The Healing Work of Jesus
Scripture: Matthew 4:23-25
Code: 2196

Matthew Chapter 4 and we're looking at the last paragraph in this chapter tonight and going to consider briefly what the Lord has to say to us here through His Holy Spirit by the evangelist Matthew as he writes to us. Jerry already read the text so I won't read it again and I'm sure it's set in your mind. Perhaps the thing that stood out here in your thinking as you listened to it being read and as Jerry commented on it was the fact of the healing ministry of Jesus Christ. The section could well introduce us to this whole concept of healing. This is the first great statement about His healing ministry made in the gospels.

And as we know, if we study the New Testament, particularly the gospel record, and even into the book of Acts, one of the key ways in which Jesus demonstrated His majesty, one of the key ways in which He manifested His deity was in healing. Healing was a very vital part of Jesus' demonstration of His power. In fact, in a broader sense the whole area of miracles was a tremendously important aspect of Christ's messianic and kingly credentials. We find, for example, the entire thrust of the gospel of John is based upon this primary element, that Jesus is giving His messianic credentials. And John particularly focuses on two things: one His words and two His works. You might say that the gospel of John is the gospel of the Messiah's credentials.

And so what Matthew is introducing to us here is really expanded in great breadth and depth in the gospel of John. In fact, John opens his gospel in Chapter 1, let me have you look at it with me for just a moment as an introduction, John opens his gospel with a great statement that, "In the beginning was the Word and the Word was with God and the Word was God." A great statement of the deity of Jesus Christ. It goes on to prove His deity because He is the creator, in other words His creative power indicates that He is God.

In Chapter 1:14 he says that He had the glory of the Father in Him, again a statement referring to Him as God. Verse 18, "No man hath seen God at any time; the only begotten Son, who is in the bosom of the Father, He hath declared Him." In other words this Jesus is God in human flesh, God in full glory, God in full declaration. That's John's thrust. And John sets out to prove this by his miracle power. For example in Chapter 2, we have the first of Jesus' miracles and in verse 11 it says, "This beginning of miracles did Jesus in Cana of Galilee and manifested forth His glory and His disciples believed on Him." His miraculous works were to manifest His deity in Chapter 5, again in verse 36, Our Lord Jesus said, "But I have greater witness than that of John." In other words I have a greater witness than that of John the Baptist. "For the works, which the Father hath given Me to finish, the

same works that I do bear witness of Me that the Father hath sent Me." Again He says the works that He did, the miraculous things that He did were testimony to His deity.

In Chapter 7:31, of John's gospel we read, "and many of the people believed on Him and said, 'When Christ cometh, or when the Messiah cometh will He do more miracles than these, which this one hath done?" In other words they caught the message. They were saying He has given us the Messianic credentials, miracles. Could someone else come and do more miracles than this man has done?

In Chapter 10 of the gospel of John and verse 38 Jesus said, we're backing up to verse 37, "If I do not the works of my Father, believe Me not. But if I do, though you believe not Me, believe the works that ye may know and believe that the Father is in Me and I in Him." In other words the works are the testimony. If I don't do the works don't believe me; if I do then you'd better believe me.

In Chapter 14:11, John again pointing up this element of Christ's credentials says, "Believe Me that I am in the Father and the Father in Me." Just because I said it is implied, "Or else believe Me for the very works sake." Believe my words and if that is not sufficient believe my works.

And then in Chapter 20:30 and 31, the great climax of the gospel of John in which John clearly states his purpose in writing and many other signs truly did Jesus in the presence of His disciples, which are not written in this book." By the way, John's gospel records eight of the major miracles of Jesus, eight of them. There were many many others, many others as we shall see, but these eight, says John in verse 31, "Are written that ye might believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God, and that believing ye might have life through His name."

John also included the tremendous claims of Christ, didn't He? The I Am, the Bread of Life, that's in his gospel. The I Am the Resurrection and the Life. The I Am the Way, the Truth, and the Life. The I Am the Living Water. The I Am the Light of the World. The words and the works of Jesus, the Messianic credentials particularly emphasizing his works.

In Acts Chapter 2 Peter preaching the very first sermon the church ever heard, the first sermon the day the church was born said this: "Ye men of Israel," verse 22 of Acts 2, "Hear these words. Jesus of Nazareth, a man approved of God among you by miracles and wonders and signs." You get the message? Those were His credentials. Now listen. Jesus gave His messianic credentials in His mighty works. To deny these works is to deny His deity. To deny His deity is to deny His works. It is the most heinous crime there is to deny the deity of Jesus Christ.

Listen, the whole purpose for which Matthew, Mark, Luke, and John were written was to conclude that He was God, not just another man. His works, as well as words, look at John 12:47, John 12:47, "And if any man hear My words and believe not, I judge him not, for I came not to judge the world, but to save the world." Did you notice that Jesus really doesn't accept the responsibility for a person's

damnation. He that rejects me and receives my words has one that judges him. What is it? The word that I've spoken, the same shall judge him in the last day. In other words you deny the deity of Christ and deny His words and deny His works and you pass sentence on yourself. The very words them self if held in unbelief become their own judge, their own sentencer.

So you can see that John's purpose is to present the words of Jesus and the works of Jesus and he has Jesus over and over again say, "These are enough so you should believe." So notice, people, the ministry of Jesus Christ when He came to earth was a ministry of words and works and the whole idea of what He said and what He did was messianic credentials. It was to prove to the world that He was not just another man, but He was God.

Now let's go back to Matthew Chapter 4. When Matthew, then, introduces the beginning of Jesus' ministry, he includes these elements. He says, "Jesus went about," in verse 23, "Teaching and preaching," that's His words, "and healing," that's His works. That really makes up the ministry of Jesus Christ, what He said, what He did, and it ought to have been enough to prove the point.

