

Slum Dog Millionaire (8:1 – 8:17)

In this chapter, Matthew lists outcasts who came to Jesus, seeing him for who he is, and also the in-crowd who can't see Jesus for who he is.

It appears as if God has dealt these outcasts a terrible hand in life however it is because as outcasts these people are prepared to see Jesus for who he really is.

1st. The Leper

- ❖ Disfigured by his crippling disease and excluded from Jewish society.
- ❖ The trouble in his life humbled his heart to be ready to receive Jesus.
- ❖ He freely admits that he is dirty, worships Jesus as Lord and confesses by faith that only Jesus can make him clean.
- ❖ Jesus responds straight away to his humility and heals him.

2nd. The Roman Centurion

- ❖ Life in the army had taught him how authority works, and had given him faith that Jesus could heal with just a word.
- ❖ His background prepared him for his encounter with Jesus.
- ❖ He left having been granted the healing he requested.

3rd. The sick and demonized crowd

- ❖ All the people humbled themselves to receive help from Jesus their Messiah.

4th. Two Demoniacs, a paralysed man, unclean woman and more...

- ❖ All these people were humble enough to receive Jesus as he passed by.
- ❖ They had been prepared by tragedies of life to grasp that Jesus was the Messiah and have faith in him.
- ❖ The rich and religious had no such preparation, yet God wanted to save them but few of them were humble enough.

What kind of man is this?

- He wants us to respond by faith and commitment.
- Many ask; *'how can we believe when good things happen to bad people and bad things happen to good people?'*

Matthew turns it on its head:

- ❖ "Good things" happened to the Jewish in-crowd and it was the worst thing as it made them attached to possessions, parents' rules and theology and blind to the Messiah.
- ❖ "Bad things" that happened to the outcasts were actually the best things as it prepared them to recognize and reach out to the Messiah when he came.
 - ➔ They were slum dog millionaires prepared by the terrible experiences of their lives.
 - ➔ God uses suffering; it softens their hearts to receive the seed of the Gospel.

Matthew 5 vs. 3 – "Blessed are the spiritual beggars, for theirs is the Kingdom of Heaven."

They alert us to great danger of being prosperous and honoured with the in-crowd and give great advantage of being humbled to our knees with the outcasts.

Jesus came to earth with God's ideas and not to start a revolution and overthrow the Roman Empire like many hoped for.

First clue was when he referred to Roman law that any Jewish male could be forced to carry heavy equipment for one mile. Jesus baffles the people by saying carry it for two miles.

He also teaches to pay Caesar's taxes in full → far from the revolution people wanted, therefore they were offended.

The Kingdom Jesus preached had:-

❖ *A bigger enemy*

- Roman 13 vs. 1-2:- God has put authority in place.
- He had not come to defeat Rome but Satan.
- He had not come to kill Romans but save them.

❖ *Bigger goals*

- Jesus brought a Kingdom which would fill the whole Earth and would last forever.
- He wanted to save nations, not destroy them.

❖ *A far greater currency*

- Which Jesus established with humility, faith and submission rather than swords and spears.
- Not on horseback but on a donkey.
- Not crowned with gold but with thorns.
- Not with rings on his fingers but with nails through hands and feet.
→ *He was the hope of Israel but not what they hoped for.*
- Jews accused him of blasphemy and plotted to kill him; (9:3, 12:14)
- Gentiles however welcomed him with open hearts.

- The Roman centurion let Jesus be God's Messiah, bringing God's revolution in God's way.
 - ❖ Jesus warns Jews that unless they have similar faith, they won't enter the Kingdom of Heaven.
- Being a Jew can't save you and their preconceptions may even be a hindrance to salvation → they needed to humble themselves.
 - ❖ We must not let earth-bound hopes obscure the glory of Kingdom Revolution.
- Thus, the Gentiles may end up being saved → doing what Paul did in making them so jealous that they humbled themselves and received Jesus too.
- This shows how God has already chosen the nature of the Kingdom and if they don't embrace it, other nations will.

Christians in every generation have been tempted to reshape Jesus to fit their own desires and expectations. Jesus is *God's* Messiah who fights *God's* enemy for *God's* goals and with *God's* methods. The Revolution which he starts is a revolution led by *God's* agenda. We need to fall in line with *God's* agenda and not our own. If we don't, God will simply find other would-be revolutionaries!

***God's* Kingdom has come and we need to repent and fall into line with *His* programme.**

Matthew 8:16 – 17

- Matthew 8 vs. 17 shows how Jesus snatched authority from Satan to bring victory to the Kingdom of God.
- Here, Jesus wielded His unsurpassed authority.
 - Constant cry of praise as he heals and restores.
- Jesus healed people because he is King and Satan is not!
- Jesus gained his authority through his death on the cross.
- Sickness was an aspect of God's just curse upon sin but our standing changed when Jesus became a curse for us on the cross and died with the victory-cry '*It is finished!*' on his lips.
 - ❖ On the cross Jesus disarmed Satan of ALL his weapons, including sickness; that could resist an advance of God's Kingdom.
- Matthew shows that Jesus dealt with the curse of sickness in the same way he dealt with our sin.
- Jesus was able to heal sickness and drive out demons because he was about to die on the cross to carry our sins and the curse which lay on humankind through sin.
- Satan's kingdom has no authority before the Kingdom of Jesus Christ.

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

**"He took up our infirmities
and carried our diseases."**

Matthew 8:17