

8:16

When the even was come, Just previously, Jesus is healing sick people and casting out demons by speaking the word. Before that, He's healing Peter's mother-in-law of a fever by touching her. Before that, He's healing a centurion's servant by speaking the word. Before that He heals a leper by touching the leper. By touching him. And before that, He's preaching the Sermon on the Mount. It's been a full day.

When the even was come, they brought unto Him many that were possessed with devils: We just talked about that.

8:18-19

Now when Jesus saw great multitudes about Him, He gave commandment to depart unto the other side. 19 a certain scribe came, Scribes were the teachers of the word because no one knew the word like they did. They spent their time counting letters and making sure that this copy looked like that one. They're the kind that say, "I know what the word says. I'm with it all the time. I know the standard."

And here's a scribe. He has spent all his days before the age of 12 in a rabbinical school. He has memorized all of Genesis, Exodus, Leviticus, Numbers, and Deuteronomy. If anyone knew the Law, it was this guy. Why is he coming to Jesus? What is it about a man that knows everything? What is it about this guy who has spent all his time around the Bible? Why is he coming to Jesus? We might think right off the bat, "Well, it must be because he was getting saved." But I think that it was because he as a scribe found all of a sudden the possibility that he could get a better position somewhere else. After all, Jesus was coming with John the Baptist promising a kingdom.

Well, who wouldn't want that? Every time they looked around they saw the clanging of a Roman spear or a shield. Every time they turned around they'd see their daughters being raped by the Roman soldiers. Every time they turned around their last mule was being taken. Every time they turned around the taxes were being doubled. Matthew knew this all too well because he was usually the one collecting the taxes. Who wouldn't want a kingdom? Particularly a scribe who spent all of his time copying the Old Testament and knows that a kingdom is coming?

and said unto Him, Master, I will follow Thee whithersoever, wherever, And so, if this man is doing miracles like Moses, He must be the next king like His dad David. "So I think I'd like to get on board with Him. And since I know this is a winning circus, Master I'll go with You anywhere." He was unaware that his loss was greater than he thought. He thought he would lose some friends and gain greater fame and really, the greater connection to the greatest teacher ever because Jesus is the greatest teacher ever. He's the greatest miracle worker probably since Moses. Elijah an Elisha have nothing on Jesus. You have to go all the way back to Moses to find someone impressive like Jesus. So the scribe says, "This must be my next ticket." He's that guy that can't get away from the idea of getting the best positions for his career. He was really to lose his friends and he just didn't know it. The fame that he had he was going to lose and he said, "I'll go with You anywhere."

Thou goest. And Jesus saith unto him, The foxes have holes, and the birds of the air have nests; but the Son of man hath not where to lay His head. "You'll go with Me anywhere? You'll go with Me even to the realm of the homeless? Is that really what you had in mind, scribe? Is it really what you had in mind: that you're going to give up everything? Lose everything? You really have in mind to get in this boat with Me never to return because everyone will have seen you with Me? You will not ever be allowed in the temple again if they find out you were with Me. Are you ok with living under a bridge? Are you ok living in guest rooms if someone is gracious enough to put you up? Are you ok with that?"

Scribes were teachers, not followers of teachers. This means that the man had the utmost respect for Jesus. And by the way, Jesus had no credentials. It's not like He could pull out a seminary degree or a rabbinical school degree. No. He was supposed to have been, the King James Hebrews 12 would call Him, "a bastard child." One whose father is unknown or at least his mom and dad played around before they

finally got married. You can find that in John 8. He was accused of it at least twice in the Gospel of John alone, of being a child of fornication. So Jesus must have been very impressive. Everyone suggested that He was born out of wedlock. No one was guessing, "Oh by the way, I bet He's virgin born." No one could say, "Here's the Rabbi that He followed." And so it is a marvel that he approaches Jesus and calls Him "Master" in verse 19.

