

AM Service February 11, 2024
“Jesus The Compassionate Healer”
Matt 8:1-13
Dr. Dan Doriani

Stay standing. Children are going to run to their classes or stroll to their classes, depending on their disposition to run or to stroll. And the rest of us are going to stand in the presence of the King. As I read God's Word, describing one of the mighty works of Jesus, Lord and King Matthew, 8

“When He (Jesus) came down from the mountain, great crowds followed him, and behold, a leper came to him and knelt before him saying, ‘Lord, if you will, you can make me clean.’ Jesus stretched out his hand and touched him, saying, ‘I will be clean.’ And immediately his leprosy was cleansed. And Jesus said to him, ‘see that you say nothing to anyone, but go show yourself to the priest and offer the gift that Moses commanded for a proof to them.’

When he entered Capernaum, a centurion came forward to him, appealing him, Lord, my servant is lying paralyzed at home, suffering terribly. He said to him, I will come and heal him. (Or it could be translated. Shall I come and heal him?) The centurion replied, Lord, I'm not worthy to have you come under my roof, but only say the word and my servant will be healed. For I too I'm a man under authority, the soldiers under me and I say to one, ‘go,’ and he goes, and to another ‘come’ and he comes and to my servant, ‘do this’ and he does it. When Jesus heard this, he marveled and said to those who followed him, ‘Truly, I tell you, with no one in Israel have I found such faith. I tell you, many will come from East and West and recline at the table with Abraham, Isaac and Jacob in the Kingdom of Heaven, while the sons of the King will be thrown into the outer darkness. In that place, there will be weeping and gnashing of teeth. And to the centurion Jesus said, Go, let it be done for you as you have believed, and the servant was healed. At that very moment. “

Now I want to say a word to visitors who are here today. We're so glad to have you and welcome you. And the word is that I'm going to talk a little bit, as I will do from time to time, about the doubts people have about the gospel narratives. So if you're a regular here, I want you to feel or know that you can bring your unbelieving or skeptical friends. We'll have a word from for them from time to time. Today is one of those days, and if you like to know what's coming, I'm going to say, first of all, that we can be confident that the Bible's accounts of the miraculous deeds of Jesus can stand up and at least, they're plausible to a skeptic. That's the first point.

Second, we're going to notice that Jesus heals an absolute outcast, the leper, and then we're going to notice that Jesus heals the last person anyone would expect and that is the centurion. And then we will draw four lessons for ourselves.

One more thing I'll say, and that is my name is Dan Doriani, and I'm the Interim Pastor here and I've been here for a while. I think a dozen times, counting morning to evening by now and so you're kind of done with introductions. You don't really want to hear anymore about me. You don't care. And you shouldn't care whether I played baseball or ran track in high school and whether I played the clarinet or was King Crayon in Antiquity. These are all things that have no bearing on anything at all in terms of what I say. But sometimes you have to keep the introductions going because there's more to be said. And that's certainly the case with Jesus because we've been introduced to him, right? We know he's Jesus, which means God saves. He's the Christ anointed for his work. Son of David. Son of Abraham. We know that he's Emmanuel. We know that he has authority. Now, that authority showed up in the Sermon on Mount, which we just spent two weeks on. We're kind of going through the life of Christ in a survey right now. But at the end of the Sermon on the Mount, everybody who listened to him was astonished at his teaching for the way it had authority. How does he speak that way so differently from the other teachers with so much confidence?

Now, there's not an immediate answer to that. That's the last verse in chapter seven, but Chapter eight answers that indirectly. And it says, you know, not only does Jesus have authority when he speaks his words as a teacher, but he also has authority when he speaks a word to nature. You know, at one point he said to a storm, be still, in the original - it's one word. In this passage when he tells the leper be clean, that's one word in the Greek *Katharós* and he's done and he cast out demons with a word later in chapter eight and he forgave sins with a word also in chapter eight and nine. Jesus has authority is power in his words. But I want to say a word about why we can be confident in this, because, you know, there are people when we hear the teachings of Jesus, they're very pleased because he's a great teacher. But when we get to the miracles, they become skeptical. The great philosopher David HUME said, We cannot believe any report of a miracle because they come from ignorant and barbarous nations. They're credulous people. They believe anything. And what we can't do as enlightened people is believe the impossible. Miracles are impossible. So we don't believe - no testimony can establish a miracle.