I always think of the story of the blind man in John 9. A man born blind and his disciples found this man and they said to Jesus, "Master, who did sin, this man or his parents that he was born blind?" Now they had wrong theology. They thought that everybody who was sick or everybody who was diseased, or everybody who was maimed was so because of sin. That's not true. Sometimes you can get sick from sin. Ananias and Sapphira got so sick they died. I Corinthians 11, people got sick, weak and sickly and some slept. The Lord can allow disease be a chastening and a punishment for sin. But not everybody who got sick is sinful. Was Job? No. There was not such a righteous man on earth as Job. And Jesus said, "This man didn't sin nor his parents. The reason he's sick is that the works of God should be made manifest." In other words, God allowed some people to be sick so Jesus could heal them and in such a healing manifest His deity. And later on the blind man was healed and the Jewish leaders said, "Well this is very strange." And they came to Him and said, "Who is this, who is this, what's this all about?" And the blind man said, "That's very very interesting. Here is a marvelous thing," he says in verse 30, "that you know not from where He is and yet He has opened my eyes." That's pretty ridiculous. You see he got the message. If this man was not of God he could do nothing. He knew, the credentials got through to him.

Now let's look at how Jesus approached His ministry in Matthew 4, in just these three brief verses and it won't take us long to look at it. This is the beginning of the official ministry of Christ, great passage, and we've been studying it now for several weeks. And I told you from the very beginning of this passage, which was verse 12, that it was really all one unit and Matthew having presented the birth and the genealogy and the homage of Christ and all of the wonderful things and every one of them sort of portraying His majesty, now begins to talk about the beginning of the King's ministry.

And you remember how I told you that first of all he said the King began His ministry at the right point. Remember that? At the right point. Look at verse 12, "Now when Jesus had heard that John was cast into prison He departed into Galilee. And leaving Nazareth he came and dwelled in Capernaum." And secondly he not only began His ministry at the right point when John's work was done and John the forerunner was cast into prison it was time for Jesus to begin, secondly He began in the right place. And it tells us in 13 He left Nazareth, which had been His home for the first 30 years of His life, since He left Egypt, and He came and dwelt in Capernaum. Why? Because the Old Testament had said, verse 14, "Isaiah said the land of Zebulun, the land of Naphtali by the way of the sea beyond the Jordan, Galilee of the Gentiles, those were the people who sat in darkness, those were the people who would see a great light and to them who sat in that region in the shadow of death light has sprung up." In other words the prophet predicted that it would be, in fact, in that area where he would arrive.

So he began at the right point, in the right place, thirdly with the right proclamation. Verse 17, "From that time Jesus began to proclaim and say repent for the kingdom of heaven is at hand." He began at the right point, in the right place, with the right proclamation, and last week we saw number four with the right what partners.

Verse 18, "And Jesus, walking by the sea of Galilee, saw two brethren, Simon, called Peter, and Andrew, his brother, casting a net into the sea because they were fishers. And He saith unto them, 'Follow Me and I'll make you fishers of men.' And they straightway left their nets and followed Him. And going on from there he saw two other brethren, James the son of Zebedee, and John his brother, in a boat with Zebedee, their father, mending their nets, and He called them. And they immediately left the boat and their father and followed Him."

He never intended to do it alone, remember I told you last time? He wanted some people to help him so He called and trained His own workers and He never turned them loose until three years later in the great commission. He said, "Now I've trained you. I'm leaving. You go do the job." So the light had dawned in Galilee all on a divine schedule, at the right point, in the right place, by the right proclamation, with the right partners, and now fifthly, on the right plan.

Jesus had a clear explicit plan. The plan was this: By words and works He would establish His deity. By the things that He did and the things that He said, He would make manifest who He really was. And you know what? They were really struck by those two things. In John 7:46, the chief priests, the officers came in and they said to the chief priests, "Never man spoke like this man." They were shocked by His words. It was incredible the things that He said. And the officers had it right, "Never man spoke like this man."

There was a division in Chapter 10 among the Jews, John 10, "And some said, 'He has a demon and He's mad. Why do you listen?' And others said, 'These are not the words of him that has a demon.'

And then they said, 'Can a demon open the eyes of the blind?'" See it was His words and His works that overpowered them. These were the marks of His majesty. These were the marks of His messiah ship. So Matthew focuses on them to begin with.

Let's look at verse 23: Jesus began on the right plan. "And Jesus went about all Galilee, teaching in their synagogues, and preaching the gospel of the kingdom, and healing all manner of sickness and all manner of disease among the people." Now here we come right to those two dimensions of messianic credentials: His words and His works. Let's look at some specifics here. "And Jesus went about," that's an interesting verb. I want to stop for a minute and it's an imperfect tense verb and when you have the imperfect it doesn't mean it's less than perfect, it's just a term used for something that's continuous action in the past tense. It means that He was constantly going about, the idea of a constant endeavor. You might even translate it, He was continually going around, incessant effort is the idea. And really what you have in verse 23, hang on to this thought is a one-verse summary of the whole Galilean ministry.

Now notice Matthew will take this one verse summary and expand it in Chapter 5, 6, 7, 8, and 9, so that those chapters to come 5 through 9 are an expansion of verse 23. In fact, His words are the subject of Chapter 5, 6, and 7. His works are the subject of Chapter 8 and 9. So Matthew simply introduces those two elements here and then he begins to expand them in the next section verse 5:1 through 9:38. First 5, 6, and 7, His words, the great truth of the Sermon on the Mount, that was absolutely shocking, devastating, and divine, and then His mighty works and miracles Chapters 8 and 9.

