

Open Your Heart and Mind

- Do you have any Labor Day traditions?
- Share a time when someone was extraordinarily compassionate towards you. Did that experience change you in some way?

Finding God in His Word (Read Matthew 8:1-17)

- We began today's sermon looking at the way Matthew has structured this section with an inclusio. What are some of the things we should look for given this literary device?
- How does Jesus' teaching and His miracles work together in this section?
- Looking at the definition given for a miracle; how else have you found miracles defined? Why is it important to clearly define what a miracle is and is not as it relates to the loss of power when a word is used inappropriately?
- We looked at four purposes for why miracles were done. What would you add to these? Why are these purposes important to understand when we talk about the nature of miracles in the Bible, and assess miracles that people might claim today?
 - o Attestation of Jesus' divine character
 - o Confirmation of Jesus' message and the Apostle's teaching
 - o Persuasion towards belief in Jesus as Messiah
 - o Fulfillment of Old testament
- We have defined and talked about the purposes of miracles, but when we come to what Jesus has actually done, it's not the miracle that draws our attention but Jesus' actions and interactions with the people He is dealing with that are the focus. Looking at the four purposes above, where are these purposes seen in the three miracles of 8:1-15?
- The leper represents a challenge to our presumptions about people. What do you think would have been commonly presumed about lepers in that society? Who are the lepers of our society and day? What are our presumptions about them? How can people, and perhaps specifically Christian's ostracize others rather than offering them the healing of the gospel?
- The Centurion represents a challenge to our prejudices about people. How are we/you prejudiced towards others that might preclude us from sharing the gospel with others? What things can we trust in other than the gospel for our salvation?
- Peter's mother-in-law is a challenge to our paradigms of people, the boxes we put them in. This miracle has the least amount of information associated with it, yet one of the more profound responses. From an overall perspective, what are some of the things Jesus' interactions with these people teach you?

Live the Christ Life

1. What are some of your takeaways from your study of this passage?