

IN SEARCH OF A LEADER Sunday School- October 4, 2009

Unifying Topic: LOOKING FOR JESUS

Lesson Text

I. Priority of Prayer (Mark 1:35-39)

II. Compassionate Touch and Healing Word (Mark 1:40-42)

III. Joyful Witness (Mark 1:43-45)

The Main Thought: And when they had found him, they said unto him, All men seek for thee. (Mark 1:37, KJV).

Unifying Principle: We often seek out people we believe can help us solve our problems. Where can we find such people? The people of Galilee realized that Jesus had the words of life and healing touch that they sought, so they went looking for Him.

Lesson Aim: To help students appreciate how Jesus healed the leper changing his life.

Life aim: To teach how Jesus is the awesome answer to our every need and that He had the wonderful power to heal us and bless us, and enthusiastically causing us to go forth and joyfully witness for Him.

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- 1:35 And in the morning, rising up a great while before day, he went out, and departed into a solitary place, and there prayed.
1:36 And Simon and they that were with him followed after him.
1:37 And when they had found him, they said unto him, All men seek for thee.
1:38 And he said unto them, Let us go into the next towns, that I may preach there also: for therefore came I forth.
1:39 And he preached in their synagogues throughout all Galilee, and cast out devils.
1:40 And there came a leper to him, beseeching him, and kneeling down to him, and saying unto him, If thou wilt, thou canst make me clean.
1:41 And Jesus, moved with compassion, put forth his hand, and touched him, and saith unto him, I will; be thou clean.
1:42 And as soon as he had spoken, immediately the leprosy departed from him, and he was cleansed.
1:43 And he straitly charged him, and forthwith sent him away;
1:44 And saith unto him, See thou say nothing to any man: but go thy way, shew thyself to the priest, and offer for thy cleansing those things which Moses commanded, for a testimony unto them.
1:45 But he went out, and began to publish it much, and to blaze abroad the matter, insomuch that Jesus could no more openly enter into the city, but was without in desert places: and they came to him from every quarter.

HISTORY:

Some commentators claim that Peter furnished much of the material for the Gospel, whereas others say that Mark made notes of Peter's preaching and later used the notes to write the Gospel. For he had neither heard the Lord or been his disciple; but he had been Peter's disciple. John Mark wrote the gospel of Mark. He accompanied the apostle Paul on his first missionary journey (Acts 13:13). He wrote to the Christians in Rome to present three things about Christ: His person, His work, and His teachings. He wanted them to know that Jesus Christ alone is the Son of the Living God. He showed in his Gospel how Jesus demonstrated His divinity by overcoming many things: diseases, demons, and even death. Mark also showed how Jesus obeyed His Father and chose to die for sinful humanity on a cruel cross.

Mark does not begin as those of Matthew and Luke, from the birth of our Savior, but from John's baptism, from which he soon passes to Christ's public ministry. The Book of Mark is **written to** the Roman world at large and the Gentile mind **for the purpose** of showing that Jesus is unquestionably the Son of God. Mark states his purpose immediately upon beginning his Gospel: *"The beginning of the gospel of Jesus Christ, the Son of God"* (v. 1). *"This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased"* (v. 11). Mark says two things right here: (1) The gospel concerns Jesus Christ, the Son of God. (2) The gospel began long, long ago, before the birth of Jesus and the ministry of John. The gospel began long ago in the mind and plan of God. Verse 2, gives us the promise of God to send a messenger, why?, to prepare* the way for His Son.

NOTE:

*God always sends a preparer (someone who leads the way) to make the way clear for His people: He sent Moses for the people; He sent the Prophets for the people; He sent Elijah for Elisha; He sent Paul for the Gentiles; He sent John the Baptist for Jesus; He sent Jesus for us. Preparation is first!

TERMS:

JESUS: Savior, He will save. The Hebrew form is Joshua (yasha) meaning Jehovah is salvation; He is the Savior.

