

**Welcome to the
Common Ground Café!**



Sunday, December 9, 2018

**Willing and Able
A Study of Matthew 8:1-17**

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If you have kids: What prayers did you teach (or are you teaching) your children? Alternate question: What childhood prayers, if any, were you taught?

One familiar childhood prayer is: “God is great, God is good; Let us thank him for our food.” The stories we’ll look at in Matthew 8:1-17 reveal the greatness and goodness of Jesus, who is God Incarnate. Jesus is both willing and able to act on our behalf whether a crisis is large or small.

Jesus’ Willingness Reflects God’s Goodness

Read Matthew 8:1-4.

Choose one word to best describe the leper’s emotions as he met Jesus. Explain your choice. (Hopeful, afraid, ashamed, courageous, desperate, assured, _____?)

What did it mean to be a leper in the 1st Century: Physically? Socially? Spiritually?

We don’t deal much with lepers today, but society does treat certain people as “outcasts” through stigma and misunderstanding. What people suffer as “outcasts” today?

According to Mark 1:41, what word describes Jesus’ *heart*?

Jesus’ *heart* led to *action*. He healed him. But he could have healed him with just a word without touching him. What is significant about Jesus’ *touching* the leper?

Jesus' Ability Reflects God's Greatness

Read Matthew 8:5-13.

What was a "centurion" in Jesus' day?

The Jewish leper was an outsider, and the Roman centurion was an outsider. What made each of them outsiders in different ways?

Do you think Jesus risked the unpopularity of his Jewish followers by offering to go to the man's home?

How did the centurion describe his belief in Jesus' ability?

If the centurion had the right view of Jesus, what powers are *under* his authority? In other words, to what or to whom can Jesus say "Go" and it must go and "Come" and it must come? Make a list.

Jesus was "amazed" by the insight of this centurion. Do you think Jesus would be "amazed" or disappointed by your faith?

Jesus is Willing and Able in the Large and Small

Read Matthew 8:14-17.

After the dramatic healings of the leper and the centurion's servant, why do you think Matthew decided to include this little story of Jesus healing a simple fever?

Do you tend to only go to God with the "big stuff" and try to just deal with the "little stuff" on your own? What can this story of Peter's mother-in-law tell you about what should be on your prayer list?

But...Sometimes Life Doesn't Go the Way We Want

If compassion moves Him, and all Jesus has to do is “say the word” and wrong is made right, we have to deal with those times he doesn't “say the word.” Discuss the following:

“I would rather wrestle with a God who *can* answer my prayer and *does not*, than have a God who'd *like* to answer my prayer but *cannot*.” What does that mean? Do you agree?

“God is more interested in my character than my comfort.” What does that mean? Do you agree?

Read 2 Corinthians 4:17. How do you think the Forever Life with God will “outweigh” all that we go through now?

Read Romans 8:28. How should that help us deal with our current hardships?



Close with praise reports and prayer requests