

THROUGH THE BIBLE STUDY

MATTHEW 8:1 - 9:26

Since its release in 1994, the animated motion picture, “[The Lion King](#),” has grossed over \$768 million. It ranks in the Top 25 of all-time blockbusters. If you have kids younger than 20 years-old you’ve probably seen [The Lion King](#).

The story is about a young lion cub named *Simba*, and his struggle to regain the kingdom stolen from his father, *Mufasa*, the former lion king. The evil villain, Scar, has taken control of the jungle and ruined life for all the animals.

One night while gazing at the starry sky, Simba hears the voice of his father say to him, “[You are my son and the one true king](#).” His father's affirmation motivates Simba to embark on his mission. He returns to overthrow Scar and his vicious hyenas. Simba liberates the animals and proves that he is the true lion king.

Though not a perfect analogy, the fairytale does have striking similarities to the book of Matthew. Chapter 1 proves that Jesus is the lion king! It records Jesus’ Messianic pedigree. It proves that Jesus is the lion from the tribe of Judah.

Chapter 2 tells of His birth and His enemy’s attempt to kill Him.

In chapter 3 His Father speaks from heaven and reaffirms His identity.

In chapter 4 Jesus takes on Scar, the devil, in a wilderness showdown.

Chapter 5-7 are Jesus' explanation of what life is like in His kingdom.

Now in chapter 8 the Lion King roars!

Jesus strips Scar and his hyenas of their strongholds. He liberates the people of the Jungle from disease and demons. Jesus shows His power over nature.

Jesus proves to the people of the Galilee that He alone is the Lion King!

Chapter 8, "When He had come down from the mountain, great multitudes followed Him. And behold, a leper..."

Leprosy was the AIDS of the ancient world.

It was an incurable disease that started out as a white patch - then turned into an ulcerated sore. Leprosy ate away the flesh and caused physical deformities.

Lepers lost ears and noses - fingers and toes. Leprosy turned feet into nubs.

Research has revealed that leprosy numbs the nerves, and causes the inability to feel pain. A leper can burn a hand, or wash his face in scalding water, and be oblivious to the damage it causes. Leprosy has been called "the painless hell."

In third world countries rats nibble at a leper's feet while they sleep.

Medical missionary, Paul Brand, use to do plastic surgery on lepers. As a post-op procedure he sent the patient home with *a cat – to chase away the rats.*

Perhaps the worst effect of leprosy was the emotional pain involved.

Lepers were quarantined from other people. If a healthy person came near, it was the leper's duty to shout, "*Unclean, unclean*" - and warn the person away.

According to the rabbis a leper had to stay 6 feet from other people at all times.

If the wind was blowing the separation grew to over 100 feet. Some rabbis threw stones at lepers to drive them away. One rabbi wrote, "I would not buy an egg from a market that was on a street that a leper had walked down."

The word "**leprosy**" means "**smitten**." He was considered "**smitten by God**."

A leper was not allowed in the Temple. Technically he couldn't pray or make sacrifice. He was not only cut off from friends and family, but also from God.

Yet here is a bold man, *a leopard of a leper*. In his desperation he violates all boundaries and decorum. He pushes through the crowd and approaches Jesus.

"And behold, a leper came and worshiped Him, saying, 'Lord, if You are willing, You can make me clean.'" This man had faith. He knew Jesus was able, but He wasn't sure He was willing. In addition to his leprosy, *this leper suffered from a faulty view of God*. He was worried that because of his miserable condition God wouldn't help him. Many people today suffer from the same concept.

People think they have to clean up before they can receive God's help. God doesn't help sinners until sinners help

themselves. This couldn't be more false.

“Then Jesus put out His hand and touched him (In the original language it's stronger, **“he gripped him.”**), **saying, “I am willing; be cleansed.”** Immediately his leprosy was **cleansed.”** Jesus deliberately embraced – *even hugged* - a leper.

It had been a long time since any healthy hand had touched this unloved leper.

And Jesus didn't have to touch him to heal him... He could've just spoken a word, but the love of Jesus touched this man and *healed him emotionally*, even before he was *healed physically*. These verses prove to you and me that Jesus' holiness doesn't keep Him from touching *the unclean* and *the outcast*.

“Jesus said to him, “See that you tell no one; but go your way, show yourself to the priest, and offer the gift that Moses commanded, as a testimony to them.”

