



Gary Inrig – The Miracles (A Portrait of Grace)

Read the Chapter in Advance of the Weekly Study. Make a Mental Note or Jot Down Something That Stood Out To You – and “Why? (Something strike you - strange – new or different?)

Week 4 – Read Chapter Four - “A Portrait Of Grace” – Healing a Leper & The Centurion’s Servant

- Read – Matthew 8:1-4 (The Leper) and Matt. 8:5-13 (Centurion’s Servant)

Opening Prayer: Begin with prayer, perhaps by asking God to open hearts and minds to understand His grace and love toward us and others – to help us walk in (and follow) Christ's example toward those around us – especially those who may not look like, sound like or act like us.

Overview: In this chapter – Gary explores two different miracles found in **Matthew Chapter 8** – and points out – just how compassionate our Lord and Savior – Jesus Christ is. First - through the healing of a leper and then a Roman centurion's servant, in these we see Christ's grace extend across societal boundaries, as well – ethnic and religious differences. To touch or aid those – thought to be untouchable might be completely unthinkable– yet Jesus challenges us (always by example) to examine our inner thoughts and leads us (*sometimes gently – sometimes abruptly*) to recognize and let go of any selfish motives. The early Christians' response to the people during the plagues and diseases of those first centuries – stand out as beautiful examples of what it means to follow in Christ's footsteps of sacrificial love.

“Most of our brother Christians showed unbounded love and loyalty, never sparing themselves and thinking only of one another. Heedless of danger, they took charge of the sick, attending to their every need and ministering to them in Christ... Many, in nursing and curing others, transferred their death to themselves and died in their stead.”- Dionysius of Alexandria

KEY POINTS:

- 1. Grace touches the untouchable:** - Jesus **moves toward** those that society marginalizes, **not away** from them.
- 2. Grace includes the unacceptable:** - No one is too far ‘outside’ God’s hand -for His grace to reach them.
- 3. It is Grace through faith:** - Not position or privilege – that gains us entry into God's kingdom. Salvation comes through trust in Jesus Christ.

Read – Matthew 8:1-4 (The Leper) and Matt. 8:5-13(Centurion’s Servant)



DISCUSSION QUESTIONS:

1. In 1st-century Jerusalem, a diagnosis of leprosy was a "*living death sentence*" one that effectively ended a person's life as they knew it, both socially and spiritually. Forced to cry out 'Unclean, unclean' whenever anyone approached – it wasn't just a stigma -it was a **total identity erasure**. That was the reality. Yet this one man (*in genuine desperation*) "came and worshiped Him, saying, "Lord, if You are willing, You can make me clean." -(Matt 8:2). How do you think the leper felt as he approached Jesus? What did that take? (*since he knew he was– breaking every cultural, legal, and religious barrier*)?

2. Why do you think Jesus chose to touch the leper when He could have just as easily healed him with- a word? What does this physical touch reveal about God's character?

3. Who are the "untouchables" in our society today? — (the marginalized, avoided, or stigmatized). What fears or concerns do we have that keep us from reaching out to them?

4. What stood out to you most about the centurion's approach to Jesus?

5. How does the centurion's statement "*only say the word*" demonstrate his understanding of Jesus's authority?

6. Jesus touched the leper & was willing to enter the centurion's home. What does this reveal about our God?



“The greatest disease in the West today is not TB or leprosy; it is being unwanted, unloved, and uncared for. We can cure physical diseases with medicine, but the only cure for loneliness, despair, and hopelessness is ... love”. – Mother Theresa

Things to Do this Week - Try to Put Into Practice

- **Who’s your “leper”?** - Is there someone in your life or community that you instinctively avoid or feel uncomfortable around? Pray specifically for them this week or perhaps ask God to show you one way to demonstrate Christ's love to them. (*I’m not talking about putting yourself in harm’s way - always listen for and obey His wisdom and discernment*).

- **Fighting Authority?** John Cougar Mellencamp – sang the ***Authority Song*** – “*I fight authority, authority always wins.*” Take time this week – to think about any areas of your life - where you are resisting Christ's authority. Choose one specific area and commit to surrendering that area or thing to Him. (*Total Victory is won – one small thing at a time!*)

*Closing Prayer: (this prayer is only a suggestion - please pray your own as the Holy Spirit leads) –
Note: If there are any needs that have arisen during the study tonight – lift these up - especially.*

- **Dear Lord** – *Thank You for this time together and Your teaching on trusting You - may we always approach You – with boldness - no matter what- even in our unworthiness. - Give us the courage – the ruthless trust that allows us to move confidently and boldly outward - toward the hurting and marginalized in our world. – Holy Spirit bless us with your knowledge - wisdom - and strength to follow always in Your footsteps - We pray this in Jesus name! “*