

THE KING OF KINGS: A STUDY OF MATTHEW

The King's Kingdom: A Study of Matthew 8–13

STUDY TWO

Snapshots of Power, Far and Near

Matthew 8:5–17

Jesus can do whatever He wishes, whenever He chooses, always within His plan and purpose for His glory and our good.

—Pastor Charles R. Swindoll

THROUGHOUT His earthly ministry, Jesus always had the full use of divine power at His fingertips. In his commentary, *Insights on Matthew 1–15*, Pastor Chuck Swindoll describes the extent of Jesus' supernatural ability:

When we consider the power of Jesus, we're talking about awesome divine power. He possesses all the attributes that are true of God the Father and God the Holy Spirit. As fully divine, Jesus is omnipotent—a word meaning “all-powerful.” His divine power comprises the ability to do anything that is consistent with His character and according to His will. . . .

No obstacle is insurmountable, no circumstance is impossible, no situation is unapproachable, no person is unchangeable, and no problem is unsolvable.¹

Whenever Jesus displayed His power, He had a purpose—often to teach a lesson in faith. Also, He never limited Himself to set patterns or formulas. He would heal a person with a touch or with just a word. Sometimes He released His power privately . . . sometimes in public with all eyes watching. As in our passage, He healed at a distance in one situation and up close in another. Regardless the circumstances, Jesus' power was unlimited, absolute, and awe-inspiring.

After cleansing a man of leprosy (Matthew 8:1–4), Jesus went into the city of Capernaum where He continued to perform miracles. Let's follow Him into this bustling city on the Sea of Galilee and marvel at His power to meet humanity's most desperate needs.



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PREPARE YOUR HEART

Are you facing a problem that is humanly impossible to resolve? Perhaps you've pursued countless remedies to no avail, and your well of resources has run dry. As you open the Word, shift your focus to the Savior and His limitless reservoir.

Father, through my study, help me see Jesus as the people on these pages of Scripture saw Him. Open my eyes to the awesome, divine nature of Your Son, settle my fears, and enlarge my faith. In Jesus' name, amen.



TURN TO THE SCRIPTURES

Read *Matthew 8:5–17*. Find Capernaum in your Bible atlas or on the online map at insight.org, "*Ministry of Jesus*," which lists the events that occurred at or near Capernaum. Read through the list and notice how many events happened there! Capernaum was the central hub and home base of Jesus' early ministry in Galilee.



Observation: Who, Where, What, and How

In the observation stage of *Searching the Scriptures*, we look for the who, where, what, and how of the passage.² In the following chart, fill in *who* received the miracle, *where* the miracle occurred, *what* was the desperate need, and *how* Jesus dealt with the problem using His divine power.



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	Healing from a Distance <i>Matthew 8:5–13</i>	Healing Up Close and Personal <i>Matthew 8:14–15</i>	Relieving Many Who Came <i>Matthew 8:16–17</i>
Who received the healing?			
Where did the healing occur?			
What is the desperate need?			
How did Jesus perform the miracle?			

As you look over the chart, what is similar about these “snapshots” of Jesus’ divine power?



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What differences do you observe?

Now focus on Jesus. What do you see in the way He heals, His heart toward the suffering, or anything else that stands out about His divine nature and awesome power?

By quoting *Isaiah 53:4* from the messianic prophecy of the Suffering Servant, what conclusion did Matthew draw about who Jesus is (*Matthew 8:17*)? Based on these passages, how would you describe Jesus?

Never doubt the Lord's ability to bring an immediate change. Everything within us is based on our scientific upbringing and empirical evidence. Here are examples of what the Lord can do that defies scientific explanation. —Pastor Chuck Swindoll



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Interpretation: The Centurion's Remarkable Faith

How do we interpret these miracles? By spotlighting the Roman officer, Matthew made a significant point: the Jewish Messiah is for *all* people. Even a Gentile in the Roman army can possess the key of faith to unlock the blessings of the messianic kingdom.

What do we know about this officer? He was a centurion, a commander of one hundred soldiers. Centurions were men of noble character, and every centurion in Scripture is mentioned with honor.³ According to Luke's account, the Jewish elders said this centurion was "worthy" (NASB), because he had built the synagogue as a gesture of love toward the Jewish people (Luke 7:1–5). And yet, the centurion never flashed his credentials before Jesus or expected favor.

What characteristics of faith did the centurion express? Examine his words to Jesus in [Matthew 8:8–9](#) and write down some principles about the kind of humble faith Jesus seeks.

