

Missing the Forest for the Trees

Mark 1:29-39

Introduction

The story has been told of a young couple who had been trying for many years to have a baby.

Eventually, the Lord faithfully provided a precious baby boy.

Mom and dad were so excited.

They had purchased all the necessary accessories.

Diapers, wipes, clothes, bottles, crib.

They had built onto their home a small room just for their new little boy.

After staying a few days in the hospital, the excited couple brought the baby home.

After so many years, their prayers had finally been answered and the ride home was so exciting.

Well, they arrived home in the early evening.

The baby fell asleep in the car, and so did the new mom.

So, dad unloaded the car.

Laid the baby down in his new crib.

And told his wife to go get some rest.

The new mom slept for a few hours and got up.

She walked into the baby's room to find him resting so peacefully in his brand new crib.

So many thoughts rushed through her mind.

She had watched her husband put that crib together only a few nights before...

And now their son was resting so peacefully in it.

Her heart was overcome with gratitude.

Just then she noticed that her husband was sitting in the dark in the corner of the room just staring at the crib.

Knowing that she was so excited and grateful, she walked over to her sweet husband.

His eyes were fixed on the crib.

And his wife wanting to know what exactly what he was thinking,...

Leans down and whispers, "I'll give you a penny for your thoughts."

He slowly breaks his stare on the crib, and responds...

“I have no idea how Wal-Mart makes such a good crib for only \$98.”

There is a well-known phrase that goes along with situations like this.

It is called “Missing the forest for the all the trees.”

Which simply means that there are times when the details distract from the big picture.

And that is exactly the case today in the text before us.

If you take your bibles and turn to the gospel of Mark, chapter 1.

If you were with us last week, you will remember that Jesus walked into a synagogue and demonstrated his authority.

First, he showed his authority as he taught.

Then, he showed his authority over one of Satan’s legion of demons.

And the point of Mark writing about this is to prove that Jesus is God’s Son.

Remember how Mark begins his gospel?

In verse 1, he declares that Jesus is indeed God's Son.

And then he sets out to prove that very point through the rest of the book.

We witnessed Jesus power to withstand the temptations of Satan in vs. 12 & 13.

Then we saw the power in his preaching and then in his teaching...

Before watching his power to cast out demons in verse 27.

And such authority and power amazed the people.

They talked about it.

They marveled at it.

And many people react to Jesus in that way.

They simply stand in amazement.

However, we learned last week that amazement is not enough.

In fact, you need to be amazed but also terrified but such power and holiness.

Another way to react to Jesus' power and authority is what we will see today.

And that reaction goes something like this...

What's in it for me?

Or, how can I benefit from Jesus?

What can he do for me?

Yet, these questions have nothing to do with their spiritual state....

But their physical state.

Some people come to Jesus for all the wrong reasons.

We will see that today and all throughout this gospel.

And we live in a day where people come to Jesus for what they can get....

Rather than listening to what He asks you to give up.

Don't miss Jesus for all the trees.

However, that is exactly what happens today.

And it has always been that way...

People miss Jesus because they are blinded by their own selfishness.

And we will see that today.

We are going to look at verses 29-29 this morning and I have broken it up into 3 sections...

The first section is from Mark 1:29-31.

Let's call it...

I. Turning to Jesus for Proof (vv 29-31)

Let's read verses 29...

²⁹ And immediately after they came out of the synagogue, they came into the house of Simon and Andrew, with ^[p]James and John.

Now, if you remember from last week, most likely....

Jesus called these disciples, -Simon, Andrew, James and John on Friday afternoon to follow him.

And then on Saturday morning, they enter the synagogue with Jesus.

Jewish synagogue usually ended around noon on Saturday....

So, verse 29 says that they went to the house of Simon and Andrew.

Most likely, Simon, who is also called Peter, and Andrew lived in the same complex.

We know that Peter was married because he has a mother-in-law, and Andrew most likely was married too.

Though we can't be sure...

Now, houses in this day would be connected to one another and surrounded by a courtyard....

Similar to modern day apartments.

So, to call this Simon and Andrew's house would be normal.

Their families probably lived together in the same complex.

Now, why did they head to their house after synagogue?

Well, I think we find out in verse 30...

*Now Simon's mother-in-law was lying sick with a fever; and immediately they *spoke to ^[q]Jesus about her.*

Peter's mother-in-law is sick, very sick as noted by the high fever.

In that day, there is no Tylenol or CVS, most high fevers led to death.

It was a desperate situation at Peter and Andrew's house.

And what had they had just witnessed?

Jesus power to cast out demons.

So, Peter thought about his very ill mother-in-law.

For all they know, Jesus is just a man with
incredible powers.

Who teaches and casts out demons with authority.

And Peter immediately thinks of his own needs.

He has a sick family member.

And look to be fair to Peter, that is admirable.

He cares about the health of his wife's mother.

He wants her to get better.

So verse 30....

He speaks to Jesus about her.

And look no one find great fault with that.

But isn't it amazing that it never crosses Peter's
mind that maybe Jesus is more than a healer.

Because, he doesn't run to his mother-in-law and
say, this man is God.

And how often do we do that?

We hold physical healing in higher regard than
spiritual healing.

And that is easy to understand.

We hate to see people suffer.

We want them to get back to normal.

But we should never think that the physical well-being is more important than their spiritual well-being.

When we do, we miss the forest for the trees.

Peter wants his mother-in-law to get better physically, and he sees as the answer to that.

Yet, Jesus who is always gracious and kind responds to this request immediately.

Verse 31...