CHRIST: the words 'Christ' (christos) and "Messiah" are the same word. Messiah is the Hebrew word and Christ is the Greek word. Both words refer to the same person and mean the same thing, the Anointed One.

The Messiah was thought to be several things:

1. Nationally, He was to be the leader from David's line who would free the Jewish state as an independent nation and lead it to be the greatest nation the world had ever known.
2. Militarily, He was to be a great military leader who would lead Jewish armies victoriously over all the world.
3. Religiously, He was to be a supernatural figure straight from God who would bring righteousness over all the earth.
4. Personally, He was to be the One who would bring peace to the whole world.

I) Jesus begins preparation for His ministry, first by being baptized by John the Baptist (v9-11).

- 1) To acknowledge His commitment to His mission to bring the message of salvation to all people.
- 2) To demonstrate that He truly was God's Son and that God approved and endorsed His mission.
- 3) To officially begin His public ministry.
- 4) To identify with our humanness and sin.
- 5) To give an example to follow.

II) He is immediately driven(compelled with great force) by the Holy Spirit into the wilderness and tempted by Satan (v12-13).

- 1) Temptation follows a person's decision – **TRUST** and not doubt.
- 2) Temptation is used by the Spirit – **PERSEVERANCE** not to fall by wavering.
- 3) Temptation is a wilderness experience – **ENDURE HARDSHIP** not to be comfortable.
- 4) Temptation is of Satan – **RESIST, STAND FIRM** not to give way and accept anything (lies).
- 5) Temptation is met by God's help – **STRENGTHEN** not to be weak.

III) Jesus preached the Gospel (v14-15) and calls His disciples (v16-20).

John the Baptist is imprisoned and Jesus comes preaching, "The time is fulfilled* and the kingdom of God is at hand: repent ye, and believe the Gospel." He begins to gather His disciples (**Simon** [Peter], **Andrew**, **James**, the son of Zebedee and **John** his brother). These disciples were visionary men looking for the Messiah and ready to follow Jesus no matter the cost.

NOTE:

*As predicted by the prophets, Christ has now come. God had foretold that Elijah must first come and prepare the way (Is.40:3; Mal.3:1). Elijah came in the person of John the Baptist (Matt.11:10). But now John was passing from the scene. His ministry of preparing the way for the messiah was completed. It was now time for the Messiah to appear in force, proclaiming the glorious gospel of God's Kingdom.

IV) The impact of Jesus' Ministry (v21-34)

Jesus began with a time of worship by going to the synagogue* on the Sabbath Day where he taught the Word of God which astonished, stirred, aroused the crowd, while the Scribes who were thought to be the experts in the law of Moses, did not teach in this fashion but basically taught tradition. He **taught with authority**, with power.

- 1) **Tradition vs. Authority:** relying on esteemed men, their traditions, and teachings instead of the Spirit of God.
- 2) **Form vs. Power:** relying on ritual, ceremony, and outward appearance instead of the inward promptings to overcome the trials and sufferings of life.
- 3) **Humanism (laws) vs. the Spiritual (truth):** relying on formulated laws of human thought and rationalism instead of the heart and life of the soul and spirit.
- 4) **Religion vs. life:** relying on other's religion instead of the abundant and eternal life.
- 5) **Profession vs. Possession:** relying on their twisted interpretation, their own liking, and man-made religion

instead of practicing and living what was taught in the Word of God having full ownership.

NOTE:

*A Gentile centurion built this particular synagogue and gave it to the Jews as a special gift. There were both Jews and Gentile proselytes (converts) present as Jesus ministered.

A. The Unclean Spirit (vv23-26)

In this same synagogue is a man with an unclean spirit. The man was in the grasp, in the possession of the unclean spirit. He was in the grip, captivated by the unclean spirit.* He was under the spell, the will of the unclean spirit and as he began to cry out in recognition of Jesus, Jesus rebuked him, saying, *“Hold thy peace, and come out of him”* (v25). Jesus’ power and authority was evident because the evil spirit obeyed and came out.

