

Title: The All-powerful, Ever Willing Messiah (Matt 8:1-4)

Introduction: The story of the man I met on a street corner in Chicago with AIDS in the early 1990's; I stuck out my lip like Bubba in *Forest Gump*, but Jesus reached out His loving hand, the first time to touch an unclean leper, and a second time to bear the leper's sin upon His own body!

“Surely our griefs He Himself bore, And our sorrows He carried” (Is 53:4).

Need: Most of us will admit how dirty we feel before a Holy God, and we confess, no doubt, that Jesus is All-Powerful, and loving, yet, many times we wonder if He truly loves ME, is He willing to embrace ME, a wretched sinner who fails both in word and deed. Matthew 8:1-4 provides the answer.

CTT: Matthew wrote this text to his Jewish readers so that they would believe that Jesus is the Promised Messiah, who is the Prophet-like-Moses (Deut 18:15) and the Servant of the Lord (Is 53:4; Matt 8:17)

How does he demonstrate this?

1. By presenting Jesus as the prophet like Moses (v. 1)
2. By showing Jesus' ability and willingness to heal leprosy (vv. 2-3)
3. By pointing to the Law's witness concerning Jesus (v. 4)

CTS: Matt 8:1-4 calls us to put our faith in Jesus as the promised Messiah because (1) He is the Prophet-like-Moses, v. 1; (2) He is the All-Powerful, Ever-Willing Messiah, vv. 2-3 and; (3) He is the fulfillment of the law, v. 4

Put your faith in Yeshua as your Messiah because:

He is the Prophet Like Moses (v. 1)

Explanation:

1. Why does Matthew do this?
 - a. Promise of like Moses in Torah (Deut 18:15)
 - b. Expectation of Prophet like Moses in Tanakh (Deut 34:10)
 - i. Dale Allison, *The New Moses*, provides list of figures in Tanakh who are intentionally compared to Moses
 - ii. Joshua, Gideon, Samuel, David, Elijah, Josiah, Ezekiel, Jeremiah, Ezra, Baruch, and the Suffering Servant
2. How does Matthew do this?
 - a. Narrative structure of Matthew's Gospel: born like Moses; flee from king; killing of infants; out of Egypt; through waters; into Wilderness; up mountain (5:1); down mountain (8:1)
 - b. Specific allusions and citations in his Gospel – eg. Ex 4:19-20; Matt 2:19-21 (also Matt 7:24; 17:5 – “hear my words” from Deut 18:15ff; the 2 ways of Matt 7:24ff. like the 2 ways of Deut 30:15)

Ex 4:19-20

Matt 2:19-21

Now the Lord said to Moses in Midian, “Go back to Egypt, for all the men who were seeking your life are dead.” So Moses took his wife and his sons and mounted them on a donkey, and returned to the land of Egypt.

But when Herod died, behold, an angel of the Lord appeared in a dream to Joseph in Egypt, and said, “Get up, take the Child and His mother, and go into the land of Israel; for those who sought the Child’s life are dead.” So Joseph got up, took the Child and His mother, and came into the land of Israel.

3. He is also the Greater than Moses

- a. When Moses came down the mountain he brought 10 commandments and death (Ex 32:15; Rom 7:8-12)

Ro 7:8-12 But sin, taking opportunity through the commandment, produced in me coveting of every kind; for apart from the Law sin is dead. I was once alive apart from the Law; but when the commandment came, sin became alive and I died; and this commandment, which was to result in life, proved to result in death for me; for sin, taking an opportunity through the commandment, deceived me and through it killed me. So then, the Law is holy, and the commandment is holy and righteous and good.

- b. When Jesus came down the mountain he brought 10 healings (Matt 8-9) and life

Jn 1:17 For the Law was given through Moses; grace and truth were realized through Jesus Christ.

Heb 3:1-6 Therefore, holy brethren, partakers of a heavenly calling, consider Jesus, the Apostle and High Priest of our confession; He was faithful to Him who appointed Him, as Moses also was in all His house. For He has been counted worthy of more glory than Moses, by just so much as the builder of the house has more honor than the house. For every house is built by someone, but the builder of all things is God. Now Moses was faithful in all His house as a servant, for a testimony of those things which were to be spoken later; but Christ was faithful as a Son over His house—whose house we are, if we hold fast our confidence and the boast of our hope firm until the end.

Illustration: Udi’s story (hearing the SM and coming to faith)

Application: Because Jesus is the Prophet like Moses we must listen to Him (Deut 18:15ff; Matt 7:24ff; 17:5). Apart from accepting Him and heeding His words we cannot enter into the Kingdom of Heaven

Heb 10:28-29 Anyone who has set aside the Law of Moses dies without mercy on the testimony of two or three witnesses. How much severer punishment do you think he will deserve who has trampled under foot the Son of God, and has regarded as unclean the blood of the covenant by which he was sanctified, and has insulted the Spirit of grace?

