistent Faith	Matthew 9:20-22
Lesson 7	The Better Choice	Matthew 12:9-13
Lesson 8	Jesus Has Power to Meet Every Need	Matthew 14:14-21
Lesson 9	Jesus Has Power Over the Storm	Matthew 14:22-33
Lesson 10	Have Faith in Jesus' Power	Matthew 15:21-28
Lesson 11	Faith in God is Greater Than Any Problem	Matthew 17:14-21
Lesson 12	God Gives Us What We Need	Matthew 17:24-27
Lesson 13	The Touch of Jesus	Matthew 20:29-34
Christmas Lesson	The Miracle of the Virgin Birth	Matthew 1:18-25

Miracles in the Gospel of Matthew

Word List

Lesson 1

example: a person or way of acting that is seen as someone or something that should be followed

failed: ended without winning

Lesson 2

instructions: words that tell what to do and how to do it

leper: a person who has the bad skin disease of leprosy

unclean: not clean, dirty, not good

Lesson 3

fever: when a body becomes more than 98.6 degrees

messages: news told from one to another

prophets: early preachers who heard and told God's messages

Lesson 4

calm: full of peace, not angry or upset, not windy or stormy

doubt: not sure, to not believe something is true

nature: everything in the world that is not made by people

Lesson 5

desperate: having a strong need or a strong want for something; to strongly want to do something

disrupt: to stop doing something; to stop someone else from doing something

distract: to take attention away from someone or something

grief: deep sadness caused especially by someone's death

tragedy: a very bad event that causes great sadness

Lesson 6

evidence: a visible sign of something; proof

outcast: someone who is not accepted by other people

persist: to continue to do something even though it is difficult.

persistent: not stopping or going away

Lesson 7

burden: something heavy that is carried; something that is hard to do or deal with

to miss the point: to fail to understand something important

priority: something that is more important than other things

Miracles in the Gospel of Matthew

Word List

Lesson 8

compassion: a feeling of wanting to help someone who is sick, hungry, in trouble

convention: a large meeting of people who come to a place to talk about their shared work or other interests

grieved: to feel or show deep sorrow or sadness

Lesson 9

haggard: looking very thin and tired, especially from great hunger, worry, or pain

intruder: a person who is not welcome or wanted in a place or a person who is in a place illegally

temptation: a strong urge or desire to have or do something that may be bad, wrong, or unwise

vulnerable: easily hurt or harmed physically, mentally, or emotionally

Lesson 10

cringe: to make a sudden movement from fear of being hit or hurt

humble: not proud; not thinking of yourself as better than other people

modest: not showing too much of a person's body

pagan: a group or person who worships false gods instead of the One True God

rebuke: speak in an angry and critical way

Lesson 11

faith: to believe in God and Jesus; to trust and have confidence in

fast: to go without eating to pray better

Lesson 12

tax collector: someone who gathers money from people to pay for the needs of the government

Lesson 13

Braille: a system of touch-reading and writing for blind persons in which raised dots represent the letters of the alphabet

Christmas Lesson

fulfill (fulfilled): to do something and finish it well; to finish a goal that is important to you

option: something that can be chosen; to pick between one or two things

result: something that is caused by something else that happened or was done before

virgin: a person who has never had sex

Miracles in the Gospel of Matthew

Word List in Alphabetical Order

These vocabulary words can found in the lesson listed in each definition; “L8” means Lesson 8.

Braille: a system of touch-reading and writing for blind persons in which raised dots represent the letters of the alphabet (L13)

burden: something heavy that is carried; something that is hard to do or deal with (L6)

calm: full of peace, not angry or upset, not windy or stormy (L4)

compassion: a feeling of wanting to help someone who is sick, hungry, in trouble (L8)

convention: a large meeting of people who come to a place to talk about their shared work or other interests (L8)

cringe: to make a sudden movement from fear of being hit or hurt (L10)

desperate: having a strong need or a strong want for something; to strongly want to do something (L5)

disrupt: to stop doing something; to stop someone else from doing something (L5)

distract: to take attention away from someone or something (L5)

doubt: not sure, to not believe something is true (L4)

evidence: a visible sign of something; proof

example: a person or way of acting that is seen as someone or something that should be followed (L1)

failed: ended without winning (L1)

faith: to believe in God and Jesus; to trust and have confidence in (L11)

fast: to go without eating to pray better (L11)

fever: when a body becomes more than 98.6 degrees (L3)

fulfill (fulfilled): to do something and finish it well; to finish a goal that is important to you (Christmas Lesson)

grief: deep sadness caused especially by someone’s death (L5)

grieved: to feel or show deep sorrow or sadness (L8)

haggard: looking very thin and tired, especially from great hunger, worry, or pain (L9)

humble: not proud; not thinking of yourself as better than other people (L10)

instructions: words that tell what to do and how to do it (L2)

intruder: a person who is not welcome or wanted in a place or a person who is in a place illegally (L9)

leper: a person who has the bad skin disease of leprosy (L2)

messages: news told from one to another (L3)

modest: not showing too much of a person's body (L10)

nature: everything in the world that is not made by people (L4)

option: something that can be chosen; to pick between one or two things (Christmas Lesson)

outcast: someone who is not accepted by other people (L6)

pagan: a group or person who worships false gods instead of the One True God (L10)

persist: to continue to do something even though it is difficult. (L6)

persistent: not stopping or going away (L6)

priority: something that is more important than other things (L6)

prophets: early preachers who heard and told God’s messages (L3)

rebuke: speak in an angry and critical way (L10)

result: something that is caused by something else that happened or was done before (Christmas Lesson)

tax collector: someone who gathers money from people to pay for the needs of the government (L12)

temptation: a strong urge or desire to have or do something that may be bad, wrong, or unwise (L9)

to miss the point: to fail to understand something important (L6)

tragedy: a very bad event that causes great sadness (L5)

unclean: not clean, dirty, not good (L2)

virgin: a person who has never had sex (Christmas Lesson)

vulnerable: easily hurt or harmed physically, mentally, or emotionally (L9)

Miracles in the Gospel of Matthew

Memory Verses

Lesson 1

Jesus said to the devil, “Get away, Satan. It is written, ‘You must worship the Lord your God. You must obey Him only.’ ” (Matthew 4:10)

Lesson 2

“Then Jesus put His hand on him and said, ‘I will. You are healed!’ At once the man was healed.” (Matthew 8:3)

Lesson 3

“It happened as the early preacher Isaiah said it would happen. He said, ‘He took on Himself our sickness and carried away our diseases.’ ” (Matthew 8:17)

Lesson 4

“Then men were surprised and wondered about it. They said, ‘What kind of a man is He? Even the winds and the waves obey Him.’ ” (Matthew 8:27)

Lesson 5

“Everything is possible for the one who believes.” (Mark 9:23b, NIRV)

Lesson 6

“I say to you, ask, and what you ask for will be given to you. Look, and what you are looking for you will find. Knock, and the door you are knocking on will be opened to you.” (Luke 11:9)

Lesson 7

“Come to Me, all of you who work and have heavy loads. I will give you rest. Follow My teachings and learn from Me. I am gentle and do not have pride. You will have rest for your souls.” (Matthew 11:28-29)

Lesson 8

“Jesus said to them, ‘I am the Bread of Life. He who comes to Me will never be hungry. He who puts his trust in Me will never be thirsty.’ ” (John 6:35)

Lesson 9

“Call on Me in the day of trouble. I will take you out of trouble, and you will honor Me.” (Psalm 50:15)

Lesson 10

“Now faith is being sure we will get what we hope for. It is being sure of what we cannot see.” (Hebrews 11:1)

Lesson 11

“... If you have faith as a mustard seed ... you will be able to do anything.” (Matthew 17:20)

Lesson 12

“And my God will give you everything you need because of His great riches in Christ Jesus.” (Philippians 4:19)

Lesson 13

“Jesus had loving-pity on them and put His hands on their eyes. At once they could see, and they followed Jesus.” (Matthew 20:34)

Christmas Lesson

“A Son will be born to her. You will give Him the name Jesus because He will save His people from the punishment of their sins.” (Matthew 1:21)

Adult Bible Study

in Simplified English

Miracles in the Gospel of Matthew

Lesson 1: Tempted without Sinning

Bible Text

Matthew 4:1-11

Memory Verse

Jesus said to the devil, "Get away, Satan. It is written, 'You must worship the Lord your God. You must obey Him only.'" (Matthew 4:10)

Word List

example: a person or way of acting that is seen as someone or something that should be followed
failed: ended without winning

Miracles happen every day. Miracles are powerful works that only God can do. Doctors see miracles when a very sick person with no hope gets better. Rescue workers see miracles when people live after terrible accidents. I saw a miracle when my mom was in the hospital not long ago. Something happened that should have caused her to bleed to death. But she bled only a little. The bleeding stopped even though she was on a medicine that made it hard for bleeding to stop. Only God could do that. It was a miracle!

Jesus is God. Jesus did many miracles while He was on earth. Jesus is still doing miracles in people's lives today. This study is about the miracles that Jesus did when He was living in Israel and traveling with His followers. Each lesson will be about a powerful work that Jesus did. Miracles were one way that Jesus showed everyone that He is God. Only God does miracles.

Jesus' miracles showed that He is God. But He was also a man. He had feelings just like we have. Have you ever wanted to do something that you knew was wrong? We might want to eat too much of the wrong kinds of foods when we are hungry. We might not want to tell the truth all the time. We might want to take things that do not belong to us sometimes. This is called being tempted. It is not a sin to be tempted. It is a sin when you choose to do the wrong thing. It is a sin when you disobey God. Jesus was tempted, too. But He did not sin. Jesus did a powerful work when He was tempted and did not sin.

Tempted to Eat (Matthew 4:1-4)

Jesus was baptized by John the Baptist. The Spirit of God came and rested on Him. A voice from heaven said, "This is My much-loved Son. I am very happy with Him" (Matthew 3:17). Matthew, one of the 12 special followers of Jesus, tells us that after this, the Holy Spirit led Jesus to a desert. It is

interesting that after such a wonderful time with God in the water, He was led to a dry place with little water. But God had a plan. Jesus was led to the desert to be tempted.

There was no food in the desert. Jesus knew that God wanted Him to stay there and not eat. He obeyed God and stayed in the desert. He did not eat for 40 days and nights. He was very hungry. Then the devil came. The devil tempted Jesus to turn some stones into bread so that He could eat.

Jesus gave the devil the best answer from God. He knew God's words very well. He told the devil, "It is written, 'Man is not to live on bread only. Man is to live by every word that God speaks.'" The devil knew that Jesus was right.

The devil **failed**. Jesus won. This was a miracle because Jesus needed to eat. He was fully a man. But He was also fully God. So, he could have changed the stones to bread easily. Jesus won when He chose to obey God. He did not need to prove to the devil that He is the Son of God.

Tempted to Jump (Matthew 4:5-7)

The devil did not stop. He tempted Jesus again. He took Jesus to the top of a tall building of worship for the Jews. It was called the temple. For the second time, the devil told Jesus to prove that He was the Son of God by doing something. This time he

tempted Jesus to jump from the building. He used God's own words for this temptation. He said the words from Psalm 91:11-12: "For He will tell His angels to care for you and keep you in all your ways. They will hold you up in their hands. So your foot will not hit against a stone." These were true words about Jesus.

Jesus answered by saying God's words from Deuteronomy 6:16a: "Do not test the Lord your God." Jesus knew that it would be wrong to make God prove His love. God had already proven His love for Jesus when He spoke at Jesus' baptism. God told everyone that Jesus was His Son. God said that He loved Jesus (Matthew 3:17).

So the devil failed again. And Jesus won again. The devil tried to use God's words to tempt Jesus. Jesus knew that His enemy was using God's words in the wrong way. Jesus won when He chose to obey God. Jumping from a tall building would not prove anything. It would be the wrong thing to do.

Tempted to Worship (Matthew 4:8-11)

The devil tried again to tempt Jesus to sin. This time he tempted Jesus to do something that would make God angry. He took Jesus to a very high place where He could see far. He could think about all the nations of the world. Jesus knew that God had promised: "I will give the nations for you to own. The ends of the earth will belong to

You” (Psalm 2:8). This will happen at the end of time. The devil said that Jesus did not have to wait. The devil would give the nations to Jesus if Jesus would worship him. The devil was tempting Jesus to worship him like a god. How terrible!

God told everyone in Exodus 20:3, “Have no gods other than Me.” Jesus would disobey the first of the Ten Great Laws of God if He worshiped the devil. This temptation made Jesus very angry. He told the devil to go away. Again, Jesus used God’s own words to reject the temptation: “You must worship the Lord your God. You must obey Him only” (Deuteronomy 6:13).

The devil failed again. Jesus won again. The devil tried to tempt Jesus with power. Jesus won when He chose to obey God. He would never worship or obey anyone other than the One true God.

The devil did not tempt Jesus again. Jesus told the devil to go away, and he did. Jesus showed us how to obey God and not the devil. God tells us in James 4:7, “So give

yourselves to God. Stand against the devil and he will run away from you.” Only God can give us this miracle of obeying Him only. We can stand against the devil like Jesus did only with the power of God.

Things to Remember

It is not wrong to eat, jump, or worship. It is wrong to do anything in a way that disobeys God. The Holy Spirit helps every follower of Jesus to know right from wrong and to choose to do right. Jesus is our perfect **example**. We can win when we are tempted by following Jesus’ example. We can win by obeying God and telling the devil to go away.

