

Mark 1 Chapter Study

INTRODUCTION

Background

Mark is the shortest of the 4 gospels; it's only 16 chapters.

Not only is it the shortest "page-wise"; it *feels* the shortest when reading it. Mark writes with a strong sense of urgency. There's a "hurriedness" to his style. There's a reason for that as we'll see.

All four of the Gospels were understood to have been written by the authors they're attributed to very early in Church history.

Matthew, Mark, Luke, & John were all known to be the authors of the works that carried their names as far back as the early second century.

It wasn't until the modern era and the skepticism of higher criticism that the authorship of the 4 gospels was questioned.

Mark, the author of this gospel, is John Mark, [Acts 15:37; Col. 4:10; 1 Pet. 5:13] *John* was his Hebrew name, *Mark* his Roman name.

In Acts 12:12 we learn that the early church met at the home of Mark's mother in Jerusalem.

It must have been a large house because it says there were a great many people there.

A large house in Jerusalem was pretty solid evidence that Mark's family was wealthy.

In 1 Peter 5, Peter refers to Mark as his "son" in the faith so Peter was instrumental in Mark's conversion and development as a believer.

Mark was Peter's companion, and the early church believed that the content of Mark's gospel was derived directly from Peter.

For that reason, many scholars consider the Gospel of Mark to really be the Gospel of Peter. [\[1\]](#)

Anyone whose read the gospels knows that there are large sections of Matthew and Mark which are virtually identical.

Since Matthew is longer, they believe Mark came first, and that Matthew just copied Mark and embellished on it.

Now, this is silly! Matthew was one of the disciples, Mark wasn't.

He relied on Peter for the content of his gospel.

So why then does so much of Matthew and Mark appear identical?

Simple – in the early years of the Church, all the disciples stayed together in Jerusalem and taught the first generation of Christians about the life and ministry of Jesus.

A specific catechism was developed, an oral tradition of the Life of Jesus.

[Explain]

When Matthew and Mark wrote their gospels, it was natural they would use this oral tradition as the core of their story of the Life of Christ.

The differences between Matthew and Mark come from their intended audiences.

Each of the gospels was written to a different audience.

Matthew wrote his with a Jewish audience in mind, presenting Jesus as their long-awaited Messiah King.

Because that was his aim, he quotes and makes allusion to dozens of OT passages, showing how Jesus fulfilled prophecy.

Matthew had that long genealogy of Jesus at the beginning of his record because he needed to connect Jesus to David and the throne of Israel.

Luke wrote his gospel to a Greek audience, presenting Jesus as the consummate man. This is what all of Greek culture was into – the ideal of a perfect humanity.

This is why Luke charts Jesus' genealogy all the way back to Adam.

He shows Jesus as the master of every situation.

John's gospel was written to and for all people – with the intent that they might believe that Jesus is the Son of God.

So he has no genealogy because as the Son of God, He is eternal.

John makes Jesus deity clear in virtually every passage, while at the same time showing him to be a real man.

Mark wrote his gospel to a Roman audience.

Since the Romans were all about efficiency and power, Mark presents Jesus in a way that would appeal to these ideals.

He presents Jesus as a “Can-do” guy – the master of every situation.

Our idea of the Romans has been colored by the Hollywood depiction of them and by the decadent final decades of Rome's dominion.

What we may not realize is that the Roman Empire began with a rather noble idea.

Maybe it's best summed up in the character of Cincinnatus.

Cincinnatus was a farmer who'd served in his younger years in the Roman army.

When Rome was being threatened with invasion and no one else appeared capable of defending her, the Senate voted Cincinnatus dictator and gave him absolute control of the region.

Cincinnatus led the Roman army to victory, and 16 days after the war was over, resigned his office as dictator and returned to his fields.

He became the embodiment of virtue to Romans for centuries after.

His humble use of power in the service and benefit of others became a part of the collective soul of Rome and fueled the Romans with a vision of bringing peace to the chaos that had become of the Post-Alexandrian world.

The Romans recognized the genius of Greek culture, philosophy and government Alexander had successfully spread across the entire western world.

But they could see that it was being slowly gobbled up by the regional conflicts brewing all around them.

They knew they possessed the power to bring a uniform system of governance to the entire Mediterranean, and set about to do so through their legions.

