

Sermon Series: (Read thru N.T.) “From Bethlehem to Calvary to Heaven”—Lord of Life Luth., Westfield, IN-1/4/04

Title: “Jesus: The Man of the People”

Text: Matthew 8: 5-13

Intro.: *Ills.: Time magazines man/person of the year – picking someone who doesn't just fit prejudice of one group*

Theme: When we realize that God's desire to send Jesus for “all the people” doesn't just mean “my people,” then, we realize the heart of God for our neighbor, friend, or work associate and his plan to use Jesus in us to reach them.

A bird's eye view of what you will be reading this week in Matthew 1-20

- Matthew's theme: Jesus as the “Son of Man”—promised Messiah come to save
- Jesus shifts the concept of the people of God from the bloodline of Abraham to the faith of Abraham
- Jesus condemns religiosity and commends faith that grows and advances the Kingdom of God

Jesus fosters a faith that goes beyond traditionalism and ritualistic beliefs

- Jesus does not work within our self-defined religion
 1. To associate with the gentile, Roman, soldier was taboo for a good Jew
 2. The Centurion's humbleness (not sufficient, don't deserve) is praised by Jesus vs. religious-correctness of Israelites
 1. **Ills.: Pre-fab religion – “non-smoking seats please”**
 2. *“For I desire mercy, not sacrifice, and acknowledgment of God rather than burnt offerings.” Hosea 6:6*
- Jesus sought to go where people are rather than making them come to him
 3. Notice that Jesus offers “to go and heal”
 1. *“But God demonstrates his own love for us in this: While we were still sinners, Christ died for us. Since we have now been justified by his blood, how much more shall we be saved from God's wrath through him!” Rom5:8,9*
 4. **Ills.: Proposal by e-mail**
 5. What man-made barrier/boundary is Jesus asking us to break through to begin practicing “true religion”?
- Jesus honors faith which steps from the comfortable of self into the uncomfortable of other-centeredness
 6. The risk of faith (for the Centurion and for us)
 1. Ridicule by others
 2. Potential disappointment of hopes and plans
 3. Walking by faith not by sight (2 Cor. 5: 7) (vs. 13)(Would you go home expecting or cynically doubting?)
 7. The vulnerability of trust (*man under authority*)
 1. Centurion was used to being in charge but also understood the accountability to a higher authority
 2. Trust is turning over the control and the direction of your future plans and of the next moment
 3. **Ills.: Freedom through captivity**
 4. Willing to be vulnerable (needy) before God fosters an vulnerability with others (family, fellow believers, world)

Jesus promotes a family of God in which all its citizens come to God on equal terms

- Those who surrender to Jesus on His terms not theirs
 1. *“I came to faith when I finally surrendered to the relentless pursuit of Jesus to capture me within his kingdom of grace.”*
 2. Dying to a spiritual presumptiveness based upon self or heritage worship
 3. Dying to a religious entitlement mentality demanding Jesus to fix things which you and I broke
 4. Saying to Jesus, *“Just say the word, and I'll believe that it's good to go”* (vs. 8c)
- Those who understand the rhythm of faith and grace
 5. Understanding that you deserve nothing (*not worthy—8a*) but receive everything by God's grace
 1. *“But by the grace of God I am what I am.” 1 Cor. 15:10*
 6. Believing that in Christ all things are possible to me through Him
 1. **Ills.: The Story of Jesus healing the leper in Matt. 8** (*A man with leprosy came and knelt before him and said, “Lord, if you are willing, you can make me clean.” Jesus reached out his hand and touched the man. “I am willing,” he said. “Be clean!” Immediately he was cured of his leprosy.[vs. 2,3]*)

Ills.: see next page of Person of the Year candidates

Non-smoking seats, please!

WHILE SERVING as church usher, I was carrying out our tradition of escorting parishioners to their seats before the service began. After I returned to the entrance of the sanctuary to escort the next party, I greeted two strangers and asked where they would like to sit. Looking confused, the young man smiled and said, "Nonsmoking, please." (Readers' Digest website)

Proposal by e-mail

Teaching at a state university, we instructors get to know our students fairly well. A colleague once mentioned that he had told his communications class of his plans to propose marriage. A student spoke up and said that he had recently asked his girlfriend to marry him. "What was her answer?" my friend asked. "I don't know," the student replied. "She hasn't e-mailed me back yet."--Contributed by Melissa Grant (Readers' Digest website)