Jesus tells him he needs to obey Leviticus 14 and show himself to the priest.

But here's the amazing command, **“see that you tell no one.”** This man spent years alienated from his family and society – now his forced exile is over. How can he keep from shouting his praise and thanks from the rooftops?

Jesus' motivation for this strange command was two-fold...

First, Jesus knows man's lust for the miraculous. People tend to follow a miracle without ever considering where it will lead. Jesus was afraid His miracles would create a mob that

didn't share His intentions and His ultimate objectives.

This is why He tried to downplay any publicity in the wake of His miracles.

Second, throughout His ministry we'll find Jesus never seeks His own glory.

His miracles are designed to *alleviate* suffering, *stimulate* faith, and *illustrate* truth – but they're never done to *manipulate* people or *elevate* His own status.

Jesus is the ultimate example for us. He came to give glory to God.

Verse 5 “Now when Jesus had entered Capernaum, a centurion came to Him, pleading with Him, saying, “Lord, my servant is lying at home paralyzed, dreadfully tormented.” A centurion was a battle-tested sergeant in the Roman army. He commanded a century - 100 men. He fought with them in the trenches.

Often a centurion grew fond of his men. For this sarge a servant had won his respect. When the servant becomes sick the soldier comes to Jesus for help.

And Jesus said to him, “I will come and heal him.” Understand, next to lepers, Roman centurions were the most hated men in Israel. The Jews despised the Roman occupation of their land. And the centurions were Rome's enforcers.

Most Jews would've had “no time for sergeants.”

“The centurion answered and said, “Lord, I am not worthy

that You should come under my roof. But only speak a word, and my servant will be healed.”

This centurion realized he'd never lived by the Law. Until his servant got sick, he hadn't even believed in God. This pagan Roman knew he was unworthy of God's attention, let alone a miracle. But this man had faith in Jesus.

He says, “For I also am a man under authority, having soldiers under me. And I say to this one, 'Go,' and he goes; and to another, 'Come,' and he comes; and to my servant, 'Do this,' and he does it.” A centurion was a mid-level manager in the military. He knew the chain of command – how to *give orders* and *take orders*.

And this centurion knew Jesus' place in the hierarchy. Jesus was God!

Jesus had the authority to command even disease to flee. He knew that if the Lion King just spoke a word the sick servant would be made completely whole.

“When Jesus heard it, He marveled...” Jesus is about to speak the word of healing, but before he does He speaks a word about the faith of this Roman.

“And (He) said to those who followed, "Assuredly, I say to you, I have not found such great faith, not even in Israel! In the minds of most Jews no one was further from God's kingdom than a Roman centurion. Yet, this man is commended for his great faith. A Gentile had more faith than the outwardly righteous Jews!

Verse 11 “And I say to you that many will come from east

and west, and sit down with Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob in the kingdom of heaven. But the sons of the kingdom will be cast out into outer darkness. There will be weeping and gnashing of teeth." The Jews were the blood relatives of Abraham. They were and still are heirs of God's promises. They were "the sons of the kingdom."

But what happened with the centurion was a preview of what is to come.

The Jews in general will be left out of God's Kingdom, while many Gentiles will enter in. Salvation is will be offered to people with faith – not family connections.

"Then Jesus said to the centurion, "Go your way; and as you have believed, so let it be done for you." And his servant was healed that same hour." Jesus never made it to the house. As soon as He gave the order the servant was healed.

The story shows that through grace Jesus reaches out - not only to *lepers* but *legionnaires* – to *outcast Jews* and *unworthy Gentiles*. *God not only can, He will...*

Verse 14 "Now when Jesus had come into Peter's house, He saw his wife's mother lying sick with a fever." Literally, the Greek reads "she was on fire."

This was a high fever - a serious illness.

"So (Jesus) touched her hand, and the fever left her. And she arose and served them." Here's a miracle... not just that the high fever vanished – but that a mother-in-law served a son-in-law – and for that matter, the whole family.

Notice after she's healed she serves. This is always the pattern. If you've been healed or touched by God, then the best way to say thanks is to rise up and serve.

Remember, Peter is about to leave all and follow Jesus. Perhaps healing his mother-in-law was Jesus' way of reassuring Peter that He would take care of his family. Whenever we leave our family behind to serve the Lord we can always trust Jesus to take care of them in our absence.

Here's one more point... Peter had a mother-in-law. Thus, he had a wife.