And I would say thank you, David, but let me ask a question in return. Why does the church exist? Because I have to tell you that whenever teachers appeared in antiquity, when they were done, their movements were done, especially if they were executed in the most ignominious possible way, publicly humiliated. They are actually in a number of teachers who were killed. And their movements always dissipated, and the church didn't endure. It grew astronomically. It went from 120 people with Jesus faithfully at the end to thousands and then millions in the Roman Empire, despite ceaseless opposition and persecution and no resources. And now there are maybe 2 billion or so believers scattered throughout the world. The best explanation for the life of the church is that Jesus rose from the dead.

You have to offer a cause sufficient for the effect. Now, if you can believe in the resurrection, you can believe in the other miracles, even though people like to doubt them. For example, I've, I've read and taught about these things. And, you know, the skeptics say skeptical things. So, for example, you know, there's a story which we'll talk

about in a couple of months of Jesus walking on water. And the skeptics say, well, you see, nobody can walk on water. Jesus was just a clever fellow and he knew where the sandbars were on the Sea of Galilee. There are no sand bars in the Sea of Galilee - Just for reference. But, you know, he knew where they were. And so he was walking around on a sandbar and kind of tricked the disciples, who, by the way, were sailors, you know, because they were fishermen and Jesus was a carpenter. But nonetheless, Jesus knows more because we want it to be so. And that, of course, makes Jesus, you know, we get rid of the miracle, but that makes Jesus a deceiver and the disciples foolish. And I don't know about you, but Jesus doesn't come across as a deceiver in the Gospels, does he?

Then there's a story of Jesus feeding 5000 men, it says, plus thousands more women and children. And one approach is that Jesus just got everybody to share. Doesn't say that in the text. My favorite is that they say Jesus was standing in front of a cave and his disciples had mounds of food behind them. How they knew they would need mounds of food, I don't know. But Jesus is standing there, and he has two loaves and fishes and he's pretending that he's distributing. But actually the disciples are handing him food from behind. He's going, look, see, I'm performing miracles. My favorite really, though, is the idea that when Jesus walked on water, he was walking on submerged logs. Have you ever tried to walk on submerged logs? I was hiking one day and I came upon a lake that had some trees that died and fell in the lake. And I tried to walk on submerged logs. I just fell the water instantly, repeatedly. I did not take a quarter of a step. Truly, it would be easier to believe that Jesus walked on water than that anybody could walk on submerged logs. Just trying to clear the decks here so that if you have doubts and of course, believers have doubts sometimes, too but if you have doubts, there are reasons to believe that Jesus did what the Bible says he did. But the greatest reason of all is that the disciples gave their lives for their story.

You know what bothers us the most about preachers who falter? Pastors, Christian leaders? It is that their life did not align with their words. They didn't seal their words with their lives. They contradicted their words with their lives. But the disciples gave their life for their testimony. They died for what they said about Jesus. Now, it's true, of course, that people will die for a lie. We know that many people died for the lie of communism, for example, and we know that people even die for a lie that does them a lot of good, maybe gives them wealth or power or something. But the disciples never got wealth or power. They got poverty and travels and opposition and jailings and beatings. People don't die for a lie that they know to be a lie that gives them nothing but trouble. So the disciples sealed their testimony to what they saw with their lives.

One more reason The Gospels name names. A lot of times just one example. Lazarus is named. People knew him. It says he lived in Bethany. Very specific. What do you think would happen if the Gospel of John were the story of Lazarus resurrection raising Lazarus by Jesus? What do you think would happen if the Gospel John got to the town of Bethany, told the story of a man named Lazarus who was raised from the dead and

people said was never anybody named Lazarus around here? Was there anybody who was raised from the dead? What kind of a story is this? The Gospels would be instantly discredited, but no such thing ever happened. Everywhere the Gospels went, they were immediately received. Nobody doubted them or questioned. Even though many names are named and places are stated because these things really happened, okay, what happened? What happened is that Jesus healed two people very unexpectedly. A leper and the servant of a centurion. I've asked Bruce Stallings to help me with this for a minute. I told him that I needed a leper. And I said, I'll be Jesus. And he said, You know, I may be kind of close to a leper, but you're way far from Jesus. But if you want me to be a leper, I'll be a leper. He doesn't have to do much. But I'm Jesus, and I've just finished the Sermon on Mount. I'm coming down with a crowd of people all around. You know, dozens of people surrounding me. And here comes Bruce. He's a leper. And now what do you think? How does the leper get so close to Jesus? How does the leper make it all the way to Jesus? What do you think? Everybody else got out of the way because he's a leper. He's supposed to say unclean. If you touch a leper, you become unclean with an incurable disease. And so he comes up to Jesus, and Jesus hears his words. He says, Lord, if you are willing, you can make me clean. It's up to you. I trust you. If you're willing, you can make me clean. And then Jesus did something very unexpected. He reached out his hand. Everybody is going to gasp because Jesus is going to catch the uncleanness of the leper. But instead Jesus touches him and the leper becomes clean. He says, I am willing, be cleansed, and he's cleansed perfectly at once.

