

The Gospel of Mark

Walking with the Servant Savior

Lesson 2 Mark 1:1-21-45

Day One: Unparalleled Authority

Pray as you begin your lesson each day.

Have you ever listened to a message, only to have it hit you like a thunderbolt? You didn't see it coming, but there it was and you knew you would not be the same again. Imagine yourself sitting in the synagogue on the Sabbath, listening for the first time to the very individual spoken of in the Scriptures of old. You're there along with the other bystanders—common laborers, fishermen, merchants. The words you're hearing are not *about* God's Word—they *are* God's Word—and they are penetrating your own soul.

Read Mark 1:21-28

1. Mark tells us that Jesus, accompanied by Peter, Andrew, James and John, arrived in Capernaum. What immediately happened there? What was the response?

The word *astonished* in the Greek is a strong word, meaning *amazed* or *astounded*. It indicated that those who heard Jesus speak were dealt a blow, a powerful punch! In other words, when Jesus spoke, people listened. They listened because "*He taught them as one having authority, and not as the scribes*" (verse 22). The scribes were Jewish teachers who specialized in the legal interpretation of God's law. They often quoted the words of well known rabbis to give authority to what they said. Jesus didn't need to do that because he was the Son of God—the Author of the Scriptures—and He understood their application to daily life.

2. *Personal:* Each time you open the Word or listen to a message preached, you can either allow it to impact you or you can turn a deaf ear to it and pretend it doesn't apply. Do you put yourself under the authority of God's Word?
3. The display of Jesus' powerful authority prompted an outburst from the audience in the synagogue. Who made it and what did he say? vv. 23-24
4. What do you learn about the nature of demons in Matthew 10:1, Mark 5:8-9, and Luke 8:29?

Demons (evil spirits) are fallen angels who joined Satan in his rebellion against God and were cast out of heaven. They have the ability to possess a human being (those not belonging to Christ), causing the person's personality to become damaged to the point that he is brought under their control. The important thing to remember is that in each case where demons confronted Christ, they were overruled and lost their power.

5. Who has authority over demons? Matthew 12:28 (See also Luke 9:1 and 10:17.)

6. With what two commands did Jesus rebuke the demons? v. 25

The word *rebuke* in the Greek means *to shame* or *reprove*. Jesus commanded the demon to be silenced, or muzzled. But that was not all, Jesus wanted to free the man held in bondage by the evil spirit.

7. Note the response to the following . . .
 - *The demons protest to Jesus' command* (v. 26):

 - *The crowd to what they witnessed* (v. 27):

 - *The aftermath throughout the region* (v. 28):

The whole region of Galilee began to hear of Jesus' great power and authority. His popularity was on the rise, but we will see it impede His ability to move freely to share His message: "*and the **whole city** was gathered together at the door*" (v. 33); "***everyone** is looking for You*" (v. 37); "*and they came to him from **every** direction*" (v. 45).

Heartbeat: (Memory verse) "*Jesus came and spoke to them, saying, 'All authority has been given to Me in heaven and on earth.'*" Matthew 28:18

Day Two: The Ministry of Healing Begins

What to look for . . .

How stirring it must have been to listen as Jesus made God's Word come alive in the synagogue that day, and how stunning to watch as He commanded the evil spirits. But perhaps even more amazing was witnessing the heart of God *in action*, as Jesus reached out with healing power to all who came to Him for help.

Read Mark 1:29-45

Imagine having a front row seat to all that went on in Galilee that busy weekend. As soon as Jesus went into the synagogue to begin teaching, the people were amazed. When He commanded evil spirits, everyone was amazed. Coming out of the synagogue and entering the home of Simon Peter, He performed His first healing and everyone in that residence was amazed. But all of that was only the beginning!

1. What did Jesus and His followers discover when they arrived at Peter and Andrew's home? Why do you think they reported the matter to Jesus? vv. 29-31

- ❖ How did He respond? What does this reveal to you about His heart?

2. What happened as night began to fall? Who came to witness what was going on? vv. 32-34

Once the Sabbath was over and the sun had set, the people started coming: those who needed to be carried, some who could walk on their own, others who were diseased or mentally disturbed showed up to see Jesus. Imagine the *whole city* gathered at the front door!

- ❖ On into the late night Jesus healed those who came. What does this reveal to you about His heart?

3. Who else came to see Him? What was his request? vv. 40-42

Lepers were social outcasts, forced to live outside the city walls. If anyone approached them they had to cry out loudly: "Unclean, unclean!" Aware of how bad his condition was, this leper had the faith in Jesus to believe he could be made clean.

- ❖ What was Jesus' response? What does this reveal to you about His heart?

4. What further instruction did Jesus give and what word of warning? vv. 43-44

- What did the man do instead? What was the aftermath? v. 45

The consequence of the healed leper's decision not to obey Jesus' instructions had a direct impact on the Lord's ministry: "*Jesus could no longer openly enter the city, but was outside in deserted places when they came to Him from every direction*" (v. 45). Let's remember that there will be times when we need to remain silent about a word from the Lord or an answered prayer. Can He trust you with a silence?

Review this week's memory verse.

Day Three:

Prayer—the Key

What to look for...

The weight of ministry should drive us to find a solitary place to be alone with God. Carving time out of the day to pray is never easy but it is essential if we want to be the kind of servant that pleases God. He listens to every prayer, but prolonged time in His presence allows us to *listen to Him!* It also provides us with the power to meet the daily demands placed upon us.

Jesus had spent an action-filled Sabbath day teaching and healing all those who were sick and demon possessed. Very early Sunday morning He rose to fellowship with His Father. By the time His whereabouts were discovered, He was spiritually refreshed and ready to face what came next.