So He went all over the place incessantly and constantly, and you'll notice it says, He went about all Galilee. He was moving all the time. Now all Galilee is a strong expression. The term all is a very strong term and when it says all in this sense it really does mean in a comprehensive sense.

Now basically I've been showing you that Galilee is not a large area. You could simplify it by saying it's about 40 miles wide and about 70 miles long. It had about 204 villages and towns according to Josephus. In fact, Josephus says this: "The cities are numerous, the multitude of villages everywhere are crowded with men owing to the fertility of the soil so that the smallest of them contains above 15,000 inhabitants." And Josephus, by the way, ought to know about Galilee because in 66 A.D. he was the Commanding General of all Galilee. He was not just a historian; e was a general. And Josephus says there were 204 towns, teaming with people 15,000 and up all crowded into an area 70 miles long, 40 miles wide. By the way, Josephus says one generation after our Lord, when he was really writing there were three million people in Galilee. Now we don't know how many there were at the time of the Lord, but not many less than that. The point is this: that to cover 204 villages and to move around through all of that mass of humanity required much time and constant travel and Jesus was busy. Somebody figured out just to touch every town, moving at a rate of one town a day is going to take a half a year, and that would be only if you stayed one day in each

place.

And so Jesus moved about. He was going to touch as many as He could. It was important that the whole of all those people, and remember they were Jew and Gentile mixed, and even the Jewish ones had been exposed to Gentile culture, He was really in a very real sense announcing Himself as the Savior of the world at the very beginning, just as He had when His first, the first person he ever announced his messiah ship to was a half-breed Samaritan woman. So he moved among these people teaching, preaching, and healing.

Let's look at those three elements of His ministry for a minute. First of all it says in verse 23, "Teaching in their synagogues." Within Galilee Jesus chose to kind of center His ministry in the synagogues. Now the synagogue was the most important institution in the life of any Jew. Keep that in mind. It was the most important institution. It is very like the church is to you, you that are Christians, you love the Lord Jesus Christ, you're active at Grace Community Church, you're involved here, this is the most important institution in your life. Your family is here, your kids are here, your friendships are here, this is your life. No different in those days. The whole of Jewish life centered around the synagogue. In fact, in some cases it would be even more intense because even the politics of life and the economics of life, you traded there, you learned to sort of match up your businesses with people of like trade because they sat according to trade. It was everything to the Jewish people. In fact, the worse thing that could ever happen to a Jew was to be unsynagogued. *Assynogased*to be unsynagogued was it. And you see that's exactly what happened when a Jew became a Christian. He was dis-fellowshipped from the synagogue. It was vital. That's why the whole book of Hebrews is written. It was written to Christians, but also there are warnings throughout that book to certain Jewish people who were so afraid of being unsynagogued that even though they believed the gospel, they wouldn't receive Christ. This synagogue was the key to their life.

In most cases the synagogue was built on a hill, using the most prominent hump in the city of the little town, and every town had one. And there would be the synagogue and it would be the highest place in the city and usually would be distinguished by a tall pole shooting up in the sky so that everybody could focus on that. It was as a familiar sight to go into a Jewish town and see a synagogue spire, as it is to go in the middle of New England and see a little church spire in the little villages. It's common.

Sometimes if there weren't any hills they would build along the river and the bank of the river, and very often they built synagogues without a roof. They just let their worship go up to God. And we don't really know, for example, in the synagogue that we've uncovered, not we, Christians I mean. I never dug up anything. But the synagogue they've uncovered in Capernaum and have reconstructed really doesn't have any roof. We don't know if it did or didn't have one or what kind of one it had, but it was where they gathered.

Let me tell you a little bit about what they did there. Divine worship was held in the synagogue every Sabbath, every Saturday. Sabbath ran from Friday at sundown to Saturday at sundown, and on the second and fifth day of every week they had special services, every Sabbath they had special services. Of course, they had special services every festival day, all the feast days and all the special days. Now basically when they came together on the Sabbath, if it wasn't a special day, this is how the format went: first there was the reading of the law and the reading of the prophets by certain people who were called upon and then there were prayers offered by the leader and then there were responses by the people. They would respond with amen's and various praises to God.

Following that there would be an exposition of some text of the Scripture and that went all the way back to the return under Ezra and Nehemiah. When they read the Scripture, you remember in Nehemiah, then Ezra, the Scribe stood up and gave the sense of it, expository preaching is not something new in this generation. It is the kind of preaching in the restoration under Ezra and Nehemiah and it is historically what the Jews have done in their synagogue, first the reading, then the prayer, and then the exposition. And it was interesting, if there was a visiting dignitary or a visiting rabbi he would be given the right to speak the exposition very often, and that's where, of course, Paul moved right into the synagogue and used some Old Testament text and took off. That was very common.

The affairs of the synagogue were administered men, basically, ten elders of whom three were called the rulers of the synagogue. They acted as judges. They would admit proselytes or not admit them. They settled issues. There was a fourth ruler called the angel of the church who was sort of the chairman of the board. There were others who were called servers who carried out the direction of the three and the one. There was an eighth one, according to Jewish tradition, who was the Hebrew interpreter who took the ancient Hebrew and translated it into the vernacular. There was a ninth one who headed up the theological school. And by the way, every synagogue had a theological school in it. And there was a tenth one who interpreted the theological school instructor stuff because it was usually over the heads of the people. So they had this whole organization, this incredible structure.

Listen, the synagogue became the court of law and any disputes or court problems or civil things they came there, and their judgment was made and execution was even pronounced. Listen, you know the Roman government only took away from the Jews the right of execution at the time of Jesus. They could do everything else. They could run their own affairs. The only thing they couldn't do was take somebody's life. That's why they had to take Jesus to the Romans to have Him crucified.