So this is a this is a remarkable statement of faith. This is a man going far outside the norms of his day. You're not supposed to walk into public places as a leper, and he has hope in Jesus, you notice what he says. He has this respect. He says, Lord, he says, it's up to you. I don't I don't know what you're going to do, but if you are willing, you can cleanse me. I believe that. I believe in your power. Now, we don't actually know what he fought. He said, if you're willing, maybe he had really high hopes. Maybe. Maybe he was filled with doubts. And that lets me tell you something important. It's not your internal state that establishes what will happen to you before God. People say, in our culture, you've got to believe, meaning you have to have internal assurance in the Bible. It's not the subject of quality of your faith. It gets you right with God. It's not the subjective. If it's the objective, if it's the object of your faith, if you trust in Jesus, that's what counts. Whether your trust is strong or weak. So, Jesus healed the man with his touch. He touched him and he healed them. That revealed, of course, Jesus' tenderness and his compassion and his love. His love of the outcast, his love of the nobodies, the powerless people of his day. He saves a leper. It's a social miracle. Because Jesus said, Go show yourself to the priest. The priest said, You're clean. You can go back to society. Lepers we're not allowed to live in their home, in their village. They were separated from family and friends and job, and Jesus restores him not only physically, but socially.

This is why in this church we don't just say things with words. We also try to help people and restore people. Touch is important. One of the things I notice as I look at you on

Sundays is that most of you are sitting in clusters. You are sitting with your friends or family, but some of you are sitting alone. People sit alone because maybe their spouse is sick or away or their friend can't join them. But there are some people that sit by themselves because they're lonely, they're widowed or divorced or never married. And it's important to remember the power of touch and be kind and reach out and touch people. (Now, right now it's cold and flu and COVID season. So I tend to bump fists little more than shake hands because I don't want to give 100 people a cold for my which I got from the first person I shook hands with 10 minutes ago.) But fist bumps and hugs and shaking hands when cold and flu season is over is a powerful thing. Jesus was saying to this man who probably hadn't been touched for years, I love you, I touch you. I give my body not just my words to you. People understand this. They sometimes forget it. The power of a gentle touch.

A few years ago, there was a water problem in the family of my oldest child. It was a big problem - water all over the kitchen. Things were torn apart so they stayed with us for a week and maybe day four or five I was working at home and my granddaughter then four, knew I was in my office and is very enamored with me. And it was pretty painful for her to know that Poppa is right there, and I can't get him to play music or read a story to me. And so, you know, she was told, Papa is working. You can't go in. But, you know, four-year-olds have a limited degree of willpower. And after a little while, she knocked on my door and I opened the door knowing who it was. And she said, Papa, will you play some music with me? Can we sing a song together? And I said, Yes, we can sing a song. What would you like to sing? I'd like to sing the Lime and the Coconut. Okay. And? And would you read me a story? And she grasped -- she's my least tactile child. But to get her way in her fiendish manipulation, she took my hands and she wrapped her hands around my hands. Can I stay with you? And I said, Honey, I'm working. You can see that I'm working. She said, Yes, I can see. What are you doing? I said, Well, I'm actually writing a book. She's is barely beginning to read but she understood and asked me, you write books? Yes. Can you see over here? This is my name, Dan, on this book. That means I wrote it. That means I'm an author. She said, Does Nana know this? That's an obvious conclusion for a four year old. If. If I didn't know something this important, probably other people don't know. So I said, Well, why don't you go downstairs and see if she knows? And so I counter manipulated the manipulator.