1. For review, where did Jesus go and for what specific reason? v. 35

The solitary place of His retreat was similar to the desert place where He had faced His enemy (1:12-13). It was there that He withdrew to be alone with God. Prayer was His first priority and while on earth He was in constant communion with the Father. In the midst of ministry as well as before and during times of personal sorrow, Jesus withdrew. Three such occasions recorded for us in the Gospel of Mark. One is mentioned here in chapter one, following the successful ministry in Capernaum.

2. Two other occasions are mentioned below. What events surrounded each retreat?
 - Mark 6:45-51
 - Mark 14:32-41

Selah...

If Jesus was in constant touch with the Father, needing to be strengthened to accomplish God's purpose, how *needy* are you? Please share your thoughts.

3. *Personal: "In quietness and confidence shall be your strength"* (Isaiah 30:15). Your strength needed to meet the day's challenges is dependent upon your time spent alone with in prayer with your heavenly Father. On a scale of 1—10 (1 being worst; 10 being best), how *equipped* are you?

Sadly, it is easier for us to communicate with other people than it is to talk with God, but for the believer prayer should be as “natural” as taking in a breath. It is, however, a spiritual discipline that must be practiced on a daily basis—the more we do it, the easier it becomes. Since we take time for what is most important to us, our talk with God should be the first two-way conversation we have each day, and then it should continue throughout the day. Jesus was interrupted (and we will be too), but He wasn’t deterred (and we mustn’t be either). It is in the place of solitude that we are closest to God. If you desire to have a vital prayer life with God (and what Christian doesn’t), think through the helpful checklist below and make sure everything is in place. A little bit of attention now will help you become disciplined over time.

- ✓ **Be consistent:** Find a quiet place where you can withdraw without interruption to be alone with God. For Jesus, it was the desert. Where do you go?
- ✓ **Be prompt:** Pre-set a regular meeting time that is the same every day. Jesus remained disciplined in this area—will you follow His example?
- ✓ **Be prepared:** Have your Bible, notebook (journal), and pen already in place to save you the time of looking for them.
- ✓ **Be faithful:** Guard this time as your #1 priority! No one else will do it for you.
- ✓ **Be ready to be blessed!** Come with an expectant heart.

Review this week’s memory verse.

Day Four: The Thankful Heart

Today our focus will be on the healing of Peter’s mother-in-law and her response to the touch of Jesus.

At the conclusion of Sabbath services (about noon), as was the custom, Jesus and His followers met to share a Sabbath meal in the home of Peter, who undoubtedly did not realize that she had taken ill with a high fever. When Jesus was made aware of it, He responded to the need of the moment.

Come closer . . . Read Mark 1:29-31 for review.

Comparing Mark’s account with that of Luke’s and Matthew’s gives us a very clear picture of what actually took place in that home. Read through the three accounts and then in a couple of sentences write a summary statement of what took place (Luke 4:38-39; Matthew 8:15; and Mark 1:31).

Throughout the New Testament we see many instances in which Jesus performed miraculous healings—each one uniquely different from the others. We don't know why He chose different ways, but it is encouraging to realize that He very carefully and lovingly considered each individual person and the circumstances as well as the message He wanted to convey. It is *His nature* to heal—both those who know Him and those who do not. His touch of grace is available to all.

For Peter's mother-in-law, it was the simple taking of her hand, an expression of Jesus' genuine desire to tenderly meet her need. Whatever Jesus and His followers had for dinner that evening, it was a superb meal because it was served up with thankfulness!

1. What three words sum up the response of Peter's mother-in-law? vv. 31

She was healed to serve, and we can appreciate the laughter and rejoicing that arose from that table and from her thankful heart.

2. Not everyone is thankful for God's touch. How is this principle illustrated for us in Luke 17:11-18?
 - If God were to touch you today, would you be *one* to return and thank Him by your actions? Please explain.

Our thankfulness for the touch of Jesus upon our lives is the motive behind our service for Him. When was the last time you returned to give Him thanks? When was the last time you turned that thankfulness into compassion for someone else in need? The degree of your thankfulness will be expressed in your reaching out to others. How far does your reach extend?

3. Take a moment to meditate on 2 Corinthians 1:3-4, then share your thoughts.
 - Name something for which you are particularly thankful today.
 - Jot down a way you can show your thankfulness by reaching out to someone else who also needs God's touch at this time.

"He comforts us in all our troubles so that we can comfort others. When others are troubled, we will be able to give them the same comfort God has given us." 2 Corinthians 1:4 NLT

Review this week's memory verse.

Day Five:

Praying God's Purpose

It's time to do some *prayer walking*—not in the literal, but the *spiritual* sense. The Holy Spirit will lead you today as you consider three points from your lesson, write them in the form of a prayer, and lift them to the Lord. If practicing the presence of God is new to you—be patient—it will come, and you will be blessed!

"... We do not know what we ought to pray for, but the Spirit himself intercedes for us with groans that words cannot express. And he who searches our hearts knows the mind of the Spirit, because the Spirit intercedes for the saints in accordance with God's will." Romans 8:26-27 NLT

A prayer of thankfulness...

Are you someone who is astonished at God's Word? Do you appreciate the Lord's authority over your life? Tell Him how thankful you are to be securely His.

A prayer of need...

Jesus revealed His heart through His extended hand. He is still reaching out today, wanting to bring His healing touch to your life. Tell Him what you need.

A prayer of value...

If you'd like to have a vital prayer life with God but you have trouble being disciplined about it, ask Him to help you find a consistent time and a quiet place to meet regularly.

Write out this week's verse from memory:

Notes