Now they didn't have synagogues in the same, I shouldn't say in Jerusalem, the synagogue wasn't the main issue in those days, the temple was. But the same mentality prevailed. They ruled their own affairs. And as we see the small villages and towns in the time of Jesus they would have their own court of law. Also the synagogue was a public school for boys, and the little boys would go there, in their childhood and learn the Talmud. And further, the synagogue was a theological school

for the men. So this was the center of the whole concentration of Jewish life. And when Jesus went there to that place He would be stepping right into the midst of Israel.

Now there's a vast difference, remember between the synagogue and the temple. There's only one temple and that is at Jerusalem. That's the only temple. There isn't one there now, as you know, not since 70 A. D. when Titus came in and wiped it out. But there was only one temple, but wherever there was a small colony of Jews, wherever there was a handful of Jewish men they could start a synagogue. And so they were every place and they were the platform for Jesus and they were the platform for the apostle Paul.

By the way, the temple was not a place for teaching and the temple was not a place for preaching unless like Jesus you happen to stand up in there and take off. The temple was a place for offering sacrifice and making offerings. But the synagogue was a place of teaching and preaching. It was essentially a preaching/teaching place. In fact, the church today pretty well had modeled its patterns after the synagogue. Now we still have Jewish synagogues with us. There's one right down the street, only now they call it a what? A temple, but it isn't, because there's no blood sacrifice being offered there. It's simply a synagogue, a gathering place.

Well Jesus took advantage of the opportunity for any dignitary, any visiting rabbi or teacher to have the opportunity to speak. And so Jesus would go in the synagogue and He would teach why because this would reach the heart of Israel. Listen, the most zealous people for God were in the synagogue. That's where you'd find the true hearts, if there were any in Israel. That's where the remnant would be, wouldn't they? They'd be there worshipping the true God in the best way they knew how, so Jesus went where they would listen to Him, where they would hear Him, the synagogue. And He would go in and He would teach the Scripture. That was His pattern, to open the Scripture, to give exposition. This is exactly what He did throughout the pattern of His ministry. Even when He was in Nazareth He broke open His whole ministry by doing an exposition on an Old Testament Scripture that referred to Him. Even in the Sermon on the Mount He kept referring, "You have heard it said, and the Scripture says, and I say," and He'd take off from there, either from a Scripture of God's authorship or from some ancient tradition that they had held to, Jesus would move off from there to do the exposition and turn the whole thing to Himself.

And so Jesus was teaching in the synagogues. By the way, the word *didosko*has to do with didactic instructive relating of truth. The word concentrates on the passing of information. The word emphasizes the content, the passing on of information. That's what Jesus did. And by the way, His method, I'm quite confident was expository, taking the text and out of it teaching the principles. I really believe this is the greatest way to preach and teach the word of God.

Secondly, it says in verse 23, 'Not only was He teaching in their synagogue, but He was also preaching the gospel of the kingdom." Now this is a different word. *Karuso*and it means to proclaim

and it concentrates not so much on the didactic method, the relating of truth, the content as it does on the very voice, the very style of proclamation and it simply means He heralded it out, He cried out. That's preaching. Teaching is where there is the careful instructive relating of content. It's kind of from the mind to the mind. Preaching is the crying out, the impassioned cry of Jesus Christ to the people. And there it wasn't so much in the synagogues, although He did both there as well, and the two are mixed up in His ministry so you can't separate them. There was never teaching without preaching and there was never preaching without teaching, but the preaching is the crying out. It is the heralding of the gospel.

Some have said preaching is the heralding of the gospel and teaching is the explaining of the gospel that's been heralded. Jesus did both, preaching, making a public announcement. William Hendrickson, who's a great commentator, says this: "Between preaching and teaching there is a difference. Though it is true that good preaching is also teaching, the emphasis is nevertheless not the same. Preaching means proclamation. Teaching, on the other hand, indicates imparting more detailed information regarding the proclamation that was made." That's the idea.

So if you want to know what I do, if I really, if I can evaluate what I do, sometimes I don't even know what I do, but I have a combination of both. And what I do is I preach and by that I get exercised and I proclaim some great truth and this is what the word of God says, and then from there I endeavor to explain to you the meaning of that proclamation. The proclamation is what is called the *kerugma*and the teaching is what is called the *didiche.*You may see those terms sometime in your reading and there's never any good *kerugma*without *didiche.* It doesn't do any good to proclaim something if you don't explain what it is.

And the theme of Jesus then, preaching and teaching. Look at it in verse 23, the gospel of the kingdom, the good news of the kingdom. This is what He was always talking about, always. He was always talking about this. In fact in Acts Chapter 1, after He had risen from the dead, until He ascended He had 40 days with His disciples, and it says in verse 2 of Acts 1, "Until the day in which He was taken up after He thought the Holy Spirit had given commandments under the apostles whom He'd chosen, to whom also He showed Himself alive after His passion by many infallible proofs," now watch this: "Being seen by them 40 days and speaking of the things pertaining to the kingdom of God."

From the time He began His ministry in Matthew right here, to the time He was silenced in His ascension He never spoke of anything other than the kingdom of God. He never got dragged into social issues that were unrelated, He never got dragged into politics, into revolutions, into economics, He spoke of the kingdom of God. And it's a great pattern. I feel in my heart I need to follow that kind of pattern. Sometimes people ask me why I don't say things about this and that and the other thing, and I guess maybe it's because Jesus until He was taken up spoke to them the things concerning the kingdom of God, and if that was His priority then that's going to be my priority.

