

Sermon: Matthew 8:23-34; 9:1-8 "Power of the King"

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Sermon text and audio available for download at www.waitara.anglican.asn.au

Authority

- [Intro 1: VIDEO: "Show me the money!"]
- Intro 2: World records.
 - The heaviest weight lifted by a human tongue is 12.5kgs. (Thomas Blackthorne)
 - The longest fingernails ever were 9.85 metres. (Melvin Boothe)
 - Fastest 100M on a skateboard by a dog is 19.6s. (Tillman)

When we don't believe, we need to SEE. I can tell you that I'm strong enough to lift up a car. But unless I can show you, it's unlikely you'll believe me. (demonstration)

Jesus has talked a lot in Matthew about what it means to be a disciple. What it means to follow him. What it means to have treasure in the kingdom of heaven. And now he claims to be the Messiah, the Christ. And he claims to be God himself. And if someone makes a claim like that, you would want them to SHOW it! To prove it.

And in Matthew 8 and 9, Jesus shows us. The storm. The demon possessed men, and the paralytic. These three events are Jesus' way of saying: "I will SHOW you who I am!"

• Wind and Waves

The first event is Jesus in a boat with his disciples, crossing the lake. And a huge storm comes up. Jesus is asleep. The waves are sweeping over the boat. And the disciples are afraid of dying.

So they wake Jesus up, and he calms the storm with a few simple words, and the disciples are amazed and ask:

"What kind of man is this? Even the wind and the waves obey him!"

So the first thing we learn from this event is that Jesus is...

- *Powerful over nature*

And Jesus wants his disciples to **see** that he has power of God over nature. He doesn't prevent the storm from coming up. He doesn't keep them safe **through** the storm. He commands the storm as one who has authority. He allows the storm to come up so we can SEE his power. But he **also** wants his disciples also to see that he is...

- *Powerful over their fears.*

He says to them: *"You of Little faith. Why are you so afraid?"*

Here I am, your Lord, in the boat with you. Yet you're afraid. He's not insulting the disciples when he says "you of little faith". It's simply Jesus' way of saying: The reason that you're afraid is that your faith is young. But as we mature in our faith, as we grow in our knowledge of God, we're able to trust God more, and recognise his authority over the things we fear in life. Jesus wants us to know that he has authority over all of the things we fear in life. And he wants us to hand those fears over to him.

- What are you afraid of? What do you fear in life? Can you hand those things over to Jesus?

• Demons and Pigs

The second event is the well known story of two demon possessed men and 2000 pigs. Jesus gets off the boat and meets 2 demon possessed men. He casts the demons out of them, send them into a herd of 2000 pigs, and the pigs run off the cliff and are destroyed. Now, first of all, we can simply look at this story and say that Jesus is...

- *Powerful over demons.*

Jesus is powerful over the work of Satan and evil. And in this event, he **SHOWS** us. He could have just expelled the demons, and destroyed them. But he let them go into the pigs. Why? Why destroy 2000 pigs? Well I think it's the same reasons as why he let the storm come up on the boat. He sends them into the pigs so we could *see his power*.

We **SEE** two demon possessed men. And we see that Jesus isn't just waving a magic wand. This is not a set up. The men are not actors. He casts out the demons into 2000 pigs. And because of the pigs, we **SEE** that happen. Jesus not only has power over the demons and destroys the demons. But most of all, he does this so we can **SEE** that power and **SEE** their destruction at the hands of Jesus.

But Jesus is also **showing** us that he wants to be ...

- *Powerful over our hearts*

When Jesus arrives, even the demons recognise who He is. On the boat, the disciples ask: "*What kind of man is this?*" But the demons say, as soon as they see him, "*What do you want with us, Son of God?*"! The demons recognise Jesus immediately. The demons have **knowledge** of who he is. But that doesn't matter. **KNOWING** who Jesus is makes no difference. Believing who Jesus is makes no difference. Jesus calls people to follow him. To be obedient to him, not just to have knowledge of him. Jesus calls for authority over our hearts, not just our heads. The reaction of the people show us is that their hearts are not ready to follow. Verse 24:

"And when they saw him, they pleaded with him to leave their region."

They **SAW** his power, and they asked him to leave. Jesus doesn't call on us to just **SEE** who he is. He calls on us to **follow** with obedience, not just knowledge. To follow with our **heart**, not just our **head**.

- Do you follow Jesus with your heart? If you **KNOW** who he is, what does that mean for you each day? If we know his will for us, do we follow? Do we have hearts that are obedient? Or do we just have head knowledge?

• Paralytic and Sin

And finally, in chapter 9, Jesus heals a paralysed man. Jesus has already **SHOWN** us his power over nature and over Satan. And now he's showing us that he is...

- *Powerful over sickness*

Some men bring to Jesus a man who is paralysed. But Jesus doesn't just heal him first from his paralysis. He says: "Your sins are forgiven." First, Jesus forgives him. And people say: "He's blaspheming". Why? Because by forgiving someone's sin, you're saying that you have God's power. That you **ARE** God. By claiming to have the power and the authority to forgive sins, Jesus was claiming to have God's direct power and authority.

So Jesus says: “Which is easier? To say ‘Your sins are forgiven’ or to say ‘Get up and walk’? Of course, it’s easier to SAY your sins are forgiven, isn’t it? Because no one can SEE that. No one can SEE if you’ve actually done it. So Jesus says: “I want you to SEE!” I want you to see that I have the authority and power to forgive sins. But I can’t do that. You can’t SEE sins forgiven like you can see a storm calmed or 2000 demons cast out. What **can** you see? You can see a paralysed man healed miraculously. You can see a paralysed man suddenly stand up and walk. And when you SEE that miracle, Jesus says, when you see the paralysed man walk, when you see my authority over sickness, and my authority over nature, and my authority over Satan, then **maybe you’ll SEE** that my power and authority comes from God, and that I do have the authority to forgive sins.

SO THAT you may know that the son of man has authority on earth to forgive sins, I will SHOW you my authority over **everything else** on this earth. Because what’s most important to Jesus is showing us that he can forgive sins. Because **sin is the big issue**. Sin is what stops us having a relationship with God.

The root of the problem

These chapters are about our struggles of life on earth and the power of Jesus to overcome those struggles. Jesus has power over nature, he has power over Satan, and power over sickness. But none of that matters if he doesn’t have power over the main problem in life – sin.

We are the “ones of little faith” here today. Jesus wants to show US that no matter what we face in life, he has authority over all things in this world. So to finish today, I want us to reflect on the words of the demons in this passage (!) *“What do you want with us, Son of God?”*

What does Jesus want with YOU?

Jesus wants each one of us to **see** his power and authority, and to make a response. Either we reject him. We don’t believe. We ignore what he has SHOWN us. **Or** we accept that He has authority. Over nature, Satan, sickness, fear, our hearts, and our sin. What does Jesus want with you? He wants to have authority in your life.

To finish with today, think about what you will face tomorrow:

1. First, think about our fears. The fear of sickness. The fear of abuse. The fear of financial uncertainty. These fears belong in the hands of Jesus.
2. What about our hearts? We KNOW Jesus, but we’ll be tempted not to obey, tempted to serve our own desires. But our hearts belongs to Jesus. We are to obey Him and HIS plans for our life.
3. And finally, our sin. More than anything, Jesus wants us to hand over our sin to Him. He dies on the cross for that sin. So why would we still want to hold on to it? Hand over that sin, and live tomorrow with the forgiveness and freedom that comes with having Jesus’ authority over your life.

Let’s pray.