Obeying God can be very hard to do. God gave us a promise that we can trust in 1 Corinthians 10:13: “God is faithful. He will not allow you to be tempted more than you can take. But when you are tempted, He will make a way for you to keep from falling into sin.” If we look, we can find that way to keep from falling into sin.

People often sin when they are tempted. Jesus could have chosen to do the wrong thing. He did not. He found a way by knowing and saying God’s words. He chose not to sin. This was a miracle! God can give us the miracle of winning when we are tempted, too. We can choose to give ourselves to God and obey Him only.

Things to Think About

1. What miracles have you seen in your life or in someone else’s life?
2. How have you won when you are tempted? Do you always win? When is it hardest for you to win?
3. Think of a time when you were tempted and did not win. Does this sin make you feel terrible?
4. Do you know what to do when you sin? How can you find forgiveness from God?

Matthew 4:1-11

1 Jesus was led by the Holy Spirit to a desert. There He was tempted by the devil.

2 Jesus went without food for forty days and forty nights. After that He was hungry.

3 The devil came tempting Him and said, “If You are the Son of God, tell these stones to be made into bread.”

4 But Jesus said, “It is written, ‘Man is not to live on bread only. Man is to live by every word that God speaks.’”

5 Then the devil took Jesus up to Jerusalem, the holy city. He had Jesus stand on the highest part of the house of God.

6 The devil said to Him, “If You are the Son of God, throw Yourself down. It is written, ‘He has told His angels to look after You. In their hands they will hold You up. Then Your foot will not hit against a stone.’”

7 Jesus said to the devil, “It is written also, ‘You must not tempt the Lord your God.’”

8 Again the devil took Jesus to a very high mountain. He had Jesus look at all the nations of the world to see how great they were.

9 He said to Jesus, “I will give You all these nations if You will get down at my feet and worship me.”

10 Jesus said to the devil, “Get away, Satan. It is written, ‘You must worship the Lord your God. You must obey Him only.’”

11 Then the devil went away from Jesus. Angels came and cared for Him.

Matthew 3:13-17

13 Jesus came from Galilee. He went to John at the Jordan River to be baptized by him.

14 John tried to stop Him. He said, “I need to be baptized by You. Do You come to me?”

15 Jesus said to him, “Let it be done now. We should do what is right.” John agreed and baptized Jesus.

16 When Jesus came up out of the water, the heavens opened. He saw the Spirit of God coming down and resting on Jesus like a dove.

17 A voice was heard from heaven. It said, “This is My much-loved Son. I am very happy with Him.”

The Temptations of Jesus

1. How was Jesus tempted?
2. What did Jesus do or say first after the devil tempted Him?
3. How did Jesus keep from sinning?
4. How are people tempted in this same way today?
5. What can people do when they are tempted in this way?

Adult Bible Study

in Simplified English

*Miracles
in the Gospel of Matthew*

Lesson 2: Jesus Touches and Heals a Leper

Bible Text

Matthew 8:1-4

Memory Verse

“Then Jesus put His hand on him and said, ‘I will. You are healed!’ At once the man was healed.”
(Matthew 8:3)

Word List

instructions: words that tell what to do and how to do it

leper: a person who has the bad skin disease of leprosy

unclean: not clean, dirty, not good

Diseases are difficult problems. Some diseases can be passed from one person to another. The person with this kind of disease must not be with other people. Children get these kinds of diseases in schools or while playing with friends. Parents must keep their children away from other children when they have these kinds of diseases. They must keep their sick children away from other people until a medicine cures them.

Some diseases are very bad. They can cause people to die. Some of these deadly diseases are the kind that can pass easily from one person to another. These diseases make people very afraid. Those who have the disease must not be with other people. They cannot be with family or friends. They are lonely and afraid.

The miracle in today’s lesson is the healing of a man with a bad skin disease. This skin disease could easily pass from one person to another. There was no medicine that could cure it at that time. The disease was called leprosy. The person who had the disease was called a **leper**. People with leprosy looked bad with many sores all over their bodies. Lepers would die slowly and alone. Their only hope was healing.

Down from the Mountain (Matthew 8:1)

Matthew wrote that Jesus started teaching, preaching, and healing after He was baptized and tempted. Jesus went up to a mountain and taught many people. We can read what He taught on the mountain in Matthew 5-7. Then Jesus came down from the mountain when He finished this long teaching time. Many of those who had been learning from Him followed Him.

Many people followed Jesus because His teaching was like nothing they had heard before. Many people followed Jesus because

He had the power to heal all kinds of problems and diseases. They knew that He was special. Some people understood that He was sent by God.

Matthew also tells about ten of Jesus' miracles that came after Jesus' time of teaching. These miracles were for many different kinds of people. Many people came to Jesus to find healing, but not all of them became followers of Jesus.

Touching the Leper (Matthew 8:2-3)

God gave rules to the Jewish people for people with this bad skin diseases. His Law says: "The person who has the bad skin disease will wear torn clothes and not cover the hair of his head. He will cover his mouth and cry out, 'Unclean! Unclean!' He will be unclean as long as he has the disease. He is unclean. He will live alone. His home will be away from the tents" (Leviticus 13:45-46).

A leper had a terrible life. A leper had many ugly sores on his skin. No one could touch or hug him. He had to stay out of crowds of people. He had to shout when people were around him to make them stay away. He had to wear torn clothes for people to notice him. And he would know that he was dying. Think about what it would be like to be a leper. How would it feel to be alone while you are slowly dying? You would do anything to be healed!

Now think about what it would be like to hear about Jesus when you had this disease. He had the power to heal. Would He want to heal an unclean person like you?

Imagine that you are a leper. You have heard about Jesus. You know that His power comes from God. He is the One who came from God. You heard about God's words when John baptized Him. You want to beg for healing. And you also want to worship this special man sent by God. You pray that God will help you get to Jesus.

You know that Jesus is teaching on a nearby mountain. You are not strong enough to climb the mountain. Your disease has made it hard for you to walk because of all the sores on the bottom of your feet. You must wait for Jesus to come down. You can beg Him to heal you when He comes down from the mountain.

Jesus is coming! You can see Him from a distance. The people are coming, too, but Jesus is first. You run even though it hurts, and you fall at His feet. You worship Him with all your heart. Then you say what you have come to say: "Lord, if You will, You can heal me!" Then you wait to see what He will say or do.

How wonderful! Jesus touches you! For the first time in many years someone has touched you. The touch feels strange but wonderful at the same time. Something is happening to you!

Jesus speaks to you. He heard you. He talks to you like you are more than just a dirty leper. He says, “I will. You are healed!” You feel something change in your body when He speaks that last word. You look, and the sores are gone! You are no longer a leper! You are free of that terrible disease. Think about how your life would change!

The touch of Jesus made the leper clean. He did not have to cry out “unclean” anymore. He could touch others and be touched. Jesus changed this man’s life.

Instructions (Matthew 8:4)

Jesus healed the leper, and then He gave the man some **instructions**. Jesus told him not to tell anyone about being healed. The news about Jesus’ healing power was bringing people from all over Israel and from other countries. Soon Jesus would not have time to teach.

Things to Think About

1. Have you ever had a disease that caused you to have to be alone? How did that make you feel?
2. How difficult would it be for a leper to come to Jesus? How difficult is it for sinners to come to Jesus?
3. How is sin like leprosy? Give some examples.
4. How is forgiveness like healing? Give some examples.
5. What people do we stay away from today? Who do we think of as unclean today? What can we do to show them God’s love?

Jesus’ next instruction to the healed man was to follow the Law that God gave to Moses and the people of Israel. This Law is found in Leviticus 14. The man who is healed must go to see a religious leader. The Law gives instructions about how to clean the man, his clothes, and his house. It also says that the man must pay for his sins by giving sin gifts and burnt gifts (Leviticus 14:31). God taught the people of Israel that blood pays for sin. So, a priest would kill an animal to pay for this man’s sins. But Jesus stopped the need for the killing of animals when He died on the cross. His death paid for the sins of all people for all time.

Things to Remember

Sin is like this disease of leprosy. It causes us to be alone and without hope. We feel unclean. We, like the leper, need the healing touch of Jesus. Jesus paid for our sins. Jesus makes us clean and free! We are not alone, and we have hope!

When we come with faith and ask Jesus to make us clean, He will. The Bible promises: “If we tell Him our sins, He is faithful, and we can depend on Him to forgive us of our sins. He will make our lives clean from all sin” (1 John 1:9). This is how we become followers of Jesus. Our life changes, and we are never the same!

Matthew 8:1-4

1 Jesus came down from the mountain. Many people followed Him.

2 A man with a bad skin disease came and got down before Him and worshiped Him. He

said, “Lord, if You will, You can heal me!”

3 Then Jesus put His hand on him and said, “I will. You are healed!” At once the man was healed.

4 Jesus said to him, “Go now, but tell no one. Let the religious leader see you. Give the gift in worship that Moses told you to give. This will show them you have been healed.”

Leviticus 14:1-3a, 8-9, 31

1 The Lord said to Moses,

2 “This is the law of the person with a bad skin disease when he is made clean. He will be brought to the religious leader.

3 The religious leader will go away from the tents and look at him.

....

8 The one to be made clean will wash his clothes, cut off all his hair, wash himself in water, and be clean. After that he may go among the tents. But he must stay outside his tent for seven days.

....

31 He will give what he is able to give, one for a sin gift and the other for a burnt gift, together with the grain gift. So the religious leader will pay for the sins of the person to be made clean before the Lord.

Adult Bible Study

in Simplified English

Miracles in the Gospel of Matthew

Lesson 3: Jesus the Healer

Bible Text

Matthew 8:14-17

Memory Verse

“It happened as the early preacher Isaiah said it would happen. He said, ‘He took on Himself our sickness and carried away our diseases.’”

(Matthew 8:17)

Word List

fever: when a body becomes more than 98.6 degrees

messages: news told from one to another

prophets: early preachers who heard and told God’s messages

Have you ever had a strong feeling that something was going to happen? My father and mother were on vacation far from home when my father had a bad feeling. Somehow he knew that something was wrong with my brother. They did not have a telephone nearby, so they just started driving home. They called when they found a telephone. They learned that my brother was in the hospital. He had a bad infection and almost died. The doctors had

saved his life. How did my father know about my brother? He said it was a strong feeling. We believe that God told him in his spirit.

God often spoke to people in this way in the past. Sometimes He would speak regularly with special people that He chose. He would give them **messages** for the people. Sometimes God gave them instructions for the people. Sometimes He gave warnings for the people. And sometimes He told about things in the future. These people of God were called **prophets**. It was important for them to give the people the words that God had told them.

One of those prophets was a man named Isaiah. He told the people many things about the One who was coming from God. Isaiah told that He would be born to a young woman who had never been with a man (Isaiah 7:14). Jesus’ mother Mary was that young woman. Isaiah 53 tells about Jesus’ death. All of the things Isaiah wrote about happened to Jesus. Matthew wanted all people to know that Jesus was the One sent by God to show how much God loves us. He wanted to prove to everyone that Jesus was sent by God to take away the sins of the world.

The Touch (Matthew 8:14-15)

Jesus again healed a sick person. This was not just any sick person. She was the mother-in-law of Peter, one of Jesus’ special

followers. Peter's mother-in-law had a bad **fever**. No one knew what caused fevers. One person with a fever could cause others to get a fever. They did not have medicine for fevers. Many people died from fevers.

The Law of the Jewish people said that it was wrong to touch a sick person like it was wrong to touch a leper. This rule was like the rule about lepers. God's Law helped people to stay well.

Everyone knew about these rules. But they also knew that Jesus had touched and healed others. Now He touched this sick woman. Jesus did not get sick or get a bad disease. It was a miracle.

Jesus touched her, and her fever was gone. Her healing was fast and complete. She felt so well that she got up out of her bed and served Jesus. She was so happy! She wanted to do something for the One who took away her disease. She was thankful for this complete miracle.

The Word at Work (Matthew 8:16)

Jesus did not always touch people to heal them. God made the world and the universe by speaking. Genesis 1 says, "God said ..." on each day that He made things. God made everything by speaking. The words of God have great power.

The words of Jesus have power, too. That evening, people with problems came to

see Jesus, and He helped them. Some of the people who came to Jesus were sick people. That night, Jesus healed them all.

But some people who came to Jesus had demons in them. And Jesus helped them, too. Jesus put out the demons by speaking to them. Demons are angels who used to follow and obey God. But then they chose to follow the devil. The devil was also an angel. He decided that he wanted to be God. He told the angels to follow and worship him. The devil and all of those who followed him were put out of heaven.

Demons are sent by the devil to stop the work of God. First Peter 5:8 says, "Keep awake! Watch at all times. The devil is working against you. He is walking around like a hungry lion with his mouth open. He is looking for someone to eat." This is the job of the demons, too. Their home is here on earth. They work against God, but they will not win. Jesus has power over demons.

It Happened (Matthew 8:17)

The prophet Isaiah said many things about the One who was going to come to save the people from their sins. Matthew wrote his book to prove to the Jewish people that Jesus was the One that they were waiting for. But Matthew also wrote his book for all of us. Matthew showed us that the prophet's words were about Jesus.

