

Susanna Wesley (1669–1742), the mother of John and Charles Wesley, had 19 children (10 survived to adulthood). When someone once asked her something like “Which of your children is your favorite?”, she is said to have replied in effect:

“The one who is sick, until he is well;
the one who is away, until he returns;
the one who is in trouble, until he is helped.”

Study Questions for Matthew 8-9:8

1) What is the significance of the miracle stories in Matthew 8 and Matthew 9:1–8?

Purposefully presented (not in chronological order), Jesus’ supreme authority as the Messiah and Son of God is demonstrated through his power over every realm of human brokenness: **disease and impurity** (healing the leper), **illness from a distance** (the centurion’s servant), **widespread affliction** (many healings), **nature** (calming the storm), **demonic forces** (exorcism in the Gadarenes), and ultimately **sin itself** (forgiving and healing the paralytic).

Further, those healed were meaningful: the leper (**societal outcast, unwanted**); centurion’s servant (**Gentile outsider** of extraordinary faith); Peter’s mother-in-law (**family**); many sick (**masses**, broad human suffering); **demon-possessed**; and paralytic (**the spiritually broken**).

These miracles authenticate Jesus’ identity, fulfill prophecy (Isaiah 53:4), illustrate the invasion of a broken world with God’s compassion and inclusion, and call for faith—while showing varied human responses: trust, awe, fear, and rejection. The section climaxes in 9:1–8, where Jesus proves his divine authority to forgive sins, addressing humanity’s deepest need.

2) In Matthew 8:1-4, the leper approaches Jesus despite his condition making him an outcast. What does his bold step teach us about bringing our deepest needs or "unclean" areas to Jesus?

The leper risks rejection by coming close and worshiping Jesus (Matthew 8:2), showing that we don't have to clean ourselves up first. In everyday life, this encourages us to be honest with Jesus about struggles like shame, addiction, or past mistakes—approaching Him in prayer or confession without fear, trusting He meets us where we are.

3) Jesus touches the leper and says, “I am willing; be cleansed” (Matthew 8:3). How does this moment of touch and willingness challenge our ideas about who God is willing to help?

Touching the untouchable broke social and religious barriers, showing Jesus' compassion is personal and immediate. Today, it reminds us God is willing to help anyone—perhaps a difficult family member, coworker, or neighbor we might avoid—prompting us to reach out with kindness instead of judgment in our relationships.

4) After the healing, Jesus instructs the man to show himself to the priest and offer the gift Moses commanded “as a testimony to them” (Matthew 8:4). Why do you think Jesus emphasized this step, and how can we apply it?

This followed the Law (Leviticus 14) and served as evidence to the religious leaders. In daily life, it models gratitude and obedience—when God helps us (through healing, provision, or restored

relationships), we can share our story thoughtfully or live in a way that testifies to His goodness, rather than staying silent.

5) In Matthew 8:14-15, Jesus enters Peter's house and heals his mother-in-law with a simple touch, after which she immediately serves them. What does her response after healing suggest about how we can live after God touches our lives?

She rises and serves right away (Matthew 8:15), turning healing into action. This applies to us: when God restores health, peace, or strength (perhaps after illness, grief, or burnout), a natural response is to use that renewed energy to serve others—family, church, or community—in practical ways.

6) Matthew 8:16-17 says Jesus healed all who were brought to Him, fulfilling Isaiah 53:4 (“He Himself took our infirmities and bore our sicknesses”). How does this picture of Jesus carrying our burdens change the way we handle stress or illness today?

Jesus actively takes on our pain (Matthew 8:17), showing He shares in our struggles. In everyday life, this invites us to cast anxieties on Him (instead of carrying them alone), pray for others who are hurting, and find peace knowing He understands and cares deeply about physical and emotional burdens.

7) BONUS: Why did the people of the region ask Jesus to leave in Matthew 8:34?

In Matthew 8:34, after Jesus cast the demons into the herd of pigs (causing them to drown), “the whole city came out to meet Jesus. And when they saw Him, they begged Him to depart from their region.”

They asked Jesus to leave primarily because of great fear at His overwhelming authority over demons (Luke 8:37 says they were “seized with great fear”) and economic loss from the destruction of their valuable pigs.

The people showed a strong tolerance for the status quo: even though the two demon-possessed men were now delivered, clothed, and in their right mind. The people preferred the familiar (however broken or dangerous) over the improvement, disruption and change Jesus brought. They valued their livelihood, routine, and “control” more than the miracle of human restoration or the presence of the One who could transform their region.

This challenges us to ask: Do we sometimes tolerate harmful or stagnant situations in our own lives (community, relationships, habits, comfort zones) because change feels too costly or scary or even unwanted?

