

What Kind of Man is This? Lord of All
From the Series, “The King and I – Matthew Tells Us About the King of the Universe”
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Introduction

Like many people, I do different kinds of things in my spare time. One of the things I enjoy is learning new things. In my free time, I like to read and watch instructional videos on all kinds of topics.

Sometimes I like to watch something called “TED talks”. TED stands for “Technology, Entertainment, and Design”. It’s run by a group that also likes to learn new things. They came up with the idea that they could invite speakers on all kinds of interesting topics to share their ideas. There are only a few rules. One of the rules is that you must be able to present your talk in 20 minutes or less. A lot of these talks show up on YouTube.



One of the most successful of these talks was given by a man named Simon Sinek. It’s called, “Start with Why: How Great Leaders Inspire Everyone to Take Action”. Apparently, there are lots of people who want to be great leaders. I say that because this man’s TED Talk has been viewed over 14 million times on YouTube since it was first presented in 2010.

Simon Sinek suggests that all great leaders start with the question, “Why?” Why should you follow them? Why should you read their books? Why should you buy the products they sell? In his presentation, he asks questions like this: Why are some people supremely successful when others fail?

We’re in our series, “The King and I – Matthew Tells Us About the King of the Universe.” We’re working our way through the book of Matthew. As we do, we’re looking at many episodes from the life of Jesus Christ. Jesus was a great leader. Millions have followed him. Does he follow Simon Sinek’s advice? Does Jesus start with “Why”? Does he start by saying, “Here’s why you should follow me?”

Well, yes, and no.

We could say that all humans should follow God. We have an obligation because he is the Creator and the King of the Universe. We are the created ones, so we simply should follow him. But, as humans, we are helped when we are given a reason: a ‘why’. God is gracious and he recognizes this. The ‘why’ is there in the Bible. It’s certainly in Matthew’s book. However, it’s not the first thing you see - You have to look for it.

A few sessions ago, we started a new sub-series: What Kind of Man Is This? More specifically, what kind of man is Jesus? We started by saying that Jesus is Lord of Life: Biological Life. We moved on to learn that Jesus is Lord of the Machine. The Universe is a big machine. And Jesus sits at the controls.

Today, we will get a short answer to the question, “Why should we follow Jesus?” Because Jesus is Lord of all. Let’s read:

14 When Jesus came into Peter’s house, he saw Peter’s mother-in-law lying in bed with a fever. 15 He touched her hand and the fever left her, and she got up and began to wait on him. 16 When evening came, many who were demon-possessed were brought to him, and he drove out the spirits with a word and healed all the sick. 17 This was to fulfill what was spoken through the prophet Isaiah:

“He took up our infirmities
and bore our diseases.”

(Matthew 8:14-17)

We learned way back when we started our study of Matthew’s book that Matthew had a reason for writing: He met Jesus. Jesus was the Great King, the King of the Universe. Having met Jesus, and having spent three years with him, Matthew now wanted his friends to meet Jesus, too. When he wrote his book, he didn’t start with the word, “Why”. He knew that he didn’t have to use that word. That’s because he knew his readers. His first readers, at least the first ones, were members of the Hebrew faith. The reason Matthew didn’t need to use the word “Why” is that his readers had that word silently in their minds.

He knew that the Hebrew people lived their lives looking for the Great King, otherwise known as the Messiah. When the Messiah appeared, any faithful Jew would follow him. So, Matthew spends a lot of his time explaining why Jesus is the Messiah. He explains the credentials that Jesus provided to demonstrate who he was.

But the earth is populated by humans. We are all limited. We are all imperfect. We can all be weak at times. We **should** follow Jesus because he is the great King, and the Great King deserves our service. But “should” is sometimes insufficient to overcome our weakness.

So now, Matthew is going to give us something more. He’s going to give us three images. Each is described in just a few sentences. With each image, we’ll learn more about **why** we want to follow the Great King.

Let’s look at them.

I. Peter's Mother-in-Law *(A King with a Heart)

In the first image, we meet Peter's mother-in-law.

14 When Jesus came into Peter's house, he saw Peter's mother-in-law lying in bed with a fever. 15 He touched her hand and the fever left her, and she got up and began to wait on him. (Matthew 8:14-15)

Peter's home was within walking distance of the mountainside where Jesus presented his great manifesto. So, it was a great place to stop in for a visit. It's a great place for Peter to bring Jesus his other friends. One problem: There is a woman in the house who is sick - Peter's mother-in-law. To make a long story short, Jesus heals her. And he does so immediately.