The Jewish leaders studied the words of all the prophets. They taught the Jewish people about the meaning of the prophets' words. They knew what Isaiah had written. Isaiah told that the One from God would heal many people. Then Jesus came and began healing people. Isaiah wrote that the One from God would have power over demons. Then Jesus came and spoke to send demons away. The religious leaders did not see how Isaiah's words matched Jesus' life. But Matthew did. He wrote to prove that Jesus was the One Isaiah wrote about.

Jesus came to make all people well. He came to make us well in mind, body, soul, and spirit. Isaiah wrote about Jesus before He came. Everything happened to Jesus just as Isaiah said it would. Other prophets also wrote about Jesus. Their messages prove that Jesus is the One that came to save everyone from the power of sin.

Things to Think About

1. Why did Jesus heal Peter's mother-in-law? Why did she get up and care for Jesus?
2. What do you know about demons? Can you tell about something that happened because of their work in our world?
3. Have you or someone you know been healed? What happened?
4. Have you prayed for someone who needed a miracle of healing? What happened?
5. Have you asked God for healing or for a miracle and it did not happen? How did you feel? How do you feel now?

Things to Remember

Sin is the problem. Jesus is the answer. Matthew wrote to help us understand this wonderful truth. We may be sick and need healing. God uses doctors and medicines. But God also uses miracles to heal today. We all need to be healed from the problem of sin. Jesus was the answer then, and Jesus is the answer now.

Followers of Jesus live in a world full of sin and trouble. Some get sick and die. Others get sick and are healed. God decides what happens. It is important to understand that God knows all things. God knows what is best for every person.

God loves us. He sent His Son Jesus to prove His love. John 3:16 says, "For God so loved the world that He gave His only Son. Whoever puts his trust in God's Son will not be lost but will have life that lasts forever." We are saved by Jesus when we put our trust in Him. We will all die. But those of us who are followers of Jesus will live with God forever. Have you asked Jesus to save you from the power of sin? Have you trusted Jesus and decided to give Him your life?

Matthew 8:14-17

14 Jesus came to Peter's house. He saw Peter's wife's mother in bed. She was very sick.

15 He touched her hand and the sickness left her. She got up and cared for Jesus.

16 That evening they brought to Jesus many people who had demons in them. The demons were put out when Jesus spoke to them. All the sick people were healed.

17 It happened as the early preacher Isaiah said it would happen. He said, "He took on Himself our sickness and carried away our diseases."

John 3:16 for You

For God so loved _____

that He gave His only Son.

If _____ puts

his her trust in God's Son,

he she will not be lost,

but will have life that lasts forever.

Adult Bible Study

in Simplified English

Miracles in the Gospel of Matthew

Lesson 4: The Perfect Storm

Bible Text
Matthew 8:23-27

Memory Verse

“Then men were surprised and wondered about it. They said, ‘What kind of a man is He? Even the winds and the waves obey Him.’”
(Matthew 8:27)

Word List

calm: full of peace, not angry or upset, not windy or stormy

doubt: not sure, to not believe something is true

nature: everything in the world that is not made by people

Sometimes many small problems come together at the same time to make a very big problem. We call this a perfect storm.

God has power over these kinds of problems. We pray, and God decides what will happen. We often do not understand why these kinds of things happen. We learn to trust that God knows and God cares. God is with us in the storms of life.

The followers of Jesus had to learn to trust Jesus, too. It is easy to trust when everything is going well. But we become afraid when there are many problems. It is hard to trust when we are afraid. We must learn how to trust God when we have problems. We must learn to trust God in the storms of life.

Perfect Peace (Matthew 8:23-24)

The Sea of Galilee is the name of a beautiful lake in Israel. It is about eight miles across and a little over twelve miles long. It is much faster and easier to go across the lake on a boat to get to a place on the other side than to walk around it. The people who live there know that this sea can have terrible storms. These storms happen very quickly. They come when no one expects a storm. And they are very dangerous to small boats.

Jesus and His followers got in a boat on this sea. The sea was **calm**. Jesus had taught for a long time. He had healed people for a long time. He needed to rest. The sea could be dangerous, but Jesus had perfect peace. He was calm. And Jesus slept.

A terrible storm happened very quickly. The wind blew. The waves came up over and into the boat. Jesus’ followers were afraid. This was a very dangerous storm. But Jesus continued to sleep, and He did not wake up.

Little Faith (Matthew 8:25-26)

Jesus' followers were sure that they were going to die. Some of them were fishermen. They knew that this kind of storm had killed fishermen and others in boats. They knew that they needed help. Jesus had done miracles. They saw Him touch and heal people. They heard Him speak and heal people. This storm was so much bigger than any disease. What could Jesus do? Their faith was only big enough to ask for help.

The followers made Jesus wake up. They spoke loudly and quickly because they were afraid. They called to Jesus to help them. This showed some faith.

But their faith was small. Jesus' followers should have understood that Jesus would not let them die in that boat. They had seen Jesus do many miracles. Jesus had stopped many people from dying by healing them. He saved the leper. He saved Peter's mother-in-law. And He saved many other people with diseases. But His followers did not understand Jesus' power. He had power over much more than diseases. He had power over all of **nature**. Their **doubt** and fear showed how small their faith was.

Jesus Has All Power (Matthew 8:26)

Jesus asked His followers why they were afraid with so little faith. Then He stood up and spoke to the storm. Mark tells us the

words He used. Jesus spoke loudly and said, "Be quiet! Be still" (Mark 4:39). Jesus spoke to the wind and the waves. And the wind and waves obeyed Him. The sea became calm.

Jesus could control the winds and the waves because He had made the winds and the waves. Jesus made everything that was made. John wrote about Jesus: "He made all things. Nothing was made without Him making it" (John 1:3). Jesus made nature, and nature obeyed Him. Jesus is God in every way, and He proved it.

Isaiah wrote true words about what Jesus would do. King David also wrote true words about Jesus when he wrote: "He stopped the storm, and the waves of the sea became quiet" (Psalm 107:29). He wrote this a long time before Jesus was in that boat. Jesus proved that He is the One that Isaiah, David, and others wrote about.

Surprise and Wonder (Matthew 8:27)

The followers of Jesus learned more about Him because of the storm. They had learned about His power to heal. Now they knew He had power over nature, too. This truth surprised them. It made them wonder what kind of man He was.

They did not know Jesus as God in every way. They only knew that He was a man. They did not understand how He could also be fully God. They had doubts. They

were learning more about Him all the time. Sometimes we must learn the same lesson again and again before we know it as truth!

Things to Remember

Most of us are still learning about Jesus. That's why we study the Bible. We read about His miracles. We learn about how Jesus is both God and man. But we do not really understand what that means until we have been through a storm.

We all have storms in life. The prophet Isaiah had also been through many storms. He wrote, "But now the Lord Who made you says, 'Do not be afraid. For I have bought you and made you free. I have called you by name. You are Mine! When you pass through the waters, I will be with you. When you pass through the rivers, they will not flow over you. When you walk through the fire, you will not be burned. The fire will not destroy you. For I am the Lord your God ... Who

saves you'" (Isaiah 43:1-3a). This is what Jesus' followers learned that day on the boat. Now they knew that Jesus had power over nature. Now they saw that Jesus was able to save them from anything! The storm taught them that Jesus was God.

You can know this truth, too. What are you afraid of? Will you trust Jesus to be with you and to save you? He will save you from the terrible power of sin in your life if you trust Him. He will save you when you call on Him. Have big faith and give your life to Jesus today!

Things to Think About

1. Have you ever had a "perfect storm" in your life? Tell about it.
2. When have you felt the perfect peace that God gives? What happened?
3. Do you think you have big faith or little faith? Why?
4. What do you know about God? What do you know about Jesus? In what ways are they the same?
5. What surprises you about Jesus? What makes you wonder? Ask your most important question.

Matthew 8:23-27

23 Jesus got into a boat. His followers followed Him.

24 At once a bad storm came over the lake. The waves were covering the boat. Jesus was sleeping.

25 His followers went to Him and called, “Help us, Lord, or we will die!”

26 He said to them, “Why are you afraid? You have so little faith!” Then He stood up. He spoke sharp words to the wind and the waves. Then the wind stopped blowing.

27 Then men were surprised and wondered about it. They said, “What kind of a man is He? Even the winds and the waves obey Him.”

1 Corinthians 2:4-5

4 What I had to say when I preached was not in big sounding words of man’s wisdom. But it was given in the power of the Holy Spirit.

5 In this way, you do not have faith in Christ because of the wisdom of men. You have faith in Christ because of the power of God.

Adult Bible Study

in Simplified English

*Miracles
in the Gospel of Matthew*

Lesson 5: Desperate Faith

Bible Text

Matthew 9:18-19, 23-26

Memory Verse

“Everything is possible for the one who believes.”
(Mark 9:23b, NIRV)

Word List

desperate: having a strong need or a strong want for something; to strongly want to do something

disrupt: to stop doing something; to stop someone else from doing something

distract: to take attention away from someone or something

grief: deep sadness caused especially by someone's death

tragedy: a very bad event that causes great sadness

What is possible? Many things that seemed impossible to people in the past are now possible for us today. Airplanes can fly us almost anywhere we want to go. We can go far away in a short amount of time.

Today, people can use video calls to talk with others who are many miles away. We can

see one another and speak together even when we are separated by great distances.

Many diseases from the past no longer scare us today. Scientists have found ways to protect us from disease. Doctors have better ways to heal us when we do get hurt or sick. People are living longer and longer.

Today, more things are possible than ever before. But there is one thing we still cannot do. We cannot bring dead people back to life. Even today, we would call someone crazy who believed it was possible. Dead people do not come back to life.

One time, Jesus said, “Everything is possible for the one who believes” (Mark 9:23). In a moment of **tragedy**, one man believed this truth. He rushed to Jesus and asked for help. And Jesus quickly responded. The result was a miracle that amazed everyone. With Jesus, anything is possible.

A Desperate Father (Matthew 9:18)

When bad things happen, we want to fix them. Loving parents would do anything to find help for their sick child. In this Bible story, a young girl became sick and died. Her father and mother were surely broken with **grief**. At any other time in history, that would be the end of the story. Sometimes, children die. Their parents weep and are sad for a long time. And then they must go on with life.

But one thing made this story

different. Jesus was nearby. The young girl's father was **desperate** to see his daughter alive again. He turned to the one Man who could do something about his problem. He rushed out to find Jesus.

The man was a leader in the place of worship for that town. This was a man with authority among men. Perhaps at another time, he would have stayed away from Jesus. Or he might have argued with Jesus. Many religious leaders did not like Jesus. They did not like the way that Jesus taught and led the people. But none of that mattered for this man at this moment.

This leader among men came to Jesus in humbleness. He fell to his knees to ask for help. Sometimes, our fears and hurts lead us to places we would not normally go. We do things we might not normally do. We search for possibilities. This man put aside his pride to ask Jesus for help. He hoped for something impossible. And Jesus responded.

A Decision to Help (Matthew 9:19)

Jesus was talking with a group of people when this desperate father came to him. At once, He saw that He was needed. Jesus never turned away a chance to help someone. He was always ready to draw someone into deeper faith. And this was a perfect opportunity.

There would be time to talk more later. At this moment, Jesus needed to go with this

man. Did Jesus need to act quickly because He might not have enough time? No. We know that later, Jesus raised Lazarus after four days in the grave (see John 11:17). Jesus did not need to rush for the sake of the girl. Instead, Jesus responded quickly for the sake of the father. This man was asking for help now. Jesus knew what people were like (John 2:24). He knew that this man's heart and belief might change. The man believed right then. So Jesus responded quickly.

A Death Disrupted (Matthew 9:23-24)

Jesus went with the man to his home. They found a crowd of people there. They had come to show their sadness. The people had customs they followed when a person died. They showed their sorrow with loud crying and sad songs. This was an important family in the town. So, many people came to show their respect for them. In that day, people showed their grief openly for others to see.

But the tears and loud songs ended suddenly as Jesus walked into the house. He looked around the room. And then He said, "The girl is not dead, but is sleeping." The women stopped crying and began to laugh. They could see clearly that the girl was dead! How could Jesus say such a thing? What could He possibly mean?

Jesus saw our world differently. He was there at the beginning of the world (see Colossians 1:15-16). And He knows how our

world will end (see Matthew 24:14). We think of death as an end — the end of our time with someone we love or the end of our time on earth. But Jesus knew that death is not the end. A new life begins after death.

For this girl, a new life after death would come much later. Because Jesus knew He would bring her back to life, He knew death would not hold her today. Jesus described that as sleeping. And Jesus was about to **disrupt** that sleep. It was time for this daughter to wake up. This daughter still had more life to live!

A Daughter Returned (Matthew 9:25-26)

Jesus sent the crowd out of the house. He did not come here to make a big show. He came because of His love for this family. This father needed to believe. He did not need anything to **distract** him. He needed to see what Jesus would do for him. This moment would change his life.

Jesus always acted for people one by one. Jesus taught large crowds of people. He met many people along His path. But He

loved each person separately. He touched people when He healed them. He looked them in the eyes. Jesus was always personal.

Why did Jesus bring this daughter back to life? Was it because her father was a leader? Was she special because she was important? Or did Jesus have another reason?

This desperate father came to Jesus because He believed that Jesus could do something impossible. Jesus looked at him and saw another possibility. He saw the seed of faith. Jesus wanted to feed that faith. He knew that this man's faith could grow into something real. So Jesus responded with a powerful work.