Next time you talk to a Catholic friend ask if he knew the first pope was married. That'll raise some eyebrows. *If Peter was the pope what's he doing with a wife? And if he's not the pope to whom does any pope trace his authority?*

Verse 16 “When evening had come, they brought to (Jesus) many who were demon-possessed. And He cast out the spirits with a word, and healed all who were sick...” This was evening! Jesus is off the clock. He's tired and exhausted.

The people are interrupting His dinner. Yet you don't hear Jesus complain.

He puts His dinner in the microwave and works some overtime. You can't follow Jesus if you're worried about working late hours or missing a few meals.

Jesus “healed all who were sick, that it might be fulfilled which was spoken by Isaiah the prophet (he quotes from

Isaiah 53:4), saying: "He Himself took our infirmities and bore our sicknesses." His healing was fulfillment of prophecy.

Verse 18 "And when Jesus saw great multitudes about Him, He gave a command to depart to the other side." Jesus didn't mind working overtime.

But He also knew when it was time to withdraw. Jesus didn't mind letting his voicemail take a call. Ministry can monopolize your life if you lack boundaries. Jesus withdrew to spend time with God – communicate with headquarters.

In the next 4 verses Jesus challenges two would-be followers.

"Then a certain scribe came and said to Him, "Teacher, I will follow You wherever You go." 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."

The world is all about **arrival**. Getting ahead - then showing off. Hoping at *some point*, *some one* will say you've finally arrived. You've made it to the top.

But Jesus was not about **getting ahead** – He was just **passing through**.

Making it to the top in life was not His goal - "**the Son of Man has nowhere to lay His head.**" His hope and home was heaven. If we follow Him ours will be too.

"Then another of His disciples said to Him, "Lord, let me first go and bury my father." But Jesus said to him, "Follow Me, and let the dead bury their own dead."

Following Jesus is about **passing through - not getting ahead** – and it's about **moving on – not holding on**. You can't follow Jesus and be a clinger.

Jesus tells this would-be follower he's got to be willing to turn loose when it's time. When Jesus says "move" you've got to be ready up anchor and set sail...

And speaking of setting sail... "Now when He got into a boat, His disciples followed Him. And suddenly a great tempest arose on the sea, so that the boat was covered with the waves." The Sea of Galilee is a lake that sits 685 feet below sea level. It's surrounded by mountains that funnel cold northern air south. When the cold air hits the tropical air over the lake it causes violent, sudden storms.

In January, 1986 two Jewish fishermen found what turned out to be a first century boat buried in the mud off the shore of the Sea of Galilee. Today, it's a tourist attraction. They call it *The Jesus boat*. It was typical of the time of Jesus.

It measures 26½' long by 7½' wide. Imagine 10 foot seas in a boat that size!

Matthew says "a great tempest arose on the sea". The Greek word translated "tempest" is "seismos." This was a seismic storm – an underwater earthquake!

Matthew says Jesus "was asleep." He may've been exhausted from ministry.

"Then His disciples came to Him and awoke Him, saying, "Lord, save us! We are perishing!" Mark tells us before boarding the boat Jesus said to His disciples, "let us cross

over to the other side." Jesus had promised they would **cross over not go under**. But in the heat of the moment they doubted and began to panic.

Hey, Jesus doesn't promise us shelter from the storms of life. Storms are part of the waters we navigate. No one can escape. Like the storms on the lake the storms of life arise suddenly, instantaneously, when you least expect them.

But Jesus promises to be in our boat!

Jesus will eventually calm the storm, but faith is learned on the water. The disciples learned to follow Jesus not just *to the storm*, but *through the storm*.

After the disciples woke Jesus from His nap, He tries to awaken them from their spiritual slumber. **But He said to them, "Why are you fearful, O you of little faith?"**

Following Jesus isn't just boarding the boat, *or becoming a Christian*. Faith grows courage. Faith continues to follow Jesus even into the teeth of a storm.

"Then He arose and rebuked the winds and the sea, and there was a great calm." Jesus is always able to transform **"a great tempest"** into **"a great calm."**

It intrigues me that Jesus didn't just speak to the sea. He rebuked it!

"Rebuke" is how you drive away a demon. I believe this storm was not just a collision of cold and warm air. It wasn't just *metrological* - it was a *theological*.

The evil Scar was trying to drown the Lion King - but the Lion prevailed.