Now what do you mean by this? What is the gospel of the kingdom? Well first of all, the word gospel means something simple, good news, good news. It's good news and the world is full of bad news, isn't it, all bad news. This is the only good news, really good news. The teaching and preaching of Jesus Christ was filled with good news. You know something interesting? Listen to this: John the Baptist's preaching is never called good news, never.

Now maybe it was good news and maybe it might have been called good news, but it never is. I began to think about why. Perhaps it is because the note of judgment is so strong, the ax is laid at the root, the winnowing fan is moving, the fire is consuming, and John fired out so much judgment and so much condemnation and cried for such repentance that maybe his message was too strong to win the gracious title good news. But it really was good news, wasn't it? It's kind of like the deal you've got to have bad news before you get good news.

But I think the reason John's is never called good news is because there never really was good new until Jesus arrived. There never really was any good news until Jesus came. And it is Jesus who is said to preach the good news. John was saying, "Get right, repent, get ready and avoid judgment." And then Jesus came along and gave the other side of it and come to Me and I'll take you to heaven. That was the good news.

After the Messiah had encountered more and more of the hypocrisy and more and more of the hostility of the hierarchy of Israel, His preaching became even more stern than John's. Did you know that? But at the very beginning there was no strong word of condemnation. Jesus didn't come saying there's going to be an ax, and there's going to be a winnowing fan, and there's going to be a fire consuming you. You don't hear that at the beginning of Jesus' ministry. That comes later. It was just the good news. And what is the good news? The kingdom. The kingdom. That God is going to establish His rule. That we can be a part of God's dominion that as Paul said we can be translated out of the kingdom of darkness into the kingdom of His dear Son, that our sins can be forgiven. Listen, the gospel of the kingdom is the same gospel preached today. It's just the message of salvation.

The good news is this: God has a kingdom, He wants you to be a citizen, here's how. That's the good news. Oh it has all kinds of ramifications, as we'll see as we go through Matthew. But it's the good news of salvation because that's the way you get in His kingdom. Once you're in it has all kinds of features. There is the element of the kingdom now in us in the Holy Spirit. There is the element of the millennial kingdom for a thousand years on earth. There is the element of the eternal kingdom and glory in the new heaven and the new earth forever with God. It has different facets and wondrous things that we're going to see, but for now all we need to know is that the good news is that God has a kingdom and you can be in it. You can be a part of it. That's good news.

I'll tell you the alternative is pretty sad isn't it? These people had long had a weariness of being in the kingdom of Rome, before that the kingdom of the Greeks, before that the kingdom of the Medes and the Persians, before that the Babylonians. And even when they tried to do it on their own with their own kings it was nothing but debauchery and evil. And the very fact that there could be a kingdom with God was what they had longed for. This was good news. Jesus was saying there's a way to escape. There's good news, there's a kingdom, and the good news is you can be a part of that kingdom. How? What is that good news that gets you into the kingdom? I Corinthians 15:1, tells us. Here's the gospel which I preach to you, listen, "For I delivered unto you, first of all, that which I also received." Here comes the good news, "That Christ died for our sins according to the Scriptures. That He was buried, that He rose again the third day according to the Scriptures." That's the gospel, folks.

The good news this: Jesus died for you. He rose for you. Your sin is paid for. Your eternal life is purchased and you can be in God's kingdom. That's good news isn't it? And that's what Jesus came preaching and teaching. The plan of salvation is the good news. Oh He didn't cover all the ground early on here. He just simply announced, "I've got good news. God has a kingdom for you. God has a kingdom for you. In fact it would have been an earthly kingdom if they had believed wouldn't it? If they had accepted Jesus as their Messiah and they had been saved there and the nation Israel had repented and come to Christ their kingdom would have been right then and there. It's physical, millennial fulfillment. But they rejected it and so the kingdom millennially was postponed, but not internally because when anybody every comes to Jesus Christ, Colossians 1 says they're translated out of the kingdom of darkness into the kingdom of His dear Son.

So when Jesus was teaching and preaching the gospel of the kingdom He was announcing that He was the king, that's right. He was saying, "I'm the king," and He was saying, "I've got a kingdom."

Secondly, and you can be a part and fourthly here's how. Here's the terms: The glorious day long awaited by the world, God has a kingdom and you can be a part. The words that He preached, oh no man, the officers had it right, ever spoke like that man spoke. His words about the kingdom for three years went across the land of Israel. They should have known. It should have been obvious. To some it was. Listen to Luke 4:22, "And all bore Him witness," this was when He was preaching in Nazareth. And by the way He did and exposition of an Isaiah passage, took Isaiah and just cracked it open for them. Isaiah 61, preached a sermon off of that text, and then they listened and finally in verse 22 they bore Him witness and wondered at the gracious words that proceeded out of His mouth and they said, "Is not this Joseph's son?" I mean these words coming from this guy who grew up in our town, the son of a carpenter. Verse 31, "And He came down to Capernaum, a city of Galilee, and He taught them on the Sabbath days and they were astonished at His doctrine for His word was with power." And in verse 36, they said, "What a word is this?"

In Matthew Chapter 24, I think its verse 35, he said this: "Heaven and earth shall pass away, but My words shall not pass away." He spoke an eternal word, a powerful word, like no one ever spoke. They could never confound Him in His words, they could never trap Him in His words, they could never stump Him in His words, they were literally devastated by His words. They were so powerful that they were literally thrown down in their own tracks when they tried to encounter Him and catch Him in His words.

Simon Peter had it right. He said to him one day in John 6, "Will you also go away? And Simon Peter said, 'To whom shall we go? Thou and thou alone hast the words of eternal life.'" See, the first area of credentials His words in preaching and teaching. Let's go to that third area.

