

Message #6

Mark 1:29-2:12

George Whitefield was one of the most powerful preachers to ever preach. Many years ago when I was in Maine, a pastor friend of mine showed me a field where Whitefield had actually preached in the 1700's. Literally thousands of people would go to these fields to hear him preach.

George Whitefield was once asked how you know whether or not you have preached a good sermon. Mr. Whitefield said that is easy to answer. I know I have preached a good sermon when someone gets saved or someone gets angry.

At this point Jesus is in Capernaum with four fishermen that He has called to join His team. He is training them to become fishers of men. They have no idea what they will see in the next three years. But they are about to learn that they need to know and communicate the fact that only Jesus Christ can miraculously take away and forgive people's sins. To prove this point, Jesus did some amazing miracles.

Last week one of our thinking members said that when Jesus came preaching grace salvation to a world steeped in legal coded law, He understood how those people had a hard time believing that. That is why Jesus performed amazing miracles. They became His credentials that proved His new message was a message from God. What we see here is this:

JESUS CHRIST DID AMAZING HEALING MIRACLES IN GALILEE FOR THE PURPOSE OF VALIDATING HIS PREACHING AND FOR THE PURPOSE OF SHOWING PEOPLE THAT HE WAS THE ONLY ONE WHO COULD FORGIVE THEIR SINS.

Now remember news about Jesus Christ is spreading everywhere (Mark 1:28). The news was about the fact that He was an authoritative preacher and that He could command unclean demons to do what He wanted them to do. People were questioning Him, criticizing Him and debating among themselves. So in this part of Mark, Jesus performs five amazing miracles to show He is who He claims to be.

HEALING MIRACLE #1 – Jesus healed Peter's mother-in-law's fever. 1:29-31

Now Jesus is in Capernaum in Galilee and with him are Simon (Peter), Andrew, and James and John. They had just come out of a synagogue where He had powerfully preached and healed a demon-possessed man. The response of the crowd had not been one of immediate acceptance. So He wants to show these four disciples that He is worth following because He is God.

After they left the synagogue, they went to Peter and Andrew's house in Capernaum. Mark is the only one who mentions that it was also part Andrew's house, which apparently he learned from Peter's testimony of what happened. Peter was probably the main owner, but the coordinate conjunction "and" indicates it was both their home.

Now the fact that He is going to Peter and Andrew's house is due to the fact that when He called them to follow Him, they did. Had they not followed Him, they would have never had this opportunity to see this amazing miracle.

Archeologists in the 6th century excavated a first century house just a few hundred feet from the synagogue in Capernaum and the markings suggest that this was a home used as a house church and many believe this was the actual location of Peter's house (Mark Strauss, *Mark*, p. 99).

When they got to Peter's house, they were probably expecting a meal, but instead they found a sick cook. Peter's mother-in-law was sick with a fever. In fact, the imperfect middle verb means she was lying down by her own choice and had been there a while. The participle "sick" is present tense which means she had a fever that continually existed for quite a while.

When Jesus entered the house, this was urgent and they mentioned this to Him. Now notice this is critical to training; "immediately they spoke to Jesus" (**verse 30**).

These disciples are interceding in behalf of this woman and they are doing exactly what they should do, speak to the Lord. When we are sick or we face some crisis, this is what we need to do, "immediately speak to Jesus." In fact, James actually tells church leaders to pray for the sinful and the sick (James 5:14-18).

So in **verse 31**, Jesus came to her, took her by the hand and the fever left her and she started waiting on them. Luke adds that Jesus rebuked the fever.

Now Jesus could have healed her any way He wanted. He had just commanded an unclean spirit to leave a man and it did, so He did not have to take her by the hand; but that is what He did. This shows us the tenderness of Christ's healing touch. This is the actual hand of God touching the hand of a sinful, sick woman. As soon as Christ touched her life, she served them. That is what Christ's touch on our lives should do; cause us to serve Him.

HEALING MIRACLE #2 – Jesus healed many who were sick and demon-possessed while at Peter's mother-in-law's house. **1:32-38**

Notice Mark begins **verse 32**, "when evening came, after the sun had set." The Sabbath day was now over. As soon as the people realized this, everyone in Capernaum began looking for Christ. They could now travel any distance they wanted so hundreds of people brought sick people and demon-possessed people for Jesus to heal. In fact, **verse 33** says, "the whole city gathered" at the door of this house. So this is going on well into the night time.

