

Mark 1:21-45 - The Great Physician

Pastor Chris Bove

Introduction - Last week we looked at how Mark is making the claim that Jesus is the Son of God. This week as we look at the text, we'll see that He is the Son of God, the Great Physician. Jesus proves His Sonship by teaching, casting out demons, curing diseases, and remaining faithful to His Father and mission. His teaching was like no other. His casting out of demons was miraculous and proved His identity. He had power over disease and illness like no man, and He stayed faithful to His Father and on mission like no one expected. We should believe the testimony of Christ's authority and commune with Him Who is the Great Physician.

The Son of God...

v21-22 Teaches - do we listen? Teaching at Capernaum's synagogue

Jesus enters the Capernaum synagogue on the day the Jews gather to worship God. What was He teaching? It doesn't say, but He likely presented the Gospel (1:15) and in other accounts He read from the Old Testament to demonstrate who the Messiah was and what God expected of His people. The people's response - astonishment! Exepllesonto - "astounded, struck out of their senses, overwhelmed."¹ How did scribes teach? Quoting Talmuds and Rabbinical teachings. Instead, Jesus is the Word of God (John 1) teaching the Word of Scripture with authority!

Does God's teaching have a place in our lives to astonish us and challenge us to be more like Him? If we believe Jesus is the authority, then all areas of our lives should come under the authority of His Spoken and Written Word - the Holy Bible. To what extent can we teach with authority? See Acts 2:14-41, 4:13 - The Holy Spirit empowers us to preach with conviction and power. What Jesus has given us plainly, we can teach with boldness and authority. What we haven't received simply, we should teach with humility.

v23-28 Rules - do we yield? Casting out a demon at the synagogue

"What have You to do with us?" This is a Hebrew idiom. "It denotes entire separation of interests:-i.e., "Thou and we have nothing in common; we want not Thee; what wouldst Thou with us?"² "Have you come to destroy us?" There's an expected time of reckoning where Jesus will destroy Satan and his fallen angels (Rev 20:10). The demons know Who Christ is (Ps 16:10) and fear and tremble (James 2:19, Acts 19:11-17). Intellectual belief or acknowledgement of Christ doesn't make us Christians, it is our submission to Him that makes us faithful followers.

Q: What is a demon? A fallen angel and servant of the Devil/Satan (Jude 6, Rev 12:3-4, 7-9, Matt 12:24, 25:41). A created, spiritual being, who has rejected its Creator but still subject to His authority (Job 1:12, 2:6). The devil and his angels will be thrown into the lake of fire (Matt 25:41, Rev 20:10). They are not omnipotent (all powerful) nor omniscient (all knowing) nor omnipresent (all present) - restricted in time and space. Strong and powerful like unfallen angels.

Q: Can a Christian be "possessed" by a demon? If it was a concern or possibility, it's never addressed or described in Scripture. The Bible speaks of unsaved people who "have a demon" or suffering from demonic influence. It does not speak of "possession."³ Guzik demonstrates that the Greek prepositions to describe someone "having" a demon is the same as language to say we're "in" Christ (1 Cor 1:30) which most people don't describe as "Jesus Possessed."⁴

We can answer the question with a resounding, "No!" Greater is He who is within you than he who is in the world (1 Jo 4:4). Christians have been sealed in the Holy Spirit upon belief until the day of redemption (Eph 1:13-14, 4:30), protected by the power of God through faith (1 Pet 1:5), and no one can snatch us from His hand (John 10:28-29). Jesus shared His authority over the demonic realm with us (Mark 3:15, Acts 16:18). While we can be afflicted by demons or spiritual attack (2 Co 12:7), Satan is subject to Christ. "Resist the Devil and he will flee from you." (James 4:7)

Jesus demonstrates His power over the demonic realm, authenticating His teaching as authoritative.

¹ *The Bible Knowledge Commentary: New Testament*. Walvoord and Zuck. Pg 109.

² *Commentary on the Whole Bible*. Jamieson, Fausset, and Brown. Pg 952.

³ Bible Doctrine. Wayne Grudem.