“So the men marveled, saying, “Who can this be, that even the winds and the sea obey Him?” The disciples are starting to piece it all together. God alone has power over nature? Yet the wind and sea bows to Jesus. *He must be God.*

“When He had come to the other side, to the country of the Gergesenes, there met Him two demon-possessed men, coming out of the tombs, exceedingly fierce, so that no one could pass that way.” They wild, crazed maniacs were roadblocks.

People steered clear of the road along the eastern shore for fear of these men.

And suddenly they cried out, saying, “What have we to do with You, Jesus, You Son of God? Have You come here to torment us before the time?”

Notice, the demons recognized and believed in Jesus. They call Him the “**Son of God.**” And the demons realize they’re no match for Jesus. They know their destiny is hellfire – they just don’t want to end up there before its time.

It’s interesting these demons have pretty sound theology. They know who Jesus is and have a good grasp on biblical eschatology.

The demons prove there’re a lot of folks with sound theology who won’t end up in heaven. It’s been said, “*You can miss heaven by 18 inches - the distant from your brain to your heart.*” It can be in your *head*, without reaching your *heart*.

“Now a good way off from them there was a herd of many swine feeding.

So the demons begged Him, saying, "If You cast us out, permit us to go away into the herd of swine." Notice the demons don't want to be disembodied spirits.

They immediately look for a body to inhabit. Both the *Holy Spirit* and *evil spirits* desire to embody humans. The goal is the same - but the intention is different.

The Holy Spirit wants to cleanse people of sin and make them like Jesus.

Evil spirits know man was made God's image – an image that has been defiled by sin. The demons want to further warp and distort the image of God in man.

The Holy Spirit *lives in us to build up*. Evil spirits *wants in us to tear down*.

“And (Jesus) said to (the demons), "Go." So when they had come out, they went into the herd of swine. And suddenly the whole herd of swine ran violently down the steep place into the sea, and perished in the water.” It's sad, this herd of pigs committed an act of *souey-side*. Call it “the case of the deviled ham.”

The demons were *hamming it up*. They didn't want a *boring ending*.

We know from the Scriptures that one day Satan and his demons will be thrown into the Lake of Fire. But where did these pigs end up? Perhaps *Hog Heaven...*

On our trips to Israel we drive the road through the land of

Gadara. You can see where the slope falls right into the lake - perhaps the exact site of this story.

Two years ago on our trip to Israel we were driving through Gadara – the place where Matthew 8 took place – when suddenly a wild boar came out of the bushes and ran straight at our bus. No joke. It hit the bus and put a dent in the wheel-well.

If you want an authentic tour of Israel – complete with pigs – go with CCSM.

“Then those who kept them fled; and they went away into the city and told everything, including what had happened to the demon-possessed men.”

Jews would not have been herding swine. Bacon was not a kosher food.

The region around the eastern shore of the Sea of Galilee was Gentile territory. It was dominated by Greek culture. It was called the **Decapolis – or ten cities**.

“And behold, the whole city came out to meet Jesus. And when they saw Him, they begged Him to depart from their region.” What a sad ending to a wonderful story. Demoniacs are delivered. They're snatched from the claws of the devil - yet the townsfolk are upset over the loss of revenue. Pork bellies were big business.

In the end, *their business* was more important than *God's business*.

So far the Lion King has proven His sovereignty over disease, nature, demons.

Even a perfect storm is no match for Jesus. In chapter 9 Jesus confronts our greatest enemy – sin. He boards the boat and heads back to the western shore.

Chapter 9 “So (Jesus) got into a boat, crossed over, and came to His own city.” Or Capernaum “Then behold, they brought to Him a paralytic lying on a bed.”

The other Gospels tell us the house was so crowded the lame man's friends had to lower him through a hole in the roof. “When Jesus saw their faith, He said to the paralytic, “Son, be of good cheer; your sins are forgiven you.”

The man was letdown through the roof to see Jesus - now his buddies are a little letdown. They wanted his legs healed – not his sins forgiven. The paralytic's obvious need was healing for his crippled legs, but Jesus looked deeper.

Our *spiritual condition* is always more important than our *physical plight*.

There’s an ancient tradition that this man had become paralyzed from a sexually transmitted disease. His *sickness* was because of his *sin*.

But Jesus is saying **first things first!** And this is still His priority. Some people come to Jesus to be blessed or healed - when first they need to be forgiven!