Soon everyone would know what had happened. They saw a girl who was dead now walking around again. She was alive! Jesus changed the life of a young girl and her family. Surely His miracle changed the life of the town as well. But most importantly, Jesus helped a man to believe in Him.

Things to Remember

Today we can do many things that people in the past only dreamed about. But we still have our limitations. There are still some things we cannot do.

But Jesus taught that belief opens doors for us. It changes how we see our world. And it changes what is possible for us. Sometimes God uses desperate moments to make us turn to Him for help. If we are willing to believe,

Things to Think About

1. When has great trouble or sorrow sent you running to Jesus for help or comfort? What did you receive from Him?
2. How has God used difficulties in your life to grow your faith?
3. How can you help someone else in a time of need? How can you point them to Jesus?

He can use those times to grow our faith and make us stronger. All we must do is bring our seed of faith, and He will make it grow.

Matthew 9:18-19, 23-26

18 While Jesus talked to them, a leader of the people came and got down before Him, and worshiped Him. He said, “My daughter has just died. But come, lay Your hand on her and she will live.”

19 Jesus got up and followed him. His followers went also.

.....

23 Jesus came into the leader’s house. He saw the people playing music and making much noise.

24 He said to them, “Go now! For the girl is not dead, but is sleeping.” But they laughed at Him.

25 He sent the people outside. Then He went in and took the girl’s hand. She was raised up.

26 News of this went out into all the country.

Colossians 1:15-16

15 Christ is as God is. God cannot be seen. Christ lived before anything was made.

16 Christ made everything in the heavens and on the earth. He made everything that is seen and things that are not seen. He made all the powers of heaven. Everything was made by Him and for Him.

Matthew 24:14

14 “This Good News about the holy nation of God must be preached over all the earth. It must be told to all nations and then the end will come.

Matthew 8:5-10, 13

5 Jesus came to the city of Capernaum. A captain of the army came to Him. He asked for help,

6 saying, “Lord, my servant is sick in bed. He is not able to move his body. He is in much pain.”

7 Jesus said to the captain, “I will come and heal him.”

8 The captain said, “Lord, I am not good enough for You to come to my house. Only speak the word, and my servant will be healed.

9 I am a man who works for someone else and I have men working under me. I say to this man, ‘Go!’ and he goes. I say to another, ‘Come!’ and he comes. I say to my servant, ‘Do this!’ and he does it.”

10 When Jesus heard this, He was surprised and wondered about it. He said to those who followed Him, “For sure, I tell you, I have not found so much faith in the Jewish nation.

13 Jesus said to the captain, “Go your way. It is done for you even as you had faith to believe.” The servant was healed at that time.

Adult Bible Study

in Simplified English

*Miracles
in the Gospel of Matthew*

Lesson 6: Persistent Faith

Bible Text

Matthew 9:20-22

Memory Verse

"I say to you, ask, and what you ask for will be given to you. Look, and what you are looking for you will find. Knock, and the door you are knocking on will be opened to you." (Luke 11:9)

Word List

evidence: a visible sign of something; proof

outcast: someone who is not accepted by other people

persist: to continue to do something even though it is difficult.

persistent: not stopping or going away

A young couple wants to have a baby. But a baby does not come. They pray for a baby, and still the baby does not come. Weeks and months go by. They wait and they pray. They visit doctors. They do everything they know to do. Their marriage begins to suffer in their sadness. And still they wait and pray with no baby. What should they do?

A woman prays for her alcoholic husband. He does not know Christ. She prays for his salvation. She asks the Lord to help her love her husband well. Years go by. And still she prays. She believes that God can change her husband. But those changes do not come. How long should she wait?

A man watches his wife suffer with cancer. He prays to God for healing. But the healing does not happen. Slowly she is growing weaker and weaker. He cries out to God for help. How long can he go on believing in God?

All around the world people are praying for answers to problems. Sometimes the answers come quickly. We thank God for those answers. But sometimes we have to wait for answers. Sometimes our problems do not go away. We wait and watch for God to act. But still we see no sign of change. We wonder how long we must wait. How can we go on believing when our prayers do not seem to help?

One time, a woman with a health problem came to Jesus. She had suffered for years without finding help. She reached out to Jesus for healing. And then, healing came in an instant! Her story inspires us. It gives us hope that our own needs will be met. And it challenges us to trust God even in our moments of waiting. Can we have faith such as hers?

Twelve Years of Waiting

(Matthew 9:20-21)

Matthew tells us that this woman suffered from a bleeding problem. This illness would have made her life difficult. She could not go to the Jewish place of worship. She was thought to be “dirty,” so she had to stay away from people. Anyone she touched would be made “dirty.” Her illness caused her to be an **outcast**. What a terrible burden to carry!

Luke tells us that this woman had been to doctors (Luke 8:43). She had spent all her money trying to find help. Yet her problem continued for 12 years. This illness was **persistent**. It would not go away. And no one could heal her.

Surely in all those years, this woman prayed many prayers. She must have cried out to God for help. Did she ever wonder if He heard? Did she ever grow tired of waiting? Did she ever doubt God’s love?

We cannot know all the ways this woman suffered. But we see the **evidence** of her faith. She still had hope of healing. When Jesus came to town, she went to find Him. She **persisted** in pushing through the crowd to get to Jesus. She believed that Jesus could heal her.

But she did not demand to speak to Jesus. She did not ask for a personal word or touch. She just quietly reached out to touch

His coat. Maybe she did not want to be noticed by Him. Her culture told her to stay out of crowds. But here she was in a crowd. Her culture told her not to touch other people. But she reached out for Jesus. This woman was persistent in her wish to be made well. And her persistence resulted in a miracle!

Healing in an Instant (Matthew 9:22)

Luke tells us that this woman’s bleeding stopped the minute she touched Jesus’ coat (Luke 8:44). Her idea of touching Jesus had worked! Now she was free of her illness. Now she could live a normal life again.

Maybe she hoped to quietly slip away unnoticed. Maybe she thought that the healing of her body was all she needed. But her culture said that she should not even be there. The rules said that she should not have touched Jesus. If she left now, would she go home with guilt? Would she always feel shame for the way she found healing?

Jesus would not let that happen. Remember, Jesus cared about each person. And He cared about more than just the needs of the body. This woman had more needs than just the need for healing of her body. She needed to be seen.

Jesus was in a crowd of people. First, He had been talking and teaching. And then He was called to come help a young girl. Jesus was busy. But He was not too busy to meet

this woman's needs. So He turned to her. And Matthew says that Jesus saw her.

His words were kind. He did not scold her for touching Him. He did not call her "dirty." He did not say that she was wrong to be there. Instead, He blessed her. He called her "daughter." He said, "Take hope!" How did those kind words sound to her? Did she remember all the harsh words that had been spoken to her? Twelve years is a long time. Maybe His words helped to ease the pain.

But Jesus had more to say. Something important had happened. Jesus was always looking for faith. He was always working and teaching so people's faith would grow. This woman had come to Jesus in faith that He could heal her. And her faith was rewarded. She was healed by faith. That faith was more important than the healing. Someday her body would grow old and die. This healing would not last forever. But her faith would last. She would always remember this day. She would

never forget what Jesus had done for her. Her faith would carry her through the rest of her life and into the next one.

Things to Remember

God has a reason for everything He does. But we do not always know His reasons. Sometimes He asks us to wait for answers to our prayers. And we question why. But we do not know the things God knows. We do not see the bigger picture. All that we can do is trust in God's love for us. We must continue to believe that His plans are always good for us.

One woman suffered for 12 years. Surely she prayed many prayers in those years. She must have wondered why God did not heal her illness. Yet she continued to hope. She persisted in believing that she could be healed.

And God rewarded her faith. He sent Jesus, who healed her body. But Jesus also healed her heart. He showed that God did see her. She mattered to God!

And we matter to God as well. He sees us and knows our pain. Even when He asks us to wait for answers, He still loves and cares for us. We can trust Him to do what is right for us. May we have persistent faith to trust Him with our lives.

Things to Think About

1. Do you wait well? How do you respond when you are asked to wait for something?
2. When have you had to wait for an answer to prayer? What did you learn during the waiting time?
3. Do you know someone who is waiting for answers to prayer? What help and encouragement can you give?
4. How persistent are you? How hard do you persist in working for the things you want? How persistent are you in your faith?

Matthew 9:20-22

20 Just then a woman who had been sick with a flow of blood for twelve years came from behind. She touched the bottom of His coat.

21 She said to herself, "If I only touch the bottom of His coat, I will be healed."

22 Then Jesus turned around. He saw her and said, "Daughter, take hope! Your faith has healed you." At once the woman was healed.

Luke 11:5-10

5 Jesus said to them, "If one of you has a friend and goes to him in the night and says, 'Friend, give me three loaves of bread, 6 for a friend of mine is on a trip and has stopped at my house. I have no food to give him.'

7 The man inside the house will say, 'Do not trouble me. The door is shut. My children and I are in bed. I cannot get up and give you bread.'

8 I say to you, he may not get up and give him bread because he is a friend. Yet, if he keeps on asking, he will get up and give him as much as he needs.

9 I say to you, ask, and what you ask for will be given to you. Look, and what you are looking for you will find. Knock, and the door you are knocking on will be opened to you.

10 For everyone who asks, will receive what

he asks for. Everyone who looks, will find what he is looking for. Everyone who knocks, will have the door opened to him.

Adult Bible Study

in Simplified English

*Miracles
in the Gospel of Matthew*

Lesson 7: The Better Choice

Bible Text

Matthew 12:9-13

Memory Verse

“Come to Me, all of you who work and have heavy loads. I will give you rest. Follow My teachings and learn from Me. I am gentle and do not have pride. You will have rest for your souls.” (Matthew 11:28-29)

Word List

burden: something heavy that is carried; something that is hard to do or deal with

to miss the point: to fail to understand something important

priority: something that is more important than other things

I took a trip to another country last summer. I went to teach English and Bible lessons to teenagers at a camp. The campers liked to talk with the Americans.

I talked some with a student named George. He told me that he did not believe in God. But he also told me that he wanted to do good things. He wanted to be a good person.

One day George asked me a question.

He said, “Some people work seven days. I have heard that people who work on Sunday are sinners. Is this true?”

I knew that I needed to be careful in what I said. I did not want to give a bad answer! So I said, “George, all people are sinners. We have many ways that we sin.”

People have been asking questions about sin for thousands of years. Sometimes, we struggle to know what sin is and what it is not. We sin so easily and often! Sometimes, it seems that we cannot keep from sinning.

Jesus came to solve that problem for us. First, He showed us how to live. He taught us about His Father and how to honor Him. And then He died to pay for our sin. We can trust that He knows the answers to all our questions about sin. His answers take away the **burden** of sin and set us free.

The Question (Matthew 12:9-10)

The Jewish people had a long history of trouble with sin. They were once slaves in Egypt. God rescued them with powerful works. He gave them Ten Great Laws. God’s Laws showed His people what God cared about. The Fourth Law told God’s people to remember Him on the seventh day of each week. God made the world in six days. Then He rested on the seventh day. God told His people to rest on the seventh day, too. It was a day to spend time thinking about God.

God's people learned about sin at that mountain. They learned that God rewards His people when they obey His Laws. And He punishes His people when they break His Laws. The Jewish people broke God's Laws many times after they left that mountain. God warned them that their sins would cause them to lose freedom and their homes. He sent special preachers to tell the people not to sin. But the people did not listen. Finally, God let their enemies come. The enemies took the people of God away from their homes in chains. God's people learned a terrible lesson about sin.

Then God let His people go home. They built new homes and cities and places of worship. Now they were afraid of sinning again. So they began making rules to add to God's Law. By the time Jesus came, they had many rules to follow.

The religious leaders followed the rules carefully. They did not want to sin by breaking any of God's Laws. So they watched their actions carefully. But they **missed the point** of God's Law. God wants His people to know Him and love Him. He wants them to love the things He loves and to do the things He does. The religious leaders were so focused on the rules that they forgot about God's heart. They worked hard to do all the right things. But their hearts became hard under the burden of their rules.

Then Jesus began teaching about God in a new way. He did not teach about how to follow rules. He taught about how to love God and act like Him. The religious law-keepers did not like this new teaching. And they did not like Jesus! The people were listening to Jesus more than to the religious leaders. So the law-keepers wanted to get rid of Jesus.

One day, they found Jesus in a place of worship. It was the Day of Rest. The law-keepers had many rules to follow on that day. They thought they could make Jesus break those rules. They showed Jesus a man with a hand that would not work. Should Jesus heal the man's hand on this day? Or should He wait until another day?

The Answer (Matthew 12:11-12)

Jesus knew why the religious leaders hated Him. He knew how much they cared about their rules and their power over the people. And He knew that they wanted to get rid of Him. But He also loved them. Jesus always taught the truth about God. He always showed the right way to love and follow God.

Jesus did not give a simple yes or no to the law-keepers' question. Instead, He asked His own question. What should a person do if his sheep fell into a hole on the Day of Rest? He could wait until another day to rescue the sheep. But the sheep might die in the hole. Or he could do work to rescue the sheep.

Sometimes, we must make hard choices. How can we know the right thing to do every time? Can we find the answers we need from God? In Jesus' story, the choice is between saving a sheep or resting. What would God want the man to do?