At first, they justified the use of military power by saying that they were seeking to bring peace and safety to the Mediterranean world.

And once peace came, they would step aside – just as Cincinnatus went back to his fields.

But with the growth of their power, corruption crept in.

Rome's massive wealth, gained through conquest led to incredible moral and political decadence.

Mark wrote his gospel at a moment in history when Rome's corruption was beginning to become obvious to all, and many of Rome's philosophers and politicians were longing for a return to Rome's original vision.

Cincinnatus was their hero. Mark points to Jesus as someone even greater than Cincinnatus.

The idea of the humble use of power in the service of others is Mark's whole theme as he writes of Jesus.

Mark presents Him as a servant – and because no one cares about the genealogy of a servant, there's no list of names charting Jesus' background in this gospel.

Outline of Mark

I. JESUS IN GALILEE CHS. 1-9

II. JESUS IN JUDEA CHS. 10-16

I. JESUS IN GALILEE CHS. 1-9

A. Jesus' Ministry Begins Ch. 1

1. John the Baptist prepares the way Vs. 1-8

¹The beginning of the gospel of Jesus Christ, the Son of God. ²As it is written in the Prophets: "Behold, I send My messenger before Your face, Who will prepare Your way before You." ³"The voice of one crying in the wilderness: 'Prepare the way of the LORD; Make His paths straight.'"

While John doesn't give a *physical* genealogy for Jesus, He does present a *spiritual* background for Him.

He shows how the plans for Jesus' coming had been set by God ages before.

He quotes both Malachi & Isaiah [Mal. 3:1 & Isa. 40:3]

Both foretold John the Baptist who would come and prepare the way for the Messiah.

In the ancient world, a king would visit the various regions of his domain every so many years.

A huge entourage of attendants would be gathered then he would go forth from his palace and capital and go out to visit all the little cities and towns over which he ruled.

A few months before he was set to begin the tour, a royal messenger would go out on the same route and announce to the people all along the route that the king was coming and they needed to get ready.

The people would then busy themselves with fixing the road leading into and through their city.

They'd repair the city wall and give their houses a fresh coat of plaster or whitewash.

Everything was spiffed up for the royal visit.
That's the image here – the prophets said that God would send forth an emissary to announce that the Messiah-King was coming, and the people needed to get ready, not by fixing their roads, but by preparing their hearts.

Mark begins here because he wants his readers to realize that Jesus was more than just a good example of manhood – He comes from Heaven!

And while Mark is going to present him in the role of a servant – He is in fact The King of all the Earth.

Talk about the humble use of power!

Mark then shows how John the Baptist was the fulfillment of these prophecies.

4 John came baptizing in the wilderness and preaching a baptism of repentance for the remission of sins.

This is how the people were to make the path straight, as it says in v. 3 – by repentance.

Sin had twisted and distorted them. Repentance would prepare them to receive the work God desired to do in and to them through Jesus.

John's baptism was a symbol of the people's repentance.

As we've seen before, baptism was not something Jews did; it was a ritual reserved for Gentiles who were converting to Judaism.

It marked a radical decision to forever put aside their identity as a Gentile and to embrace a new life as a Jew.

Jews didn't get baptized because they were already Jews.

When they *did* submit to baptism under John, it was because he was calling them out of dead Judaism into what it *really* means to be Jewish – one who is in covenant with God.

John was pointing at the religion of Israel and saying, "It's become nothing more than an empty shell, a meaningless ritual. If you're sincere about your personal relationship with God, then prove it by repenting and getting ready for what He's about to do by being baptized."

5 Then all the land of Judea, and those from Jerusalem, went out to him and were all baptized by him in the Jordan River, confessing their sins. 6 Now John was clothed with camel's hair and with a leather belt around his waist, and he ate locusts and wild honey.

Though the journey out to the wilderness where John was was difficult, thousands went to hear him and to be baptized.

They went because John's lifestyle was in complete accord with his message.

He lived in the wilderness. His clothing was of the coarsest nature and his diet was ultra-rustic.

The common people knew that the priests who served in the temple were corrupt and getting rich off the people.

They knew the worship going on by the priests in the temple in Jerusalem was a sham and they hated it.

