

Gospel of Matthew

8:14-22

It's All About Who You Know



*Back in the early 1970s I was a young teen. I needed a job because I had to start saving for college. Back then it was not normal for parents to pay anything toward their children's college education. As young adults, that was everyone's own responsibility. So we had to work, at the very least, throughout the summer break and save all our money if we wanted to go to college. But that's just a sideline to my point. I couldn't get a job as a 15 yr. old. I put in applications everywhere I could think of, but the economy was sluggish at the time and businesses were just not hiring people that walked in off the streets. They were accepting *applications* and WERE doing *some* hiring, but usually they were hiring the son, daughter, cousin, nephew, or friend of someone who worked higher up in the company. So, it seemed that if you didn't know anyone you were just out of luck!



So if you didn't know anyone there, you really didn't have a chance at getting hired. Those jobs were being held for those who had someone to speak for them within the company. It took a while to figure this out, and a lot of wasted time and effort, until finally my mother went to bat for me at HER place of employment – the public school system. She was able to get her boss to hire me - not to teach or work with kids, but simply to do maintenance, mowing lawns, painting, repairing blacktop in parking lots! I learned a lot there actually. But I got the job because of who I knew – in this case, my mother. I paid for my first year of college with that money and had money left over for a car. I need a car to get to my next job. But the economy was even worse so jobs even harder to come by. However, I found a job. It was in Green Bay because my brother was able to use his connections through a guy in his church to secure a very good job earning the astronomical sum of \$6.00 an hour! Again, I got the job piggybacking on someone I knew,.. who knew someone!



Networking is a principle that applies everywhere in life. The people that try to go it alone, beholding to no one, do not do as well, in my experience. But those that network well are the people that excel.



The Gospel accounts never tell us directly that Peter had a wife, but the synoptic gospels all relate this mother-in-law story, so we can assume that he did. Paul mentions Peter (Cephas) as one of the apostles that had a wife, in 1 Cor. 9:5. And not one word of his wife anywhere for some reason. But He chose her, and we can assume he loved her. We can safely assume she gave him children. But they aren't mentioned either for some reason. But we do know for sure that her mother lived with them, that she got sick — Mark records that she had a fever. Luke, the doctor, is the only one that records that she had a *high* fever.

But Peter knows someone in high places. He knows Jesus.

Matthew leaves out any context for this incident. Mark and Luke tell this same story but include the detail that beforehand Jesus had been teaching at the synagogue in Capernaum. He had cast a belligerent demon out of a man when they were at the synagogue, thus proving his mastery over Satan. Afterward they had all gone directly to Peter's house. It doesn't say that Peter came to Jesus with concern for his mother-in-law. It just says that they all went to Peter's house after church (okay, after synagogue) and found his mother-in-law to be seriously ill. Perhaps it was a sudden onset of fever, and Peter hadn't even known. But Jesus heals her and she immediately rises as if in perfect health, and plays hostess to them. Afterward, Jesus cast out more demons and healed other diseases.





I find it interesting that the mother-in-law is sandwiched in-between demonic exorcisms performed by Jesus. The writers of the gospels credit many of the illnesses and diseases they encounter to demonic mischief. So many

illnesses Jesus simply rebuked, as if rebuking demons as a source of the disease. I don't know what to make of that, exactly. We have a good understanding today of the sources, composition, and progression of illnesses and diseases, and ailments. We have some pretty good remedies or treatments because of that understanding. It is the smallest things that pose the greatest dangers to us! There are microscopic organisms – bacteria and viruses, toxins, molds that make us ill and can even kill, depending on what type they are. All of the bad ones will certainly cause a fever, as the immune system of the human host tries to fight off these tiny invaders, and stop them from multiplying!

But the medical establishment has no idea about demons and what effect these dark spiritual forces might have upon these very material organisms. can't culture a demon in a laboratory culture distill one into a glass beaker. So we cannot rely upon those that are experts in the physical realms to have any idea about what is going on in the spiritual realms. They don't know the first thing! As for myself, I do not doubt that demons can utilize microscopic organisms to cause suffering to the human race, or to any living thing, for that matter. They are portrayed in scripture as having almost god-like powers (little g), and have the ability to cause wonders and miracles – perhaps (and I'm not sure about this) to even countermand the laws of physics! Or,.. they could more directly cause illness, by simply replicating the symptoms of an organic illness. A target person would be just as sick, but the source would be much different.