The answer is simple: save the sheep. Remember, God gave His Law to teach us about Himself. The Law shows us what God cares about. God wants us to do good, even on the Day of Rest. That is a day to remember God. Can a person save a sheep from a hole and still remember God? Yes!

Jesus' story shows that sometimes we must choose our **priorities**. We must ask, "Which is more important?" This is where God can help us. His Word can show us how to choose what is most important. If we know God, He will help us know what is important.

The Choice (Matthew 12:13)

Now Jesus had to make a choice. Should He heal the man's hand and anger the

law-keepers? Or should He wait until another day? The man was not in danger that day. Maybe Jesus should wait.

But Jesus chose not to wait. The law-keepers only wanted to use the man to test Jesus. They did not care about him. But Jesus did care about the man. He loved the man and wanted to do good for him.

So Jesus simply told the man to put out his hand. And the man held out a healthy, strong hand. Jesus had not touched the man! The religious leaders could not say that Jesus had worked on the Day of Rest. Their test had failed to trap Jesus. Jesus used their plan for evil to do a powerful work of God.

Things to Remember

We will always struggle with the problem of sin. Our hearts are easily tempted to sin. And we often have to make choices that are difficult. How can we choose rightly?

The religious leaders thought the answer to sin was more rules. They thought that God was a God of rules. But Jesus showed that He is a God of love. We obey God's Law by loving Him and by loving others. We cannot break God's Laws by loving too much. But we can break His heart by loving too little. Make the better choice and choose to love as Jesus would.

Things to Think About

1. What sins burden you most? What ways do you try to avoid sin in your life?
2. What difficult choices have you made before? What do you do when you have a difficult choice to make? What helps you make wise choices?
3. How has Jesus taken away the burden of sin in your life? How have you found rest in Jesus?
4. How much do you love? What can you do today to grow your love for God and for your neighbor?

Matthew 12:9-13

9 From there Jesus went into their place of worship.

10 A man was there with a dried-up hand. The proud religious law-keepers asked Jesus, “Does the Law say it is right to heal on the Day of Rest?” They wanted something to say against Him.

11 He said to them, “If one of you has a sheep which falls into a hole on the Day of Rest, will you not take hold of it and pull it out?”

12 How much better is a man than a sheep! So it is right to do good on the Day of Rest.”

13 Then He said to the man, “Put out your hand.” He held it out and it was made as well as the other.

Matthew 22:35-40

35 A proud religious law-keeper who knew the Law tried to trap Jesus. He said,

36 “Teacher, which one is the greatest of the Laws?”

37 Jesus said to him, ““You must love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind.’

38 This is the first and greatest of the Laws.

39 The second is like it, ‘You must love your neighbor as you love yourself.’

40 All the Laws and the writings of the early preachers depend on these two most important Laws.”

Exodus 20:8-11

8 “Remember the Day of Rest, to keep it holy.

9 Six days you will do all your work.

10 But the seventh day is a Day of Rest to the Lord your God. You, your son, your daughter, your male servant, your female servant, your cattle, or the traveler who stays with you, must not do any work on this day.

11 For in six days the Lord made the heavens, the earth, the sea and all that is in them. And He rested on the seventh day. So the Lord gave honor to the Day of Rest and made it holy.

Psalms 19:12-14

12 Who can see his own mistakes? Forgive my sins that I do not see.

13 And keep Your servant from sinning by going my own way. Do not let these sins rule over me. Then I will be without blame. And I will not be found guilty of big sins.

14 Let the words of my mouth and the thoughts of my heart be pleasing in Your eyes, O Lord, my Rock and the One Who saves me.

Adult Bible Study

in Simplified English

*Miracles
in the Gospel of Matthew*

Lesson 8: Jesus Has Power to Meet Every Need

Bible Text
Matthew 14:14-21

Memory Verse

“Jesus said to them, ‘I am the Bread of Life. He who comes to Me will never be hungry. He who puts his trust in Me will never be thirsty.’”
(John 6:35)

Word List

compassion: a feeling of wanting to help someone who is sick, hungry, in trouble

convention: a large meeting of people who come to a place to talk about their shared work or other interests

grieved: to feel or show deep sorrow or sadness

About 134,000 people worked as event planners in 2018, according to the United States Department of Labor. Event planners work to plan large meetings. They plan parties, weddings, meetings, and **conventions**. They plan the location, decorations, and food for many large events. Planning for events like

these takes a lot of hard work. It takes many weeks to plan these events.

Event planners think carefully about the needs of people who will attend these events. They must count just the right number of chairs. They must order just the right number of tables. They must purchase just the right amount of food. Event planners must pay careful attention to details. If an event planner makes a mistake, many people will be unhappy. It is not an easy job.

Wherever Jesus went, it was a big event. Crowds gathered to see Him wherever He would go. But no event planners worked to organize these gatherings. No chairs were ordered. No decorations were displayed. No food was purchased. No meals were prepared. But a lack of planning was not a problem for Jesus.

Jesus is always ready to meet the needs of people. He is able to meet every need. Everything in heaven and on earth belongs to Him. He has the power to provide.

Compassion and Grief (Matthew 14:13-14)

Crowds of people gathered wherever Jesus went. They wanted help and healing. Jesus turned away no one. He responded with patience and gentleness to people who needed His help. The needs were great. Many people came to Him.

One day Jesus received bad news. He learned that his cousin, who was called John the Baptist, died (Matthew 14:1-12). He felt sadness and grief. Jesus was fully God. And He was also fully man. He felt the pain of death. He **grieved** because of the evil that led to John's death. In His sadness, He wanted some time alone. He got on a boat and left for a quiet place.

Even in His time of grief, people were looking for Jesus. They needed His help. They wanted healing from Him. The people followed Jesus. Although Jesus wanted to be alone, He had **compassion** for people. He cared for their needs more than He cared for His own. Jesus took time to care for people no matter the personal cost to Him.

Loaves and Fish (Matthew 14:15-18)

The nearest villages were a long distance from the place where Jesus went. Still, people came looking for Jesus. They came to Him with their needs. And Jesus gave them what they needed. He spent the day healing and teaching the people.

Jesus' disciples were with Him while He ministered to the people. They were probably tired. They looked at the crowd of people. They knew that the people were very hungry at the end of the day. They thought the people should go away to find food for themselves. But Jesus had a different idea.

Jesus cared for the people. He knew that He could meet their needs. He knew that He could feed them. But the disciples never thought about this. Jesus used the situation to teach His disciples a lesson. Jesus told the disciples to give the people something to eat.

Jesus' disciples did not understand. They only had a small amount of food. The disciples only looked at what they could see. They only looked at their five loaves and two fish. They did not remember Jesus' care and concern for people. They did not think about Jesus' power to meet the needs of people.

Little Becomes Much

(Matthew 14:19-21)

Jesus' disciples knew He was an important teacher. They knew that He healed people. They knew He spoke and acted with authority that came from God. Jesus wanted them to understand that He was more than a great teacher. He wanted them to understand that He was fully God.

The disciples gave their food to Jesus. It was all they had. But in Jesus' hands, it would be more than enough. That's because Jesus' hands have the power to change things. In Jesus' hands, little can become much. In Jesus' hands, small things can become great things. Through Jesus' power, weak things become strong. With Jesus, *not enough* can become *more than enough*.

When the disciples gave their food to Jesus, Jesus gave thanks to God. He thanked God for His power. He thanked God for everything He provided. Jesus displayed great faith in God. He set an example for His disciples to follow. God displayed His power through Jesus. He provided all the food the people needed.

This was a great miracle. Five loaves of bread and two fish fed thousands of people. In all there were 5,000 men. In his Gospel, Matthew stated that women and children were also there. This means that the total number of people could be around 10,000. This was more than the number of people who lived in the whole area. Feeding such a large crowd was indeed a powerful miracle.

Things to Remember

People have many deep needs. They need material things like food, money, clothing, and shelter. They also need things

like purpose, love, understanding, and forgiveness. People cannot always provide what is needed. Often they cannot meet their own needs. But people do not have the same power that God has. Only God can meet every need.

Some people today spend a lot of time worrying. They spend much effort trying to fix their own problems and meet their own needs. Just like the disciples, they never think about God's power. They never think about the help that God can provide.

Jesus provided bread for the people in the crowd that day. He met their physical need for food. Jesus can provide even more. Jesus is "the Bread of Life." He can meet people's deepest spiritual needs. In His hands, everything increases. He can replace little with much. He can replace struggles with victory. He can replace deep brokenness with rich blessings.

Whatever you have, give it to Jesus. Give Him your fears and hopes. Give Him your time and talents. Give Him your losses and disappointments. Give Him your questions and your doubts. He has the power you need. Jesus changes everything. Give all of yourself to Him today.

Things to Think About

1. What needs do you have in your life today?
2. What can you learn from the way Jesus showed compassion to others?
3. Why did the disciples fail to think about God's power when they were faced with a great need?
4. Why do you think that Jesus expressed thanks to God while holding the disciples' bread and fish?
5. How much time do you spend worrying about your own needs?
6. What do you need to give to Jesus right now?

Matthew 14:14-21

14 When He got out of the boat, He saw many people. He had loving-pity for them and healed those who were sick.

15 When it was evening, His followers came to Him. They said, “This is a desert. The day is past. Send the people away so they may go into the towns and buy food for themselves.”

16 Jesus said to them, “They do not have to go away. Give them something to eat.”

17 They said to Him, “We have only five loaves of bread and two fish.”

18 Jesus said, “Bring them to Me.”

19 He told the people to sit down on the grass. Then He took the five loaves of bread and two fish. He looked up to heaven and gave thanks. He broke the loaves in pieces and gave them to His followers. The followers gave them to the people.

20 They all ate and were filled. They picked up twelve baskets full of pieces of bread and fish after the people were finished eating.

21 About five thousand men ate. Women and children ate also.

Adult Bible Study

in Simplified English

*Miracles
in the Gospel of Matthew*

Lesson 9: Jesus Has Power Over the Storm

Bible Text

Matthew 14:22-33

Memory Verse

“Call on Me in the day of trouble. I will take you out of trouble, and you will honor Me.”
(Psalm 50:15)

Word List

haggard: looking very thin and tired, especially from great hunger, worry, or pain

intruder: a person who is not welcome or wanted in a place or a person who is in a place illegally

temptation: a strong urge or desire to have or do something that may be bad, wrong, or unwise

vulnerable: easily hurt or harmed physically, mentally, or emotionally

A young boy went into his backyard early one morning to do chores. He heard a loud noise behind him. The boy turned around to see a **haggard** man in dirty clothing. The man was running toward him. The boy froze. He could not yell. He couldn't run. He could not even move. He could hardly even breathe

because he was afraid.

It took a minute or two for the boy to find his voice. He picked up an ax from the backyard and began yelling at the man. The man stopped and ran away. Afterwards, the boy could feel himself shaking. His heart was beating fast. His eyes were hot with tears. His breathing was heavy. The man had frightened him.

Not everyone will fight an **intruder** in their own backyard. But life is full of things that make us feel afraid. Failure, illness, debt, and violence can all cause us to feel fear. Terrorism, job loss, rebellious children, and broken marriages can make us feel **vulnerable**, too.

Fear is a part of life. It is a feeling every person knows. Fear causes people to feel a loss of control. In times of great fear, it is important to remember God's great power. In today's Bible text, Jesus reminded His disciples about His power over all things.

Jesus Stays on the Mountain

(Matthew 14:22-23)

Jesus spent the day teaching and healing a large crowd of people. He fed more than 5,000 men, women, and children who were hungry. He did many works of great power. He performed many miracles. He must have felt very tired.

Jesus' disciples were with Him. They

saw all that Jesus did among the people. Now that the day was over, He sent His disciples ahead of Him. He sent them to the other side of the lake. He wanted to be alone for a while. So He went up the mountain to pray by Himself.

Jesus was fully God. He was also fully human. This means that He experienced the same feelings as every person. He felt hunger and thirst. He felt tired. He faced **temptation**. He felt sadness and grief. In fact, Jesus experienced a great loss before He went up the mountain to pray. Jesus learned about John the Baptist's death. John was His cousin. John's death brought Him sorrow and pain. In His sorrow, Jesus sought a quiet time to pray.

Jesus Walks on Water (Matthew 14:24-27)

The disciples were on the lake in a boat. Jesus was not with them. A storm began to toss their boat against the waves. This was not the first time they had been in a storm (Matthew 8:23-27). They had seen Jesus calm the storm before. But this time Jesus was not with them. They needed help. They knew Jesus had power over the storm, but they did not know where He was.

In the darkness of the storm, Jesus came to the disciples. But the disciples did not recognize Him. They saw a figure

walking toward them on the water. None of them knew it was Jesus. Fear took over their hearts and minds. They thought the figure was a ghost or an evil spirit. Their thoughts were not focused on Jesus.

Jesus called out to them. He said, "Take hope. It is I." (v. 27). In the middle of the storm, Jesus came to them. Even when they were not looking for Him, Jesus came to them. Jesus was present in the disciples' storm. His presence is powerful. His presence changes things. His presence brings hope. His presence casts out fear.

Peter Loses Focus (Matthew 14:28-31)

Peter had a bold faith. His faith led him to take risks. Peter responded to Jesus' voice. He obeyed Jesus' command to "Come!" (v. 28). Peter got out of the boat. He walked on the water toward Jesus. He was focused on Jesus. He stepped out with strong steps of faith. Peter's faith led him to experience a mighty miracle.