John was different – he lived out what he preached – and his example inspired others to live likewise.

This is what our lifestyle should be & do.

It should reflect what it is we say we believe.

And it should do so in a manner that encourages and inspires others to live in holiness and excellence as well.

This is one of the dangers that lies in the modern use of broadcast media in presenting the gospel and in Bible teaching.

Some people drop out of the local church and limit their exposure to teaching to just what they get on the radio or TV.

This never allows them to examine the *lifestyle* of the person they're listening to.

In the Apostle Paul's letters he regularly reminded his readers to remember his lifestyle and how it was he had lived among them, showing that his example was in line with his doctrine.

In fact, he wasn't hesitant to say, "Imitate me – as I imitate Christ."

The great blight on the Church of today is the charge of hypocrisy – that Christians don't live like what they say they believe.

Many unbelievers say, "Jesus is great! I like Jesus; it's His followers who are the problem."

John shows us that when lifestyle & message are in harmony, great things can be accomplished for the Kingdom of God.

7 And he preached, saying, "There comes One after me who is mightier than I, whose sandal strap I am not worthy to stoop down and loose.

Here's the way it went in the order of ranking in society: Men, women, servants.

Among servants, there was a ranking: Chief steward, household servants, field workers, & at the very bottom was the foot-washer.

[Explain process of washing feet.]

That's who John claims to be in relation to the One he is the forerunner of, the messenger for.

John was esteemed by the people of his day as a mighty prophet, in the same role and mode as the classic OT prophets, Isaiah & Jeremiah.

Now he says, he's lower than a 'foot-washer' compared to the One who's coming after him.

8 I indeed baptized you with water, but He will baptize you with the Holy Spirit."

There's something here in what John says about baptism that we ought to take a closer look at because it might clear up some questions about the proper method to use in baptism.

The word "baptism" means *to immerse*.

In fact, the word's original use was in the dyeing industry.

A piece of fabric was immersed in a vat of dye and so indelibly marked with the color of the vat.

Baptism does not mean sprinkling or standing in the water and having a cup poured over one's head.

It meant immersion – and that is clearly the way John means it here when he said that while his baptism was an immersion in water, the Messiah's would be with the Holy Spirit.

Jesus doesn't *sprinkle* us with the Holy Spirit – He fills us, immerses us, and overflows us with the Holy Spirit.
Just as the dye marks the fabric, the Holy Spirit is to be in evidence in coloring our lives with the virtue of Christ.

2. Jesus is baptized Vs. 9-11

⁹It came to pass in those days

The days in which John was baptizing and was drawing huge crowds . . .

that Jesus came from Nazareth of Galilee, and was baptized by John in the Jordan.

If John's baptism was one of repentance, why was Jesus baptized?

He was sinless and had no need to repent.

Jesus came to identify with us, just as we identify with Him through baptism.

In Romans 6 we're told that baptism identifies us with Jesus' death, burial, and resurrection.

He came to identify with us in our brokenness & need, and did so in His baptism.

At the very outset of His mission, Jesus identified the character of His ministry.

Even though He was God, sinless, all-powerful - He would identify with man, and would go about His mission as a man, identifying with us in every way.

And that's why we read in the next verse . . .

¹⁰And immediately, coming up from the water, He saw the heavens parting and the Spirit descending upon Him like a dove. ¹¹Then a voice came from heaven, "You are My beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased."

God the Father put His seal of approval on Jesus, and then empowered Him for service by imparting the Holy Spirit.

You see, Jesus didn't perform His mission through the power of His deity.

Colossians 2 makes it clear that Jesus laid all of that aside in the incarnation.

His power was the power of One who'd been empowered by the Holy Spirit.

Just before Jesus ascended into heaven and turned His mission over to His

followers He told them to wait for the empowering of the Holy Spirit which would occur in just a short time.

On the Day of Pentecost, the promise was fulfilled when they were all filled with the Spirit.

What was available to them is available to us and God intends that each of us would know such empowering by the Spirit.

One other thing to note here is the clear evidence of the Trinity.

You have Jesus coming up out of the waters of baptism.

You have the Father's voice speaking from heaven.

And you have the Holy Spirit descending from the Father onto the Son.

