

sermon study guide

Pastor Ashwin Ramani

Date: April 18 / 19, 2020

Sermon Title: Thy Kingdom Come - Part 1

IN - PURSUE RELATIONSHIP

1. In this time period of 'social distancing' and other restrictions, what return to normal are you most looking forward to?
2. Who in your life would you describe as a person of great faith? How do you see their faith at work from day to day?

UP - PURSUE GOD

3. Pastor Ashwin said, "We see in the Bible as well as in our experience the 'already' and 'not yet' dimensions of God's Kingdom."

In your Bible, browse through the section headings and content between Matthew 4:23 and 9:35. Where do you see 'the good news of the kingdom' preached? Which are 'already' aspects of the kingdom? Which are 'not yet'?

Read *Matthew 8:5-13*

4. From verses 10-13, what aspect of Jesus' reply stands out or surprises you? What connections does Jesus draw between having faith and being admitted into the kingdom?

OUT - PURSUE MISSION

5. Re-visit verses 8-9. During this global pandemic, how confident are you in the authority of Jesus? What difference could a faith like the centurion's make, both in our own lives and in our interactions with others?
6. How would you respond to someone wrestling with the idea that Jesus has unlimited authority and yet, even in response to prayer, allows sickness and pain in this world of the 'already' and 'not yet'?

For Personal Reflection/Prayer:

Pastor Ashwin said, "Irrespective of the circumstances, Jesus has unlimited authority! Jesus is pleased, he is even amazed when we affirm his absolute authority, his full control and ask him to act." Reflect on the power and authority of Jesus. Pray to have faith like the centurion, and for Jesus' kingdom to come in specific areas of your life and the lives of those around you.

For Daily Reflections from CSC, visit

<https://www.cschurch.ca/daily-reflections/>

THE WORD (NIV)

Matthew 8:5-13

⁵ When Jesus had entered Capernaum, a centurion came to him, asking for help. ⁶ "Lord," he said, "my servant lies at home paralyzed, suffering terribly."

⁷ Jesus said to him, "Shall I come and heal him?"

⁸ The centurion replied, "Lord, I do not deserve to have you come under my roof. But just say the word, and my servant will be healed. ⁹ For I myself am a man under authority, with soldiers under me. I tell this one, 'Go,' and he goes; and that one, 'Come,' and he comes. I say to my servant, 'Do this,' and he does it."

¹⁰ When Jesus heard this, he was amazed and said to those following him, "Truly I tell you, I have not found anyone in Israel with such great faith. ¹¹ I say to you that many will come from the east and the west, and will take their places at the feast with Abraham, Isaac and Jacob in the kingdom of heaven. ¹² But the subjects of the kingdom will be thrown outside, into the darkness, where there will be weeping and gnashing of teeth."

¹³ Then Jesus said to the centurion, "Go! Let it be done just as you believed it would." And his servant was healed at that moment.

Psalm 107:20a

He sent out his word and healed them;

sermon study summary

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Matthew 4:23 and 9:35 are summary statements of Jesus' ministry. There is a great deal packed in between those verses including Jesus' teaching and preaching on the Sermon on the Mount. After that are many examples of Jesus' healing ministry. Within his teaching Jesus often references the 'Kingdom of Heaven'. This signifies the rule of God over his creation. Since the Fall, sin and its consequences have striven hard against God's Kingdom. When Jesus came to earth the process to redeem creation from the consequences of the fall began. It is still continuing. Jesus' miracles in this section demonstrates that he has authority and power over disease and sickness. Over the last millennium there have been several viruses that have wreaked havoc on humanity. In 1918 the Spanish Flu alone killed 50 million people. Sickness still has a grip in our world. But Jesus is still at his redemptive work.

In Matthew 8:5-13 we see a Roman Centurion petitioning Jesus on behalf of one of his servants who is very ill. At Jesus' offer to come and heal the servant, the Centurion replies with a stunning admission of faith in Jesus by recognizing that Jesus had divine authority. The Roman Caesars at that time were worshipped as gods yet the Centurion twice called Jesus 'Lord'. He recognized the greater authority in Jesus – even authority to help his servant simply through his word.

Jesus has the authority to heal with a word (Psalm 107:20a). Authority is mentioned five times in this section of Matthew. On many occurrences throughout the Gospels, people reacted with amazement when Jesus performed a healing miracle. Here we see Jesus utterly amazed at the faith of the Centurion! He proclaimed to his disciples, the crowd, and the religious leaders present that he had not seen such faith in any of them or indeed throughout all of Israel as this Gentile soldier had just displayed. Jesus then gave the word, and the servant was immediately healed. Jesus has authority over sickness that has plagued creation from the time of the Fall.

What about today? Jesus' power IS still available. His authority on earth has not waned. The kingdoms of God and the enemy still struggle – the restoration is not yet complete. Yet, Christians are called to exercise that authority and pray with confidence for divine healing for those who are sick. Jesus is greater than any sickness, be it physical, emotional or spiritual. All God's people will experience his healing power, be it in this life or in the life to come.

The Centurion from Matthew 8 models how we might pray during this COVID-19 pandemic and beyond. When we intercede for healing we are declaring: His Kingdom Come! Like the Centurion we come in humility appealing to Jesus' authority. Let us pray boldly in faith in our Lord and Savior who had authority over sickness and disease when he walked the earth – and today as he walks the earth through his followers and sits on his throne in heaven.