What was it about the presence of Christ that brought this magnanimous, world-shattering respect from someone who did not have to give it to Him? To some degree even today, I find myself praying to Jesus, "I will give it all up for You, so long as it's for a better gig." No. Let's make it personal enough so you know how human I am. "Lord, if following You means that I can stay in America, if following You means that all of my bills are paid on time every month, then I'll go with You wherever You go."

So Jesus, in other parts of Matthew we're going to get to, says things like, "You will lose your life if you seek to gain it. And if you seek to keep it, you will lose it." And so Jesus seems to be saying, "What if you knew you would lose your life? What if you knew you would lose your job? What if you knew you would lose your home? Exactly how full of conviction would you be then?"

"I'll go with You wherever You go, Jesus, so long as I don't risk losing my pension." I would like to see payback immediately from the kingdom. And so we see the honest truth is that strong profession does not really mean commitment. It might mean you can just talk loud. Let's be honest. There were plenty of people around the ship, why in the world did Matthew record this guy? What was it about this man that butted into things there and said, "I'll go with You wherever. I'll be a part of Your crowd." This wasn't some sort of yacht. This was a limited, a vessel, a ship, a boat. You're not getting a whole beach-worth of people on there, as a matter of fact just the disciples, and not all 70, probably lucky to get all 12. What makes this man think that he is going to get on the boat? Well the fact is, "I'm a scribe. I belong on the boat with the new king." So we can get into the boat tonight if we want to. Because if the scribe can, I can. But just know that the cost is the same as it is with the scribe.

And another of His disciples We don't find them named. I don't know who this is. I don't know who he is in Mark or Luke. I don't know who he is at all. It's another disciple. And we find out in Luke 10 that Jesus had 70 disciples; 12 apostles, but 70 disciples. It could have been any of those 70.

"Lord, suffer me first to go and bury my father." But Jesus said unto him, "Follow Me; and let the dead bury their dead." And when He was entered into a ship, His disciples followed Him. And, behold, there arose a great tempest in the sea, insomuch that the ship was covered with the waves: but He was asleep. Clearly Jesus needed a break. Very tired. It's been a full day. And can you see the Son of God, who has never "not been," and He is experiencing weariness. And not just weariness, but weariness with people. And not just weariness with people, but weariness with people to whom He is ministering. Who wants to get in line and tell Jesus how unspiritual He is? Why is He sleeping in a boat in the middle of a storm?

I think we should do well to realize that if we don't recognize our own physical limits they will soon catch up with us. Before you know it we're short with people. Can you imagine the Son of God emptying Himself, making Himself of no reputation, Philippians 2, to the point where He had to sit down on a well and ask a young lady for a drink? Or, get into a boat and nap?

This is the second time we find Him getting into a boat to get away from people. He was a pretty popular man. Of course, if all the hospitals in Hickory, NC were empty and it was because of one guy, probably—he would be very popular. As a matter of fact, that's what I'd like to wage to some of our healing evangelists out there. If you're so altruistic and godly, why don't we just have you come to Hickory. We'll not let you speak; we'll take you around to all the hospitals, and the funeral homes.

But what I don't find in the verses to follow is that Jesus chases this man down the beach and says, "Hang on. I know I was a little too rough there. Can we talk about this? I was kidding. The truth is I do have a place to sleep tonight. And life is good. The benefits package is pretty good. I've got lots of people with lots of money. I think that you would like it. Uh, I do need more disciples. What do you think?"

Would you rethink this? Can we agree? Compromise? Meet in the middle?” No. Jesus chased him about as much as He chased the rich young ruler (in Matthew 19).

8:20

Self-indulgence was not Jesus’ plan. I mean, think about what Jesus calls Himself at the end of the verse. The Son of Man is homeless. The Son of Man. Now please, let me ruin Theology 101 for you. People say “Son of God refers to His deity; Son of Man refers to His humanity.” You read Psalm 80:17, you read Daniel 7, what you don’t get is the idea the Son of Man is a title for a human being. It’s the title for someone who belongs on the throne with the Ancient of Days.