This refutes the idea of *modalism*, which says that there is One God and One person, who has manifested himself in three different modes: The Father in the OT, The Son in the Gospel age, and now the Spirit in the Church era.

Right here, 3 distinct persons all at the same time, – yet the Bible is clear, there is one God.

3. Jesus is tempted Vs. 12-13

12Immediately the Spirit drove Him into the wilderness. **13**And He was there in the wilderness forty days, tempted by Satan, and was with the wild beasts; and the angels ministered to Him.

Mark doesn't give us the details about the temptations Jesus endured.

What he does tell us is that it was the Spirit who compelled Jesus into the wilderness.

For 40 *years*, Israel had wandered around the wilderness, mostly being beaten up by the devil, yielding to temptation time and again.

Now for 40 *days* in the wilderness, Jesus resists the devil and overcomes.

It's interesting that the first thing the Spirit did was compel Jesus into the wilderness, knowing that it would be a time of temptation.

Obviously He didn't want Jesus to succumb, so why did He do this?

He did it because He was showing Jesus off! The Father was so proud of the Son, and so confident of His faithfulness, that He presented Him to the devil and said – "Go ahead, take your best shot!"

The 3 temptations Satan placed before Jesus were the greatest and most severe temptations that have ever been visited upon man.

Yes, God the Father was showing Jesus off!

Just as He did with Job! Remember what God said to the devil?

God asked him, "Where have you been?"

The devil said, "Walking around down there."

God said, "Have you considered my servant Job?"

The devil said, "Yeah – he only serves you because you bless him. Take away the blessing and like all the rest of them, he'll curse you."

So God let the devil have at Job – and through it all, Job remained true.

Much the same thing is going on here. The Father is showing the devil that his day of dominion is coming to an end.

Jesus will defeat him, not in His identity as God, but as a man empowered by the Holy Spirit.

And that's why we read that Jesus was *hungry* in the *wilderness*, surrounded by the *wild* beasts, and the angels *ministered* to Him.

The *first man* had been *well fed* in a *garden*, surrounded by *tame* beasts, but when he fell was *opposed* by angels.

Where Adam *failed* in the midst of *ease* – Jesus *prevailed* in the midst of *hardship*.

What was lost in Adam is reclaimed by Christ.

4. Jesus begins preaching Vs. 14-15

14Now after John was put in prison, Jesus came to Galilee, preaching the gospel of the kingdom of God, **15**and saying, "The time is fulfilled, and the kingdom of God is at hand. Repent, and believe in the gospel."

Along with John's humble lifestyle of personal holiness went a strong call to repentance – not just for the common people, but for all people, including rulers.

He wasn't afraid to point out the error in others, specifically when their immorality was a public scandal.

So when Herod, one of the nation's rulers, was having an incestuous affair with his sister in law, John denounced it as a gross sin.

For this he was arrested and thrown into prison.

This resulted in a crackdown on all of John's disciples.

Since Jesus was the One everyone knew John had been claiming to be the forerunner of, Jesus left the region in Judea where John had been working, and moved north to Galilee.

His method in Galilee was simple – He announced the gospel, the Good news, that the Kingdom of God, the long hoped for reign of God on Earth was about to begin.

What the people needed to do in order to enter the Kingdom was to repent and believe the Good news Jesus was declaring.

That's it – that was the entrance requirement into the reign of God – turn from sin, toward God!

5. The first disciples are called Vs. 16-20

16 And as He walked by the Sea of Galilee, He saw Simon and Andrew his brother casting a net into the sea; for they were fishermen. **17** Then Jesus said to them, **“Follow Me, and I will make you become fishers of men.”** **18** They immediately left their nets and followed Him.

This wasn't the first time Jesus had encountered Simon Peter and Andrew.

Andrew had been one of John the Baptist's disciples.

After Jesus' baptism, Andrew had followed Jesus for a short time.

But when Herod arrested John, Andrew went back home to Galilee and picked up his old job as a fisherman.

Andrew had already talked to his brother Peter about Jesus and brought him to meet Him.

Now as Jesus begins His public ministry in earnest, He invites Andrew and Peter to follow Him full-time.

It seems a bit dramatic to us that they would just drop what they were doing, what they had been doing as their *livelihood*, and took off after Jesus.