First is teaching, second His preaching, third Matthew 4:23, and "healing all manner of sickness and all manner of disease among the people." Now here is the area of His works. Not just His words, but His verification, His messianic credentials, those proofs of His majesty were also seen in His works. It simply says here that he healed everybody. To all that came to Him there was healing. You know something? I think His words would have drawn people without the healing. Some critics of Christianity say, "Well, the people tolerated the teaching for the sake of the miracles." But I don't think that's true. Many followed Him, many who didn't need a healing either for themselves or their friends or their relatives.

The preaching and the teaching also came first and then the healing. He began to teach. Even His disciples and they obeyed and they followed and they believed. Before the first miracle in Cana of Galilee they were already with Him. They didn't just come for the miracles alone. By the way, even John the Baptist had drawn multitudes to himself and he preached repentance. And you know something John the Baptist never did a miracle. It tells us in John 10:41 that he did no *semeion,* no sign, not John the Baptist. The healing ministry of Jesus then was a powerful addition to His words.

Alexander McClarion, that great preacher said, "It may be doubted whether we have an adequate notion of the immense number of Christ's miracles. Those recorded are but a small portion of those done. Those early ones were illustrations of the nature of His kingdom. They were His first gifts to His kingdoms subjects." What a great thought. Those miracles were a taste of His kingdom, just like His words were. You want to know what the kingdom is going to be like? Just check out all the miracles and multiply that by a million fold and that's what the kingdom is going to be like. A miraculous supernatural kingdom!

Those were tastes of the kingdom and that's why in Hebrews 6, the writer says, "You have tasted the powers of the age to come." You've been in on the miracles. You've seen the signs and wonders and diverse gifts of the Holy Spirit that confirmed unto you the preaching of the gospel. Hebrews 2, 3, and 4. You've tasted of the age to come. That's why He condemned in Matthew 13 those

unbelieving Pharisees because they had seen the power of the kingdom and they should have known this was the king. Listen, these were kingly credentials. These were pre-kingdom manifestations of kingdom power to prove to those people that He was the king and He would bring the kingdom. And the miracles and the teaching are so interwoven that you can't extract one from the other.

Literally verse 23 says, "And He healed every kind of illness and every kind of disease." Boy what a great statement. Listen, He healed every kind of illness and every kind of disease. That's the literal Greek. I've yet to see any would be healer since that time, since the apostolic era do that. Heal every kind of illness and every kind of disease. The universal character of the healings is brought out by the fact that it says that Jesus was going through all Galilee healing. And look at verse 24, "And His fame went throughout all Syria and they brought unto Him all sick people who were taken with divers diseases." And it spread even into Syria.

Now these healings did three things. First of all they confirmed His message as divine. They proved that He was divine because no human being could do these things. These were evidences clearly of His deity. John 14:11, "Believe Me that I am in the Father and the Father in Me, or else believe Me for the very work sake." They were proof that God was in Him and He was in God, deity.

Secondly, they also showed that He was the prophesized Messiah because the Old Testament had predicted a Messiah of miracle power. In Matthew 11:2, "John heard in the prison the works of Christ and he sent two disciples and they said, 'Are you He that should come?'" Are you really the Messiah? Are you really the one? John's wondering. John's having some doubts. And Jesus said, "You go and tell John the things which you hear and see; the blind receive their sight, the lame walk, the lepers are cleansed, the deaf hear, the dead are raised, the poor have the gospel preached to them." You tell him because those are the things the prophet said the Messiah would do. Those are the things the prophet said the kingdom would bring.

So one it confirmed that He was divine and two it showed that He was the prophesized one of the Old Testament. Three, it proved that the kingdom was coming. These were like the first gifts of the king to His subjects. It was a foretaste of the whole kingdom. It was just a little taste of what was going to be in the future. He let them have a glimpse of the kingdom. Verse 35 of Matthew 9, "Jesus went about all the cities and the villages," and by the way this is still talking about commenting on this verse, clear through Chapter 9 Matthew is still expanding verse 23 here. "And Jesus went about all the cities and villages teaching in their synagogues and preaching the gospel of the kingdom and healing every sickness and every disease among the people." Matthew 10:7, "He committed the same power to His disciples. And as you go preach saying the kingdom of heaven is at hand. Heal the sick, cleanse the lepers, raise the dead, cast out demons." You see these were tastes of the kingdom and always connected with kingdom preaching and kingdom teaching.

Matthew 12:28, "If I cast out demons by the Spirit of God then the kingdom is come unto you." See this is a sign of the kingdom. You'd better wake up. The kingdom is here. The king is arrived if indeed you are seeing the casting out of demons, the healing of the lame, the blind, and the deaf." Kingdom credentials.

Luke Chapter 9, "He called His twelve disciples and gave them power and authority over all demons and to cure diseases and He sent them to preach the kingdom of God and heal the sick." Always always the healing ministry, the casting out of demons attached to the kingdom because those were elements of the kingdom to show that in fact the kingdom was really coming.

Now listen, beloved, I'm convinced that the only time these kind of miracles will again happen is in the next time just before the kingdom comes. Not now. This is the parenthesis, but in that time when God begins the re-gathering of Israel, the time of the tribulation, and begins to set up His kingdom, then we're going to see these marvelous signs of the kingdom again and when the kingdom comes in full bloom the supernatural will take over. Miracle upon miracle will happen.

You know B. B. Warfield, the great reformed theologian said this: "When our Lord came down to earth he drew heaven with him. The signs, which accompanied his ministry, were but the trailing clouds of glory, which he brought from heaven, which is His home. The number of the miracles, which He wrought, may easily be under rated. It has been said that in effect he banished disease and death from Palestine for the three years of His ministry. One touch of the hem of His garment that He wore could medicine hold countries of their pain. One touch of that pale hand could restore life." You see, the kingdom was going to have all this. Read it. It's all in Isaiah. I don't have time to go into it, but it's all in Isaiah 35. Let me give you two verses just as a taste. Verse 5, Isaiah 35:5, "Then the eyes of the blind shall be opened, the ears of the deaf unstopped. Then shall the lame man leap as a hart or a deer and the tongue of the dumb sing."

