

(Matt. 8:14-15) - Here is another great example of Christ's power to heal all diseases which shows His power to heal our spiritual diseases. Christ is the Great Physician Who heals sinners of the spiritual disease of sin. He entered into Peter's house and saw Peter's mother-in-law sick with fever. He *"TOUCHED HER HAND, AND THE FEVER LEFT HER."* Again, Christ touched a sick person and was not defiled Himself. Her healing was so complete that she was able to get up and serve them. When Christ heals our spiritual sickness, then we are made able to serve Him in love, truth, and obedience (Rom. 7:4-6; Eph. 2:8-10). Christ gives us the cure for our legal condemnation by establishing righteousness for us which God has imputed to us (2 Cor. 5:19-21). He also gives us the cure for spiritual death by giving us life by His Spirit in the new birth, bringing us to faith in Him and true repentance (John 3:3-7; Rom. 8:10).

Notice that Peter was not, as the heretical Catholics contend, a celibate priest or pope. He had a wife. He was an apostle whom Christ commissioned to preach the Gospel of God's grace in the salvation of sinners, and Peter himself was a sinner saved by grace. In forbidding their ministers to marry, the false church of Rome goes contrary to that very apostle from whom they allege to derive infallibility.

(Matt. 8:16-17) - Christ continued to heal many sick people and many *"THAT WERE POSSESSED WITH DEVILS."* He had power over diseases and over devils (Mark 1:24). Satan and his devils are great enemies of Christ and His people. God's Word tells us that those who are spiritually sick and blind are under the power of Satan to deceive them (2 Cor. 4:3-4). It takes the power of God to reveal Himself in Christ to bring sinners from darkness to light (2 Cor. 4:5-6). This was all in fulfillment of Isaiah's prophecy in *Isaiah 54:4* - *"Surely He hath borne our griefs, and carried our sorrows."* Christ bore the awful weight of our sins imputed to Him, suffered unto death, and established righteousness by which we are justified in God's sight, Christ's righteousness imputed to us. He also heals our spiritual sicknesses and casts our demons out when, in the power of the Spirit, He give us spiritual life, and we are brought to believe the Gospel of His grace in Christ Jesus (Psa. 103:3; Isa. 33:24; 1 John 2:20).

(Matt. 8:18) - Although great numbers gathered around Him, the Lord *"GAVE COMMANDMENT TO DEPART UNTO THE OTHER SIDE."* Every place He went, He did so by His own predeterminate counsel and will. He had a divine appointment to find and save His lost sheep. Just as He had told His disciples that *"He must needs go through Samaria"* (John 4:4; cf. 10:16) to save the Samaritan woman, here He departed to the other side to seek and find His sheep. It was all for the purpose of the glory of God in the salvation of His people by His grace in the Lord Jesus Christ.

(Matt. 8:19-20) - *"A CERTAIN SCRIBE CAME"* - Scribes were considered experts in Jewish law. They interpreted the Scriptures (Matt. 7:29) and were known as cholars. Like their cohorts, the Pharisees, they believed and taught righteousness and salvation attained by their works of the law. Remember how Christ said, *"That except your righteousness shall exceed the righteousness of the scribes and Pharisees, ye shall in no case enter into the kingdom of heaven"* (Matt. 5:20). Like the Pharisees, they were bitterly opposed to Christ and the Gospel of God's free and sovereign grace. He exposed them as hypocrites (Matt. 23:2-29). Finally, they were successful in having the Lord of Glory crucified by the Romans, yet all was done according to the eternal purpose and will of God (Acts 2:22-23; 4:26-28).

This "certain scribe" said, *"MASTER I WILL FOLLOW THEE WHITHERSOEVER THOU GOEST."* One might think this indicates genuine, God-given faith in Christ and repentance of dead works. However, from the Lord's response, it seems this man had an evil motive,

thinking that to follow such a miracle worker, he would gain earthly treasures and comforts. The Lord told him, *“THE FOXES HAVE HOLES, AND THE BIRDS OF THE AIR HAVE NESTS; BUT THE SON OF MAN HATH NOT WHERE TO LAY HIS HEAD.”* This is not to say that true disciples must take a vow of poverty to follow Him. Remember, Peter had a home (Matt. 8:24), but the Lord did not. The disciples fared better in earthly comforts than Christ (read Matt. 6:26-33). We have no record of this scribe following Christ as he had promised.

(Matt. 8:21-22) - *“AND ANOTHER OF HIS DISCIPLES SAID UNTO HIM, LORD, SUFFER ME FIRST TO GO AND BURY MY FATHER. BUT JESUS SAID UNTO HIM, FOLLOW ME; AND LET THE DEAD BURY THEIR DEAD.”* We know that burying the dead is necessary, so why did the Lord respond this way? At first glance, it may seem cruel, but it was not so. Christ always spoke truth, and sometimes truth seems cruel when it is what we need to hear for the safety of our souls. His point was this - Even though it is necessary to bury the dead, others, even spiritually dead people, can do this. This man needed to follow Christ! Let the spiritually dead take care of the things they can do, but we who know the Lord have a far greater work to do. We must *“be about our Father’s business”* (Luke 2:49). If we can take care of such things without interfering with obeying Christ, then fine. But no task on earth can interfere with our Father’s business.

(Matt. 8:23) - *“AND WHEN HE WAS ENTERED INTO A SHIP, HIS DISCIPLES FOLLOWED HIM”* - Christ’s true disciples follow Him wherever He goes. This means that they, having been brought to faith in Christ and repentance of dead works and idolatry, follow Him outside the camp of false religion and worldly idols *“bearing His reproach. For here have we no continuing city, but we seek one to come.”* (Heb. 13:13-14; cf. Rom. 12:1-2). The Gospel message and ministry exceeds all earthly ties and concerns (Luke 14:26). We who are true disciples of Christ are to cling to and follow Him and His Word. We are to pursue righteousness as we find it in Him, and we are to flee from the world. Consider some Scriptures that show us what it means to follow Christ -

(1) It is to believe in, trust, depend upon, and cling to Him in the glory of His Person and power of His finished work for all salvation, all righteousness, all forgiveness, all life and glory, and repent of all else - *“But what things were gain to me, those I counted loss for Christ.”* (Php. 3:7)

(2) It means denying self and standing in opposition to all that would deny or oppose Christ - *“Then said Jesus unto His disciples, If any man will come after Me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross, and follow Me.”* (Matt. 16:24)

(3) It means to seek and strive to be like Him - *“Not as though I had already attained, either were already perfect: but I follow after, if that I may apprehend that for which also I am apprehended of Christ Jesus.”* (Php. 3:12; cf. 1 Tim. 6:11-12)

(4) It means to be a witness in this world to the lost, seeking His sheep - *“And He saith unto them, Follow Me, and I will make you fishers of men.”* (Matt. 4:19)

(5) It means to be in fellowship with brethren in the love and truth of the Gospel and the whole Word of God - *“Beloved, let us love one another: for love is of God; and every one that loveth is born of God, and knoweth God.”* (1 John 4:7)