The centerpiece is touch. She knew she didn't belong, and so she touched me. Touch is a powerful thing. Jesus did not heal with a touch. Jesus did not have to touch people to heal them. We'll see that in a minute. But it did heal by a touch because he wants to connect with people, because of his compassion, because of his humanity, acknowledging our humanity, even for the last person you would ever want to touch a leper.

Well, Jesus does heal a leper. And he also heals another very unexpected person. He heals the servant of a centurion. After this, healing takes place, Jesus went to Capernaum, which was his base of operations in a logical place, because it's the

meeting place or the intersection of several trade routes. And so people would come and go and people could hear him. And because it was an intersection of trade routes, it was a town of size and therefore there's a Roman centurion there because they keep the peace and exercise their power and collect the taxes. And it's a logical place for a centurion, for Roman armies to be. Centurion is an important person, commands about 100 soldiers, which is more than enough to control an area in those days. Not elite, not nobility. The nobility have the higher offices. They're the best soldiers who rise from the ranks of the army, which means they're isolated. They're not part of the elite, the nobility that's above them. And and they came from the ranks of the ordinary soldiers, but are above them. So they can't relate above, they can't relate below. And the rules of the day said they couldn't get married either. So they have a very isolated situation. They could maybe take a concubine, but they couldn't have kids, they couldn't have a wife. And so their servant probably their best friend. In fact, the word that's used for a servant here is a word that means something like beloved servant or even can mean a child. This is someone who matters to him. And Jesus says, Sorry. He says to Jesus, Lord, my servant lies ill, paralyzed, suffering terribly. And we hear the respect. He's a Roman centurion, but a lot of power. And it comes to Jesus, says Lord, we understand his emotion while he's appealing to Jesus. And yet there's an ambiguity. It could be our translation says, I will go and heal him. That is, will I go and ill him or I will go and heal him? They're both totally plausible. Equally likely translations of the original. Shall I heal him or I shall heal him? And why would Jesus say, Shall I heal him? Or shall I come and heal him? And it's because he didn't actually ask Jesus for anything, did he?

He said, my servant is terribly ill and paralyzed. He doesn't finish it and say, would you please do something about it? Which is a trade of people. You know, we sometimes describe our need to somebody. I need a ride to the airport, but we don't say, And will you give me a ride to the airport? We hesitate. We don't want to be rejected.

That's also true in prayer. Sometimes you find it easy to pray for somebody else, but hard to pray for ourselves because we don't want to hear God say no to us. So Jesus says, What are you asking me to come and heal him? And the man says, Actually, no, I'm not worthy to have you come under my roof. What he means is I know your laws. Your laws say that a Jew, an observant Jew, cannot go to the house of a Gentile. I don't want you to compromise your integrity. Just say the word. Just say the word and my servant will be healed. That will be enough. Listen to what else he says. He says, For I myself, I'm a man under authority, with soldiers under me. And I say to one, go. And he goes into another comedy comes and I say to my servant, Do this, and he does it. He's saying, I know the way authority works. All I have to do is say a word. In the ideology of the Roman Empire. Every word of an officer descended directly from the emperor who had the spark of the divine.

When I say to my soldier go, it's as if the Emperor himself spoke and Jesus I know that's the way it is with you. I know that when you speak, God himself speaks. I know that when you command it is. It is not the command of a man. It is the voice of God.

Now, the centurion has gotten this correctly by meditating on his experience. He understands Jesus heals with a touch (act of compassion), but not by a touch. He doesn't have to be there. Jesus is powerful and his presence is beyond that momentary presence. He can command for miles. That's how powerful he is.

Can I commend the same thing to you that you would meditate on your life and see what your life might teach you about the ways of God? You know, Shakespeare said that infants come into the world mewling and puking. Now we all know what puking is. I had to look up mewling. Mewling means somebody's like, whining, crying. And it's pretty good. It's a pretty good description. Infants come into the world mewling and puking and mom and dad get to clean it up. Not only do they come mewling and puking, but they're a bottomless pit of need and when you meet their needs, they don't. Thank you. I mean, six month olds and ten month old do not write thank you notes. Their fingers aren't up to it. They aren't even thinking about it. You know, they don't even think Thanks. They just consume what you bring them. Nonetheless, we love them. And parents, by the way, continue to love their children when they're two years old. And, you know, we're offering them food and when they're full, they don't say I'm full. Thank you very much, mom. They just the spoon is approaching and they just turn their face. And so then you stick their spoon, the spoon into their face. Now there's food. I've got a two year old granddaughter right now. When she's done eating, they trust her to put food on her plate. When she's done eating, she doesn't say I'm done. She has the words. She just goes like this and the food goes everywhere. That's children. And we love them and we love them when they're seven and ten and 14 and 18. They continue to have needs and disappoint us. We keep on loving our children and mothers and fathers please meditate on this. This is a picture of the love of God, our father, for us as you parent, children see the love of God. If you're a chef or a nutritionist or a food preparer of any kind, you can meditate on the beautiful way in which God put all the good nutrition, the food that we need into the world, into, you know, cherries and squash and rice and all the rest, and see his handiwork. And if you're a business leader, you can you can appreciate the way in which the Lord engineered the start up of the church. So if you resources we can all learn by meditating on the basis of our lives, seeing God's handiwork.