8) Why does Jesus forgive the paralytic's sins first in Matthew 9:1-8 instead of healing him immediately?

Jesus says, “Son, be of good cheer; your sins are forgiven you” (Matthew 9:2), then heals the man to prove His authority: “But that you may know that the Son of Man has power on earth to forgive sins... Arise, take up your bed, and go to your house” (9:6).

He prioritizes forgiveness because sin is the root of all brokenness; physical healing demonstrates His divine right to forgive.

We often seek fixes for surface problems (health, stress, relationships), but Jesus addresses our deepest need—forgiveness and freedom from guilt. Bring your real struggles to Him first; His forgiveness brings lasting peace and strength for everything else.

9) After the paralytic walks away healed (Matthew 9:7-8), the crowds marvel and glorify God. How can everyday "healings" or breakthroughs in our lives lead us and others to praise God more?

The crowd's reaction shows gratitude spreads (Matthew 9:8). Practically, when God brings breakthrough—overcoming worry, mending a relationship, or providing in need—we can share thanks openly (in conversation, prayer groups, or social media), inspiring others to recognize God's work and turn to Him.

BONUS: Why was healing a significant part of Jesus' ministry?

Matthew 9:35: ³⁵ Then Jesus went about all the cities and villages, **teaching** in their synagogues, **preaching** the gospel of the kingdom, and **healing** every sickness and every disease ^[a] among the people.

In the Gospel of Matthew, Jesus' early ministry is repeatedly summarized with the triad: **preaching** (proclaiming the good news of the kingdom), **teaching** (explaining the kingdom's ethics and truths, as in the Sermon on the Mount), and **healing** (demonstrating the kingdom's power through miracles of restoration).

Healing is **not** an optional or secondary add-on—it's integral and carries profound **theological weight**. Here's why healing holds such importance in this context:

1. Healing Demonstrates Jesus' Messianic Authority and Identity

Jesus' miracles authenticate his claims. After teaching with unmatched authority (Matthew 7:28–29), he immediately shows that authority in action. Healing "every disease and sickness" (4:23) proves he is the promised Messiah who brings God's kingdom into the present. The miracles serve as visible signs (like "credentials") that his message about the kingdom is true and empowered by God.

2. Healing Fulfills Old Testament Prophecy

Matthew explicitly links the healings to **Isaiah 53:4**: "He took our illnesses and bore our diseases" (Matthew 8:17). In the Suffering Servant passage, the Messiah bears humanity's infirmities to bring redemption. By healing, Jesus previews and enacts this role—not just relieving temporary suffering, but pointing to his ultimate work on the cross, where he bears sin's curse (including its physical consequences like disease and death). Sickness and suffering are symptoms of the fallen world under sin's curse (Genesis 3); Jesus' healings signal that he has come to reverse that curse and inaugurate renewal.

3. Healing Symbolizes Deeper Spiritual Restoration

Physical healings are **signs** (as John calls miracles) pointing to the greater reality of salvation:

- Disease represents brokenness from sin.
- Healing illustrates forgiveness, wholeness, and new life.
- In Matthew 9:2–6, Jesus forgives a paralytic's sins first, then heals him physically to prove his authority to forgive—showing that the ultimate "healing" is spiritual deliverance from sin. Every physical miracle foreshadows the eternal healing Jesus accomplishes: liberation from sin, death, and all forms of bondage (Revelation 21:4—no more pain, tears, or death in the full kingdom).

4. Healing Reveals God's Compassion and the Kingdom's Inbreaking

Jesus is moved by compassion (Matthew 9:36; 14:14), touching the untouchable (e.g., the leper in 8:3) and reaching the marginalized (Gentiles, women, outcasts). Healings show that God's kingdom brings mercy, inclusion, and restoration now—not just future hope. They preview the full kingdom where suffering ends, demonstrating God's heart for the whole person (body, soul, relationships).

5. Healing Calls for Faith and Response

Many healings highlight faith (e.g., the centurion's great faith in 8:10; the leper's trust in 8:2). They invite people to respond to Jesus—not just as a healer, but as Lord and Savior. Yet responses vary: some marvel and follow, others reject him (e.g., the Gadarenes in 8:34). This underscores that the kingdom demands faith beyond mere physical relief.

In summary, while preaching announces the kingdom and teaching explains it, **healing enacts and authenticates it** in power. It bridges word and deed, showing that the kingdom Jesus brings is holistic—addressing sin's effects in every dimension of life. The healings are not primarily about temporary health fixes (most healed people eventually died physically); they are messianic signs pointing to Jesus as the one who ultimately defeats sin and restores creation through his death and resurrection. This is why Matthew gives such prominence to healing in the early ministry: it reveals who Jesus truly is and what his coming means for humanity.