Psalm 80:17 says that the Son of Man is “the Man of Your own right hand.” Excellent. “Well if He belongs at God’s right hand than He belongs in Rome in charge of the Senate, and I will gladly get into His boat.” “Nope. I’m not going to Rome. I’m not going to self-indulge,” Jesus says. This is the first time Son of Man is mentioned in all of Matthew. It is such a big deal that when Jesus stands before the High Priest on the eve of His death, when He says to the High Priest, “I am the Son of Man,” the High Priest rips his clothes out of anger in front of Jesus. If Son of Man just meant, “Hey, I’m a dude,” no, this is a power packed, fully immersed word that means, “I am divine in every way and I don’t even have a place to sleep tonight. So why should you?” Wow. Certainly the One worthy of such a regal, magnificent name should have lavish digs. The creator of the birds doesn’t have a place? The creator of the nest of the birds doesn’t have a place. The creator of the fox doesn’t; the creator of the den of the fox doesn’t have a place to sleep.

And so we move on to the next man.

8:21

And another of his disciples said unto him, Lord, suffer me first to go and bury my father. Now, this is a little strange if we read it at face value. As 2014 Americans we might think, “Well that’s reasonable. All he wants to do is conduct a funeral and be on his way.” But the truth is in the Oriental world, “Let me go home, care for him and wait for him to die, render proper respects,” which, by the way, included weeping for weeks, “Let me settle the estate and collect my inheritance.” In all probability his father was not even yet dead. “Let me go bury my dad” is a middle-eastern, Oriental old-fashioned way of saying, “He’s not dead but he’s old, and I need to wait around until he is dead, settle the estate, give him a proper burial, do 30 or more days of weeping, get my inheritance, then I’ll follow You.” It seems honorable. Whether he was asking to hang out with dad until he died or whether he was seeking one more year, he wanted more time. Presumably he wanted more time with family or he wanted more money, but Jesus comes back with something that is rather alarming.

8:22

But Jesus said unto him, Follow Me; and let the dead bury their dead.

Matthew 6:33 But seek ye first the kingdom of God, and His righteousness; and all these things shall be added unto you. Take therefore no thought for the morrow: for the morrow shall take thought for the things of itself. Sufficient unto the day is the evil thereof.

And so Jesus is giving a real life example application of 8:21-22. “I tell you what, you quit worrying about when your daddy’s going to die and you follow Me.” And what was Jesus saying, “Your dad’s not important?” No, of course not. Several verses earlier He’s healing someone’s mother-in-law. This is not reflective of a callous Jesus. This is reflective of a Jesus who knows the heart of a man who’s using his older father as an excuse for why he’s not following Jesus. Oh, but this man sounded very spiritual. “Let me take care of dad.” You remember how many brothers the rich man in hell had. He had five brothers. That was probably very typical. The parable of the prodigal son, for example. There’s a son who stays home and a son who’s a prodigal. So probably there was plenty of help around the house. And Jesus

knew what the man wanted was more time and more money. He had out-of-order priorities. It's not Jesus picking on the fact that you want to help your elderly parents, it's because Jesus is knowing it is absolutely and positively an excuse.

I know this sounds drastic, "Let the dead bury their dead." But is this any more drastic than chapter 5?

5:27 Ye have heard that it was said by them of old time, Thou shalt not commit adultery: But I say unto you, That whosoever looketh on a woman to lust after her hath committed adultery with her already in his heart. And if thy right eye offend thee, pluck it out, and cast it from thee: for it is profitable for thee that one of thy members should perish, and not that thy whole body should be cast into hell. And if thy right hand offend thee, cut it off, and cast it from thee.

If you wanted to hear it in Matthew 8 language, "Let the dead bury their dead. You do what Christians do, and you let everyone else do what they do."