But something happened to Peter. He lost his focus. He took his eyes off Jesus. He began to look around. He saw the wind and waves. He saw the raging storm. He became afraid. And Peter began to sink into the stormy waters. Peter was helpless.

Peter remembered that Jesus was present. He called out to Jesus. And Jesus

responded to Peter's cry for help. As soon as Peter cried out, Jesus reached for Him. He pulled Peter out of the water. He saved Peter from drowning. Peter's bold faith failed in the middle of the storm. But Jesus was still faithful to Peter.

The Disciples Worship Jesus (Matthew 14:32-33)

The disciples watched Peter's bold act of faith. They also watched Jesus' saving power in the middle of the storm. Jesus and Peter got into the boat with the disciples. In Jesus' presence, the wind stopped blowing. In Jesus' presence, the storm ended. The weather responded to Jesus' power. And the disciples responded to Jesus' power, too. They responded in worship. The disciples understood that Jesus was God. They saw that He was worthy of worship. Their example is

Things to Think About

1. Tell about a time you felt very afraid.
2. What can you learn from Jesus' example of spending time in prayer on the mountain?
3. Think about Matthew 14:27. In what life situation do you need to "take hope" in Jesus?
4. Why do you think that Peter stepped out of the boat and walked toward Jesus?
5. How do you think the disciples felt when they saw Jesus walking on water in the storm?
6. Where do you usually focus when you are in the middle of life's storms? How can you remind yourself to focus on Jesus?

one all Christians should follow. The right response to Jesus is to worship Him as God's true Son.

Things to Remember

We all experience storms in life. People may disappoint and betray you. Disease and sickness may strike you. You might find yourself going through hard things you never thought would happen to you. These kinds of life storms create fear. Fear can make us lose focus. Fear can keep us from looking for Jesus. Fear can keep us from remembering God's power.

When Jesus went through painful loss, He spent time alone in prayer to God the Father. God wants each person to have a relationship with Him. A strong relationship involves talking, listening, time, and trust. In the storms of life, Jesus can be trusted.

Keep your eyes on Jesus. Look at Jesus instead of your struggles. Look at Jesus instead of your pain. Look at Jesus instead of your fear. He is the one who makes a way when there seems to be no way. He is the one who saves us from the storms. Even if you are sinking in life's storms, call out to Jesus. He is faithful. And His power is mighty to save.

Matthew 14:22-33

22 At once Jesus had His followers get into the boat. He told them to go ahead of Him to the other side while He sent the people away.

23 After He had sent them away, He went up the mountain by Himself to pray. When evening came, He was there alone.

24 By this time the boat was far from land and was being thrown around by the waves. The wind was strong against them.

25 Just before the light of day, Jesus went to them walking on the water.

26 When the followers saw Him walking on the water, they were afraid. They said, “It is a spirit.” They cried out with fear.

27 At once Jesus spoke to them and said, “Take hope. It is I. Do not be afraid!”

28 Peter said to Jesus, “If it is You, Lord, tell me to come to You on the water.”

29 Jesus said, “Come!” Peter got out of the boat and walked on the water to Jesus.

30 But when he saw the strong wind, he was afraid. He began to go down in the water. He cried out, “Lord, save me!”

31 At once Jesus put out His hand and took hold of him. Jesus said to Peter, “You have so little faith! Why did you doubt?”

32 When Jesus and Peter got into the boat, the wind stopped blowing.

33 Those in the boat worshiped Jesus. They said, “For sure, You are the Son of God!”

Adult Bible Study

in Simplified English

*Miracles
in the Gospel of Matthew*

Lesson 10: Have Faith in Jesus' Power

Bible Text

Matthew 15:21-28

Memory Verse

"Now faith is being sure we will get what we hope for. It is being sure of what we cannot see." (Hebrews 11:1)

Word List

cringe: to make a sudden movement from fear of being hit or hurt

humble: not proud; not thinking of yourself as better than other people

modest: not showing too much of a person's body

pagan: a group or person who worships false gods instead of the One True God

rebuke: speak in an angry and critical way

The last time I went to the grocery store, I saw a father yelling and cursing at his children. He was angry because they would not be quiet and kept asking for things they wanted. I **cringed** when I heard his ugly words. In my mind, I wondered how any

parent could act that way toward his children.

Later, I was standing in line at the checkout. I noticed how the woman in front of me was dressed. I thought to myself that her clothing was not very **modest**. In my opinion, her clothes were too tight and showed too much skin. I did not think she was a respectable person based on the way she was dressed.

As I was driving home, I saw a homeless person at a stoplight. The homeless person was asking for money from people in the cars. I assumed that this person was a drug addict. I assumed this homeless person would use any money to buy drugs or alcohol. I decided it was unwise to give any money to this individual.

In all three of these examples, my thoughts were filled with pride. It is very easy to judge others when we think we are better than they are. It is easy to judge people without knowing them. This kind of pride works against our faith in God. It keeps us from seeing other people the way God sees them. It keeps us from loving people the way God does. It can also keep us from seeing the power of God at work in the lives of people.

Pride can make us believe the lie that some people are outside the reach of God's power. If we believe this, then we do not really believe that God is all-powerful. If we believe this, then we lack faith. In today's

lesson, we will see how spiritual pride affected the faith of the disciples. We will also meet an unusual woman with great faith.

A Cry for Pity **(Matthew 15:21-22)**

Matthew mentioned two cities in these verses. The cities of Tyre and Sidon are also mentioned in Matthew 11:21. These cities were well-known. They were **pagan** cities. The people of these cities did not show faith in the One True God. Even Jesus' powerful miracles did not cause them to have faith in God. Their hearts were unmoved. They were a faithless people. Jesus spoke strong words against the people of these cities.

Still, Jesus went to Tyre and Sidon. No one would expect to find a person of faith in this place. While Jesus was there with His disciples, a Canaanite woman came to Him. The people of Canaan were people who were not Jews. Like the people of Tyre and Sidon, Canaanites were a pagan people. The Canaanites were not people who showed faith in God.

Imagine how surprised the disciples were to find a Canaanite woman looking for Jesus. This was definitely not normal. Her words were unusual, too. She addressed Jesus as "Lord." She called him the "Son of David." These were the same words the Jews used. The Jews used these words to show

that Jesus was the promised Savior. These words meant that Jesus was the *Messiah*. The Canaanite woman showed great faith by speaking to Jesus with these words.

Words of Mercy **(Matthew 15:23-26)**

The Canaanite woman spoke boldly and plainly. Everyone could hear her. Jesus' disciples heard her, too. Yet Jesus did not answer her right away. He reminded people that He was sent to the Jewish people who were lost.

Then He pointed out that she was not a Jew. Jesus said, "It is not right to take children's food and throw it to the dogs." The disciples had heard these kinds of words before. Many Jewish people referred to people who were not Jews as dogs. These words were an insult to pagan people like the Canaanite woman.

But the word Jesus used for "dogs" meant something like "pet dog" or even "puppy." Jesus was not insulting the woman. He was only calling attention to the fact that she was not a Jew. Jesus was moved by the woman's words and felt sorry for her. By speaking to her in this way, Jesus showed that His mercy was intended for all people, not just for Jewish people.

The response of the Canaanite woman was very surprising. Her response was a

humble one. She did not defend herself. She did not respond in pride. She did not object to Jesus using the word “dog.” Instead she replied, “Even the dogs eat the pieces that fall from the table of their owners” (v. 27).

An Act of Faith (Matthew 15:27-28)

Jesus saw the woman’s humble heart. He recognized her strong faith. Although she came from a pagan land, she made her own choice about Jesus. She decided to come to Jesus in faith. Jesus pointed out her faith to everyone who was watching. He said to her, “Woman, you have much faith” (v. 28).

Jesus held up the Canaanite woman as a strong example for His disciples. The disciples had spent many days with Jesus. They had seen His great power. And still they did not always show strong faith. In fact, Jesus often **rebuked** them for having too

“little faith” (Matthew 6:30, 8:26, 14:31).

Because of the Canaanite woman’s great faith, Jesus granted her request. He healed the woman’s daughter. He freed her from the demon that troubled her. Jesus displayed His great power when He saw the woman’s great faith.

Things to Remember

The disciples probably judged that the Canaanite woman was outside the reach of God’s power. But Jesus saw the great faith that was in her heart. He honored her faith by showing His power. This reminded the disciples that anyone can exercise great faith. It also reminded them of another important truth. It reminded them that pride always blocks us from experiencing God’s power.

Think about people you know. Think about people in your community and in your city. Who do you believe is outside the reach of God’s power? People who are addicts? People who break the law? People who vote differently than you? People who look different from you?

Pride is a powerful force. It can make us doubt God’s power. But great faith can live in any humble heart. Ask God to show you if pride is hiding in your own heart. Humble yourself before Him. And watch Him work in powerful ways.

Things to Think About

1. Why is it so easy for people to judge others who do not live up to their standards?
2. What can you learn from the Canaanites woman’s example of faith?
3. How do you respond when others insult you?
4. Why do you think the disciples often showed too little faith?
5. What does great faith look like?
6. Why does pride seem to so easily creep into our lives? How can we guard our hearts against pride—especially religious pride?

Matthew 15:21-28

21 Jesus went from there to the cities of Tyre and Sidon.

22 A woman came from the land of Canaan. She cried out to Jesus and said, “Take pity on me, Lord, Son of David! My daughter has a demon and is much troubled.”

23 But Jesus did not speak a word to her. His followers kept asking, saying, “Send her away for she keeps calling us.”

24 He said, “I was sent only to the Jewish people who are lost.”

25 Then she came and got down before Jesus and worshiped Him. She said, “Lord, help me!”

26 But He said, “It is not right to take children’s food and throw it to the dogs.”

27 She said, “Yes, Lord, but even the dogs eat the pieces that fall from the table of their owners.”

28 Jesus said to her, “Woman, you have much faith. You will have what you asked for.” Her daughter was healed at that very time.

Adult Bible Study

in Simplified English

*Miracles
in the Gospel of Matthew*

Lesson 11: Faith in God Is Greater Than Any Problem

Bible Text

Matthew 17:14-21

Memory Verse

“... If you have faith as a mustard seed ... you will be able to do anything.” (Matthew 17:20)

Word List

faith: to believe in God and Jesus; to trust and have confidence in

fast: to go without eating to pray better

When my mother was young, her family did not have light at their house on their farm. Finally, the pole with the electricity line came to the road close to her house. One morning while her parents were in town, she and her brother brought the line to the house. They screwed in a light bulb and had light for the first time.

To have light was something that had seemed impossible. Then it became possible. This lesson teaches how faith is the number one tool in the Christian's life. It is like an electricity line to bring light to our lives. The

Christian life must be received and lived by **faith**. Then the impossible becomes possible. When we obey God's teachings, our faith grows.

Peter, James, and John had been with Jesus on a high mountain. They saw Jesus as His face became as bright as the sun and His clothes as white as light. God's voice had come from a cloud and said, “This is My much-loved Son, I am very happy with Him. Listen to Him!” (Matthew 17:5b). This was a special time of worship.

A Father's Faith (Matthew 17:14-15)

Jesus and the three followers came down from the mountain. They found many people waiting for them. One was a man who came to Jesus and got down on his knees. He told Jesus about his son who was very sick. The boy would lose the use of his mind and fall into the fire or into water.

At this time, everyone did their cooking over outside fires. These were a danger to this man's son. They had places to catch water from the rainy season. These were also a danger. Mark 9 tells more about the boy. A demon was causing the boy to suffer.

The father might not have understood everything about Jesus but he believed Jesus could heal his son. His small faith was real, and he knew Jesus could help. He came to Jesus because of his love for his son and he came with faith.

Failure of the Followers

(Matthew 17:16-17)

This father needed Jesus because he had asked Jesus' followers for help with his son earlier. They could not heal the boy. They did not fail because they did not know what to do or had never done it before. In Matthew 10:1, we read that Jesus "gave them power to put out demons and to heal all kinds of sickness and disease." But this time, the followers did not have faith in Jesus and could not do anything.

The father saw that Jesus was the One with the power to heal. The followers did not have what Jesus had. The followers were trying to heal with their own power. Jesus said to the people watching that they had no faith and were going the wrong way. Jesus said, "How long must I be with you and put up with you?" These words are like those of Israel's people in the desert long ago (Deuteronomy 32:5). People did not believe God then either. They were called "a bad and sinful people."

Jesus Succeeds (Matthew 17:18)

The father had asked for pity for his son. Jesus told the father to bring the son to Him. Jesus spoke sharp words to the demon and the demon came out of the boy. At once, he was healed.

Jesus could do what the followers could not do in their own power. It was a

mighty work, a powerful work; it was something only God can do.

The Power of Mustard Seed Faith

(Matthew 17:19-21)

The followers could not understand why they could not heal the boy. They were thinking about their failure and not their faith. They came to Jesus when He was alone to ask why they could not put out the demon.

Jesus told them, "Because you have so little faith." The followers were thinking about the demon inside the boy. Jesus knew it was the unbelief inside His followers. Their question was about putting out demons. Jesus' answer was about putting away doubt. Jesus knew that once unbelief has been put out, taking out demons would not be a problem for them. Faith grows stronger when we obey God.

Their failure taught them some important lessons. It taught them of their need for Jesus. It showed them the power of Jesus. It taught them to come to Jesus with their problems.

