



UNIONTOWN
BIBLE CHURCH

Sermon Guide
January 18: Matthew 8:1-17

What stood out to you most from the sermon? Why?

Key Takeaway:

1. Jesus embraces people before they become "one of us" - He didn't wait for Matthew to clean up his act; He called him immediately.
2. Jesus sees people differently than religious people do - Where others saw disease, contamination, or enemies, Jesus saw people worth rescuing.
3. The Kingdom of Heaven includes people we never expected - People who don't share our background, values, or voting habits may be seated at the great banquet.
4. Grace goes to the undeserving - That's what makes it grace. We all need rescue, not reward.
5. We must remember our own stories - "Such were some of you" (1 Corinthians 6:11) - We cannot forget where we came from.

Discussion Questions:

1. Read Matthew 8:1-17 together. What stands out to you most from these three healing stories (the leper, the centurion's servant, and Peter's mother-in-law)?
2. Why was Jesus' physical touch of the leper so significant? What social and religious boundaries did this break?
3. What amazed Jesus about the centurion's faith? What can we learn from how the centurion understood authority?
4. Every single one of us has a "them." Who is your "them"? What group of people do you find yourself most uncomfortable around or judgmental toward?
5. Have you ever felt like the leper - too broken, too far gone, or too unworthy for Jesus? What does this passage say to those feelings?

6. We forget our own stories. Share your own story of rescue. What were you rescued from? How does remembering this impact how you view others?
7. Read Jonah 4:1-11. How do you relate to Jonah's attitude? In what ways might we be angry that God shows mercy to the "wrong people"?
8. Jesus ate with tax collectors and sinners, which scandalized the religious people. Who would scandalize your church or Christian community if Jesus brought them to your dinner table?
9. Are there people in your life you've been avoiding or keeping at arm's length because they make you uncomfortable? How might Jesus be calling you to engage differently?

Practical Applications:

1. REMEMBER YOUR STORY: Write out your testimony - specifically focusing on what you were rescued from. Share your story with one person this week who needs to hear about God's grace
2. BREAK DOWN BARRIERS: Intentionally have a conversation with someone different from you (politically, socially, economically, culturally). Invite someone to coffee or lunch who others might avoid or overlook
3. EXAMINE YOUR HEART: Make a list of your "thems" - people groups you struggle to see as Jesus sees them. Pray specifically for one of these groups each day this week and ask God to show you where your attitude needs to change.
4. EXTEND GRACE: Identify one person you've been judging or keeping at a distance, and take one concrete step toward reconciliation or connection this week
5. PRACTICE PRESENCE: Look for the invisible people in your daily routine (cashiers, janitors, service workers). Make eye contact, learn names, show genuine interest in their stories