What we don't realize is just how special Jesus' invitation was to these guys.

You see, the tradition of rabbis and their “talmidin,” disciples was something that was unique to Galilee.

To be the disciple of a well-known rabbi was counted as a great privilege.

Jesus isn't well known yet – but Andrew & Peter know enough about him to know

He has potential and they jump at the opportunity to become His disciples.

Besides, His invitation to them is intriguing.

“Follow Me, and instead of fish, you'll catch men!”

19 When He had gone a little farther from there, He saw James the son of Zebedee, and John his brother, who also were in the boat mending their nets. **20** And immediately He called them, and they left their father Zebedee in the boat with the hired servants, and went after Him.

John was another who'd been a disciple of John the Baptist.

Like Andrew, he'd already spent a little time following Jesus when He was in Judea.

When Jesus called him & his brother, they too dropped what they were doing and began to follow.

The mention here of hired servants means that Zebedee was a wealthy man.

Servants weren't cheap and only the rich could afford them.

John & James left privileged lives to follow Jesus.

Jesus took His first disciples from the ranks of common people who were just going about their daily lives, working in the real world.

He didn't go to the schools where the brightest students were and ask who the greatest prospect were.

No, He found people who were being faithful with their daily lives, and called them to something different.

Don't get me wrong, I'm not saying going to seminary or Bible college is wrong.

Actually, Andrew, Peter, James, and John had all been through a kind of Bible college prior to their work as fishermen – we'll be taking a closer look at this Sunday.

But after their schooling, they went to work, in a field that was unrelated to their Bible education. And it was in the midst of being faithful and diligent there, that Jesus came and said, "Change of plans. Instead do fish, I want you to catch people."

It's been my experience that while a Bible college degree is a great thing and seminary can be highly educational, in order to be effective in ministry, a person needs a healthy dose of what it means to work in the real world, at a real job.

But apart from what I think – isn't that what we see here?

Jesus called these 4 men while they were in the very act of faithfully working in what lay before them as today's duty.

6. The ministry in Capernaum Vs. 21-39

a. with authority vs. 21-22

21 Then they went into Capernaum, and immediately on the Sabbath He entered the synagogue and taught. **22** And they were astonished at His teaching, for He taught them as one having authority, and not as the scribes.

The synagogue was the Jewish equivalent of the local church.

It was a place, not of sacrifice (that was done only in the temple in Jerusalem) but teaching and reading from the Tanach; which is what the Jews call the OT.

Every synagogue had an overseer – called the "Ruler of the Synagogue."

He was responsible for whatever happened there at each Sabbath service.

When a visiting rabbi was present, the ruler of the synagogue would ask him to teach.

Jesus was asked to speak that day and when He did, He amazed everyone with the authority with which He spoke.

The people were used to the scribes method of teaching which was to read a

passage and then quote what a dozen or so esteemed rabbis had said as commentary on it.

None of the scribes presumed to offer their own ideas or commentary.

It tended to be a rather dry recitation of boring remarks.

Jesus didn't quote others. He read the text, and then offered even *more* insight into the subject the text spoke to.

As the people listened, they knew intuitively that they were hearing much more than the words of just one more man.

While there were many rabbis in Galilee, only a few of them were recognized as having "s'mikah" = authority.

Rabbis were divided into 2 groups: Torah teachers, AKA scribes, & s'mikah rabbis.

While the torah teachers simply read the law and then quoted what various authorities had said about it, the s'mikah rabbis' comments were considered as inspired and carrying authority from God.

Their comments weren't on the same level as scripture, but close.

When Jesus spoke, people recognized an authority in His teaching that was unlike anything they had heard before.

He was a s'mikah rabbi.

What troubled them is that s'mikah rabbis were all the disciples of a previous s'mikah rabbi.

Jesus sprang up out of nowhere – that is, He hadn't been the "talmid," the disciple, of a rabbi.

This is why they often asked Him – "Where did you get Your s'mikah, Your authority?"

His reply was that He got it from His Father – and it was this that infuriated them so.

b. with power vs. 23-28

23 Now there was a man in their synagogue with an unclean spirit.

And he cried out, 24 saying, "Let us alone! What have we to do with You, Jesus of Nazareth? Did You come to destroy us? I know who You are—the Holy One of God!"