We must make sure that our trust is in God and that we are trusting that His will is the right way. We do not change God to do our will.

Jesus told them, "If you have faith as a mustard seed, you will say to this mountain, 'Move from here to over there,' and it would move over. You will be able to do anything."

A mustard seed is such a small seed but it grows into a tree much taller than a person. Faith that starts very small can grow very large. “Moving mountains” in that day meant removing difficulties. Jesus tells us that if we have faith enough, all difficulties can be solved and we can do the hardest things. These are the mountains that faith can move.

When God calls us to do the impossible, He is calling us to depend on Him. The followers placed their faith in the wrong things. They were not to depend on their strength but depend on Jesus.

Jesus also told them that there would be times when they needed to pray and go without food so they could pray better. This kind of praying with faith will take away our unbelief. God’s power comes to us to help others.

We show our faith in God when we pray. We might want to think about being more like the Father than the followers. Jesus said when we have this kind of faith in Him,

we can do anything.

Jesus also talked about **fasting**. We fast when we give up something physical to think about God. You can fast from food, from the Internet, from physical pleasures of any kind. This helps us to be right with God and pray better. This is the kind of prayer James talked about in James 5:1, “The prayer from the heart of a man right with God has much power.”

Things to Remember

The Christian life begins by faith and is lived by faith. We read in Hebrews 11:6 that a man cannot please God without faith. God wants to see our little faith grow into a great faith to help us in both good and bad times. Followers can trust God when He calls us to do the impossible. Trust means we must remember Who our God is. He can do all things; nothing is impossible with God.

We must put our faith in God and nothing else. Faith in itself can do nothing. God is the One Who can do what needs to be done. This moves away the mountains of difficulties and problems.

We are His followers. God has called us to believe in Him, love one another, and make followers of all nations. When we remember Who God is and what He wants us to do, we can do the impossible.

Things to Think About

1. How big is your faith?
2. Is there a part of your life where you need to trust God more?
3. Name something you are believing God will do.
4. What are the problems or difficulties in your life? Are they like mountains to you?
5. What can you tell those who say they would like to have more faith?

Matthew 17

14 When they came to many people, a man came up to Jesus and got on his knees. He said,

15 “Lord, have pity on my son. He is very sick and at times loses the use of his mind. Many times he falls into the fire or into the water.

16 I took him to Your followers but they were not able to heal him.”

17 Then Jesus said, “You people of this day have no faith and you are going the wrong way. How long must I be with you? How long must I put up with you? Bring him here to Me.”

18 Jesus spoke sharp words to the demon and the demon came out of him. At once the boy was healed.

19 The followers came to Jesus when He was alone. They said, “Why were we not able to put the demon out?”

20 Jesus said to them, “Because you have so little faith. For sure, I tell you, if you have faith as a mustard seed, you will say to this mountain, ‘Move from here to over there,’ and it would move over. You will be able to do anything.

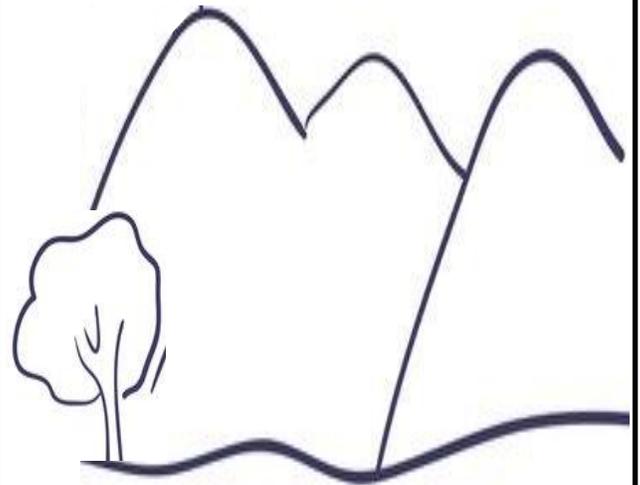
21 But this kind of demon does not go out but by prayer and by going without food so you can pray better.”

**If you
have
faith**



as a mustard seed,

**you will say to this mountain,
‘Move from here to over there,’
and it would move over.**



**You will be able
to do anything.**

Matthew 17:20b

Adult Bible Study

in Simplified English

*Miracles
in the Gospel of Matthew*

Lesson 12: God Gives Us What We Need

Bible Text

Matthew 17:24-27

Memory Verse

“And my God will give you everything you need because of His great riches in Christ Jesus.” (Philippians 4:19)

Word List

tax collector: someone who gathers money from people to pay for the needs of the government

My brother once took his family on a trip to California. They went swimming in the ocean. They were having a wonderful time when my brother felt something pull at his left hand. When he looked, his wedding ring was gone. On TV that evening, they heard a warning about fish that liked shiny things in the water. One of those fish had taken his ring.

This lesson is about a fish that gave something instead of taking something.

Matthew, the writer of this book, was himself a **tax collector** and wrote for those who knew Jewish laws. Matthew is the only

one among the first four books of the New Testament to tell the story of finding a coin in the mouth of the fish.

Jesus made a way to pay a tax and teach His followers an important lesson. He also showed that we are free to give as much as we can with great joy.

The Question of Paying the Tax for the House of God (Matthew 17:24)

Jesus and His followers had returned to Capernaum. This was the town in Galilee where His follower, Peter, was from. It seems the tax collectors met Peter as they returned to the city.

Every male Jew who was over 20 years old had to pay a tax each year to take care of the house of God in Jerusalem. This was not money for the rulers in Rome. The tax was paid with a silver coin. It took about two days of work to earn the money. The first time the tax money was taken is found in Exodus 30:13. At that time, it was made so that God’s people could enter the house of God with their sin debt paid.

During the time of Jesus, this money was usually gathered in the towns and villages from March 15th to March 25th. After that date, people had to go to Jerusalem to pay the tax.

Those who gathered the tax may have thought that Peter was the leader of the

followers. The men asked, “Does not your Teacher pay tax money for the house of God?” This was a different way to ask a question. Was this an ordinary question or were they trying to find out if Jesus was a loyal Jew?

Jesus Asks Peter a Question

(Matthew 17:25-26)

Peter answered the tax collectors with one word, “Yes.” Then Peter went on to the house where they were staying. Jesus spoke to Peter first. Peter had not told Jesus what he had told the tax collectors. Jesus calls Peter by his old name, “Simon.”

Jesus asked Peter to tell Him what he thought, “Who pays the taxes that the kings of the earth want? Is it from their own people or from others?”

During the time of Jesus, kings got money from their citizens. We read that Joseph and Mary had to travel from Nazareth to Bethlehem. Joseph had to write his name in his hometown to be counted for taxes to pay the Roman rulers. It was in Bethlehem that Jesus was born (Luke 2:1-4).

Peter answered Jesus’ question about who pays taxes. He told Him, “Other people pay the taxes.” These same rulers would not make their own children pay taxes. The ones who paid taxes were those not related to the king. Jesus then added that the king’s “own

people” did not pay taxes.

This tax for the house of God was also one that Jewish teachers did not have to pay. Peter had recently said that Jesus was the Christ, the Son of the living God (Matthew 16:15). Since Jesus is God, the house of God belonged to Him. He did not have to pay any money.

Jesus also knew that the people would not understand that. Perhaps they would think that He did not care about God’s House. That is why Jesus asked Peter the question about the taxes.

Jesus went on to explain that in order that no one would be troubled about whether the tax was paid, He Himself would pay. Jesus did not want to put something in the way that makes people fall. Followers of Jesus may sometimes need to do something that limits their own freedom. We can give up our rights so that other people do not fall.

Putting Others First (Matthew 17:27)

So Jesus told Peter how to find the tax for them both. Jesus told Peter to go fishing. Fishing was Peter’s work. Jesus sent Peter to work to get the money. Usually Peter went out in the water with a boat to fish with nets. Jesus told him to go with a hook.

Jesus told Peter what would happen when he got the hook ready. The line would get tight, and the first fish caught would have

a silver coin in its mouth. That silver coin would be the exact amount to pay the tax for both of them. This is a picture of what Jesus would soon do when He paid Peter's sin debt by dying for Peter and for all of us on the cross.

We are not told what happened when the other followers saw this. We might imagine that they would want to go fishing that day, too. They might even take a net. But no other coins were to be found in the mouth of any other fish.

Jesus had told His followers earlier that He would make them to be fishers of men. This time, Jesus told Peter to fish for a coin to pay the tax.

Matthew, the ex-tax collector knew the saving power of Jesus as Savior and Lord. This story showed once again his own journey in finding God's love.

Things to Think About

1. Why was it important for Peter to learn to obey Jesus?
2. How did Jesus teach that we should do our best to cause others not to be troubled and to gladly give up our rights for the good of others?
3. How important is it that we should learn to be thankful when God meets our needs?
4. How was this miracle a picture of Jesus paying our sin debt?

Things to Remember

Jesus paid Peter's earthly debt with a coin and a fish. Very soon, Jesus would pay another kind of debt with His own blood.

Christ has made us free. But we must be careful not to use our freedom in the wrong way. It is our job to be good citizens and to do what we can to help others. We cannot help people to come to Christ if they do not see us acting with kindness the way Jesus did.

Jesus was willing to pay a tax He did not have to pay. He is our example of the way to think about obeying God and obeying man's laws.

Jesus asks His followers to do more than we have to do so that we can encourage others to follow Him. It is important for others to see that being a follower of Jesus makes a difference in how we treat others.

Peter saw that Jesus did not demand "His rights." Jesus made a way to pay the tax. The reason? Jesus said, "...so we will not make them to be troubled." Jesus chose to pay the tax.

As followers of Jesus, we choose to help others. We can have joy when we give freely from our hearts to the work of the Lord. We can have joy when we work to bring peace to others and help one another.

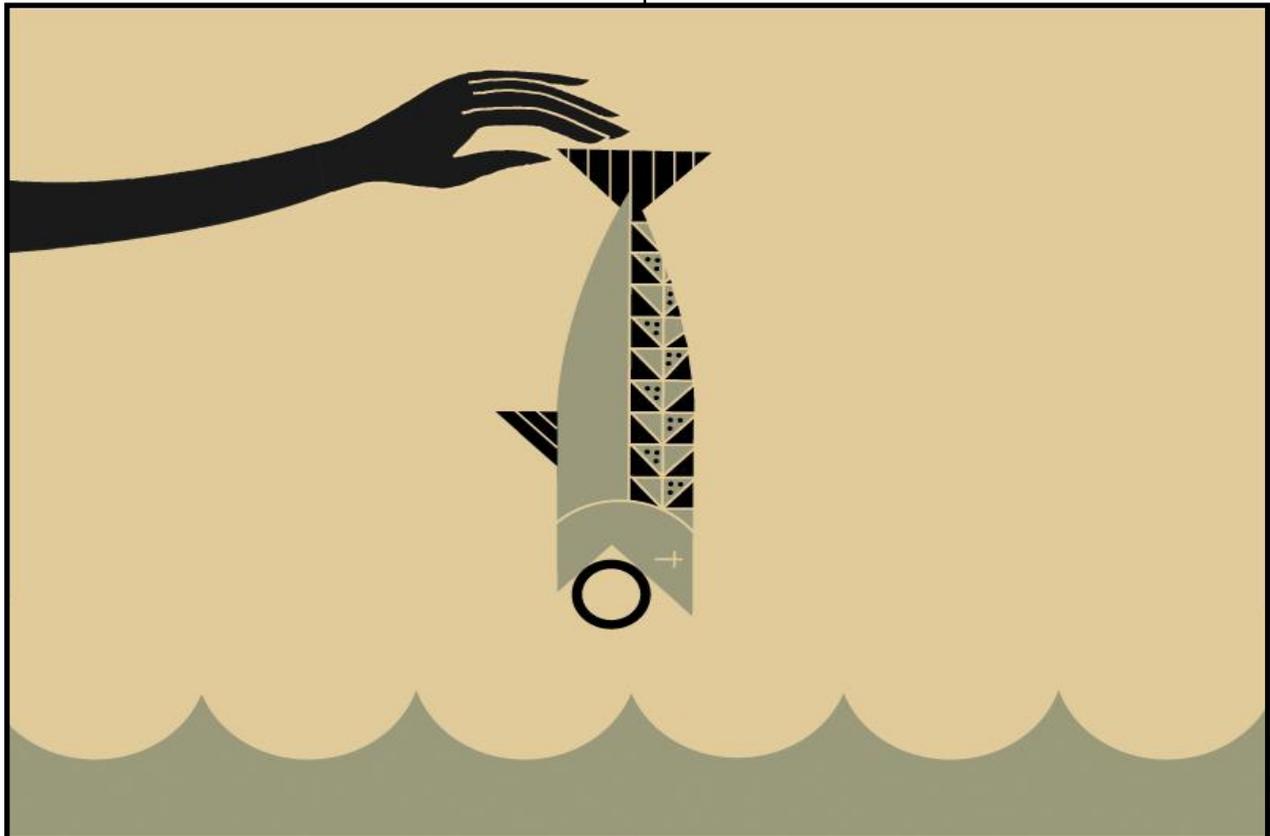
Matthew 17:24-27

24 They came to the city of Capernaum. Those who gathered the tax for the house of God came to Peter. They said, “Does not your Teacher pay tax money for the house of God?”

