

Every Life Valued
January 18, 2026
Allen Power

Matthew 8:1-9:8 (various verses)

Opening: Today is the annual observance of “Sanctity of Life” Sunday. Because the observance started with a proclamation by President Reagan, some people hear that and think, “*Here we go, we’re going to get political!*” We’re not going to be political --- we’re going to be biblical.

What does the term “Sanctity of Life” mean? Based on scripture, why is it true? How is sanctity of life more than the debate on abortion? How do I know Jesus believed it? Who are examples of the weak and marginalized in our society today?

Matthew 8:1–8 (ESV) — **1** When he came down from the mountain, great crowds followed him. **2** And behold, a leper came to him and knelt before him, saying, “Lord, if you will, you can make me clean.” **3** And Jesus stretched out his hand and touched him, saying, “I will; be clean.” And immediately his leprosy was cleansed. **4** 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.”

- What faith! The leper declared: “*If you will...I know you can make me clean!*”
- Verse three: Don’t miss the significance of the words: “*Jesus touched him.*” In Jesus day, no one touched a leper. That compassionate gesture spoke volumes.

5 When he had entered Capernaum, a centurion [Roman military officer in charge of about 100 soldiers] came forward to him, appealing to him, **6** “Lord, my servant is lying paralyzed at home, suffering terribly.” **7** [Jesus said], “I will come and heal him.” [Then the Centurion said something surprising: “*I’m not worthy to have you come to my house, Jesus. You don’t have to come to my house. I command soldiers, I understand authority, Jesus I know if you just say the word my servant will be healed!*”] **10** 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. **13** 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.

14 And when Jesus entered Peter’s house, he saw his mother-in-law lying sick with a fever. **15** He touched her hand, and the fever left her, and she rose and began to serve him. **16** That evening they brought to him many who were oppressed by demons, and he cast out the spirits with a word and healed all who were sick. **17** This was to fulfill what was spoken by the prophet Isaiah: “He took our illnesses and bore our diseases.”

9:1–8 (ESV) — **1** And getting into a boat he crossed over and came to his own city. **2** And behold, some people brought to him a paralytic, lying on a bed. And when Jesus saw their faith, he said to the paralytic, “Take heart, my son; your sins are forgiven.” **3**

And behold, some of the scribes said to themselves, “This man is blaspheming.” **4** But Jesus, knowing their thoughts, said, “Why do you think evil in your hearts? **5** For which is easier, to say, ‘Your sins are forgiven,’ or to say, ‘Rise and walk’? **6** But that you may know that the Son of Man has authority on earth to forgive sins”—he then said to the paralytic—“Rise, pick up your bed and go home.” **7** And he rose and went home. **8** When the crowds saw it, they were afraid, and they glorified God, who had given such authority to men.

- Those verses in Matthew are just a small sample of the biblical evidence that Jesus values every person – especially the weak and marginalized.
- In **Matthew 11:3–5 (ESV)** — **3** [John the Baptist in prison sent this question to Jesus:] “Are you the one who is to come, or shall we look for another?” **4** And Jesus answered them, “Go and tell John what you hear and see: **5** the blind receive their sight and the lame walk, lepers are cleansed and the deaf hear, and the dead are raised up, and the poor have good news preached to them.
- Here are some interesting statistics: Scholars usually count 35 distinct miracles performed by Jesus (excluding the Resurrection itself, which is often categorized separately as the central saving act rather than a “miracle story”). [Full list below]
- 20 of the 35, over half of Jesus’ recorded miracles (≈57%) directly address: human brokenness (sickness, disability), and spiritual bondage (evil spirits).
- The record of His miracles emphasizes: Jesus values every person.
- Most of those Jesus healed and delivered were “outcasts” or marginalized.
- We sometimes romanticize the past and say, “*If only we could go back to the good old days, when human life was valued more.*” History tells a different story.
- The world of Jesus’ earthly ministry was a world where crowds cheered as people were torn apart by animals or killed in arenas for entertainment; where infants born unwanted or imperfect were exposed to the elements and left to die; where slavery and human trafficking were not only common but unquestioned.
- That was the cultural backdrop of the gospel. Jesus did not arrive in a society that already cherished human life—He entered one that routinely discarded it. And it was in that darkness that He introduced a radically different vision: that every person bears God’s image and possesses immeasurable worth.
- Jesus was even counter-cultural to the religious establishment of His day.