In verse 3 look at the reaction when Jesus forgives the lame man’s sin. “And at once some of the scribes said within themselves, “This Man blasphemes!”

The scribes had *great theology*. They understood that only

God can forgive sins. They knew that by forgiving this fellow Jesus was claiming to be God!

But the scribes had *poor discernment*. Jesus was no poser. He was God.

“Jesus, knowing their thoughts, said, “Why do you think evil in your hearts? For which is easier, to say, ‘Your sins are forgiven you,’ or to say, ‘Arise and walk’?”

It’s tougher to forgive sins - but both are a bit beyond the capabilities of man.

Jesus continues, “But that you may know that the Son of Man has power on earth to forgive sins” - then He said to the paralytic, “Arise, take up your bed, and go to your house.” And he arose and departed to his house.

The proof is in the pudding! When the paralyzed man took up his mat and walked home it cut the rug out from under the Jews. How can they deny Jesus’ authority to forgive sin in the face of His ability to remove its consequences?

Back to the question - **what's easier... to heal sickness or forgive sin?**

Ultimately, it would prove much more difficult to forgive sin. Jesus healed by speaking a word. It took His death upon the cross to gain our forgiveness.

Verse 8 “Now when the multitudes saw it, they marveled and glorified God, who had given such power to men.” Isn’t it interesting, every time Jesus performs a miracle people always ended up praising and glorifying God.

There are ministers today who need to take lessons from Jesus.

It seems their work always promotes and pumps up themselves. Jesus always diverted the attention off Himself onto the Father. And anything less for us is sin.

It reminds me of the Taiwanese man who loved a young lady dearly. He wrote to her over and over expression of his great love. Over the course of the year she received 700 lengthy letters - 62 of which contained marriage proposals.

The letters succeeded. At the end of the year the woman married... But not to the man who sent the letters. She married the mailman who delivered them.

When we glorify the pastor we're marrying the postman, the deliverer - rather than the God who sent the letters! God is the one we should love and praise!

Verse 9 “As Jesus passed on from there, He saw a man named Matthew sitting at the tax office. And He said to him, “Follow Me.” So he arose and followed Him.

We know from Mark that Matthew's given name was Levi. He was of a Jewish, priestly family. But he strayed from his religious roots. Matthew should've *worshipped in the Temple* - instead he *worked for the Romans*.

As far as the Jews were concerned tax-collectors were worse than either lepers or centurions. A tax-collector was a traitor – an enemy collaborator. He took money out of Jewish pockets to enrich the coffers of foreign occupiers. And tax-collection was a commissioned job. Matthew exploited his countrymen to fatten his wallet.

Matthew was an IRS agent - *need I say more about his popularity.*

The Israeli tour guides like to point out the Treasury Building in Jerusalem, the Israeli Internal Revenue Service. They call it "the new wailing wall."

Matthew's parents were ashamed of him. His neighbors despised him. He was hated by everyone but Jesus. Jesus made an outcast... a member in His family!

One day Jesus walks by Matthew's tax booth. All He says is, "Follow Me." And Matthew leaves all and follows. Jesus had a mastery over men. His character attracted their allegiance. No one had ever met a man like Jesus.

Verse 10 "Now it happened, as Jesus sat at the table in the house, that behold, many tax collectors and sinners came and sat down with Him and His disciples.

Matthew not only opened *his heart* to Jesus - he opened *his home*. He threw a party and invited over his unsavory friends - like hookers and other tax collectors.

Studies have shown that two years after their conversion most Christians lose all meaningful connections with non-Christians. Their free time is spent at church - with Christians. And this isn't bad. But it doesn't bode well for our witness.

You may've opened your heart to Jesus, but have you opened your home?

When was the last time you reached out to some unsavory friends and *invited them over* so you could *invite them to Jesus*? Our homes need to be *havens from the world*, but

they also need to be *hospitals for the wounded*.

Why not think about having a **Matthew Party** - mix some sinners with some Jesus people who want to be a witness? A few tax-collectors might get saved.

Verse 11 “And when the Pharisees saw it, they said to His disciples, “Why does your Teacher eat with tax collectors and sinners?” When Jesus heard that, He said to them, “Those who are well have no need of a physician, but those who are sick.”

