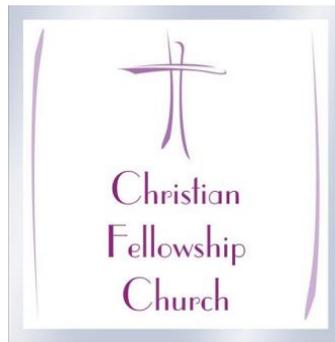


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Ministry of the Word  
**Wednesday 22th April 2020**  
by Vincent Gannon

**Scripture:** Matthew 4:23-25

**Subject:** Part 13 – The Work of the King

*<sup>23</sup> And Jesus went about all Galilee, teaching in their synagogues, preaching the gospel of the kingdom, and healing all kinds of sickness and all kinds of disease among the people. <sup>24</sup> Then His fame went throughout all Syria; and they brought to Him all sick people who were afflicted with various diseases and torments, and those who were demon-possessed, epileptics, and paralytics; and He healed them. <sup>25</sup> Great multitudes followed Him—from Galilee, and from Decapolis, Jerusalem, Judea, and beyond Jordan.*

The King called His men to follow. Jesus said that He would make them fishers of men. Their training would not be in a classroom or collage nor even a synagogue or a safe place where He would instruct them. He took them into the depths of need, and onto the sea of sorrows and destruction, demonstrating to them the power of the King. When He spoke, we hear the Word of God manifested in the flesh (John 1:1), and what He did, we see the work of God demonstrated (John 14:11-14).

Jesus called his men unto discipleship. That applied to His men that day when they left their boats, but it also applies to us today. Being a disciple or discipleship means a follower, a serious student of the Lord and the Word of God. It's not just about knowing Scripture, but also living the truth in the power of the Holy Spirit.

Of all the kings in Israel or even leaders, there was no one like Jesus. *How could there be?* Very simply put, because He and He alone is the Messiah. Remember that wonderful Scripture in John 8:28-30:

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***28 Then Jesus said to them, "When you lift up the Son of Man, then you will know that I am He, and that I do nothing of Myself; but as My Father taught Me, I speak these things. 29 And He who sent Me is with Me. The Father has not left Me alone, for I always do those things that please Him." 30 As He spoke these words, many believed in Him.***

The point here I believe is very important. It's not that Jesus did not have power of Himself but as a man he made himself subject to the Father, saying and doing only those things that the Father told Him to say and do. He was at all times submitted to the will of the Father. That's important to remember because some may think that Jesus acted independent of the Father in His ministry but He never did.

Luke tells us in chapter 4 verses 18 to 21 that when Jesus was in Nazareth He went into the synagogue and read from Isaiah 61:1-3

***"The Spirit of the Lord is upon Me, Because He has anointed Me. To preach the gospel to the poor; He has sent Me to heal the broken-hearted, To proclaim liberty to the captives And recovery of sight to the blind, To set at liberty those who are oppressed; 19 To proclaim the acceptable year of the Lord." 20 Then He closed the book, and gave it back to the attendant and sat down. And the eyes of all who were in the synagogue were fixed on Him. 21 And He began to say to them, "Today this Scripture is fulfilled in your hearing."***

No earthly king could ever say anything like this, not even remotely close. The kings and kingdoms of this world operate contrary to this. In the poor kingdoms, the kings were selfish and in the rich ones they are incredibly selfish. Jesus our King is beyond generous in mercy, grace and love. As He said to the apostles, he did not come to be served but to serve, see Matthew 20:20-28 and Mark 10:35-45. Most kings want to live but he came to die in order that He would give life to all who would believe.

One of the ways Jesus proved His divine character was through miracles. Miracles were of tremendous significance to the Messianic and Kingly credentials of Jesus. We see this here in Matthew but also in the Gospel of John. John focused His Gospel on Christ's deity. To demonstrate this, he also concentrated on two aspects, His words and works. John stated in chapter 20:30-31 the following.