Mark 3:1–5 (ESV) — **1** Again he entered the synagogue, and a man was there with a withered hand. **2** And they watched Jesus, to see whether he would heal him on the Sabbath, so that they might accuse him. **3** And he said to the man with the withered hand, “Come here.” **4** And he said to them, “Is it lawful on the Sabbath to do good or to do harm, to save life or to kill?” But they were silent. **5** And he looked around at them with anger, grieved at their hardness of heart, and said to the man, “Stretch out your hand.” He stretched it out, and his hand was restored.

- The Old Testament foretold that miracles would be part of the Messiah’s mission: **Isaiah 61:1–2 (ESV)** — **[The text of Jesus’ first recorded sermon]** **1** The Spirit of the Lord God is upon me, because the Lord has anointed me to bring good news to the poor; he has sent me to bind up the brokenhearted, to proclaim liberty to the captives, and the opening of the prison to those who are bound; **2** to proclaim the year of the Lord’s favor, and the day of vengeance of our God; to comfort all who mourn;

Isaiah 35:4–6 (ESV) — “...your God will...come and save you. Then the eyes of the blind shall be opened, and the ears of the deaf unstopped; then shall the lame man leap like a deer, and the tongue of the mute sing for joy.”

Isaiah 29:18–19 (ESV) — “In that day the deaf shall hear the words of a book, and out of their gloom and darkness the eyes of the blind shall see. The meek shall obtain...joy in the Lord, and the poor...shall exult in the Holy One of Israel.

Psalms 146:7–8 (ESV) — Says the Messiah would “...execute justice for the oppressed, ...give food to the hungry...set the prisoners free...open the eyes of the blind...lift up...those who are bowed down...”

- Jesus didn't argue for the value of human life; He demonstrated it.
- Of course, His ultimate demonstration that He values every human life is that He came, died, and rose to offer ETERNAL LIFE to all who trust Him (John 3:16).
- If Jesus values every person, then His followers should do the same.
- That sounds simple, but even with good intentions, what makes it difficult to consistently value every person the way Jesus does? What kinds of situations make it hardest for us to see people the way Jesus sees them? [Hints: Familiarity, busyness, categorizing, people's poor choices, growing numb.]
- It's not that we need reminders because we don't care—we need them because we drift. Scripture, prayer, and Christ's example realign our hearts to see people as Jesus does: *never as problems to manage, but as lives He died to redeem.*

So, What's the Takeaway?

- Sanctity of Life is not political --- it's biblical.
- Jesus loves every person and so should we.
- Let me help us be reminded of that with the words of a familiar children's hymn.
- The first “church” song I ever learned (maybe the first song of any type) was written by Anna Bartlett Warner in the mid-1800s: “*Jesus loves me, This I know, for the Bible tells me so... Yes, Jesus loves me, the Bible tells me so.*”
- Anyone know the third verse? “*Jesus loves me, loves me still, Though I'm very weak and ill; From His shining throne on high, Comes to watch me where I lie.*”
- What if we re-wrote that little chorus? “*Yes, Jesus loves me AND Jesus loves YOU, Jesus loves every life, the Bible tells me so.*”
- It's easy to walk the halls of our church observing beautiful young families, maturing Christian youth, and wonderful senior saints and sing in my head, “*Yes, Jesus loves YOU!*”
- Where I need help is to be reminded when I see the weak, the outcast, the marginalized to also think: “*Yes, Jesus love YOU! And so should I! The Bible tells me so.*”
- God bless those in our THRIVE ministry who sing that in their heads!
- Bless those in the Church on the Street ministry who sing it in their heads!
- Lord, help us all when we see those on the margins to think: “*Yes, Jesus loves YOU and so should I! The Bible tells me so!*”