The Pharisees were appalled at the company Jesus kept. They were too good to hang-out with sinners. It’s interesting that the Lord of heaven didn’t come off as holier-than-thou. There was something about Jesus – call it love and authenticity - that made sinners like prostitutes and tax-collectors comfortable around Him.

They knew Jesus hated their sin, but they never doubted He loved them.

Jesus reveals the attraction in verse 13, “But go and learn what this means: ‘I desire mercy and not sacrifice.’” Mercy was the honey that drew sinners to Jesus.

People don't understand the *sacrifices we make* until they experience the *mercy we’ve received*. Religious folks love to show off their sacrifices. They focus on what they’ve given up for Jesus – without focusing on what Jesus has given up for them.

Remember Romans 2:4, “Or do you despise the riches of his goodness... not knowing that the goodness of God leads you to repentance.” Sinners swarmed to Jesus like bugs on

a light. *Does your brand of Christianity attract or repel?*

Verse 13, “For I did not come to call the righteous, but sinners, to repentance.” Let’s break out of our holy huddles and care about the folks headed for hell.

Verse 14 “Then the disciples of John came to Him, saying, “Why do we and the Pharisees fast often, but Your disciples do not fast?” Remember the Pharisees were spiritual show-offs. They fasted *in places* and *in ways* to attract attention.

Their face was painted with a white paste. They fasted to be seen by men.

John's disciples fasted for more noble reasons. They wanted a more intimate communion with God. They deprived the body to focus on the soul. It’s tough to mourn over sin with a mouth-full. Fasting facilitates an attitude of repentance.

I’ve heard it put, “Fasting is a way to fatten the soul.”

Fasting was a good idea – a wholesome, spiritual, biblical idea - so why were Jesus’ disciples always making merry! John’s posse was mourning and fasting while Peter and the boys were feasting. “What’s the deal, what’s the difference?”

Jesus explains. “Jesus said to them, “Can the friends of the bridegroom mourn as long as the bridegroom is with them?” First century, Israeli newlyweds didn’t have a honeymoon. The couple spent their first week at home with their friends and family. For 7 days they celebrated with “the friends of the bridegroom”.

For a working class couple this was the happiest week of

their lives.

And the wedding party was exempt from the weekly days of fasting and mourning. The rabbis wrote, "All in attendance (at the marriage feast) are relieved of all religious observances which would lessen their joy."

As far as the disciples were concerned they were the bride and they were with their bridegroom. Every moment spent with Jesus was a cause for celebration.

"But the days will come when the bridegroom will be taken away from them, and then they will fast." When Jesus ascends to heaven fasting will become important.

Talking to God will become a spiritual exercise – fasting will have a purpose.

But while Jesus was physically present why would you go off to fast when you could just sit around the campfire and talk to God. While Jesus was with them in body they were better off roasting another marshmallow... than trying to fast.

Jesus also says, "No one puts a piece of unshrunk cloth on an old garment; for the patch pulls away from the garment, and the tear is made worse." Put a denim patch on a pair of old Levis and you've got trouble. When you wash the jeans the patch will shrink, but the Levis won't. The *new patch* will tear the *old jeans*.

Verse 17, neither is it a good idea to "put new wine into old wineskins, or else the wineskins break, the wine is spilled, and the wineskins are ruined. But they put new wine into new wineskins, and both are preserved." Old wineskins are dry

and brittle. Put new wine in an old flask – and when the wine ferments and expands it bursts the old flask, and spills out. This is why you put new wine in new skins.

New wineskins are soft, supple, pliable, moldable, stretchable flasks...

Jesus is declaring that God is about to do a new thing in the earth – the Spirit will work in new ways – and new structures will be required to contain His Acts.

The old guard is on its way out! *Move over for a new move of God's Spirit!*

Obviously, Jesus was speaking of Judaism. Symbols were needed until the substance had come. Once Jesus came on the scene the rules and rituals of Judaism were obsolete! Moses emphasized Law. Jesus emphasized Love.

You can't pour the new wine of grace into the brittle bottle of legalism.

But these words of Jesus have an even broader application. God is still doing new things on the earth and when He begins to work in a new way we have to be moldable, adaptable, willing to change our approach and adapt to the Spirit!

If we're resistant, the Spirit of God will move right past us! Always remember the last words of a dying church are, **"We've always done it this way."**

The Spirit is like new wine! He's moving, and expanding, and growing – and if we want to keep up we need to be flexible. Let's not be an old, brittle wineskin.