When Jesus' authority was manifest in the teaching of the Word, it moved the demon who was possessing one of the men there that day to manifest itself.

What's interesting is that this man was there in the first place.

How long had he been coming to the synagogue, and the people were unaware this guy in fact had a demon?

They probably thought he was a bit strange, but were ignorant to the real cause of his strangeness.

But the demon freaked when Jesus' authority was manifest, and suddenly everyone knew what was going on.

25 But Jesus rebuked him, saying, "Be quiet, and come out of him!" **26** And when the unclean spirit had convulsed him and cried out with a loud voice, he came out of him.

The demon spoke openly about Jesus' identity – and Jesus hushed Him.

This becomes a major theme of Mark's – that Jesus told those He healed to keep silent and not noise abroad who He was.

Mark emphasizes this because it fits with his desire to show Jesus' humble use of power.

It was never showy or flashy. It was always quiet, dignified, and with the aim to do only 2 things, glorify God and compassionately meet people's needs.

This is something that would appeal to the sense of virtue and the heroic in the Roman mind.

As this demon was leaving the man it'd possessed, it tore at him one last time with a terrible convulsion.

The word *convulse* here means *to tear*. We'd refer to it as a seizure that caused a person to be thrown on the ground and go rigid.

Even with the deliverance that Jesus brought to this man, the demon did one last little act of torment to this poor guy.

The point is this – the demonic realm is real, and while it is under the authority of God and has to do what He says, on the way there, it will do what it can to harm man.

God can and does forgive sin – but the sinful choices we make have consequences. What we sow, we reap.

What was so different about Jesus' deliverance of this guy was that it was so seemingly effortless on His part. [Explain]

27 Then they were all amazed, so that they questioned among themselves, saying, "What is this? What new doctrine is this? For with authority He commands even the unclean spirits, and they obey Him." 28 And immediately His fame spread throughout all the region around Galilee.

They were simply stunned at the authority and power with which Jesus ministered.

This story of the demon-possessed man in the synagogue is an important one for us.

It teaches us that when God's Spirit is moving and His authority is at work in our midst, in all likelihood we are going to see the demonic manifest itself.

When it does – don't freak out. Just pray. [Elaborate on how we will deal with it]

c. many healings vs. 29-34

29 Now as soon as they had come out of the synagogue, they entered the house of Simon and Andrew, with James and John.

After the Sabbath service at the synagogue, Simon Peter & Andrew invited Jesus to come to their house, probably for the traditional meal.

30 But Simon's wife's mother lay sick with a fever, and they told Him about her at once.

Living there was Simon Peter's mother in law – which means the first Pope was married.

As the senior woman of the house she would have led in making the meal.

But she was sick.

31 So He came and took her by the hand and lifted her up, and immediately the fever left her. And she served them.

No big deal, Jesus just takes her hand and lifts her and she is healed.

Then, she set about to serve them, which is always a good response to being touched by the Lord.

32 At evening, when the sun had set, they brought to Him all who were sick and those who were demon-possessed. **33** And the whole city was gathered together at the door. **34** Then He healed many who were sick with various diseases, and cast out many demons; and He did not allow the demons to speak, because they knew Him.

Word spreads about Jesus' power to heal and pretty soon there's a line outside the door of people wanting His touch.

The line began at sunset because that's when the Sabbath ended and they had probably all used up the allowed travel distance on the Sabbath and couldn't come till sunset.

d. Jesus' priority in prayer vs. 35-38

35 Now in the morning, having risen a long while before daylight, He went out and departed to a solitary place; and there He prayed. **36** And Simon and those *who were with Him* searched for Him. **37** When they found Him, they said to Him, "Everyone is looking for You."

38 But He said to them, "Let us go into the next towns, that I may preach there also, because for this purpose I have come forth."

39 And He was preaching in their synagogues throughout all Galilee, and casting out demons.

Since we covered these verses Sunday, I'll leave it to you to get the CD if you weren't here.

7. A notable healing Vs. 40-45

40 Now a leper came to Him, imploring Him, kneeling down to Him and saying to Him, "If You are willing, You can make me clean."

41 Then Jesus, moved with compassion,

How could a person not be moved with compassion in the face of a case of leprosy.