Healing Miracles (Physical & Mental)

1. **Heals a man with an unclean spirit** – Capernaum synagogue
(*Mark 1:21–28; Luke 4:31–37*)
2. **Heals Peter’s mother-in-law (fever)**
(*Matthew 8:14–15; Mark 1:29–31; Luke 4:38–39*)
3. **Cleanses a leper**
(*Matthew 8:1–4; Mark 1:40–45; Luke 5:12–16*)
4. **Heals the centurion’s servant**
(*Matthew 8:5–13; Luke 7:1–10*)
5. **Heals a paralytic lowered through the roof**
(*Matthew 9:1–8; Mark 2:1–12; Luke 5:17–26*)
6. **Heals a man with a withered hand**
(*Matthew 12:9–14; Mark 3:1–6; Luke 6:6–11*)
7. **Heals many sick at evening**
(*Matthew 8:16–17; Mark 1:32–34; Luke 4:40–41*)
8. **Heals two blind men**
(*Matthew 9:27–31*)
9. **Heals a mute demon-possessed man**
(*Matthew 9:32–34*)
10. **Heals a man at the Pool of Bethesda (38 years paralyzed)**
(*John 5:1–15*)
11. **Heals a blind man at Bethsaida (two-stage healing)**
(*Mark 8:22–26*)
12. **Heals a man born blind**
(*John 9:1–12*)
13. **Heals a woman bent over for 18 years**
(*Luke 13:10–17*)
14. **Heals a man with dropsy**
(*Luke 14:1–6*)
15. **Heals ten lepers**
(*Luke 17:11–19*)
16. **Heals blind Bartimaeus (and companion)**
(*Matthew 20:29–34; Mark 10:46–52; Luke 18:35–43*)
17. **Heals Malchus’ ear (arrest scene)**
(*Luke 22:50–51*)


Exorcisms (Authority over Demons)

18. **Casts out demons from the Gerasene demoniac(s)**
(*Matthew 8:28–34; Mark 5:1–20; Luke 8:26–39*)
19. **Casts out a demon from a Syrophenician woman’s daughter**
(*Matthew 15:21–28; Mark 7:24–30*)
20. **Casts out a demon from a mute boy (epileptic)**
(*Matthew 17:14–21; Mark 9:14–29; Luke 9:37–43*)

Nature Miracles (Authority over Creation)

21. **Turns water into wine (Cana)**
(*John 2:1–11*)
22. **Calms the storm**
(*Matthew 8:23–27; Mark 4:35–41; Luke 8:22–25*)
23. **Feeds 5,000 with five loaves and two fish**
(*Matthew 14:13–21; Mark 6:30–44; Luke 9:10–17; John 6:1–14*)
24. **Walks on water**
(*Matthew 14:22–33; Mark 6:45–52; John 6:16–21*)
25. **Feeds 4,000 with seven loaves**
(*Matthew 15:32–39; Mark 8:1–9*)

-
26. **Miraculous catch of fish (early ministry)**
(Luke 5:1–11)
 27. **Coin in the fish's mouth (temple tax)**
(Matthew 17:24–27)
 28. **Curses the fig tree (withering)**
(Matthew 21:18–22; Mark 11:12–14, 20–25)
 29. **Miraculous catch of fish (post-resurrection)**
(John 21:1–14)

 **Raising the Dead (Authority over Life)**

30. **Raises Jairus' daughter**
(Matthew 9:18–26; Mark 5:21–43; Luke 8:40–56)
31. **Raises the widow's son at Nain**
(Luke 7:11–17)
32. **Raises Lazarus from the dead**
(John 11:1–44)

 **Other Miraculous Signs**

33. **Heals a deaf and mute man**
(Mark 7:31–37)
34. **Heals a boy at a distance (royal official's son)**
(John 4:46–54)
35. **Transfiguration (glory revealed)**
(Matthew 17:1–8; Mark 9:2–8; Luke 9:28–36)

Often categorized separately as a *revelatory miracle* rather than a healing or nature sign.