What kind of illness does she have? We're only told that she has a fever. We're told that it's so bad, she's bed ridden. Do we need to present a list of all the things that can cause a fever? There are lots! Any time something attacks your body, one defense your body could use is to raise your temperature in an attempt to kill off the attacker. Sometimes your body succeeds. Sometimes your body fails. When it fails, your body has a big problem.

In our last two sessions, we met people who needed to be healed. In each case, we discussed what it would take.

- You would have to find the cause of the problem.
- You would have to remove it.
- You would have to rebuild the damage caused by the problem.

You can look at those last two talks for more detail.

What's important to note is that to this day, doing this is hard. You have to visit a doctor. The doctor will have to look at you. They'll have to draw some blood and maybe hook up some machines. Then, you hope that they have a medication or a therapy that will help. In the best cases, the medication may work right away, and you'll see the fever come down in as little as a few hours - Usually something longer.

Once again, Jesus did it, he healed the woman, *immediately*.

From this, we learn some things about the "why" of following Jesus. We're reminded of the credentials of Jesus. He once again shows that he is the Lord of biological life. He can do everything needed to heal in an instant. But there's something more.

A. Who is this man? A King with a heart.

What kind of man is this? We learn from this that Jesus is a King with a heart. He cares about people.

Sometimes when teachers cover the passages we've looked at recently, they'll focus on the people involved. In one of the passages (Matthew 8:11), Jesus talked about the great feast of Abraham. That's a great celebration in the future, in the Kingdom of Heaven. Let's imagine that great feast - Let's imagine all the people there.

In our first session of this series, we saw a leper. A leper was an outcast. Leprosy condemned a person to a life of constant distance from other people. Victims of this disease couldn't touch anyone - They couldn't even come close. If you want to imagine a great party, a great feast, the lepers were people who were thrown out of the party. So, lepers were **outcasts** (which literally means "Cast out").

Next, we met the Centurion. He was a foreigner, a non-Jew, a gentile. He had a sick servant who was likely a foreigner, too. Foreigners, it was thought, were not allowed at the great party. They were locked out. They were **excluded**.

Now we meet Peter's mother-in-law. Today, we might tell some mother-in-law jokes on occasion, but normally, Mom is invited to the family gatherings. However, in ancient culture, some men looked down on women. Two centuries before the time of Christ, one ancient Jewish teacher said this: "Thank God that I am not a gentile, a slave, or a woman." Nice guy, huh?

So, women were at the party, but they were hidden. They were **unimportant**. They were to cook the food and raise the children. And otherwise stay quiet.

Jesus was a King with a heart. By healing the leper, Jesus showed us that he is Lord of the **outcast**. By healing the Centurion's servant, Jesus showed us that he is Lord of the **excluded**. By healing Peter's mother-in-law, a woman, Jesus showed us that he is Lord of the **unimportant**.

To further show this, let's look at the way that Jesus healed: We're told that Jesus "...touched her hand..." He didn't have to do that. In the last session we learned that Jesus healed the Centurion's servant without even seeing him. Jesus was nowhere near the Centurion's house. All he had to do was speak and servant was healed. He could have done that here.

But Jesus wanted to do something more. When Jesus healed the leper, we're told that he touched the man. Jesus didn't have to do that either. No one was supposed to touch a leper. That man may have gone years without human contact. So, it wasn't enough to heal his body. Jesus wanted to heal his mind and his heart as well.

Many in that day considered women to be unimportant. Because of that, there might have been others who could help, but who would not go out of their way. Jesus could have done this woman and her family a great favor if he only healed her. When Jesus heard that this woman was so sick, she couldn't get out of bed, Jesus could have said, "What a shame - OK, (snap fingers) she's healed." Instead, he went in to see her. He touched her hand. In doing this, Jesus showed this woman that she was **important** to him.

So, what kind of man is this? A king with a heart. He is Lord of the outcast. He is Lord of the excluded. He is Lord of the unimportant.

Jesus was very kind to this woman. How did she respond?

“...she got up and began to wait on him. (Matthew 8:15)”

This woman responded by serving Jesus. Now, notice something here. Jesus didn't say, “Hey lady, tell you what. I'll heal you, but I expect some service in return!” No, he didn't do that. He healed her for no other reason than that she was important to him. She responded by serving him.

Why follow Jesus? We could just say, “because you should”, and that would be enough. But Jesus offers us more. By healing Peter's mother-in-law, along with the leper and the Centurion's servant, Jesus showed us that he is a king with a heart.

Do you sometimes wish people had a heart? Do you sometimes feel like an outcast? Do you sometimes feel like you are excluded? Do you sometimes feel unimportant?

Jesus is a king with a heart. He cares about the outcast and reaches out to touch them. He calls to the excluded and invites them in to the great celebration. He goes out of his way to encourage the unimportant. He holds their hand.