According to **verse 34**, He healed "many" which is a substantive that means this was a great number of people (G. Abbott-Smith, *Greek Lexicon*, p. 371). When He cast out demons, He would not permit them to speak and identify Him because they knew who He was (**2:34**). He did not permit unclean demons to identify Him.

According to **verse 35**, Jesus got up and left the house very early in the morning and went to a secluded spot to pray. There are three times in the Gospel of Mark where the private prayer of Jesus is stressed:

- 1) At the beginning of His Galilean ministry (1:35);
- 2) After the feeding of the 5000 (6:46);
- 3) In the Garden of Gethsemane (14:32-39).

Now this was important to Jesus, but it was also a critical lesson to those who will fish for men. They need to be men of prayer. Many times in this book Jesus will challenge His disciples to pray (9:29; 11:24; 13:18; 14:38).

One naturally wonders what Jesus was praying about. He certainly is not confessing sin because He does not have any sin. By the response He gives to His disciples when they find Him, He was certainly praying about the will of God, specifically in His Divine Assignment, which primarily was preaching (**v. 38**).

We will not ever know God's specific will for our lives if we do not spend time in prayer. Jesus, by His own example is teaching us that. If prayer was a necessity to Him, how much more is it to us? **No matter how hectic our schedule, we need personal time spent with God in prayer.**

Simon and his companions searched for Him and found Him and told Him that everyone was looking for Him (**verses 36-37**). **Christ said to His disciples let us go to some nearby towns so I can preach, because this is what I came for. Do you get this? Do you see what He is teaching these disciples?** Most ministries and most ministers have missed this point.

Jesus did not come to do a bunch of spectacular entertaining miracles. He did not come to heal everyone of everything. **He came to preach.** He came to preach that sinners could have a kingdom entrance through faith in Him.

HEALING MIRACLE #3 – Jesus preaches and casts out demons in the synagogues throughout all Galilee. **1:39**

This is one eye-opening verse. In almost every synagogue were demon-possessed people. Demon-possessed people regularly go to religious church services. They are not threatened until someone comes who accurately preaches the Word and then sparks fly. These disciples are getting a great education about fishing for men and that is many unsaved demon connected people regularly go to church.

Christ travelled from town to town preaching and casting out demons. He would go to the synagogues to preach and He also did something none of us can do, and that is command demons to do what He wanted them to do.

HEALING MIRACLE #4 – Jesus heals a leper. 1:40-45

As Jesus was travelling in Galilee, a leper came to Jesus and asked for cleansing (1:40). **What this teaches us is that He was obviously doing much more preaching than healing because this leper actually requests that Jesus heal him.**

A leper was unclean and according to the O.T. law he made everything he touched unclean (Leviticus 13). Laws regarding how you deal with a leper were harsh. Leprosy was considered to be highly contagious and a leper was to be quarantined. In fact, this leper broke the O.T. law by coming to this public gathering.

Well, this leper comes in before Jesus and said, “if you are willing you can make me clean.” According to **verse 41**, Jesus was moved with compassion and stretched out His hand and touched this leper and said, “I am willing; be cleansed.” By touching this leper, according to O.T. law, one is unclean. So Christ is Personally identifying Himself with this unclean leper.

Nothing Jesus is doing squares here with the O.T. laws of leprosy, which shows us that He is in the process of putting an end to the law. As soon as Jesus touched this man and said, “I am willing,” the leprosy left him and he was cleansed (**verse 42**).

Now again, Jesus did not have to physically touch anyone. He could command the leprosy to leave. Does this not show us that Jesus Christ has a personal interest in touching and saving sinners? This leper had probably not been touched by anyone for years. **Jesus Christ is willing to have a personal relationship with the worst kind of leper sinners.**

Verse 43 says that Jesus “sternly warned him.” Warned him about what? **Verse 44** says He warned him not to tell anyone; but He sent him away to go and show himself to the priest and offer to follow the cleansing process that Moses prescribed in the O.T. law. Now Jesus was the Jewish Messiah and He is in Galilee and the Jews were looking for a Messiah who could free them from Rome. The program of God demanded that Jesus first came to save from sin and He did not want a premature Messianic identification to take place.

But notice **verse 45**, he did not do what Jesus told him to do. He went out and started telling people everywhere what happened and there is no record he did go to the priests.

It is possible that he started saying Jesus cleansed me; I don’t need the priests or the O.T. law.