Jesus had the ability to diagnose the source of a disease, and where He perceived that there was demonic activity in and around someone's illness, He began with banishing the demon – casting it out! His action would ALWAYS bring about immediate healing! He saw what cannot be seen under a microscope! He was far more advanced than modern medicine!



Mark records that when Jesus cast the demons out, he commanded them to silence. But Luke records that He must have done this only after the first demons testified just before coming out that Jesus was the Son of God! It was way too early in the game

plan of God for the kind of unwanted attention/controversy that these words would attract, so Jesus commanded the demons to keep silence as they were torn out of their victims. The demons wanted to announce who was throwing them out. But Jesus did not want them to. Interestingly, they knew all about Jesus! And,.. He actually was the last person they wanted to meet! They had made the mistake of being in the wrong place at the wrong time. They had run head long into ultimate “authority”. Jesus had authority over all elements of the earthly realms and all the elements of the heavenly realms! He met them and proceeded to make them homeless!

So now I go back to my original thought. It is incredibly foolish to go through life on your own. I mean, if we have lived long enough, we've networked, and we've piggybacked, and we've used people that we know to help us get what we wanted, or where we wanted to go. But that is for procuring jobs, property, and getting help doing things you cannot do alone, lifting something heavy, borrowing money, repairs to home or car that you don't know how to do yourself, references, etc... It works for the mundane things of life.



But what about when you are deathly ill, or injured badly and are facing premature death? What can people do for you then? What about when you don't know what is going to happen to your soul when you die? People are always preparing to live better, to get what they need or want, but what about preparing for the end of life and the beginning of the next?

Closer to home, what about when you need a reason to get up in the morning – to go on living?! Can people do that for you? Will marriage or a “significant other” provide that reason, *like 5000 popular songs and thousands of movies, tell us it will?!* No – absolutely not! What happens when he she cheats, or starts hitting you, or ends up being a compulsive liar, or gets addicted to gambling and piles up debt that will pauperize you and your children?! Relationships fade, marriages die horrible deaths all the time. Love is not stable, (unless of course it is centered in the Creator who IS love! He stabilizes, He teaches, He empowers love).



OR,.. what if they DIE?! People die all the time! Then what? Then your reason for living has died with them, hasn't it! No, you have to have a purpose that is bigger, more important, more reliable and secure! In fact, wouldn't you want something unchangeable in a world where everything changes? The poets of the Bible continually speak of God in terms of “*the Rock*”, the “*Strong Tower*”, the “*Refuge*”.

[Ps. 31:1-3]

The idea of an immortal soul is not exclusive to Christianity. In fact, most people believe in some kind of an afterlife for people. It is only when young people have it driven out of them by the relentless indoctrination of godless and nutty professors in college that they become atheist. They just don't know enough to resist such brainwashing techniques. But a thinking person would consider whether there isn't some legitimacy in the universal human instinct that there *is* an after-life, and want to be prepared even if it is just in case. A lot of people are hedging their bets by church attendance, and/or by giving money to the church. It is a worthless exercise!



I believe personally that the biggest part of living is preparing to die well. To die well, you have to live well. Otherwise your deathbed becomes a bed of nails - unbearable emotional pain and fear cause by deep regrets!

The biggest regret a person could possibly have in life and especially in death is to never have utilize one's greatest asset in life – the Son of God, sent here to be your Savior and Leader – to have never known the wisdom of God in the scriptures! To have never discovered the wisdom of God in His written word, the Bible! To have squandered one's opportunity for the purest form of life - eternal life with God,.. *one thing* in particular, is a regret that will haunt and hound the soul for all eternity. That is the torment, the unquenchable thirst of hell, my friends.



Give your heart to Jesus. Put it to rest! Salvation is all about who you know. You cannot have this life of God on your own. You must piggyback your way. You humble yourself, and you get there riding high on His back!