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*“And truly Jesus did many other signs in the presence of His disciples, which are not written in this book; <sup>31</sup> but these are written that you may believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God, and that believing you may have life in His name”.*

Jesus' claims and miracles were so astounding that even His enemies desperately suggested that He must be demon possessed, some even suggested insane. But no one has ever heard or seen an insane person say or do as Jesus had done which we see in John 10:19-21:

*<sup>19</sup> Therefore there was a division again among the Jews because of these sayings. <sup>20</sup> And many of them said, “He has a demon and is mad. Why do you listen to Him?” <sup>21</sup> Others said, “These are not the words of one who has a demon. Can a demon open the eyes of the blind?”*

If you go back to John 9, we read an amazing testimony of a once blind man. Go through the account and when you get down to verses 30 to 33, we read the summary which caused upset in the court that he stood before that day.

*The man answered and said to them, “Why, this is a marvellous thing, that you do not know where He is from; yet He has opened my eyes! <sup>31</sup> Now we know that God does not hear sinners; but if anyone is a worshiper of God and does His will, He hears him. <sup>32</sup> Since the world began it has been unheard of that anyone opened the eyes of one who was born blind. <sup>33</sup> If this Man were not from God, He could do nothing.”*

Both the disciples and the Pharisees considered that the man's condition was the result of sin, either his own or that of his parents. Jesus in John 9 verse 3 answered that question for the disciples. The Pharisees simply denied the evidence before them but some did have their doubts in verse 16. Denial is very different than proving it did not happen. The burden of proof was on them but they waved it away, on account of their preconceived prejudices concerning Jesus. This is clearly seen in John 7:45-48. However there is evidence that some of His enemies recognised that Jesus was no ordinary man and many times people were amazed at His teaching (Matthew 7v28-29).

A lot of the things that religious people hold to and even what they believe are far from the Gospel that Jesus and His disciples preached, historical and presently. Many hold to private beliefs about Jesus, his teaching and even miracles that have no Scriptural basis whatsoever.

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In Christianity, evangelism is the commitment to or act of publicly preaching the Gospel with the intention to share the message and teachings of Jesus Christ. In verse 23 of Matthew 4, we see Jesus being our prime example as He went throughout Galilee teaching, 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.

## Teaching - His Works

### 1. The Place where He Taught.

Matthew says Jesus went "*about in all Galilee*". The region of Galilee is about sixty miles by thirty miles, and the Lord moved about in it, for a time. So anyone who wanted to see or hear Him did not, in those days, have far to travel. In the brief time that He had He certainly ministered to many people there. While He ministered around that region, Jesus went into the synagogues and He would teach – Why go there? - because this would reach the heart of Israel. 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*, the true believing Jew came in search of understanding of God's Word, the Torah. That's where the remnant would be, wouldn't they? While many used the synagogue as a place to socially gather and do business, it was primarily a place where they'd go for religious worship and instruction about the true God, in the best way they knew how. So Jesus went where they would listen to Him.

Remember, that the first formal place where the Jews as a nation gathered to worship was the Tabernacle, and they lived around it. After they reached the promised land and were established, a time came when Solomon built the first temple. The synagogue is believed to have developed during the Babylonian exile, and in the foot notes you can read more information regarding its history (\*1). By New Testament times the synagogue had become, next to the Temple, the most important institution in Jewish life. Around them virtually all Jewish religious, as well as social life, centred. To be banished from the synagogue was the greatest tragedy for the Jew. We have seen this in the book of Hebrews in chapters 6:4-6 and in 10:35-39. It was not unusual for visiting dignitaries or rabbis to be given the honour of

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expounding the Scriptures, a practice which Jesus and the apostle Paul took advantage of, on numerous occasions. (Luke 4:16-17 and Acts 13:15-16).

*Just for your information,* You will come across the terms elders and rulers particularly in the Gospels. A synagogue would have its own structure of leadership. There would be ten elders three of whom were appointed “rulers” and it was the rulers who gave the permission who would fellowship. They also sorted out all kinds of disputes. During the Roman times they operated very much as they had done with the exception of executions according to the Levitical law, hence why they needed Pilates permission to crucify Jesus. Scripture was held very high which leads us to what Jesus taught.

