Gospel of Matthew
Matthew 9:14-26

The King’s Authority – Wise Words and Wonderful Deeds

This section of Matthew includes more of Christ’s teaching and His miracles. He revealed Himself by what He said and what He did. We see the character of Jesus on display. There is His pity and power, His sensitivity and sovereignty, His gentleness and greatness. In all of the miracles Jesus proved His authority and power. He has power over disease, power over demons, power to forgive sin, power over storms and the forces of nature, and even power over death. All this proved Him to be the one true Lord and Savior.

Two miracles are described in this passage: Christ healed a sick woman and He raised a young woman from the dead. While proving His divine credentials, His words and miracles blessed many people, surprised some, and irritated others.

1. Christ answered a question about fasting (vs. 14-17)

   A. John’s disciples offered an honest and sincere question (vs. 14)

   The disciples of John had an honest and straightforward question. They had no hidden agenda. They wondered why Jesus’ disciples did not fast, since they and the Pharisees fasted routinely. The discipline of fasting was a spiritual exercise designed to help a person focus on God, prayer, and Scripture.

   B. Jesus gave them a simple and profound answer (vs. 15)

   Jesus answered their question with a question of His own. The proper time for fasting was not while He was with His disciples, but after He was taken from them. His answer revealed two important truths: He was the bridegroom and His ministry with the disciples was only temporary.

   C. Jesus taught them an important lesson (vs. 16-17)

   Jesus used this as an opportunity to teach a further lesson using two illustrations. The first picture was that of patching an old garment with a new piece of cloth. The second image was storing new wine in old bottles (wineskins). The point is that His disciples would not fast in the same ritualistic way, but they would fast as they were led by the Holy Spirit. John Phillips comments: “The Lord had not come to patch up the old garment of Judaism...and Jesus had come to pour out the new wine of Christianity” (Exploring the Gospel of Matthew, 165).

2. Christ healed a sick woman (vs. 20-22)

   This was a blessed interruption, but this woman wanted to be healed without being noticed.

   A. She suffered a terrible condition (vs. 20)

   This woman had an incurable hemorrhage that plagued her for twelve years. She had spent all her money on doctors, but no one was able to help her (Mk. 5:26; Lk. 8:43). Her disease also caused her to be ceremonially unclean and her life was in many ways as bad as a leper. Phillips observes: “She had lost everything worth having in life: religious consolation, family...
care, social standing, financial security. No wonder Jesus took time to minister to her in such a special way” (Exploring Matthew, 168).

B. She demonstrated a true confidence (vs. 21)

This woman pressed through the crowd to touch the hem of Christ’s garment, believing that He had the power to heal her.

C. She received a total cure (vs. 22)

Jesus healed her instantly and completely in response to her faith.

3. Christ raised a girl from the dead (vs. 18-19, 23-26)

A. The father’s plea (vs. 18-19)

A synagogue official came to Jesus, pleading for Him to come and heal his daughter who was at the point of death. His daughter was only 12 years old (Mk. 5:42). Our hearts can feel this man’s pain. He was willing to risk his reputation as a Jewish leader and he humbled himself before Jesus because he was desperate.

B. The Lord’s power (vs. 23-26)

When Christ arrived at the house the mourners were grieving. But when Jesus told them to get out (vs. 24, “give place”) and said the girl was not dead but sleeping, they laughed at Him. He referred to the sleep of the body in death, a common expression found in Scripture (for example, Dan. 12:2; 1 Cor. 15:51-52; 1 Thess. 4:13-18). Jesus was not deterred by their mockery, but took the dead girl by the hand and she arose. This was one of three people Christ raised from the dead (the widow’s son, Lk. 7:15; Lazarus, Jn. 11:44). It is worth noting that in each case the miracle of resurrection was confirmed by signs of genuine life: the widow’s son spoke; Lazarus walked; and the ruler’s daughter ate (Lk. 8:55).

When the famed evangelist D. L. Moody was asked to speak at a funeral, he thought he would use one of the Lord’s funeral messages as his text. But he couldn’t find one. Moody discovered that Jesus broke up every funeral He attended. According to Mark and Luke’s account, Jesus did say something at the funeral for the ruler’s daughter. He said, “Talitha cumi; which is, being interpreted, Damsel, I say unto thee, arise” (Mk. 5:41). Literally translated, Jesus said: “Little lamb, I say unto thee, arise.” How inexpressibly lovely! (Phillips, Exploring Matthew, 170).
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