Then he goes on. "The desert will blossom like a rose." Describing the kingdom healing is a part of it and Jesus was giving them a taste of the kingdom because the kingdom could have come right then. Listen when they rejected the king they forfeited the kingdom, they turned the taste of the kingdom all around and they concluded that He was doing what He did by the power of Satan. And Jesus said, that's all for you. The church age was dropped in the middle and the only time we're going to see these kind of miracles again is just before the kingdom comes in the future. They are the king's credentials announcing His kingdom; proof positive God was at work.

Now verse 24 says that His fame spread throughout all Syria and they brought to Him all sick people taken with diverse diseases and torments, those who were possessed with demons demoniacs, those who were epileptic and those who had the palsy and He healed them. Syria was a, actually Syria was a Roman province that included Galilee and Palestine. It was the massive, the whole area, but when it's used here it really refers to the north part where Damascus was the major city.

If you go north from Palestine today you'd be in Lebanon. If you go northeast you'd be in Syria where King Hussein is and where Damascus is. Well it's basically that same area and they started hearing about this miraculous healing going on and, of course, at Capernaum where Jesus was headquartered was right on the road to Damascus and the news went like wildfire and pretty soon they started coming from Syria. Boy you can imagine that in those days medicine wasn't what it is today. A disease was rampant, plagues were a problem, and death was all over the place, and people heard that there was healing, a person who could do this, and boy they started to bring them. And you know, it was great, Jesus could handle them all. He wasn't like modern day healers. He didn't have to check them all out and make sure they fit into the situation and not be embarrassing. You know the healers when they get you in that line they check you out real good to make sure you've got something they can handle. Not with Jesus.

And simply sampling Matthew mentions three things, three diverse diseases and torments. By the way, the difference between diverse diseases and torments is simply the difference between the disease and its symptom. The diverse disease caused torment. They were tormented people. The root and the symptom are both mentioned and then he gives three samples. First there were demoniacs. They are demonized, *deigmaisima*, *deigmastimas*, they are people who are demonized. And believe me much of sickness is caused by demons, much of it. We see that in the Scripture. Demons were the cause of many many many illnesses and I'm not going to take time tonight to go through them, but they're all over the gospel of Matthew and we're going to see them as we go to Chapter 9, Chapter 12, Chapter 17, Mark Chapter 9, Luke Chapter 13.

Much of illness is caused by demons. And Jesus was able to handle that. And you know what gift it was that dealt with that? The gift of miracles. Remember when we studied that? We told you that the word miracle is *dunamis*the gift of powers and whenever that term is used Jesus using power to cast out demons it's speaking of the gift of miracles. The gift of miracles in the apostolic era was not the ability to make pudding or to create a new car or to walk on water. Those kinds of natural miracles the apostles never did. Only Jesus did those. The gift of miracles was the ability to cast out demons. It was power against the kingdom of darkness. And Jesus had that power. He could cast out demons, thus He could end demon-caused disease.

Secondly, the old English says lunatic. It's translated epileptic. That's very interesting. Lunatic is a word with a Latin root and the first part luna comes from the moon because the people in those days thought that people were nuts because they got affected by the moon. Lunar sickness, they were sort of, they used to call them moonstruck. That's where you get the idea of a lunatic; he's moonstruck. But the best etymological connection for this word for us today is epileptic. The reason we say that is because in Matthew 17:15, that word is used to refer to a seizure that appears to be some kind of epileptic seizure. So our Lord could deal with disease that is caused by demons, all of it, and our Lord could deal with disease that is come kind of disorder in the brain or the nervous

system or whatever malfunction creates seizures.

And then not only from the standpoint of the nervous system and the brain and demons, but one other category our Lord could even handle those who had palsy who would have what we would call some kind of a physical disorder. Not so much the brain as seems to be sort of the idea with epilepsy, but with the physical disorder, blindness, deafness, crippled legs, withered arms, withered hands, dumbness. He could handle all of that. You know as we go through Matthew we're going to see it. We're going to see Him cast out demons and heal. We're going to see Him take care of people with seizures. We're going to see Him take care of all those people with physical illnesses and disorders.

And so here they are, this is so beautiful, listen people, this is a little photograph of the kingdom. You know what the kingdom is going to be like? All the demons are going to be gone in the kingdom. Did you know that? Satan himself is going to be what bound. And all the demons cast into the Lake of Fire. The beast and the false prophet, and there's going to be healing. Why Malachi says, "The Son of Righteousness shall arise with what healing in His beings." And Isaiah said it, "The blind shall see, the deaf shall hear, the lame shall leap like a gazelle." And he was saying here's a little photograph of My kingdom. Look at the demons flee. Look at the people with nervous and mental disorders and brain damage and all of these things, look at the transformation. Look at the healing of the physical. This is the kingdom. These are the credentials.

It really disturbs me, deeply, when people come along today and claim to be healers. They miss the whole point of why Jesus healed. This isn't the, they aren't here to announce the kingdom. Jesus will do that when He gets here. You say, "Well does God still heal today?" You'd better believe it. "If any sick among you let him call for the elders of the church to pray for them." He heals if He chooses to. By the way as you study the book of Acts the healings get less and less and less and less until at the end they disappear altogether. And as Paul writes his epistles and he says talks to somebody that's got a disease he says to Timothy for example, he doesn't say heal yourself fellow, you know how to do it. He says, "Take a little wine for your stomach's sake." He says, "I had to leave Trophimus sick. He says Epaphras is nigh unto death for your sake. He apparently couldn't do a thing about it, because once, watch it, once Israel turned their back on the king there was no reason any more for the features announcing the kingdom to be still taking place, you see, so they faded.