## **2. The Teaching that He proclaimed.**

Jesus taught them the Scripture. He expounded it as He read, explaining section by section, and often verse by verse. That was His pattern; to open the Scripture, to give exposition. This is exactly what He did throughout the pattern of His ministry and Paul often followed this pattern too. I really believe this is the greatest way to preach and teach the Word of God. I must say, I would have loved to be on the road to Emmaus with Jesus as he expounded the Scriptures which we find in Luke 24:13-35, and in verse 17 it says:

*“And beginning with Moses and all the Prophets, he explained to them what was said in all the Scriptures concerning himself.”*

Not only did Jesus teach in their synagogues, He also preached the gospel of the Kingdom. William Hendrickson, a great commentator, said 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,”*

In Jesus’s ministry, He used both. But just to note, it doesn't do any good to proclaim something if you don't explain what it is! Jesus proclaimed the kingdom of God, which is what they had longed for. This was good news. Jesus was saying, there is a way to escape and the good news is, you can be a part of that kingdom. *How?* 1 Corinthians 15:1, tells us.

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***"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. 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. He didn't cover all the ground early on here. He just simply announced, "I've got good news. Repent, for the kingdom of God is hand. Jesus announced that God's long promised Messiah and King had come to establish His kingdom. He not only continued but extended the preaching of John the Baptist.

The Gospel means "good news" and it is good news still today. It is the supreme truth around which his earthly teaching was centred Luke tells us in Acts 1:2-3.

***"until the day in which He was taken up, after He through the Holy Spirit had given commandments to the apostles whom He had chosen, <sup>3</sup> to whom He also presented Himself alive after His suffering by many infallible proofs, being seen by them during forty days and speaking of the things pertaining to the kingdom of God."***

John's preaching was about the coming of the King and His kingdom but not about the gospel of the kingdom. Simply, John's preaching focused on sin and judgment. Don't make the mistake that Jesus did not do the same, He did. When Jesus' ministry was resisted more and more by the Jewish leaders, His preaching became more sterner than that of John the Baptist. Jesus' words became even more direct than that of John. Jesus' cleverest enemies could never corner Him in his words or confuse Him, or confound Him. They could find no error in what he said. His teaching and preaching, His words were His divine qualification but so were His Works, which we see in verses 23 and 24 of Matthew 4.

### **Healing**

When Peter preached his first sermon to the church in Acts chapter 2, he said this in verse 22: ***"Men of Israel, hear these words: Jesus of Nazareth, a man attested to you by God with mighty works and wonders and signs that God did through him in your midst, as you yourselves know"*** These indeed were His credentials.

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Kings don't go around, laying hands on the sick and praying for individual's healing, never mind actually healing them. If they chose to, they probably would only visit a few for P.R. purposes and would always be selective. Not our King! Jesus weighed in among them and laid hands on them all. There was no one following with a wash basin or hand sanitiser, nor did Jesus wear a mask! He reached out and laid hands even on those whom the Jews were forbidden to go near, and for good reason. He knew the cause and source of their sicknesses and was most importantly moved with compassion.

Jesus' healings were a divine verification, even though His word ought to have been sufficient proof of His Messiahship. We know from the Scriptures that many heard Jesus preach and they believed which is most important. We know that John the Baptist never had signs or miracles; we read this in John 10:41. However, Jesus' miracles had without doubt a profound impact on the people who came to hear Him preach. Yes, there were times that there was no sermon proceeding the healing like that of the amazing miracle of the widow's son who was on the way to be buried and Jesus raised him to life (Luke 7:12-16). Note what it says, verse 13

***“When the Lord saw her, His heart went out to her, and He said, “Don't cry”.***

This is very important to note what followed in verse 10. They were filled with great awe and praised God... they went on to say in verse 16 (NIV).

***“They were all filled with awe and praised God. “A great prophet has appeared among us,” they said. “God has come to help his people.”***

Alexander McLaren said, ***“It may be doubted whether we have an adequate notion of the immense number of Christ miracles. Those recorded are but a very small portion of those done. Those early ones were illustrations of the nature of His kingdom, they were His first gifts to His kingdom subjects”***

Yet when the lepers were healed, as recorded in three of the Gospels (Matthew 8:2-4, Mark 1:40-42. Luke 5:12-13), we are not told that if they became believers. Which proves that Christ's compassion knows no bounds. The writer of Hebrews in chapter 2 verses 3-4 says:

***“how will we escape [the penalty] if we ignore such a great salvation [the gospel, the new covenant]? For it was spoken at first by the Lord, and it was confirmed to us and proved***

