



## The Healing Work of Jesus

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**Text:** Matthew 8: 5-17

**Series Overview:** “Dead man walking.” It’s a phrase that has been used over the years to describe a person who has committed a capital offense walking to their impending death. Of course, the person is not literally dead (in contrast to your favorite zombie movie, dead people can’t actually walk), but the death the criminal is facing is so imminent, so certain, so real that it looms over every step they take toward their execution.

“Dead man walking” is a poignant way to describe the incarnate life and ministry of Jesus. His death was so imminent, so certain, so real that it loomed over every step he took toward Jerusalem and the cross. As the time drew closer, Jesus spoke about it with his disciples.

**Overview:** The cross is ultimately about restoring what is broken. On the cross, Jesus entered into our brokenness so that we might enter into his wholeness. What we often miss about all of the healings that Jesus performed is that they were all pointing to where he was going. On his way to the cross, he was providing glimpses of the wholeness the cross provides. A man with leprosy. A co-worker who was paralyzed. A sick mom. The spiritually enslaved. And so many more. Jesus saw them and he healed them. But it was just a glimpse. There was so much more to come.

Brokenness abounds in our world. And sometimes it can overwhelm us. We can’t fix it. But we can point people to the One who can. And already has. We can point people to the cross. But we can do more than that. We can do what Jesus did. As we are walking, we can open our eyes and see the brokenness that is around us. We can help the hurting and care for the sick and stand with the lonely. We can provide glimpses. And we can remind them that there is so much more to come.

**Resources:** Check out <https://thebibleproject.com/explore/matthew/> for more information on the book of Matthew.

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### WELCOME

### DISCUSSION

#### A. Getting Warmed Up



- Brokenness all around us. What brokenness do you see? What are the pieces of brokenness that bother you the most?

## B. Digging In

- Read aloud Matthew 8:5-17
- Did Jesus perform miracles to just show how mighty he was or was there a larger purpose?
- Rod said that every time Jesus performs a miracle, they point us forward and point us back. Talk about what that means.
- Discuss this statement: *"Jesus' miracles are actually the only natural thing in the world that is unnatural, demonic and wounded."*

## C. Bringing It Home

- When Jesus looks at the world he doesn't say, *"Something should be done about this."* He says, *"Something is being done about this. This is being set right. This brokenness is being healed. This death is being conquered."* So while we are waiting for everything to be put back into place, what is our part in this healing as believers?
- An example was used about how the plague was so devastating that most people stopped helping and got away from the disease to save themselves. But it was the believers who stayed to help, never thinking of themselves. What would you need to clearly understand to put yourself in that position?
- Jesus says that those who put their faith in him will do greater things than he has done while here on earth. Give examples of how you see that in your own backyard? In your community? In the world?
- What part do you play in doing *"those greater things"*?
- If your group has taken part in one of the **Love Your Neighbor** events, talk about what you did and what it did for those on the receiving end. How was that part of the restoration work?
- Is there something else that you (as a group) in your neighborhood can respond to that will work to heal the brokenness in your community?

\*NOTE: Although ideas may flow here, write them ALL down (no idea is a bad idea) and pray over them tonight together. When you gather again, remember to revisit the conversation and start with something small and MAKE A PLAN. Ask for someone in the group to help oversee the plan.

Ideas: Maybe the elementary school could use some fresh school supplies as the year ends for students who don't have them (pencils, paper, tissues). Call the school and ask. Maybe there is an



elderly neighbor who needs a spring cleanup? Are there meals to make for a family in need? A free food pantry placed in the neighborhood? Does someone in the group know of a need at their workplace?

If you need help with this, contact [brookeluther@fairfax.cc](mailto:brookeluther@fairfax.cc) and she can walk you through this.

**CLOSING PRAYER:** Pray for your group to find an area of service in your neighborhood.

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Talk about this...

- Have you thought about inviting someone to an Easter service? We all know one or two folks who we have thought about inviting but we may not know how to go about it because they aren't going to ask to come. I think Jesus was a master of the invitation.

He never assumed anything. If he wanted someone to follow him, he gave that person a clear invitation. There was no hidden agenda, no ambiguity. Jesus got right to the point. So it's a good idea to make the invitation as simple and clear as if you were to invite someone to a NATS game. You can be casual about it and say something like, "Hey, why don't you come to church with us this Easter? Maybe we can grab some coffee and spend some time together afterwards."

Arrive early since you are likely the only person there who they will know. Having to walk into an unknown place may be uncomfortable for some. Maybe they would like to be shown around a bit. You could introduce them to some of the people who you know before you settle in a seat (I'll be in the lobby for all the services.) You know your friend, so do what feels natural in the context of your relationship with them. Afterwards, ask them what they thought of the service and if they have any questions. If you don't know the answer, that's ok. You can get back to them.

Be praying these next few weeks with your group about who you'd like to invite. Pray specifically for each one that they might be open to receive the invitation. There will be some great stories to share in your group when someone says YES!



- Here's the information if needed for the group about challenging your group to reading the book of Matthew during this series. Here's all the info you need:
  - ◆ Challenge them to read the book of Matthew using the 27 chapters as a backdrop to the weekend message and study in our group. Ask them to read four chapters a week. It won't work out evenly and the readings we will be doing won't always line up exactly with the study for the week. But we'll be reading together and sharing fresh insights as we read from the gospel of Matthew.

Week of March 9/10	Chapters 1-4
Week of March 16/17	Chapters 5-9
Week of March 23/24	Chapters 10-14
Week of March 30/31	Chapters 15-19
Week of April 6/7	Chapters 20-24
Week of April 13/14	Chapters 25-27

Resource: the [bibleproject.com/explore/matthew](http://bibleproject.com/explore/matthew)