Well, Jesus, the text says, marveled at the faith of the centurion. Can I tell you? I marveled that Jesus marveled. I mean, Jesus knows all things. How can he marvel? He said, I'm just amazed. I'm amazed that Jesus is amazed. I'm amazed that Matthew tells us he was amazed. But it's a beautiful thing that Jesus is amazed. He's thrilled. He's pleased to see this remarkable faith that someone has grasp so much about his identity. We should continue to be amazed that beautiful things that give thanks for them.

Jesus is also amazed and pleased because the faith of this centurion, not a Jew, is a sign that God's will that the nations come to him is beginning to come to pass. Now it's missions week here, next week for a whole week. And so we we celebrate our role in the mission of Christ from this place to the whole world. And this is the first bit of a

harvest. Jesus says, you know, the Bible says that many will come from east and west and take their place in the feast with Abraham, Isaac, Jacob and Joseph. Because way back in Genesis chapter 12, the Bible said that all the nations will be blessed through Abraham and his seed, the son of Abraham and Isaiah stirringly said, The Lord Almighty will prepare a feast of rich food for all peoples. He will destroy the shroud, the veil that enfolds all peoples hides the truth from them. He will swallow up death forever and people will say, this is our God. We trusted in Him and He saved us. Let us rejoice and be glad in His salvation. And all the nations will say that we're privileged to participate in that. The nations will trust him. But meanwhile, the Israelites, who largely rejected what Jesus was doing at the time, will face God at the end of time and will weep and gnash their teeth because they had the opportunity to see the salvation before them and they did not receive it. I pray that's not true of anyone here on the last day, and Jesus heals the servant at a distance, miles away. He says, Go. It will be done as you have believed it would. And the servant was healed that hour.

There's a beautiful thing about this story that doesn't show up in the Gospel of Matthew, and that is that over in the Gospel Luke, we learn that this centurion was actually a friend of Israel and God fearing and in fact had used some of his money - Centurions were well paid, especially as they were victorious in a battle - had used some of his funds to build the a synagogue in Capernaum that is still barely visible. The ruins of it, the lowest level still barely visible if you would go there today, Luke tells us that people said he's worthy. But over in Matthew, it doesn't tell us that. He just comes as a man in his need, a man pleading with Jesus for grace and Jesus gives him preposterous grace every bit as preposterous as the grace for the leper - the last person anyone would start with. I mean, come on, Jesus. Why don't you start with somebody can be an ally. Why don't you start with the king's son? Now? He starts with the leper. It starts with the centurion, an oppressor of Israel. And he still does that.

You've heard of John Newton, right? Amazing Grace. How sweet. The sound saved a wretch like me. It's not hyperbole. John Newton was a wretch. He grew up in a Christian home. His mother especially taught him the truths of the scriptures but he entered the Navy and quickly distinguished himself as a miscreant called coerced, rebelled against authority, got drunk, tried to desert his post, got caught, chained, whipped by which I mean whipped with a whip. He bore the scars the rest of his life. He escaped. Got caught was enslaved by somebody, escaped from that, got another boat, sailed there, got drunk, fell overboard. Somebody saw him fall, pulled him out. Storm at sea. He thinks he's going to die. He calls on God sometimes that's told us the great repentance of John Newton. But the sad truth is that after Newton called on God, remembering what his mother had taught him, after that, he went back to his old ways. He went back to drinking. In fact, he had some talent. And so he went from being a bad sailor to becoming a bad captain of a ship. He captained slave ships after he had apparently repented. He wasn't sure later on when he had really repented because, you know, he was a pretty bad dude and bad dudes don't always reform right away. The path forward is sometimes broken and choppy. Now, he did straighten it all out by the age of 30 or so

and did follow the Lord for over 40 more years and did right. Amazing Grace. How sweet the sound and other hymns. And he preached and he taught and he fought slavery. He really was a changed man. But truly, it's astonishing that God would call somebody like John Newton, but that's what he does.

