



*The Inspiration of St. Matthew,*  
Caravaggio, 1602

## OPENING PRAYER

Proper 28<sup>1</sup>

Blessed Lord, who caused all holy Scriptures to be written  
for our learning:  
Grant us so to hear them, read, mark, learn,  
and inwardly digest them,  
that we may embrace and ever hold fast  
the blessed hope of everlasting life,  
which you have given us in our Savior Jesus Christ;  
who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit,  
one God, for ever and ever. Amen.

## MATTHEW 8<sup>2</sup>

### Jesus Cleanses a Leper

8 When Jesus[a] had come down from the mountain, great crowds followed him; 2 and there was a leper[b] who came to him and knelt before him, saying, “Lord, if you choose, you can make me clean.” 3 He stretched out his hand and touched him, saying, “I do choose. Be made clean!” Immediately his leprosy[c] was cleansed. 4 Then Jesus said to him, “See that you say nothing to anyone; but go, show yourself to the priest, and offer the gift that Moses commanded, as a testimony to them.”

### Jesus Heals a Centurion’s Servant

5 When he entered Capernaum, a centurion came to him, appealing to him 6 and saying, “Lord, my servant is lying at home paralyzed, in terrible distress.” 7 And he said to him, “I will come and cure him.” 8 The centurion answered, “Lord, I am not worthy to have you come under my roof; but only speak the word, and my servant will be healed. 9 For I also am a man under authority, with soldiers under me; and I say to one, ‘Go,’ and he goes, and to another, ‘Come,’ and he comes, and to my slave, ‘Do this,’ and the slave does it.” 10 When Jesus heard him, he was amazed and said to those who followed him, “Truly I tell you, in no one[d] in Israel have I found such faith. 11 I tell you, many will come from east and west and will eat with Abraham and Isaac and Jacob in the kingdom of heaven, 12 while the heirs of the kingdom will be thrown into the outer darkness, where there will be weeping and gnashing of teeth.” 13 And to the centurion Jesus said, “Go; let it be done for you according to your faith.” And the servant was healed in that hour.

### Jesus Heals Many at Peter’s House

14 When Jesus entered Peter’s house, he saw his 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 serve him. 16 That evening they brought to him many who were possessed with demons; and he cast out the spirits with a word and cured all who were sick. 17 This was to fulfill what had been spoken through the prophet Isaiah, “He took our infirmities and bore our diseases.”

### Would-Be Followers of Jesus

18 Now when Jesus saw great crowds around him, he gave orders to go over to the other side. 19 A scribe then approached and said, “Teacher, I will follow you wherever you go.” 20 And Jesus said to him, “Foxes have holes, and birds of the air have nests; but the Son of Man has nowhere to lay his head.” 21 Another of his disciples said to him, “Lord, first let me go and bury my father.” 22 But Jesus said to him, “Follow me, and let the dead bury their own dead.”

<sup>1</sup> Episcopal Book of Common Prayer pp.236

<sup>2</sup> All Bible quotations and footnotes are from Biblegateway.com, New Revised Standard Version Updated Edition (NRSVUE)  
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### **Jesus Stills the Storm**

23 And when he got into the boat, his disciples followed him. 24 A windstorm arose on the sea, so great that the boat was being swamped by the waves; but he was asleep. 25 And they went and woke him up, saying, "Lord, save us! We are perishing!" 26 And he said to them, "Why are you afraid, you of little faith?" Then he got up and rebuked the winds and the sea; and there was a dead calm. 27 They were amazed, saying, "What sort of man is this, that even the winds and the sea obey him?"

### **Jesus Heals the Gadarene Demoniacs**

28 When he came to the other side, to the country of the Gadarenes,[e] two demoniacs coming out of the tombs met him. They were so fierce that no one could pass that way. 29 Suddenly they shouted, "What have you to do with us, Son of God? Have you come here to torment us before the time?" 30 Now a large herd of swine was feeding at some distance from them. 31 The demons begged him, "If you cast us out, send us into the herd of swine." 32 And he said to them, "Go!" So they came out and entered the swine; and suddenly, the whole herd rushed down the steep bank into the sea and perished in the water. 33 The swineherds ran off, and on going into the town, they told the whole story about what had happened to the demoniacs. 34 Then the whole town came out to meet Jesus; and when they saw him, they begged him to leave their neighborhood.