Seeing past the officer's Roman armor to his believing heart, Jesus was amazed—not only at the centurion's faith but at the absence of similar faith among the Jews. What is the "feast" Jesus mentions in [8:11–12](#) and who is present? For help with the answer, consult Pastor Chuck's commentary, *Insights on Matthew 1–15*, page 147. An online resource is [Constable's Notes](#) at netbible.org.

Jesus' "feast" metaphor came from the Old Testament and would have been familiar to the Jews in His audience. Let's clarify what Jesus meant by looking through the lens of prophecy.



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Correlation: A Banquet for All Nations

Jesus had in mind a glorious future event when the kingdom of God has come in full and the curse of sin, sickness, and death is no more. Someday, redemption's plan will culminate in a great celebration. What did Isaiah say about this lavish banquet in *Isaiah 25:6–9*? Who will be present? What will happen? What similarities do you see in *Revelation 21:1–4*?

Who is this powerful and compassionate Savior who will “swallow up death forever” and “wipe away all tears” (*Isaiah 25:8*)? He is the same one who healed the centurion's servant from a distance, restored a fevered woman by touching her hand, and gave relief to those tormented by demons. What power! What compassion! And He is the same one in whom we trust in our desperate times.

The Lord is for us, not against us. The Lord is full of compassion and understanding. He's not some distant deity frowning and judging us. He is capable of handling whatever we're struggling with, and He is ready to hear us when we call. —Pastor Chuck Swindoll



Application: Responding to Similar Needs Today

What is your impossible situation? Perhaps someone you love is far away and struggling, and you can't change his or her heart or situation. Perhaps you're on your sickbed like Peter's mother-in-law. Or perhaps you feel tormented by spiritual or mental anguish. Here are three principles from our study to guide you.

First, *don't let distance hold you back from faith*. Whether physical or relational, the distance you feel between a loved one can seem like an impassable gap. Come to the Lord as the centurion came, believing that the Lord can heal from a distance with just a word.

Second, *don't be afraid to ask for the Lord's divine touch*. Focus on the Lord's divine power and leave it with Him to heal according to His will.

Third, *don't think your torment is too evil or bad for the power of Jesus to resolve*. Jesus is powerful enough to fight our spiritual battles, just as He helped those tormented by demons.



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Which of these principles most applies to your circumstances? In what way can you apply it today?

As you close this study, focus on the power of Christ. Release your impossible situation to Him in a prayer of faith.

Now, rest in the compassion of Christ. He bears our griefs and carries our sorrows, feeling them as His own. Whether He releases His healing power now or someday, we can rest assured that His gentle hand will wipe away our tears. Focus on His power and rest in His compassion today.



A FINAL PRAYER

Father, I rest in the truth that You are intimately aware of all my struggles. You are interested in the details of my life, and You are not removed from what troubles me. Grant me a quiet confidence in You and a grounded faith in Your Son. Help those I love who need Your touch. Take my burden as I give it to You now. In the name of Jesus, amen.

ENDNOTES

1. Charles R. Swindoll, *Swindoll's Living Insights New Testament Commentary: Insights on Matthew 1–15*, vol. 1A (Carol Stream, IL: Tyndale House, 2020), 143.
2. To learn about Pastor Chuck Swindoll's *Searching the Scriptures* method of Bible study, go to the Web page, "[How to Study the Bible for Yourself](#)."
3. Other positive references include the centurion at the foot of the cross who acknowledged Jesus as the Son of God (Mark 15:39); Cornelius in Caesarea who received the Holy Spirit (Acts 10:1–48); the centurion who aided Paul in Jerusalem (22:25–26); and the centurion who protected Paul on the ship to Rome (27:42–44).



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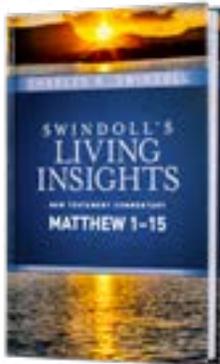
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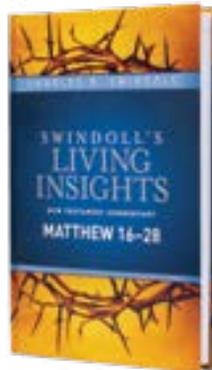
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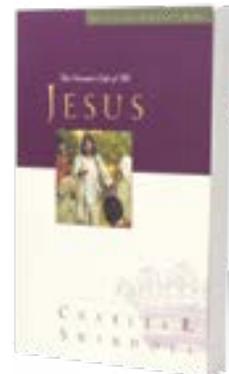
Tools for Digging Deeper



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For the 2021 broadcasts, this *Searching the Scriptures* study was developed by Bryce Klabunde, vice president of *Searching the Scriptures* Studies, based upon the original outlines, charts, and transcripts of Charles R. Swindoll's messages.



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