



DEVOTIONAL FOR MATTHEW 8, 12; MARK 2-3; JOHN 5; LUKE 6

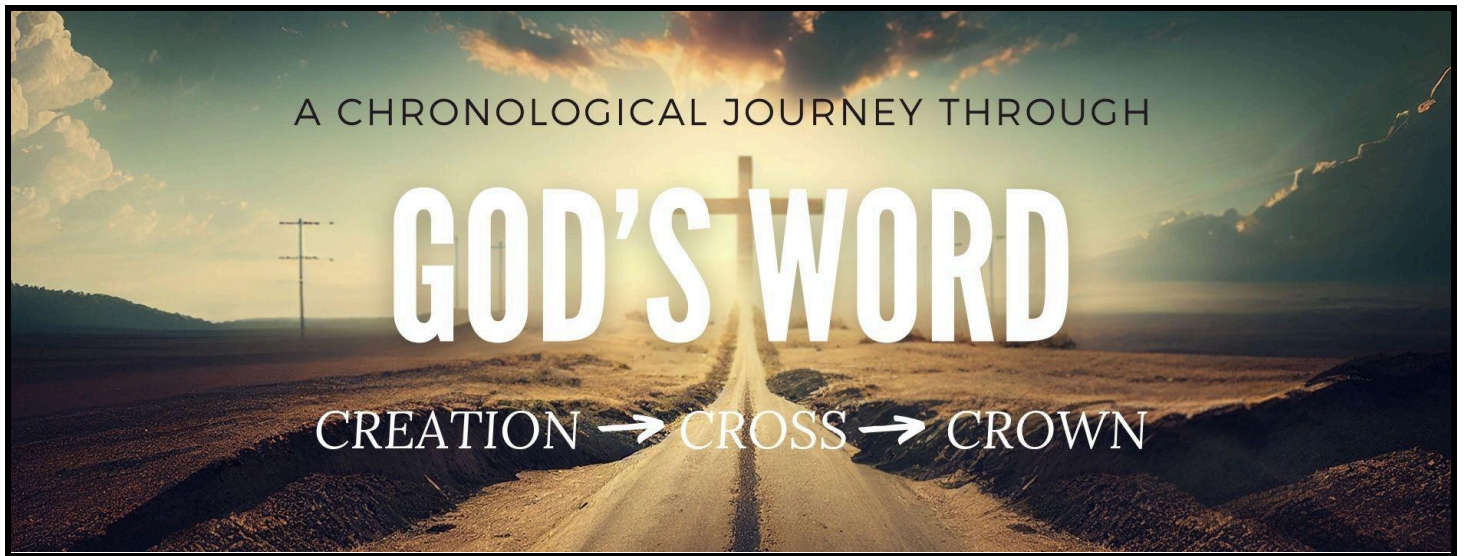
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I went home one time for a quick weekend visit while in college. The time spent with family was fun, full of great food, and sweet moments with my church community. But Sunday afternoon became a nightmare of epic proportions when my dad started a small burnpile behind our garage to get rid of leaves and branches from the yard. In a matter of seconds, his garage went up in flames, with all manner of explosions happening because of the bottled aerosol cans and chemicals stored there. The fire department came quickly and got things under control, but I felt everything but in control. I quietly packed my things, jumped in my car, and escaped the chaos. I don't know how many times I've done the same thing in other situations. I'm a "flight" girl, never a "fight" girl. This is my reaction to desperation. My tendency is to stay silent, let anxious thoughts come in, and then I hide.

There are so many things in our lives that people feel desperate about—relationships that hurt, addictions that control, physical conditions, overwhelming feelings, and the loss of power and might. And when the sense of urgency or need for immediate relief comes, it can result in impulsive or irrational behavior. Take a look at our many verses for today! We find all kinds of desperate people—a leper, a paralytic, a man with a withered hand, parents and friends of sick family members, and sinners. Each one of them had serious situations that were beyond their control and they needed intervention immediately. How did they find peace and healing? The leper knelt before Jesus and said, "Lord, if you choose, you can make me clean" (Matthew 8:2)." In the storm, the disciples were frightened and overwhelmed. Their first response was to find the Master, saying, "Lord, save us! We are perishing (Matthew 8:25)!" The friends of the paralytic man did everything in their power to get him to Jesus, to the point of taking off the roof (Mark 2:3), and multitudes of people would follow Jesus to reach out and touch him for healing from physical illness and spiritual bondage (Mark 3:10-11).

At the same time, there were those who seemed to have completely given up hope. The man with the withered hand was just sitting at the synagogue. Jesus found him and healed him to the shock and surprise of the religious leaders (Luke 6:6, 10). There was a man who had been ill for thirty-eight years laying at the Bethesda pool, with little hope of ever becoming well. Jesus saw the need and made him well (John 5:8).

No matter how intense your desperation is, your faith to seek out Jesus is an important part of the healing process! Whether the ailment is physical, spiritual, psychological, social or a mixture of ailment and spiritual oppression, Jesus is able to provide the "medicine" to restore peace and comfort. The work He does is bringing a renewal of His



creation and reset to the person. He is the one who gives LIFE. He heals wounds and diseases, making people whole. He gives eternal salvation, restoration as a new creation, and true life. Jesus is all about a holistic restorative mission in this world.

Questions:

1. What are you feeling desperate about and what is your reaction? Do you "fight or flight", freeze, let stress and anxiety control your mind, do you plead and cry, take risks at your own peril? How do examples from Scripture lead you to deal with your desperation?
2. Is the gospel of Jesus really "good news" to people who are suffering under repressive circumstances? Are some more deserving than others or do all people have access to his healing? Is Jesus really in the process of healing and restoring lives, of delivering people from sin and all its effects like social injustice, hunger, and poverty?
3. I encourage you to take a few minutes of private prayer to bring your desperate need to Jesus. Be honest in your prayer, stating the need and the feelings that overwhelm you. He has an answer for you.