### Footnotes

Matthew 8:1 Gk *he*

Matthew 8:2 The terms leper and leprosy can refer to several diseases

Matthew 8:3 The terms leper and leprosy can refer to several diseases

Matthew 8:10 Other ancient authorities (manuscripts) read *Truly I tell you, not even*

Matthew 8:28 Other ancient authorities (manuscripts) read *Gergesenes*; others, *Gerasenes*

## OVERVIEW<sup>3</sup>

### Chapter 8

- Matthew shifts from teaching to action/healing.
- 6 stories are in Mark, Matthew, and Luke.
- On Following Jesus: Matthew 8:18-22 and Luke 9:57-62 is from Q.

#### 8:1-4 Jesus Cleanses a Leper

- “Lord, if you choose, you can make me clean.” 3 He stretched out his hand and touched him, saying, “I do choose. Be made clean!” VV. 2-3
- Echoes Num 12 (Moses heals Miriam), and 2 Kings 5:1-14 Elisha heals Nathan.
- Observes the Laws of Moses (Lev 13:49) -- Jesus sends the healed man to a priest

#### 8:5-13 Jesus Heals a Centurion’s Servant

- Roman centurion becomes an exemplar of faith when he asks for help from Jesus, a Jew
- Jesus offers to help a Gentile. After the soldier’s statement on authority, Jesus identifies the soldier as having faith.
- Jesus’ response is threefold: he declares that no one Israel has such faith; he makes a prophetic threat using the language in Psalm 107:3 “the heirs of the kingdom” which may mean the Jews will suffer eschatological rejection while many from the east and the west (Gentiles will enjoy eschatological salvation; and he heals the servant.

#### 8:14-17 Jesus Heals Many at Peter’s House

- This story is about an early Church leader, Peter, and remembered in Matthew’s community.
- The fact Peter had a family and a home in Capernaum places an important caveat to the “Follow Me” v.4:19. He and Andrew left their nets but not their families.

#### 8:18-22 Would-Be Followers of Jesus

- The scribe asks Jesus as teacher not Lord and he is not asked to follow Jesus.
- The disciple refers to Jesus as Lord gets the request to follow Jesus.
- “Follow me, and let the dead bury their own dead.” V.22
- Jesus may be saying, let the spiritually dead take care of the burial. Jesus must be followed now. This saying is not easily explained or understood. Nonetheless the early church made burial a rite of the Church, an important individual and community event, and an act of loving kindness.

#### 8:23-27 Jesus Stills the Storm

- The sea and the storm may symbolize world and its difficulties, and the ship the church.
- Discipleship requires faith in Jesus in the midst of trial. The Christological message is that Jesus is a prophet greater than Jonah. Unlike Jonah, Jesus does not pray to God but directly addresses the storm; and in stilling the cosmic forces of evil that threaten the created order he exercises the power of YHWH himself.
- The wind and sea obey him – it is the first time Jesus controls elements of nature, it has implications for discipleship and for the Christology of Jesus.
- “What sort of man is this, that even the winds and the sea obey him?” V.27

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<sup>3</sup> Sources include notes from Barton and Muddiman, Biblegateway.com, Brown, Raymond E., S.S., Harper Collins Study Bible, NRSV Version, France, R. T., Levine, Morris, Leon