As I said earlier the Lion King roars in chapters 8-9. He's

overcome disease, demons, sickness, and sin. Now He defeats Scar's secret weapon – death.

Verse 18 “While He spoke these things to them, behold, a ruler came and worshiped Him, saying, “My daughter has just died, but come and lay Your hand on her and she will live.”

Luke tells us the desperate dad was named Jarius.

Jarius was the ruler of the local synagogue. Each local assembly of Jews was run by a council of 10 men - and one of those 10 was elected as the ruler!

Jarius occupied a prestigious post. He was a spiritual leader - a man with clout.

Jesus was an unsanctioned preacher - a social nobody. Jarius was upscale, respected, sophisticated. Coming to Jesus and requesting His help was a giant step for Jarius - yet Jarius climbed over his pride and pleaded for a miracle.

What humbled Jarius is what has toppled many a man – love for a daughter.

He had a little princess at home. They played Barbies, went out on dates, and ate ice cream together. Luke tells us she was 12 years-old. *And now she's dead.*

Remember Rhett Butler in “Gone With the Wind” when his little girl died he went nuts. He locked himself up - unwilling to accept what had happened. Like Rhett - Jarius is desperate! He comes to Jesus and begs for his little girl's life.

“So Jesus arose and followed him, and so did His disciples. And suddenly, a woman who had a flow of blood for 12 years came from behind and touched the hem of His garment.”

Notice, for 12 years Jarius' princess had been full of life – and for the same 12 years this woman had been dying a slow death.

Again it was Doctor Luke who said this woman had wasted all her money on physicians who had been unsuccessful in their treatment. Jewish doctors had some strange remedies for a woman with menstrual problems.

The Talmud had eleven different prescribed cures for this malady....

Some were outlandish... For example - carry a kernel of barley corn found in the dung droppings of a white female donkey and you'll be healed.

Boil three Persian onions in wine - drink them, and you'll be healed. The woman had wasted her savings on these kinds of cures and was still bleeding to death.

And the worst dimension of her suffering was not physical, but spiritual. A woman with this malady was unable to enter the Temple to worship God.

For 12 years Jarius' little daughter had been **merry** - yet suddenly it ended.

For 12 years this woman had been **miserable** - now that too is about to end.

Life is like that, you never know what's next. But Jesus knows. Both Jarius and the woman have faith to reach out to Jesus and expect a miracle.

Verse 21 **"For she said to herself, 'If only I may touch His garment, I shall be made well.'"** Her belief was probably based

on superstition. Folks in the ancient world believed there was power in the borders of a holy man's robe. They also believed if they could sit in the shadow of a man of God they could be healed.

“But Jesus turned around, and when He saw her He said, “Be of good cheer, daughter; your faith has made you well.” And the woman was made well from that hour.” Jesus makes sure she knows that the hem of His garment was not the source of the miracle. The reason she was healed was her faith in Him.

This woman is an amazing example of God’s mercy. She had an uninformed, theologically-flawed, selfish, superstitious faith - yet it was still faith in Jesus. As a result she was healed. God doesn’t save us because of our infinite wisdom or perfect theology - but because of our faith in His grace.

Verse 23 “When Jesus came into the ruler's house, and saw the flute players and the noisy crowd wailing...” The family had hired professional mourners.

These were people hired to mourn and wail and grieve over the dead.

“(Jesus) said to them, “Make room, for the girl is not dead, but sleeping.” And they ridiculed Him.” Have you ever heard of the movie - “Meet the Mockers”?

Well, Jesus meets the mockers. I would suggest, whenever Jesus works a miracle there’s always a wise guy somewhere mocking God and casting doubt.

Sometimes he mocks from within. Our own doubts challenge our faith.

“But when the crowd was put outside He went in and took her by the hand, and the girl arose.” Here’s an vital observation - Jesus *moves in* when the mockers are *put out*. Before He raises the *little girl* He first kicks out the *cry-boys*. Listen, Jesus wants to perform a resurrection in your life tonight. He wants to bring back to life a hope, a dream, a relationship, a ministry... but negativity is blocking the miracle. Maybe it’s your own negativity - or the mocking of a cynical neighbor, or family member, or friend. Jesus won’t move in to work His miracle until you muzzle the mockers - and cast out the cynicism. Jarius trusted Jesus - and so should you!

Verse 26, “And the report of this went out into all that land.” I’m sure it did!