Freedom thru captivity

Eating lunch at a small café, I saw a sparrow hop through the open door and peck at the crumbs near my table. When the crumbs were gone, the sparrow hopped to the window ledge, spread its wings, and took flight. Brief flight. It crashed against the window pane and fell to the floor. The bird quickly recovered and tried again. Crash. And again. Crash. I got up and attempted to shoo the sparrow out the door, but the closer I got the harder it threw itself against the pane. I nudged it with my hand. That sent the sparrow fluttering along the ledge, hammering its beak at the glass. Finally, I reached out and gently caught the bird, folding my fingers around its wings and body. It weighed almost nothing. I thought of how powerless and vulnerable the sparrow must have felt. At the door I released it, and the sparrow sailed away. As I did with the sparrow, God takes us captive only to set us free.

Matthew 8:5-13

⁵When Jesus went to Capernaum, a Roman army officer came to beg him for help. ⁶The officer said, "Sir, my servant is lying at home paralyzed and in terrible pain." ⁷Jesus said to him, "I'll come to heal him." ⁸The officer responded, "Sir, I don't deserve to have you come into my house. But just give a command, and my servant will be healed. ⁹As you know, I'm in a chain of command and have soldiers at my command. I tell one of them, 'Go!' and he goes, and another, 'Come!' and he comes. I tell my servant, 'Do this!' and he does it." ¹⁰Jesus was amazed when he heard this. He said to those who were following him, "I can guarantee this truth: I haven't found faith as great as this in anyone in Israel. ¹¹I can guarantee that many will come from all over the world. They will eat with Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob in the kingdom of heaven. ¹²The citizens of that kingdom will be thrown outside into the darkness. People will cry and be in extreme pain there. ¹³Jesus told the officer, "Go! What you believed will be done for you." And at that moment the servant was healed. [GW]

Person of the Year Complete List From 1927-2003

2000s 2003: The American Soldier
2002: The Whistleblowers
2001: Rudolph Giuliani
2000: George W. Bush
1990s 1999: Jeff Bezos
1998: Bill Clinton/Kenneth Starr
1997: Andy Grove
1996: David Ho
1995: Newt Gingrich
1994: John Paul II
1993: The Peacemakers
1992: Bill Clinton
1991: Ted Turner
1990: George Bush
1980s 1989: Mikhail Gorbachev
1988: The Endangered Earth
1987: Mikhail Gorbachev
1986: Corazon Aquino
1985: Deng Xiaoping
1984: Peter Ueberroth
1983: Ronald Reagan/Yuri Andropov
1982: The Computer
1981: Lech Walesa
1980: Ronald Reagan
1970s 1979: Ayatullah Khomeini
1978: Teng Hsiao-p'ing
1977: Anwar Sadat
1976: Jimmy Carter
1975: U.S. Women
1974: King
1973: Judge Sirica
1972: Nixon/Kissinger
1971: Richard Nixon
1970: Willy Brandt
1960s 1969: Middle Class
1968: U.S. Astronauts
1967: Lyndon Johnson
1966: Young People
1965: Gen. William Westmoreland
1964: Lyndon Johnson
1963: Martin Luther King, Jr.
1962: Pope John XXIII
1961: John F. Kennedy
1960: U.S. Scientists
1950s 1959: Dwight D. Eisenhower
1958: Charles De Gaulle
1957: Nikita Khrushchev
1956: Hungarian Patriot
1955: Harlow H. Curtice
1954: John Foster Dulles
1953: Konrad Adenauer
1952: Queen Elizabeth II
1951: Mohammed Mossadegh

1950: G.I. Joe

1940s 1949: Winston Churchill
1948: Harry S. Truman
1947: George Marshall
1946: James F. Byrnes
1945: Harry Truman
1944: Dwight D. Eisenhower
1943: Gen. George Marshall
1942: Joseph Stalin
1941: Franklin D. Roosevelt
1940: Winston Churchill
1930s 1939: Joseph Stalin
1938: Adolf Hitler
1937: Gen. and Mme. Chang Kai-Shek
1936: Wallis Simpson
1935: Haile Selassie
1934: Franklin D. Roosevelt
1933: Hugh Johnson
1932: Franklin D. Roosevelt
1931: Pierre Laval
1930: Mohandas Gandhi
1920s 1929: Owen Young
1928: Walter Chrysler
1927: Charles Lindbergh