NOTE:

*Unclean spirit, all the activity of Satan from immorality to deceptive, lying, religious spirits. These demons possess the power to inhabit the bodies of unsaved people to carry out the will of the devil. The world cries out, “What have we to do with thee, thou Jesus of Nazareth?” Why?, because He is the Son of God who demands belief and purity of life, self-denial and a life of sacrifice. Wealth, power, ego, flesh cries “Leave us alone.” There was more than one demon in this man and they resented the intrusion of Jesus into their domain. They knew Jesus had the power to destroy them

POINT:

Why did Jesus cast out the demon, when the demon was telling the truth about Jesus? Jesus did not want to be identified with the devil, but with the Heavenly Father! He refused to receive the testimony of demons. Jesus did not come to save the fallen angels. He came to save fallen people.

How many services are dead, so lifeless that men with evil spirits can sit in the services and never be convicted or helped spiritually because there is no authority and power identified? One of the major purposes of Jesus confronting the evil spirit was to prove His Messiahship.

What was witnessed was unbelievable and **the peoples’ reaction was in three ways**: they were amazed; they questioned among themselves; and they began to spread His fame throughout all the region round about Galilee.

B. Healing (vv29-34)

Now in Capernaum, Jesus is entering the house of Simon (Peter) and Simon’s brother Andrew, with James and John, where Simon’s mother-in-law is sick (incapacitated, bedridden) with a fever. His immediate response brought hope to this house; His presence brought devotion and service, and His touch brought the compassion and authority of healing needed. *“He took her by her hand and lifted her up; and immediately the fever left her (v31)”* Jesus healed Peter’s mother-in-law so that she might serve.

When the Sabbath *ended, the people had heard about Jesus’ teaching in the synagogue and they began to gather at the door. The news had spread like wildfire. The **crowd included three primary groups**: the desperate, who needed help; family and friends who brought the desperate; and the observer. The observer was the curious person who had heard about Jesus and wanted to see what He was like.

NOTE:

*On the Sabbath a Jew was not allowed to carry any kind of burden for any distance. This included walking only a short distance; carrying a sick person for medical help. Therefore, the people were forced by law to wait until the Sabbath was over to approach Jesus. The Jewish Sabbath began at 6am and ended at 6pm. Time was judged by sunrise and sunset. So the people came to Jesus at evening (night).

Jesus healed many who were sick of divers (different) diseases, and cast out many devils (those diseased and demon possessed). Jesus was tired and fatigued, by it being a long day full of stress but he made Himself available, even at an odd hour. Conclusion: He healed and will heal; he restrained and will restrain evil spirits.

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There is a Savior with the power to heal and deliver, save and set free. *"For the Son of man is come to seek and to save that which was lost" (Lk. 19:10).*

LESSON:

Mark 1:35-39 : Priority of Prayer

These verses reveal the great passions that moved the heart of the Savior. This brief glimpse into one early morning quiet time reveals what was important to the Lord Jesus Christ and what should be important to us. Even a late night does not prevent Jesus from an early morning meeting with His Father going to a secluded location to pray. We do not know exactly what time Jesus went to prayer, but we can guess that it was somewhere between 3 AM and 4 AM.

POINT:

This reveals unmistakably where the servant of God will get their power. Jesus' first source of power was his sense of prayer! He prayed in the morning and departed into a solitary place.

A. Why Did Jesus Have To Pray?

- 1) He was God in the flesh, after all. We need to remember that Jesus was God in human flesh, but He did not come to this world to live as God, He came to live as a Spirit-filled man. Jesus prayed because He lived His life in total dependence on the Father. Jesus prayed because He wanted a totally unhindered fellowship with the Father. Jesus wanted the Holy Spirit to be able to flow through His life in absolute freedom and power. Thus, Jesus made every effort to stay in close, constant communion with His Father.
- 2) Jesus in the flesh was tired: Teaching and ministering all day sapped His strength (*"...virtue had gone out of Him" (Mk.5:30).*
- 3) Jesus in the flesh was launching his first missionary and evangelistic ministry: The needs of the people were great. The attacks required the power of His overcoming anointing.
- 4) Jesus in the flesh was confronted with the applause and praise of men: Jesus didn't want shallow and surface commitments, not producing lasting faith from the people after seeing the miracles to follow Him. *Rom. 10:17 ...Faith comes from hearing, and hearing by the Word of God.*

POINT:

We may sometimes have it backwards. We make our plans and then we ask the Lord to bless what we have already decided to do, while Jesus is showing us to pray about direction, where to go or what to do next first.