25 Peter said, “Yes.” When Peter came into the house, Jesus spoke to him first. He said, “What do you think, Simon? From whom do the kings of this earth get their money or taxes, from their own people or from those of another country?”

26 Peter said to Him, “From those of another country.” Then Jesus said, “Then their own people do not pay taxes.

27 But so we will not make them to be troubled, go down to the lake and throw in a hook. Take the first fish that comes up. In its mouth you will find a piece of money. Take that and pay the tax for Me and yourself.”



Adult Bible Study

in Simplified English

Miracles in the Gospel of Matthew

Lesson 13: The Touch of Jesus

Bible Text

Matthew 20:29-34

Memory Verse

“Jesus had loving-pity on them and put His hands on their eyes. At once they could see, and they followed Jesus.” (Matthew 20:34)

Word List

Braille: a system of touch-reading and writing for blind persons in which raised dots represent the letters of the alphabet

My friend in New Mexico was a missionary who could not see. He was an amazing missionary who preached to his people in their own language. His voice was beautiful as he sang songs about Jesus.

David would preach and sing by reading using **Braille**. The letters were made with bumps on the page that he could read with his fingers.

This lesson tells about two blind men Jesus met. This happened just before Jesus went into the city of Jerusalem and the people

greeted Him with much praise. They said Jesus was their king. Matthew may have written about this miracle because the followers of Jesus needed to see more clearly what it meant to be a believer. The two blind men who sat beside the road wanted Jesus to open their eyes. The followers needed to have their spiritual eyes opened.

Leaving Jericho (Matthew 20:29)

A large group of people were traveling with Jesus and His followers as they left Jericho. Others were on their way to Jerusalem. It was an important worship time to remember when the Jews left Egypt.

Jesus often shared the good news of salvation and told about the coming of the holy nation of heaven as He traveled. He was also a healer and miracle worker. Huge crowds had begun to follow Him. People would try to get near Jesus to touch or speak with Him.

Asking for Pity (Matthew 20:30)

There were two blind men sitting along the side of the road. Those who were blind in Jesus' time had to have help from their family or live by begging for money from others.

This road from Jericho to Jerusalem would have been a good place to ask for money from travelers. It might have been safer because there were two of them and they

would have a friend nearby.

We do not know their names. But they knew who Jesus was. The blind men called Jesus “Son of David,” which was a name for the promised king God would send the Jews. The men also called Him “Lord.”

Crowd Tells Beggars to be Quiet (Matthew 20:31)

The crowd tried to stop the blind men from calling out to Jesus. The men were slowing down the people’s journey to Jerusalem.

They wanted to get there in time for the special Jewish worship to remember when God had rescued His people from Egypt many years before. Because the beggars were calling Jesus “Son of David,” perhaps the travelers thought it might cause trouble with the religious leaders.

The two men also called Jesus “Lord.” This term can sometimes mean nothing more than a respectful “sir.” But Matthew used “Lord” as a word for God. Later, a large crowd in Jerusalem would welcome and praise Jesus and call Him the “Son of David,” exactly as the blind men had done.

A week after being welcomed into the city, Jesus would be arrested. He would be “handed over to the religious leaders and to the teachers of the Law” who would “say that He must be put to death” and “hand him over

to the people who do not know God. They will make fun of Him and will beat Him. They will nail Him to a cross. Three days later, He will be raised to life” (Matthew 20:18-19).

The blind men believed that Jesus could help them. So they did not stop calling out for Jesus. They did not give up. They wanted Jesus to take pity on them.

The Miracle: Jesus Heals the Men (Matthew 20:32-34)

Jesus stopped and asked the men what they wanted Him to do. They explained what they meant by the words, “take pity on us.” They wanted Jesus to make them to see. Then Jesus touched their eyes. They could see. They had faith in Jesus. Jesus did a mighty work, and they were healed. Matthew, Mark, and Luke all wrote about this, but only Matthew wrote that Jesus touched their eyes.

What did the blind men do when Jesus made them able to see? Matthew 20:34 says, “At once they could see, and they followed Jesus.” They joined the others in following Him. They joined the believers.

We read about two other blind men in Matthew 9:27-31. Both times, the blind men called out for help. Jesus told the first two men not to tell others about what happened. He did not want to make enemies so early in His work or let people think He had come to be an earthly king.

That command was not needed this time because Jesus was headed to Jerusalem. He would meet those who would be His enemies. People already knew of Him and what He could do. Hiding it was no longer necessary or possible. This is one of the last miracles written about Jesus.

Earlier in Matthew 20, James and John, Jesus' followers, had shown they were blind spiritually. Their mother had asked for them to have a place of honor with Jesus in His Holy Nation.

They did not yet understand that Jesus had not come to be cared for but to care for others (Matthew 20:20-28). To be a follower of Jesus meant that they would suffer. They were "blind" in a different way from the two men Jesus healed on the road. Jesus wants all His followers to see and follow Him.

Things to Remember

Jesus cared for those who were in need. He stopped His trip for the two blind beggars.

Things to Think About

1. Have you ever called out to Jesus the way the two blind men did?
2. If God were to work a miracle in your life, how would you follow Him?
3. What are some things you can do to show that you are a follower of Jesus?
4. Do you know those who make God first in their lives? What do their lives look like?

Even at a time that His thoughts may have been on what was going to happen in Jerusalem, Jesus did a mighty work.

The blind men asked for their sight. Jesus would have known that they were blind. But He wanted them to say what they needed. God knows what we need. But He wants us to pray to Him. He wants us to show that we trust Him.

We talk to God for things that matter most to us. Some of those things could include family, health, safety, and our relationship with God. The words "they followed Jesus" tell us that following Jesus is more important than physical sight.

The most important thing we can do is what the blind men did when they were healed and "follow Jesus." When Jesus asks, "What do you want Me to do for you?" perhaps we should ask for courage to follow Jesus in faith.

The prophet Isaiah wrote that when the promised king came, "the eyes of the blind would be opened" (Isaiah 35:5). Jesus had read from Isaiah 42:7 and said He would open the eyes of the blind. As sinners, we were blind to the truth about God until Jesus opened our eyes and saved us. Now we can do as the two blind men: We can follow Jesus.

Matthew 20:29-34

29 As they went away from the city of Jericho, many people followed Him.

30 Two blind men were sitting by the side of the road. They called out when they heard that Jesus was going by. They said, “Lord, take pity on us, Son of David!”

31 Many people spoke sharp words to them. They told the blind men not to call out. But they called all the more, “Lord! Take pity on us, Son of David!”

32 Jesus stopped and called them. He asked, “What do you want Me to do for you?”

33 The blind men said to Jesus, “Lord, we want our eyes opened!”

34 Jesus had loving-pity on them and put His hands on their eyes. At once they could see, and they followed Jesus.



Original Artwork by Cathy Shaw, member of International Sunday School Department, Columbus Avenue Baptist Church, Waco, Texas

Adult Bible Study

in Simplified English

Christmas Lesson: The Miracle of the Virgin Birth

Bible Text

Matthew 1:18-25

Memory Verse

“A Son will be born to her. You will give Him the name Jesus because He will save His people from the punishment of their sins.” (Matthew 1:21)

Word List

fulfill (fulfilled): to do something and finish it well; to finish a goal that is important to you

option: something that can be chosen; to pick between one or two things

result: something that is caused by something else that happened or was done before

virgin: a person who has never had sex

There is so much excitement at Christmas! Gifts, lights, music, special food, time with friends and family. Many people think the happy and friendly feelings of Christmas are a miracle in today's world. Some Christians think of Christmas as a kind of birthday party for the Baby Jesus.

Christmas is all of these good things, but much more. The Virgin Birth of Jesus was a miracle of God. It was the moment in time

when God, who is all-powerful and all-present but not seen, became a living, breathing person who lived a human life just like us.

The birth of Jesus was such an important time that the writer Matthew included several miracles in the few verses about it. He wrote about these miracles so we can clearly see God at work.

Joseph and Mary

(Matthew 1:18-19)

The story of the birth of Jesus started with Mary, His mother. In the book of Luke, an angel came to Mary and told her she would have a baby. She would name the baby Jesus, and He would be called the Son of the Most High. Mary was a **virgin**, so the baby would be the work of God's Holy Spirit, not of a human father (Luke 1:26-38). Mary must have told all this to Joseph, and he must have found it hard to believe.

Mary and Joseph had promised to marry each other. They had signed an agreement, but they had not come together as husband and wife yet. There was no way that Joseph could be the father of Mary's baby.

Joseph was a good man. He followed God's Law of Moses carefully. He knew that the Law of Moses said a woman who was not faithful to her husband could be stoned to death. But Joseph was a kind man, too. He

loved Mary and wanted what was best for her. He knew he could break the marriage agreement, and he wanted to do it quietly.

By the Law of Moses, Joseph would have been right in doing either action, but they were both sad choices for him. After he decided on the kinder choice of quietly breaking the marriage agreement, God sent an angel to tell Joseph there was a third and better **option**.

Joseph and the Angel

(Matthew 1:20-21)

God sent the angel with a special message. Joseph saw the angel in a dream. The angel told Joseph that God wanted him to take Mary as his wife. The angel showed Joseph that Mary's baby was the **result** of God's Holy Spirit, just as Mary had said.

Then the angel told Joseph, "A Son will be born to her. You will give Him the name Jesus because He will save His people from the punishment of their sins."

All people have sinned. People who lived long ago have sinned. People who live now have sinned. Romans 3:23 says, "For all men have sinned and have missed the shining-greatness of God." God hates sin, and people deserve God's punishment for their sins. If someone steals, lies, or hurts another person, he should be judged and punished.

But God gave people a different option. "For God so loved the world that He gave His only Son. Whoever puts his trust in God's Son will not be lost but will have life that lasts forever" (John 3:16). God, in His loving-kindness, sent Jesus to save His people from the punishment of their sins.

God's Fulfilled Promise

(Matthew 1:22-23)

Matthew wanted his readers to know that God had always been planning for Jesus to come to earth to save people from their sins. Matthew included the words written by the early preacher Isaiah about 700 years earlier. At that time, Isaiah told his king that God was promising to protect His people from their enemies. Isaiah told the king that he should believe this because in the future, a virgin would have a baby and name the baby Immanuel, which means "God with us" (Isaiah 7:14).

The same promise that God gave the ancient king through Isaiah was repeated to Joseph. This baby, born to a virgin, would be proof that God was protecting and saving His people.

The Miracle of Immanuel

Perhaps the greatest miracle of all is shown in the word "Immanuel." It is a Hebrew word that means "God with us." In the time of

Isaiah, the child named Immanuel was proof that God was on the side of the Israelites against their enemies.

With Jesus, Immanuel took on a much greater meaning. Jesus was much more than a sign that God is with people. Jesus was—and is—God Himself with the people.

Jesus had a human mother, Mary. But Jesus did not have a human father. Instead, Jesus was the result of God’s Holy Spirit. In this way, Jesus was fully human and also fully God.

Jesus was fully human. He taught people about God and about what God wanted from His people. He ate and drank. He had friends and family. He felt joy, sadness, and anger.

Jesus was also fully God. He worked many miracles that only God could do. He understood right and wrong as only God can. He loved people completely, as no one but God is able to do.

Things to Think About

1. What’s the most important part about Christmas for you?
2. Jesus came to save His people from the punishment for their sins. How can you explain what that means to someone else?
3. Who do you know that needs to hear and understand the Bible story about Jesus and Christmas?
4. What can you do during the busy Christmas season to remember the miracle of Immanuel, God with us?

Jesus saved His people from the punishment for their sins. He died on the cross and came back from death three days later. When He came back from the dead, Jesus proved that He was fully God and that He had power over all creation, over all life, and even over death.

Things to Remember

Jesus is still the Living God. For all who believe that He lived and died and rose from the dead, He is still saving His people from the punishment of their sins.

There are many miracles in the story of the birth of Jesus. The Holy Spirit came on Mary to create the holy child that would be called the Son of God. An angel appeared to Joseph and helped him understand God’s plan. An ancient preacher’s words about a virgin giving birth were **fulfilled** 700 years later.

But the most important and amazing miracle of all is that the Most High God, the Creator of the universe, broke through time and space to become human flesh in a tiny baby.

Jesus, our Savior. Immanuel, God with us. These are the reasons to celebrate Christmas. May God’s miracle of the Virgin Birth bless you with a deeper understanding of His endless love.

Matthew 1:18-25

18 The birth of Jesus Christ was like this: Mary His mother had been promised in marriage to Joseph. Before they were married, it was learned that she was to have a baby by the Holy Spirit.

19 Joseph was her promised husband. He was a good man and did not want to make it hard for Mary in front of people. He thought it would be good to break the promised marriage without people knowing it.

20 While he was thinking about this, an angel of the Lord came to him in a dream. The angel said, “Joseph, son of David, do not be afraid to take Mary as your wife. She is to become a mother by the Holy Spirit.

21 A Son will be born to her. You will give Him the name Jesus because He will save His people from the punishment of their sins.”

22 This happened as the Lord said it would happen through the early preacher.

23 He said, “The young woman, who has never had a man, will give birth to a Son. They will give Him the name Immanuel. This means God with us.”

24 Joseph awoke from his sleep. He did what the angel of the Lord told him to do. He took Mary as his wife.

25 But he did not have her, as a husband has a wife, until she gave birth to a Son. Joseph gave Him the name Jesus.