When we did this study some months ago I shared with you that when Jesus healed there was six features of His healing that have never been duplicated except by the apostles to whom He gave the same power. Number one, Jesus healed with a word and a touch. Touch or a word! Remember a man came and said, "Just say the word and he'll be healed." He knew a word or a touch. No falderal a word or a touch. He could heal whether He was there or not there, present or absent.

Secondly, He healed instantaneously. It always amazes me that today would be healers say, "And you know this wonderful person is healed and they're going to begin to get better." What do you mean they're healed and they're going to begin to get better? I always watch that character that's on Tonight on TV who gets all those people up there. Boy that's awful. And he gets those people up there and he starts, he gets somebody who's supposed to be deaf and dumb and then he starts saying little words in their ear and it's obvious that they can't say a thing.

Well he says they're going to be improved. God has healed them. They're going to get better. Listen, Jesus never healed that way. When He healed the blind man, the blind man saw. When He healed the dumb man the dumb man talked. Healed the deaf man, the deaf man heard. It wasn't any stumbling or mumbling around that's going to get better. Jesus healed with a word and a touch and He healed instantaneously every time, and so did the apostles. There is never a malingering healing. There is never a stage healing. One stage, two stage, three stage and by the time you hit five you'll be okay. Never.

Thirdly He healed totally. There's no partial healing. He healed totally. Whole.

Fourthly He healed everybody. I love that. He healed everybody. Luke 4:40, everybody without discrimination, without concern, all manner of illness, all manner of disease, all manner of symptoms with a word, a touch, instantaneously, totally, He healed everybody. Now nobody's every been able to duplicate that outside the apostolic era. And so whatever it is that people claim to have today it isn't this, not unless their the Messiah or His direct apostles here to announce the kingdom. And you know what? You say well the apostles are with me. They're still doing miracles in the book of Acts. Yes, and in the book of Acts they're still a last really a re-offer of the kingdom to Israel and after that the miracles begin to fade out. No sense of giving them a photograph here's what the kingdom is going to be like. They're not interested any more. They don't even want to know. They don't care. That's it. Jesus healed with a word, and a touch, instantaneously, totally, everybody, and then I told you remember Jesus healed organic disease?

He healed organic diseases, real diseases, like people with shriveled up arms got whole arms. People crippled took off running just remember when Peter and John the man got up and jumped and hopped and hollered all over the temple, and not low back pain. Jesus didn't go around healing low back pain. Some of these people, you know the problem with people today is they got a healing because they had such a lousy diagnosis. They didn't have anything to start with. Jesus healed organic disease.

And then sixthly, and I love this one, Jesus raised dead people, any and all that He wanted to, and so could the apostles. He healed with a word, and a touch, instantaneously, totally, everybody, organic disease and He raised the dead and those are all glorious manifestations of what the kingdom is going to be like. These were the kings credentials and He passed it on to His special agents, His

apostles, and said you go out and do the same will you, so they'll know I'm the king and I've got a kingdom and I want them to be in it. And you know what, at the start it looked so good. Oh it looked good. He came along and He began to minister at the right point, in the right place, by the right proclamation, with the right partners, on the right plan, and lastly to the right results or the right product.

Verse 25 and we'll close. "And there followed Him great multitudes of people from Galilee, from Decapolis, from Jerusalem, from Judea, from beyond the Jordan." Listen, great multitudes. They came. That word great multitude *acalas*is not simply a crowd, but it means a huge heterogeneous mixed multitude. Gobs of people, not single-minded, coming for all kinds of reasons were trailing Him all over Galilee. And that's what He wanted. From Decapolis, the region northeast of Galilee with the ten federated cities, and from Jerusalem, Judea, to the south, and from the east, Peria, and from beyond the Jordan, and there were massive mobs coming, the foretaste of the kingdom. You know what it's going to be like at kingdom? The whole world gathers at Jesus' feet, right? This is just a little picture of the kingdom. All the healings, all the casting out of demons, all the wonderful message of salvation and all the world coming to Jesus. That's the picture of the kingdom.

People, it started out so good, got all the right results, but it ended sad didn't it? We will not have this man, to what, to reign over us. They didn't want the king, they didn't get the kingdom, the miracles came to an end. And you know something? It was all postponed, but it was a great beginning.

Let me say this in closing. What is your reaction to the ministry of the king? What about His works, what about His words? Do you believe them? I'll tell you something, the millennial kingdom may be in the future, but you know Jesus Christ reigns as King of kings and Lord of lords in my heart. Does He in your heart? If you're a Christian He does. You know it's kind of like the kingdom went underground. The world didn't want it, but there's a remnant of godly people who want Him as king and those of us who believe have entered His kingdom. What a great reality. Well let's pray.

We thank you again Father for taking us through the adventure of seeing again the majesty of Jesus Christ. Father we could spend time doing nothing greater than this, nothing, than to behold Him who is God. Oh Father you have instructed us through the apostle Paul to gaze on the glory of the Lord and thus be changed into His image from one level of glory to the next. We've done it tonight. We've seen Him in His beauty and His majesty. Thank you for the glimpse. Maybe we love Him more, worship Him deeper, and truer than ever before. In His majestic name we pray. Amen.

Available online at: http://www.gty.org
COPYRIGHT (C) 2014 Grace to You

You may reproduce this Grace to You content for non-commercial purposes in accordance with Grace to You's Copyright Policy (http://www.gty.org/connect/copyright).