Why follow Jesus? Because he's a king with a heart.

Matthew could stop there, but he gives us another reason.

II. Jesus Drives Out Evil Spirits (Lord of the Invisible World)

16 When evening came, many who were demon-possessed were brought to him, and he drove out the spirits with a word and healed all the sick. (Matthew 8:16)

Word got out that Jesus was in town. People heard that he could do amazing things. After dinner, a crowd of people showed up - A whole crowd of outcasts, excluded, and unimportant. We're told that Jesus helped them all.

We know that Jesus can heal people, and he'll do more of that in the future. So, we'll leave that group for now. The group we'll discuss at this point are referred to here as the “demon possessed”. We meet this group in this passage with just one sentence. We'll meet them again in Matthew's book, so today we'll just discuss them on a high level.

Here's what we'll learn today. What kind of man is this? ***He is Lord of the invisible world.***

In olden days, if people wanted to learn about the world and the universe, they had a very limited set of resources. They had the five senses: Hearing, sight, touch, smell, and taste. That was it. Over the years, we have developed tools that help our five senses. We have telescopes that magnify so we can see stars that would otherwise be too faint. We have microscopes that let us peer into the world of micro-organisms - Things previously too small to be seen. Who knows what our scientists will develop in the future?

But, there's a problem here. There are things in our universe that can never be detected with our five senses. There are things that are made out of a whole different kind of stuff than the normal material of the universe - The stuff of which we are made. They are spirit. Those things are forever invisible to our limited, material, human frames. It doesn't matter how powerful our tools become. We will never see them unless God, who is spirit, chooses to show them to us.

Some prefer to explain those things away. Many don't like the idea of things that 'go bump in the night'. And sometimes strange events do have normal explanations: The wind comes in through a crack in the wall and moves something. The materials of our homes settle over time causing creaking and other sounds.

But there are things that defy our best science. Some of these invisible things are referred to as demons. The Bible says they are very real. More about that in a future talk.

Here's why we don't like to talk about them: ***We can't control them.*** We don't like things we can't control. We don't like the idea of things that can hurt us, and we have no power to stop them.

Let's look at one aspect of them in our passage.

“...many who were demon-possessed ***were brought to him...*** (Matthew 8:16)”

There is a phenomenon called “demon possession.” Sometimes one of these beings, these spirits from the invisible world, enter a human. When they do, they take control. When someone is demon possessed, the individual no longer has control over where they go. People with this condition had to be brought to Jesus.

Once again, we'll discuss this subject in more detail at a later time, but for now we only need to understand this: Demons represent all the things in the universe:

- That can hurt us.
- That are invisible.
- That otherwise have no explanation
- And which we cannot control.

But do you know who can control them? Want to hazard a guess? Jesus controls them. We're told, "he drove out the spirits with a word...". Why could he do this? Because he is the Lord of the invisible world.

Do you sometimes feel like you have things in your life that you can't control? Things that can hurt you? Things that you can't explain? Once again, Jesus is the king with a heart. He cares about you. He cares about the fact that your world feels out-of-control.

Why should you follow Jesus? Because he is Lord of the invisible world.

Having shown us these things, Matthew offers us one more reason to follow Jesus.

III. Jesus fulfills prophecy (Lord of Time).

This was to fulfill what was spoken through the prophet Isaiah:

"He took up our infirmities
and bore our diseases."

(Matthew 8:17)

Ever since Matthew started telling us the story of Jesus, he has included that fact that Jesus fulfills ancient prophecies of the Messiah. We've been looking at those in detail when they've come up, so we won't revisit them right now. For now, let's just be reminded that Hebrew prophets through centuries looked forward to the coming of the great Messiah. They predicted a number of things about this individual.

In this case, the prophet Isaiah, who lived eight centuries before the time of Christ, said that the Messiah would be a healer. In order for a statement made eight centuries in advance to come true, you would need to have total control over all the events that might occur in between.

Jesus has control over those things. Why? What manner of man is this? He is Lord of Time.

Jesus was once asked a question about when he was born. Here's how he answered:

"Very truly I tell you," Jesus answered, "before Abraham was born, I am! (John 8:58)"

When Moses spoke to the burning bush centuries earlier, he asked the name of God. God replied, "I AM". Jesus used that title for himself. He said he was around before Abraham, the father of the Jewish faith. A man who lived over 2,000 years before Jesus.

Here's what the apostle John said about Jesus.

1 In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. 2 He was with God in the beginning. 3 Through him all things were made; without him nothing was made that has been made (John 1:1-3)

Friends, Jesus is the Lord of Time. When we talk about all the incredible things Jesus could do when he walked the earth, that's only the beginning. Jesus existed eons before his physical birth. He was there before the creation of the world. In fact, he created the world. He has done incredible things since that time. He will do all the incredible things he's capable of doing in the future. Forever and ever.