Transition: Not only is Jesus the promised Prophet-like-Moses, He is also the All-Powerful, Ever-Willing Messiah

He is the All-Powerful, Ever-Willing Messiah (v. 2-3)

Explanation:

1. The leper (v. 2): his predicament, posture, petition
 - a. **Question:** why the leper first? Two reasons:
 - i. Textual: it's a Messianic miracle
 - ii. Experiential: It's how we all feel after the SM (Betty's confession after reading SM)
 - b. The predicament of the leper
 - i. It was incurable and separated one from society and the temple – Unclean! (Lev 14:45-46)
 - ii. It had only been healed 3 times in the Tanakh – Moses, Miriam, and Naaman
 - iii. It was on the top 10 list of things that only the Messiah could do (Matt 11:4-5) – No one else in all of Israel was able to help him
 - c. The posture of the leper: *proskuneo* is imperfect
 - i. He was humble (kept bowing down)
 - ii. He was persistent (he had now where else to go – Moses only accentuated his problem!)
 - d. The petition of the leper:
 - i. He didn't question Jesus' ability (incredible faith!) – Not, “If you are able, will you?”
 - ii. He questioned Jesus' intentionality – Not, “Can you?” but “Will you?”
 - iii. We feel the same. I know He can, but will He?

Argumentation: You might be saying, “If only you knew how dirty I am, you would see why God would never accept me.” LOOK AT THE NEXT VERSE FOR THE ANSWER!

2. The Messiah (v. 3): Proof of His Willingness, Demonstration of His Power
 - a. Proof of His willingness:
 - i. Jesus touched him while he was still leprous
 - ii. **Num 19:22** “Furthermore, anything that the unclean person touches shall be unclean; and the person who touches it shall be unclean until evening.”
 - iii. The beauty of the INCARNATION – He is willing to “touch” us as dirty sinners!
 - iv. This goes against our nature: the last place we want to go when we are dirty with sin is to Jesus; but He ought to be the first one we go to because He is the only one who loves us unconditionally and is able to make us clean!

Illustration: “Under the Law, the *touch of a leper* was infectious; but as Christ possesses such purity as to repel all filth and defilement, he does not, by touching, either pollute himself with leprosy, or become a transgressor of the law. When he took upon him our flesh, he did not only deign to touch us with his hand, but was united to one and the same body with ourselves, that we might be *flesh of his flesh* (Gen 2:23). Nor did he only stretch out his arm to us, but descended from heaven even to hell, and yet contracted no stain from it, but, retaining his innocence, took away all our impurities, and sprinkled us with his holiness. By his word alone he might have healed the *leper*; but he applied, at the

same time, the touch of his hand, to express the feeling of compassion. . . .*The stretching out of his hand* was therefore an expression and token of infinite grace and goodness. . . .The Son of God was so far from disdaining to talk to a leper, that he even *stretched out his hand to touch* that uncleanness” (Calvin, 373-4).

- b. Demonstration of His power:
 - i. Moses couldn’t heal leprosy (his own and his sister’s)
 - ii. Elisha could only send Naaman to wash
 - iii. Jesus didn’t say, “God is willing.” He said, “I am willing.”
 - iv. WHO IS THIS MAN? He is Immanuel, the Son of God (key in Matthew – 3:17; 4:3, 6; 8:29; 17:5; 26:63; 27:40, 43, 54)!

Application: Are you feeling unclean, unworthy, ugly, and separated from both man and God? Come to Jesus, in your uncleanness (He is the Ever-Willing Messiah), and find cleansing in Him (He is the All-Powerful Savior!) “Come to Me, ALL who” (Matt 11:28)

Transition: Not only does Matthew tell us to put our faith in Jesus because He is the Prophet-like-Moses, and the All-Powerful, Ever-Willing Messiah, but finally, because Jesus is the fulfillment of the Law

He is the Fulfillment of the Law (v. 4)

Explanation:

1. A testimony to whom? “Them” – who is “them”? (not “priest” but “multitudes” – 8:1)
2. A testimony to what?
 - a. Jesus came to fulfill the law, not to abolish it – examination & offerings (Matt 5:17-20; Gal 4:4)
 - b. Jesus came as the fulfillment of the law
 - i. Let Moses and the Prophets do the talking! They can say it far better than you can! We don’t believe Jesus is the Messiah because the church tells us so, we believe Jesus is the Messiah because Moses and the Prophets say so! (Luke 24:27, 44; John 5:46). The church merely confirmed that Jesus is the Messiah promised by the Law, the Prophets, and the Writings.
 - ii. Jesus came as the fulfillment of the law (Matt 11:4-5; Gal 4:5 – “redeem those who were under the law”)

Illustration: Several years ago I was questioned by an Israeli regarding my faith in Jesus as a Jewish person. I asked her if I could read her something, and after hearing what I read, she was to tell me where I was reading from and who it was about. Upon reading Isaiah 53 she said, “That’s Jesus, and that’s the NT.” I replied, “Rachel, you are half right. That is Jesus. But that is the Tanakh.” With jaw dropping she turned to her husband and said, “Abraham, that IS Jesus!”

Application: Moses promised the coming of One who would be bruised on His heel, of the seed of Abraham, of the tribe of Judah, who would not only be the Greater than

Moses, He would also be the Passover Lamb! The very One who pronounced the curses became a curse on our behalf (2 Cor 5:21). Put your faith in Jesus, the source of God's abundant blessings and the fulfillment of the Law, the Prophets, and the Writings!