⁴ Study Guide for Mark 1 by David Guzik.

v29-34 Heals - do we let Him? Ministering at Simon and Andrew's house

The disciples tell Jesus about Peter's sick mother-in-law - that indicates Peter is married (1 Cor 9:5). She lay with a fever - "Luke... describes it professionally; calling it a "great fever," and thus distinguishing it from the lighter kind which the Greek physicians were wont to call "small fevers."⁵ There were instructions in the Talmud (Hebrew writings relating to application of Scripture to life or other human traditions) on how to treat this illness using incantations of Scripture. Jesus healed her simply and entirely - "She began to serve them" (v31). When it's sundown (the Sabbath has ended) the people flock to the house for healing and to have demons cast out.

v35-39 Prays - do we also? Making space for prayer and staying on mission

Early on Sunday, Jesus gets up early by Himself to go pray. Jesus just experienced an incredibly busy day of ministry. He was probably up late working through the long line at the door of healings and exorcisms. But, He secludes Himself from His disciples and the crowds and His sleep to spend time with His Father. When His disciples find him and seem to urge Him back toward the masses ("everyone is looking for you"), He tells them it's time to move on.

v40-45 Rescues - do we receive Him? Healing the leper with growing fame

Leprosy is a bacterial infection that attacks the skin and damages the nerves. It is not highly contagious (95% of people are immune to it) and can be cured with antibiotics over 1-2 years.⁶ What did the law require of lepers? Lev 13:45-46 - torn clothes, no hat, covering mouth shouting "Unclean! Unclean!", live alone outside the camp. Why? 1) For their time, it was incurable, and secondary infection and complications could make it contagious. 2) Almost every commentary associates the case of leprosy with the case of sin: "(1) loathesome, (2) spreading, (3) incurable."⁷ If anything beyond the practical, God was also giving us a picture of what sin does in our lives. Have we received His healing?

Luke the physician says he was "covered" with leprosy (Luke 5:12), but the leper knows Christ has the power to make him clean ("If you are willing"). Jesus heals him, moved with pity (Mark's addition), *splagchnizomai*, or "moved with compassion." "To have the bowels yearn, i.e. (figuratively) feel sympathy, to pity:—have (be moved with) compassion."⁸ Did Christ break the law by touching a leper? "He never touched the leper, that is to say that when His hand rested on him, he was already cleansed.... He that a moment ago cried out as a leper... was now a leper no longer; and in proof of it the hand of Jesus was laid upon him."⁹

Why does Jesus try to minimize talk about His miracles? He's biding His time and does not want to be misunderstood as the Messiah the Jews were expecting (King) rather than the suffering Servant Messiah.

Jesus told the leper to follow the command of Moses. Lev 14:1-32 - requires seeing the priest, sacrificing birds, shaving, waiting 7 days, shaving of head, sacrifice of one or two lambs (depending on financial ability) and placing oil and blood from the sacrifice on the individual. Chuck Smith makes the point that this procedure is for what to do when an incurable disease is healed.¹⁰ How many times did the priests have to do this one? "If the priests declared the leper clean but rejected the One who cleansed him, their unbelief would be incriminating evidence against them."¹¹

So, what? Now, what?

- Does God's teaching have a daily place in our lives to astonish us and challenge us to be more like Him?
- Do we make the space for solitude with God? What do I need to do to have that time with Him?
- Will I minister to the untouchables in our society? Do I love those who society rejects or dismisses (unwanted children, widows, elderly, disabled)? What about the people who do things that are abhorrent to God?
- Do I feel like a leper before a Holy God? Have I accepted His forgiveness through His Son?

⁵ *Commentary on the Whole Bible*. Jamieson, Fausset, and Brown. Pg 953.

⁶ <https://www.cdc.gov/leprosy/about/index.html>

⁷ *Commentary on the Whole Bible*. Jamieson, Fausset, and Brown. Pg 912.

⁸ Strong's Definition.

⁹ *The Great Physician: The Method of Jesus with Individuals*. G. Campbell Morgan. Pg 103.

¹⁰ Verse by Verse Study on Mark. Chuck Smith.

https://www.blueletterbible.org/Comm/smith_chuck/c2000_Mar/Mar_001.cfm?a=958021

¹¹ *The Bible Knowledge Commentary: New Testament*. Walvoord and Zuck. Pg 111.