Why should you follow Jesus? Because he is Lord of Time.

IV. Jesus 'Takes Up' our infirmities (Lord of Love)

As if all this wasn't enough of a "why", there's one final thing that we learn from Isaiah. It tells us more about how Jesus does these amazing things.

"He took up our infirmities and bore our diseases. (Matthew 8:17, emphasis added)"

When Jesus healed people, it was no small thing. We've said that he is Lord of the Machine. The Universe is a great machine, and Jesus sits at the controls. But there's more to fixing things in our Universe than merely turning a knob or pushing a button on the controls of that great machine.

You see, when God created our Universe, it was perfect. All the pieces worked together in perfect harmony to glorify God and fulfill his purposes. But when our ancient parents, Adam and Eve committed the first sin, they created a terrible problem: That sin caused some of the pieces of the universe to break.

Let's look an example. We mentioned earlier that disease often involves little microorganisms attacking us. You know what? Our bodies have all kinds of microbes living there that aren't directly part of our bodily mechanisms. Those little creatures are called our microbiome. We have little creatures in us that help our bodies to operate. They help to break down our food. They produce all kinds of good chemicals that our bodies need to run.

We've said that our bodies have 30 trillion (again, with a "T") cells. Do you know how many microbes live in our microbiome? 100 trillion! The microorganisms that make up our microbiome outnumber the cells that make up our bodies – and by a lot.

You know something else? The microorganisms include things like viruses. That's right: Some viruses are very helpful. But when Adam and Eve committed the first sin, that sin broke something in the fabric of the Universe. It made microorganisms that are designed to help us instead attack us. So now, along with good viruses, we have dangerous viruses. Along with good microorganisms, we have bad microorganisms. Some make us sick. Some can kill us.

In order for Jesus to completely heal, he doesn't just get rid of the bad bugs and fix our broken bodies. He must repair the fabric of the universe that underlies those structures. He must deal with the sin that caused the breakage. So, he doesn't just heal. He "takes up" our infirmities. He "bears" our diseases.

Here's the full passage from Isaiah that Matthew quotes:

4 Surely he took up our pain
and bore our suffering,
yet we considered him punished by God,
stricken by him, and afflicted.
5 But he was pierced for our transgressions,
he was crushed for our iniquities;
the punishment that brought us peace was on him,
and by his wounds we are healed.
(Isaiah 53:4-5)

And here's the core of the matter, stated in a well-known verse:

6 We all, like sheep, have gone astray,
each of us has turned to our own way;
and the Lord has laid on him
the iniquity of us all.
(v 6)

Why should you follow Jesus? Because he is the Lord of Love. In order to heal, he did more than merely sit on top of a machine and throw a switch. He did more than touch a leper and hold the hand of a sick woman. The reason that he is the Lord of the outcast and Lord of the excluded and Lord of the unimportant is that he is the Lord of Love. He loved those people so much that he took their sins upon himself. He took up our infirmities and bore our diseases.

Friends, why should you follow Jesus? Because he is the Lord of Love. And he loves each of you the way that he loved all those other people.

Let's pull this all together.

Conclusion

Why should you follow Jesus? Because he is the great King of the universe, we are all obligated to follow him. We **should** follow him.

But Jesus offers us more. He offers us a “why”. He wants us to follow him because:

He is a king with a heart. He touches the outcast. He calls to the excluded. He holds the hands of the unimportant.

He is the Lord of the invisible world. He commands the demons with a word.

Yes, he is Lord of the machine. He sits at the controls of the universe. He can do that forever because he is the **Lord of time**. He does this because he is the **Lord of Love**. He loves you and me so much that he is willing to take our sins upon himself. He bore our sins on the cross. He went through great torment and pain so that you and I could be free.

Friends, Jesus is the Great King: **He is Lord of all.**

Would you accept his gift of love? Would you ask him to forgive your sins and to bear those sins on his cross? Would you make him the Lord of your life?

You can do so because you should. But he wants you to be like Peter’s mother-in-law who jumped to serve him. Not because it was required - But because she wanted to. Because she recognized how kind he had been to her.

Would you join with the multitudes over the ages who have recognized that Jesus is Lord of All.

Come back next time as we continue to ask the question: “What Kind of Man Is This?”

Thanks for reading! Here are some helpful links:

Trinity Church: www.TrinityTeaneck.org

Phil’s Site: PhilBrainerd.com

To learn how to begin a new life with Jesus Christ, visit Billy Graham’s site:

PeaceWithGod.net