According to **verse 45**, Christ’s reputation spread to the extent that He could not even go into a city. He stayed out in unpopulated areas and people were going to Him.

HEALING MIRACLE #5 – Jesus heals and saves a paralyzed man in Capernaum. 2:1-12

After having been on the road in Galilee for several days, He came back to Capernaum and He went back to Peter's home. So many people were cramming in to hear Him that you could not even get near the door of the house. Notice what **verse 2** says He was doing, "speaking the word to them." This was His ministry. His ministry was about preaching and teaching. This is what these disciples need to understand. This is what ministers need to understand. The job of the church is to carefully and accurately preach and teach the Word.

While Jesus was speaking, four men brought a paralyzed man to Jesus to heal and could not get near Him. Now a typical house roof had some wood crossbeams covered with thatch and dirt and then some flat stones. These were sturdy roofs. Sometimes people would sleep on them on a hot night. Usually there was some ladder or staircase to get up there.

So these four guys decided to climb up on the roof, remove a slab from the roof above him and dig through the roof and lowered the paralyzed man on a pallet on which he was laying (**verse 4**). This was Peter's house and people are digging a hole through his roof. They are vandalizing someone else's house. Just imagine Jesus is teaching and dirt starts landing on your head. These guys lowered the guy through the hole in the roof right down in front of Jesus.

Verse 5 says Jesus saw their faith. This probably means He saw the faith of everybody connected to this. They believed He could heal this guy. But in **verse 5** we get at the heart of what Jesus was preaching. He looked at this paralyzed man and said, "**Son, your sins are forgiven.**" This guy does not even ask for forgiveness of sins. He is not repenting of sins, he wants to be healed. He simply believes that Jesus can heal him. The Greek here is interesting.

First of all, the noun "son" (teknon) would indicate this is the moment that this man becomes a real son. **Second**, the noun sins is articular, plural, and contains an emphatic pronoun. The specific sins of this individual, and there were lots of them, were specific to him. We are talking about all of his personal sins. **Third**, the verb "are forgiven" is passive, which means this man had nothing to do with the action. He is the recipient of the action. **Fourth**, the present tense of the verb indicates Jesus at that very moment forgave all of his condemnatory sins, thus putting him in a continual state of forgiveness. **This is a judicial forgiveness of sins pronounced by Jesus.**

Now think what Jesus is teaching here. He is teaching His disciples and everyone else that He can forgive someone of all their specific sins which they have committed. He is the only One who can take care of your sin problem and give you a relationship with God. This is not good news; this is out of this world news.

According to **verses 6-7**, when some of the scribes heard this they started reasoning why does this man speak like this. Now they are not saying this out loud for everyone to hear; but they are reasoning this in their hearts, as if Jesus can't see into their hearts. They are saying He is blaspheming God because only God can forgive sins.

Now what they are saying is true about any other man. If this is just a man like me or you, this is blasphemy. No man can forgive sins, only God can forgive sins. Too bad the Catholic priests haven't figured this out yet. No sinful man or minister can forgive the sins of other sinful people. Only a Holy God is in position to forgive sin.

Our dear brother, Ralph Klooster, who is now with the Lord, went to a Catholic priest and asked him, do you really think you can forgive sins? The priest said, "Yes." Ralph said that is a bunch of malarkey. Actually it is blasphemous heresy.

If you have a man saying He can forgive sins, the only way this is not blasphemy is if the One saying it is God.

So Jesus says to them, "why are you reasoning about these things in your hearts" (v. 8). Jesus saw what was going on in their hearts. He knows what is in the heart of people.

In **verse 9** He said which is easier to say to this paralyzed man, your sins are forgiven or get up and pick up your pallet and walk.

Well the easier thing to say is that your sins are forgiven because you have no way of proving whether or not they have been forgiven. The hard thing would be to say to a paralyzed man to get up and walk; because if he does get up and walk, it means your other statement is also true.

So Jesus says in **verse 10**, so that you will know I am God and can forgive sins that you have committed on earth, Jesus said in **verse 11**, "I say to you, get up, pick up your pallet and go home." He doesn't tell him to follow Him. He tells him to go home.

Verse 12 says he immediately got up, picked up his pallet and went away.

The people were amazed and said we have never seen anything like this and they had never heard anything like this.

Do you see what these disciples are learning about fishing for men? Preach the truth about Jesus Christ. Here is the truth. He is God. He can forgive all of your personal sins that you have committed on this earth. When you believe on Him you will be amazed at what He will do in your life.