B. Why Did Jesus Seek a Place of Solitude?

He wanted His prayer time to be uninterrupted and unhindered. Jesus knew that His prayer time was precious and private and He wanted nothing to be able to come between Him and time spent in His Father's presence.

As Jesus is praying, He is interrupted by Peter, Andrew, James and John because they had searched for Jesus. They came to tell Him that the people of Capernaum are looking for Him. Everyone was looking, in search for Jesus. This excited the disciples! They are sure that Jesus is on the verge of superstardom! They are certain that Jesus will be declaring Himself to be the Messiah and that He will begin gathering an army to deliver the nation of Israel from the domination of Rome. They want Him to come back to town and do some more miracles so that the people will cling to Him even more. However, Jesus refuses to allow the disciples or the people of Capernaum to dictate the direction of His ministry. He had been in communion with His Father and He knows what the Father wants Him to do. Jesus is allowing the disciples to see that the message is more important than the miracles by saying, *"Let us go into the next towns"(v38).*

POINT:

Jesus' second source of power was His sense of mission! The people in Capernaum had already heard the gospel preached and they now could share the message with others. If God's Messenger (Jesus) had stayed in Capernaum, many throughout the world would have never heard the gospel.

Jesus preached in the synagogues throughout Galilee, and cast out devils. He left no place untouched. Preaching was his primary mission, but while He preached He also ministered to the physical needs of the people.

POINT:

Jesus' third source of power was His sense of power! God will continue to give His power to the messenger who continues to be faithful. He cannot license disobedience. "A divided house cannot stand" (See Matt. 12:25-26).

Mark 1:40-42 : Compassionate Touch and Healing Word

At this point a leper* comes into Jesus' mist, begging and kneeling down to Him, saying, *"If You will, You can make me clean"* (v40). This is one of only two recorded healings of lepers in the Gospels. The other is in Luke 17:12-19 where there are ten lepers. The healing of the lepers was one of the signs Jesus mentioned that proved He was the Messiah (Matt. 11:5).

The leper is a picture of the sinner or type of sin.* His ailments were:

- It affected the whole body.
- It usually began with fatigue and pain in the joints.
- Scaly spots would develop on the skin, as the disease progressed, the body would be covered with puss filled nodules.
- The appearance of the face would be altered, so that the sufferer would come to resemble a lion. Nodules would grow on the vocal chords so that the leper spoke with a raspy voice.
- The body was in a state of living decomposition, thus a terrible stench surrounded the leper constantly.
- Leprosy attacked the nervous system, compromising the body's ability to feel pain. It acted as an anesthetic, numbing the body.

NOTE:

*Leprosy is deeper than the skin - Lev. 13:3 (So is sin! The outward manifestations of sin is merely a window into the heart, Matt. 15:18-19. You see, man isn't a sinner because he sins. Man sins because He is a sinner, Rom. 3:23; Gal. 3:22!) Leprosy starts out small and then it spreads - Lev. 13:7. Look at David, 2 Sam. 11! A little spot of laziness turned into adultery, an unwanted pregnancy, lies and murder! That little drink will turn into a big problem with alcohol. Let down the walls a little here, allow a little sin there, and before you know it, your whole life has been ruined and ransacked by the devil! Leprosy defiles everything it touches - Lev. 13:44-46. Ask Achan if a little gold, silver and a garment were worth his life and the lives of his family, Joshua 7. Ask David if a few stolen moments with another man's wife were worth the devastation and calamities that came into his family as a result. Leprosy Isolates - Lev. 13:46. The leper was isolated from the camp of the clean. He was forced to dwell alone on the fringes of society. Sin also isolates and drives a wedge between family members and it separates the sinner from God, Isa. 59:2. Leprosy destines things for the fire - Lev. 13:52. Everything the leper touched was burned! So it is with sin! It destines those afflicted by it to the fires of eternal torment, Psa. 9:17!

