Lownes Free Church Sunday Morning – February 23, 2020

Let’s read Matthew!

***Do you really believe Jesus?***

Matthew 8

**What’s happening in the book?**  Jesus is acting; who is believing?

 Jesus, Messiah, has just explained the Kingdom of Heaven to His followers (chs. 5-7). Now He takes to the countryside and villages to put Kingdom words and power into action. Jesus already had begun His ministry (Matthew 4:23-25), but here we are shown how people respond to Him with faith, little faith, or outright unbelief. Matthew is raising the obvious question: How do I respond to Jesus, His teachings, and works?

**What would we like to ask Matthew?**

 What is the theme that might tie these stories together?

 Why does Matthew record the leper’s words? The Centurion’s?

 Why does Jesus warn/discourage these two would-be followers?

 Why does Jesus rebuke the disciples, seeing they were in danger?

 Why does Matthew indicate that Jesus heals all who came to Him?

 Why do the demons want to go into the pigs in the first place?

**What do we need to know about this passage?**

❑ The Leper: The most desperate of the sick, these outcasts were ritually unclean and shunned by all. This leper throws himself at Jesus’ feet with full assurance and outward confession that Jesus can “will” him into health. And Jesus does just that.

 ❑ The Centurion: The Gentile soldier affirms the power of Jesus’ words, insuring himself (and all like him) a place in God’s Kingdom. We become sons of Abraham by faith, not Jewish descent. Gen. 28:14; Matt. 3:7-10

❑ All who come: Jesus heals Peter’s family member as a representative of ALL who apply to Him for healing, fulfilling the prophet’s words. Jesus dispels evil “with a word,” and heals anyone who comes to Him.

❑ The Wannabes: The faith of two would-be followers of Jesus is challenged. Don’t come after Jesus for the adventure or comfort, for to follow Him may mean giving up both family and home. Count the cost.

❑ The Disciples: Jesus rebukes the disciples for their “little faith” because (1) They already have seen Him work countless miracles and (2) They still have not realized He is more than just a man. Matt. 6:30; 16:8

❑ The Demoniacs: Jesus’ ridding two men of an army of demons is dis-counted by a whole village who ask Him to leave. The self-destruction of the pigs proved not only that the demons were gone, but also that these people valued business more highly than the Kingdom offered by Jesus.

**What’s the big idea (main point) of the story?**

*The Kingdom of Heaven is powerful, and the change it brings reveals our moment by moment choices: to believe and trust Jesus, doubt His power, or reject Him.*

***So how do we apply these things practically today?***

 Decision: Do I want to be known to Jesus as “Little Faith”?

 Priorities: Are money, popularity, and comfort most important?

 Storms: Do I panic or pray? Do I accuse Jesus or rest in His love?

 Promise: Am I really convinced that Jesus receives all who come to Him?