He has compassion on people like the leper, like the centurion's servant, like John Newton, because Jesus loves people that the world disregard and views as nobody's. Now, nobody's a nobody, right? Everybody's created God's image. Everybody's precious in God's sight. If God sent His son for you, you must be valuable to him, Right? But there are a lot of people that are, in the eyes of the world a nobody. Your family and friends may think you're important. A place where you work. You may be regarded as a valuable contributor, but in the world you may be a nobody. I think of a boy who's seven or eight years old, who is active and runs around and somehow still cries, even in second grade or third grade when he falls down on the playground and the other boys don't think very much of him. He's a crier. He's a nobody. Or a girl. Maybe fourth grade, maybe seventh grade who his friends are all what I call giggle. Toni is just giggling, endlessly giggling and laughing and she's more serious minded and she doesn't fit in at a social level. She's a nobody or a person who's retired. It used to be important that their opinion mattered. And now nobody listens. Nobody calls, or a woman who decides to stay home with her children. And people ask, what are you doing with your degree, with your training? And she says, Well, I'm a housewife and a mother. And she realizes, by the way, people reacted it's almost like she's just slandered herself. She's a nobody in their eyes.

And there's the man, the woman who's bypassed that work. And nobody knows why. Nobody ever says and Jesus is in the business of loving the people who feel like nobodies, lepers, servants of a centurion, John Newton. Jesus has compassion on all the people of this world, the people who feel overlooked and unimportant. I said, I'll give you four applications. That's number one. Jesus loves the nobody, the overlooked, the underappreciated. And if you if you feel you belong in that category, Jesus loves people like you. You need to know that Jesus came for people who seem like nobody's in the world, number one.

Number two, we can expect substantial healing in this world. That may not happen right away, but it happens. John Newton wasn't sure when he became a Christian because his change was so small at first, but eventually he became a great man, truly a great man. And that leper was healed and his life changed. And that centurion servant, we have to assume grew in their faith. So to we grow. John Newton bore the scars of that whip the rest of his life. We bear the scars, but God heals us.

Number three Did you notice that all three of the stories I told you had nothing to do with a church building or a synagogue? Jesus met a leper while walking around. Jesus met Centurion while walking around, John Newton, met God on a ship. The Lord meets people where we are. If you want to be involved in missions, it may happen in the church, but it probably happened outside the church, outside the building of the church.

Number 4, I'm going to ask you to behold and not only behold, but conform yourself to the image of this compassionate and loving Lord Jesus. You've probably all heard of the concept of compassion fatigue, and that is the idea that there's so many needs and they're so well marketed that we're just constantly hearing about needs and I can't hear them all and I can't do anything about them all. So I just turn my back on them. Can I tell you that there was a day this year when three people asked me to be their mentor in just a in just a span of a couple hours? They were all good people, really good people. And I quivered. I thought, I've got no space to mentor three more people. And that's what I do. That's compassion fatigue.

And I want to give you a counter principle, and that is the proximity principle. You can't solve every problem. You can't help everybody you meet who's needy. But if God in his providence puts someone who's needy in your life, if they're right next to you, if they're near you, if they're just right there, like, you know, the Samaritan who saw that man who was beaten and left for dead, if they're right there, then God wants you to exercise compassion to that person right there.

Now, that doesn't mean we only exercise compassion right there. You know, we have a missions conference next week. God may ask some of you may call some of you to show compassion far away. But we can start right here. Show mercy, as God has shown mercy to you. That's what we should do. And we should cultivate a spirit. Cultivate a heart of compassion for people, even as Jesus has shown you and me compassion. And we should open our hearts, our minds or prayer. Like to ask, Lord, how would you have me show compassion that shows that I have drunk in and deeply believed in your compassion for me?

Let's pray together. Heavenly Father. We thank you for these great stories, these great miracles, the record of these great events in your life. Praise you for the way your mercy exceeds all bounds and all expectations. And may we not only be glad for it, but be transformed by it. So we pray in your name. Amen.