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*authentic by those who personally heard [Him speak], <sup>4</sup> [and besides this evidence] God also testifying with them [confirming the message of salvation], both by signs and wonders and by various miracles [carried out by Jesus and the apostles] and by [granting to believers the] gifts of the Holy Spirit according to His own will”.*

Jesus healed every kind of sickness among the people. Matthew lists them here but I'm sure there were others as well. There were no restrictions to the power of God, and there still is none. Matthew mentions the various types such as “demoniacs”; these are illnesses caused by the power of darkness. They are both physical and mental and we find this in Matthew Chapters 9, 12 and 17 as well as in Mark 9 and Luke 13. This of course does not mean that all sicknesses in the bible are in some way described as demonic presence or a direct cause. While we rightly don't see all sickness like that, we should not be surprised if we come across it. The New Testament speaks about the divine power given to combat the powers of demonic darkness (\*3). You could it read for yourself Luke 9:1 and 10:17-19. Acts 8;6-7 and of course Ephesians 6:12.

To demonstrate the absoluteness of His power there are a number of things that are surly unique.

1. Jesus healed directly, with a word or a touch, without prayer and sometimes even without being near the person.
2. Jesus healed instantaneously, except for one man.
3. It was never a partial healing.
4. He always healed without discrimination or affliction.
5. He healed irrespective of what was the problem or for how long the person had it.
6. Despite the disease or sickness having run its full course and claiming the life of the victim, Jesus could bring them back to life.

These were found in the apostles ministry as we see in the book of Acts. There are many (not a few) that believe that Jesus does not heal today nor does His church have any authority, but

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the thing is, I have never met any believer either in leadership or otherwise that has ceased to pray for healing when it's themselves or someone else they love!

I'm sure many of those who came to hear or just to see Jesus came out of curiosity, may have left with a question or two ringing in their ears and on their minds and hearts. But no one could or did say ever, that they had seen it all before, certainly not as they witnessed with Jesus. It was a very wide area that was touched in ways that had never happened before or since.

I must say, I have personally witnessed as well as heard from reliable sources of God's glorious healing power as well as his protection, provision and deliverance. Yet, the greatest miracle remains is that of salvation for it is an eternal miracle.

The whole purpose of the gospels and not just Matthew, is to conclude that He was God, not just another man.

And finally verses 24 and 25,

Jesus' fame went throughout the whole region of Galilee and even spread into Syria. These healings Jesus performed did three things. Firstly, it confirmed His message as Deity for no other human healed in the way he did. Secondly, it fulfilled prophecy that the Messiah would indeed have power to heal and do miracles. Thirdly, proved that the Kingdom was at hand. These were a foretaste of the whole Kingdom, a miraculous, supernatural Kingdom! Hebrews 6:5 pointed this out when it said ***"You have tasted the powers of the age to come."***

They had seen the miracles, the signs and wonders and diverse gifts of the Holy Spirit that confirmed the preaching of the gospel. [Hebrews 2, 3, and 4]. You've tasted of the age to come. That's why Jesus in Matthew 12 condemned the unbelieving Pharisees. They had seen the power of the kingdom, and should have known He was the King from the prophecies in the Old Testament.

People followed Jesus around as we see in verse 25. Some believed Jesus, while most were happy to get their needs met but only in this life (John 6). This is very reflective of what we

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see today. Many people rush to many different meetings, hoping to get healed or delivered but not necessarily to meet Jesus regardless of the physical work that He would do in their lives. It keeps coming back to what is our attitude before God. And interestingly, no-one is ever saved by a miracle. Yes, someone can receive a miracle and still go to hell. A person may even be impressed and profess with their lips, but they are not truly saved. We see this in the Bible.

Jesus always separated being healed physically and being healed spiritually. He would say, 'your sins are forgiven' as a separate distinction from healing. The miracle of Salvation, and it is a miracle, it's a gift from God, for he has taken our hearts of stone and given us hearts of flesh, he has taken us and made us a new creation as 2 Corinthians 5:17 says. We as believers are miracles! We serve an amazing God who is unlike any King! We have so much to give thanks, For His word that saves us and His works that keeps us.

Amen!