The leper was so desperate and so intent on seeking Jesus' help that he forgot about the Law (Lev. 13:45-46) requiring him to come no closer than six feet and requiring him to cry, **"Unclean! Unclean!"** You see, most people believed that leprosy was the *"stroke of God"*. That it was the direct judgment of God for sin in the lepers life. He acted as if no one (the crowd) was around him and thought of no one except Jesus. The leper heard the Word somehow and faith was awakened in his heart. He made his way to where Jesus was. It took great courage for this man to approach the Savior that day. He risked stoning, humiliation and death to get to the Lord. This man approaches Jesus on the basis of faith.

The leper worshipped Jesus: Mark says he knelt down (Mk.1:40); Luke says he fell on his face (Lk.5:12); Matthew says he worshipped Him. The leper saw the Devine power of God Himself and this was evidenced by worship.

TERM:

"COMPASSION" is a word that refers to "a feeling of deep sympathy and sorrow for another who is stricken by misfortune, accompanied by a strong desire to alleviate the suffering." Lepers usually did not arouse compassion.

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Their whole appearance was too repulsive, and they usually made people feel disgust instead of compassion. Jesus sees this poor man and He sees His condition. He does not shrink back in fear from the leper as the rest of the people are doing. He is not repulsed by his appearance or by his smell. Jesus loved this man like others would love a brother, or a son! It had been years since anyone had touched this man. He had been isolated and alone! *“Jesus moved with compassion (showing the heart of God... (v41).*

A. Why Was Jesus’ Touch So Important?

...put forth His hand, and touched him, (v41b). By the Law it was strictly forbidden for one to touch a leper. He could have spoken a word or even just thought a thought and the man would have been healed, but Jesus used a touch. When Jesus touched this man, His touch said, “I love you just like you are and I am here to help you.” When Jesus touched this man, Jesus entered His world just as He enters our world by sharing our pain and our suffering daily. His dying on the cross and taking our sins upon Himself, two thousand years ago touches us and change our lives by His grace and power!

Also you’ve got to remember that the leper’s body’s had not the ability to feel pain let alone a touch. But, oh how glorious that one touch must have felt to this man, if there was any feeling left in his skin it must have felt like nothing he had ever felt before! **What Love Jesus shows!** We touch, God heals; but Jesus touched **and** He healed!

He touched him without fear. He touched him without regret. The leper could not transmit to Jesus the corruption of his disease. Deity cannot be defiled! When He touched the leper, Jesus transmitted to him the cleansing of His deity! And instantly the leprosy was cleansed. That is what Jesus does when He touches a life! He gives the person He touches a new life instantly. He literally makes them into “new creatures” by His amazing power, 2 Cor. 5:17. He gives them a “new birth”, John 3:3, 7, and they are never the same again!

...and said unto him, I will; be thou clean and as soon as He had spoken, immediately the leprosy departed from him and he was cleansed” (v41c). And Power accompanied this Word. Jesus’ Words healed the man, for when He touched him, the healing had already been effected, and the man was “clean”; the words “I will” forever settled the question of the Will of God to heal the sick. *Immediately his leprosy vanished and there remained no more sign of it (v42).*

Mark 1:43-45 : Joyful Witness

Afterwards, Jesus didn’t just send the leper away. He sent him to the priest at the temple. This man was told to go and fulfill the requirements of the Law for his cleansing. This leper was to go and to present himself to the priest and get a certificate of cleansing on the basis of a ceremony in Lev. 14.* The leper was to come to the priest and the priest was to go outside** the camp where the leper was. That day, the Priest was to be put on notice that there was a Man in town Who had the power to take away leprosy! This was also a testimony to the priests that an incurable disease had been cured since lepers had never been healed and the priests had never conducted this ceremony.