Lepers were banned from the public, and forced to live in isolation.

A group of lepers might live together, but that would only serve to add to the sense of torment because you'd be looking at what was happening to you!

The disfigurement was hideous. The isolation a torment.

What made it all the worse was that lepers were thought to have committed some terrible abomination that had resulted in their condition.

So there was a crushing sense of shame that was attached to leprosy.

As Jesus looked at this poor man, He was moved with compassion, so He . . .

stretched out His hand and touched him, and said to him, "I am willing; be cleansed." **42** As soon as He had spoken, immediately the leprosy left him, and he was cleansed.

Not only was the disease healed, but the effects of the leprosy were erased and His features and digits were made whole.

43 And He strictly warned him and sent him away at once, **44** and said to him, **“See that you say nothing to anyone; but go your way, show yourself to the priest, and offer for your cleansing those things which Moses commanded, as a testimony to them.”**

Jesus told the guy to be silent about his healing and to go instead to one of the priests who had been trained in how to diagnose leprosy.

In Leviticus there’s a whole section on how to diagnose and treat leprosy.

There was also a ritual given for when a leper was healed.

Do you remember sitting in Math class and learning some arcane formula for figuring the area of an equilateral triangle, and thinking to yourself, “Why do I have to learn this? I’m never going to need this!”

You can just picture the young Jewish priests being trained and in their rituals class one day the older teacher-priest begins instructing them in the ritual of offerings that were to be done when a leper was healed.

Levi raised a hand and said, “Uh, Teacher, has there ever been a leper healed?”

“Not that I know if.”

“So why are we learning this? We’re never going to need it!”

Jesus wanted this guy to find a priest and present himself to him,

He would take a good look at him, and pronounce him clean, and then would have to go through the ritual of offering the turtle dove over the vessel with running water and hyssop and all the rest.

And the whole time the priest would be saying – “Wait a minute! I may be the first priest to be doing this in centuries.”

When the next cleansed leper came, and then the next, it would confront the priests that a new thing was happening in the land.

People who were considered unhealable, were being delivered and set free by the score!

This would be one more evidence that the Messiah had come.

There’s one more thing to learn from this.

The priest functioned in the role of a doctor regarding leprosy.

He diagnosed it and then prescribed the treatment for it.

By telling the man to have a priest clear him as healed, Jesus is telling him to get medical confirmation of the healing.

This is always a good idea when the Lord heals us.

Some people have the mistaken idea that going to the doctor is a lack of faith.

They think after they’ve been healed that going to the doctor to get confirmation would somehow jinx the healing.

Jesus told this guy to go and get medical confirmation of his healing.

And, he was to stay silent about his healing UNTIL THE CONFIRMATION WAS CONFIRMED.

This guy didn’t do what Jesus said . . .

45 However, he [the healed leper] went out and began to proclaim *it* freely, and to spread the matter, so that Jesus could no longer openly enter the city, but was outside in deserted places; and they came to

Him from every direction.

There were so many people pressing in about Him to be healed He had to stay outside the towns.

People were heedless of personal property in their attempts to get to Jesus.

We know how some men tore through the roof of a house to get their paralyzed friend into His presence!

So in order to keep people's homes from getting torn up, Jesus had to stay out in the uninhabited places.

Mark makes it clear it was the leper's failure to follow Jesus' instructions that resulted in this state of affairs.

It actually would have been more convenient for everyone concerned if Jesus had been able to remain in town.

By being out in the wilderness, it made it more difficult for everyone.

No doubt this man thought he was doing the right thing in telling everyone about Jesus and His power.

He couldn't see how his actions would actually complicate matters.

He was excited, and his emotions dictated his behavior.

The result was that ultimately, Jesus' ministry was hindered.

This is not at all uncommon.

People are touched by the Lord, and they react emotionally, doing and saying things that seem right at the moment, but in fact hinder the work the Lord wants to do. [Elaborate]

It is always best to do what Jesus says.

And when we're deeply moved emotionally, we need to be on extra guard that our emotions don't carry us over into something that would distract from the Lord's glory.

[1]

Courson, J. (2003). *Jon Courson's Application Commentary* (Page 222). Nashville, TN: Thomas Nelson