### Comparing the Synoptics

Mark 4:34-41	Matthew 8:23-27	Luke 8:22-25
35 On that day, when evening had come, he said to them, "Let us go across to the other side." 36 And leaving the crowd behind, they took him with them in the boat, just as he was. Other boats were with him.	23 And when he got into the boat, his disciples followed him.	22 One day he got into a boat with his disciples, and he said to them, "Let us go across to the other side of the lake."
37 A great windstorm arose, and the waves beat into the boat, so that the boat was already being swamped. 38 But he was in the stern, asleep on the cushion, and they woke him up and said to him, "Teacher, do you not care that we are perishing?"	24 A windstorm suddenly arose on the sea, so great that the boat was being swamped by the waves, but he was asleep. 25 And they went and woke him up, saying, "Lord, save us! We are perishing!"	So they put out, 23 and while they were sailing he fell asleep. A windstorm swept down on the lake, and the boat was filling with water, and they were in danger. 24 They went to him and woke him up, shouting, "Master, Master, we are perishing!"
39 And waking up, he rebuked the wind and said to the sea, "Be silent! Be still!" Then the wind ceased, and there was a dead calm. 40 He said to them, "Why are you afraid? Have you still no faith?"	26 And he said to them, "Why are you afraid, you of little faith?" Then he got up and rebuked the winds and the sea, and there was a dead calm.	And waking up, he rebuked the wind and the raging waves; they ceased, and there was a calm. 25 Then he said to them, "Where is your faith?"
41 And they were filled with great fear and said to one another, "Who then is this, that even the wind and the sea obey him?"	27 They were amazed, saying, "What sort of man is this, that even the winds and the sea obey him?"	They were terrified and amazed and said to one another, "Who then is this, that he commands even the winds and the water and they obey him?"

- The commentaries assume the source of the story is Mark and that Matthew and Luke included it in their Gospels.
- The three gospels are amazingly consistent.
- All three gospels emphasize the danger of the storm, the turning to Jesus, the issue of faith, and the disciples' question of what sort of person is Jesus who commands nature.

### 8:28-34 Jesus Heals the Gadarene Demoniacs

- Themes on Jesus' authority and who is his mission is to Jews and/or Gentiles.
- Gadarene maybe a gentile location because it is in Decapolis and swine are involved.<sup>4</sup>
- Could imply a mixed population, including the lost sheep of Israel.
- The demons recognize Jesus as "Son of God".<sup>5</sup>
- Jesus bends his rule of confining his mission to the people of Israel
- The demon-filled swine stampeding into the water generates hostility from the local population.

<sup>4</sup> "Gerasenes" from Gerasa is 30 miles SE from the Sea of Galilee. (Again Mark's problems with geography in Palestine.) Source: Barton and Muddiman Editors, *Oxford Bible Commentary*, 2001

<sup>5</sup> In Mark 5:6-7 the narrative framework implies that demonic powers are intent on prohibiting Jesus from entering the Gentile region: the storm on the Lake; now a demoniac man (2 in Matthew) with great personal strength hurls himself at Jesus and his party. But this time, the demons in the man do not overpower the people they confront. *Son of the Most High God*, uses a description of God often used in the Hebrew Bible by Jews and Gentiles.

## REFLECTION

What storms have you experienced in your life that your faith in Jesus helped quell?  
 What sort of person do you perceive Jesus in Matthew to be?

## CLOSING PRAYER

We thank you, heavenly Father,  
 for the witness of your apostle and evangelist,  
 Matthew, to the Gospel of Beatitude and Grace  
 which you have given us in your Son, our Savior;  
 and we pray that, after his example,  
 we may with ready wills and hearts obey  
 the calling of our Lord to follow him;  
 through Jesus Christ, who lives and reigns with you  
 and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever. Amen

*The Rev. Zoila Schoenbrun*

## GOSPEL COMPARISON<sup>6</sup>

Pericope <sup>7</sup>	Matthew	Mark	Luke	John
The Cleansing of the Leper	8:1-4	1:40-45	5:12-16	
The Centurion of Capernaum and his Servant	8:5-13	7:30	7:1-10 13:28-29	4:46b-54
The Healing of Peter's Mother-in-law	8:14-15	1:29-31	4:38-39	
The Sick Healed at Evening	8:16-17	1:32-34	4:40-41	
On Following Jesus, the Would-be Followers	8:18-22		9:57-62	
Stilling the Storm	8:23-27	4:35-41	8:22-25	
The Gadarene Demoniacs	8:28-34	5:1-20	8:26-39	

<sup>6</sup> Source: <http://www.gospelparallels.com/>

<sup>7</sup> An extract from a text, especially a passage from the Bible, "a book of pericopes"

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