NOTE:

*The priest was to take an earthen vessel, two birds, some cedar and hyssop. He was to kill one of those birds and let the blood of that bird pour into the earthen vessel. Then the priest took the blood of the dead bird and applied it to the wings of the living bird. He then took that living bird, with the blood dripping from its wings, out into an open field and he let that bird loose and that bird would go flying up into the air. The leper would see that blood dripping from the wings of the bird and he would understand the price of his cleansing and the message would come to that leper, **“I am clean because of the blood.”**

What Jesus did for us: When we couldn't go to heaven where Jesus was Jesus came down here where we are. When we couldn’t get to God, God came to us! The Bible says in **Heb. 13:12 that Jesus *“suffered outside the gate.”* Jesus has come down here where we are, and on a hill outside the city of Jerusalem Jesus suffered and died on the cross in our stead. The blood was shed for us and we are set free when we accept what He has done on the cross.

Jesus told the man to tell* no one but the priests; the man went out and told everyone but the priests! When Jesus liberates a soul from the bondage of sin and sets that sinner free, the redeemed person wants to tell everyone!

NOTE:

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* Interestingly, when Jesus told the people to say nothing, they go and tell everybody. Now that Jesus has told us to go and tell everybody, we tell no one.

POINT:

The man needed to obey the law, for he was not above the law. He was to live righteously just as the law demanded. Jesus did not annul or do away with the law, but fulfilled it. And the man was being taught to obey the law and obey Jesus who includes the law and more. His righteous act was to be his primary witness, his final act of obedience. The priest had to announce him clean. We may never understand the command of our Lord, but we must obey!

SUMMARY:

Ministry for Jesus went full force and when anything became overwhelming, Jesus our leader and source shows us how to get them back in order. **First**, Jesus takes time out for that prayer connection with the Father. He gets up early to seek the Father's direction, the course of life, have strength. **Second**, Jesus goes to a solitary place, so He would not be distracted. As they observed Jesus, they realized that something in His prayer life went beyond mere ritual. **Third**, All the sick, diseased, demonic people, and a leper were in search of Jesus, the One who was doing miracles in town. The disciples wanted Jesus to come back to town and do some more miracles so that the people will cling to Him even more. As a leader, they wanted Jesus to be a supernatural figure straight from God who would bring righteousness over all the earth. **Fourth**, His primary objective was to preach, and that they were going into the next towns. **Fifth**, He was moved with compassion to heal a leper and commanded the leper to say nothing except to the priest.

APPLICATION:

Through prayer he was refreshed and invigorated. If Jesus, who is God in human flesh, felt the need for prayer in His life, how much more do we need to make prayer a priority in our own lives? If we want a holy, spiritual empowered life that can be used of God for His glory, then we must pray. If we want the power of God on our lives, then we must pray. **How?** Set aside a set time to pray and stick to it! Find you a place where there are no distractions. Get away from the phone, the TV, the computer and any other distractions and pour your heart out to the Lord. Prayer was a habit in our Lord's life and it must become a habit in our lives, if we would have His power. Prayer is not about getting our will done in Heaven, but about getting God's Will on earth. We should seek His Will and direction for our lives. When He tells us what He wants us to do and we do it as best we know how, we can rest assured of His blessings! I must pray to have the power. If I don't pray, I have no power. Much prayer- much power. No prayer- no power.

Remember the message you preach to others is a lived message because that is what they see and it will be more powerful than the miraculous. Remember the children of Israel saw the miracles and still were not changed on the inside. Jesus wants the Word to get in us which would cause lasting and real faith, not shallow and surface commitments. If this passage teaches us anything, it teaches us that nothing is beyond the scope of God's ability. There is no disruption too great and there is no problem too mundane for our Lord. Are you in search for **The** leader today? Are you looking for Jesus? He has the compassionate touch and healing Word for your soul and physical body.