³¹ And He came to her and raised her up, taking her by the hand, and the fever left her, and she ^[r]waited on them.

Again, Jesus' power is on display.

He has just cast out a demon, and now he casts out a disease.

And the tender compassion of our Savior shows here.

He rebukes the demon, but he gently raises the lady by the hand.

This is healing power never seen before or since.

And notice a few aspects of this healing...

First, Jesus went to the lady.

He didn't say come down to my stadium show and walk up on stage....

Like so many of these phony faith healers do.

Jesus came to her.

She was sick and according to Matthew's account of this, she was lying on her back.

So, Jesus goes to her.

That's why it angers me to know end to watch these faith-healings call people to their show...

Even charge admission and claim to be healing in Jesus name.

If they are truly gifted by God to do this, why don't they go to hospitals or to homes where hospice is caring for people?

And then notice that the healing was immediate.

The text says that the fever left her.

Then and there.

Immediate healing. No second visit.

And not only was this healing immediate, but aspect number 3,...

It was complete.

Look at how complete it was.

She waited on them or served them.

You know how it is to get over a fever.

Even after it is gone, you still aren't back to normal.

Notice she doesn't experience any lingering effects.

She was sick and now she's completely and fully well.

Unfortunately, the TV is full of phony healers who do anything but heal completely.

Notice, that this woman doesn't faint or fall over when he Jesus touches her.

But she goes right to serving those in her house.

Jesus goes to the woman, heals her instantly and heals her completely.

And some have concluded that he also healed her spiritually, which is evidenced by her serving the Lord immediately.

Yet, the disciples or the community still don't understand who Jesus was.

Because look at verses 32-34....

Peter and the disciples may have been wanting to see more proof of Jesus authority when they invited Jesus to their home....

But in verses 32-34....

Those in Capernaum were #2....

II. Turning to Jesus for His Power (vv 32-34)

Verses 32-34

³² When evening came, after the sun had set, they began bringing to Him all who were ill and those who were demon-possessed. ³³ And the whole city had gathered at the door.

Talk about a busy day.

In a little over 24 hours, Jesus has called his disciples, preached in the synagogue,....

Cast out a demon, healed Peter's mother-in-law....

And now it is evening and the work really begins...

The whole town showed up at the door, which we assume meant Peter's door.

This group is made up of those having an unclean spirit like the man in the synagogue..

And like Peter's mother-in-law who had a high fever..

So, literally, diseases and demons show up at the door.

Not the kind of welcome to town that anyone wants.

Most cities try to hide these folks from site, but when Jesus comes to town, they all show up.

Now, they came in evening out of respect for the Sabbath, which ended at sundown.

Once the sun sets, they gather up these tormented folks and set out to find Jesus.

Most likely, word had been spreading all day about what happened in the synagogue.

“Yall know that crazy man in town? Jesus casts out his demon.”

Word has probably also got around about Jesus healing Peter’s mother-in-law.

“Yall know Peter’s mother-in-law who has been so sick for weeks?”

Well, this man named Jesus touched her and made her completely better. She got up and cooked dinner.”

“And she’s been in bed for a month.”

So, when evening comes and the Sabbath restrictions are lifted, people begin carrying the demon-possessed and sick to Jesus.

Notice that the people come to because Jesus has authority over demons and disease.

They are there to see that power and to also see how that power can benefit them.

Yet, Jesus has also shown authority in his teaching.

Those in the synagogue said that he taught not like the scribes because he taught with authority.

Yet, no one shows up and the door and asks for a sermon.

From what we can tell, no one shows up and says “Jesus teach us like you did in the synagogue.”

Now, they show up for what they can get.

This is so important for us to understand.

Jesus had a clear message for his day.

It is found in Mark 1:15.

Jesus wanted people to repent and believe the gospel.

He preached that in the wilderness, and though we can't know for sure....

It would be safe to assume that he had also taught that in the synagogue earlier that morning.

Maybe that's why those in the synagogue were so amazed by his teaching.

Jesus' message was clear...

“Turn from your sins and turn to God.”

Casting out demons and healing Peter's mother-in-law were only signs that proved who Jesus was.

They were just evidence that authenticated the messenger.

Yet unfortunately, the people were drawn to the miracles and not the Messiah.

They wanted signs and not the Savior.

We want to be helped but we have no interest in being holy.

And the same is true today.

Do you know what the message of the church is today?

Repent and believe the gospel.

Hasn't changed at all.

Do you know why a lot of people come to church today?

They want to get rid of their illness.

They want a better life.

They need help financially.

They want to be seen by other people.

Just like the crowds in Mark, people come to see Jesus for all the wrong reasons.

The message of the Bible is not health, wealth, success or even a better life.

The message of the Bible is to turn from your sins and turn to Christ.

Yet, thousands show up at the doors of the church every week for all the wrong reasons.

But you can't miss the compassion of our Savior...

Verse 34...

³⁴ And He healed many who were ill with various diseases, and cast out many demons; and He was not permitting the demons to speak, because they knew who He was.

Jesus knows their motivation for coming, but HE is so compassionate that he heals them...

And casts out their demons...

He is so tender even with people who showed up for selfish reasons...

Our Lord is so full of compassion...

And though Mark doesn't say...

I think it is safe to assume that some of these folks did turn to the Lord when they saw his care for them..

And church, we must show compassion at times to those who come here for the wrong reasons....

We need to model the actions of Jesus here.

We need to care for those people who are seeking only what they can get from Jesus....

But we must never help without sharing Jesus' message of repentance and belief.

When you care for the sick and those with unclean spirits, share the gospel of repentance and faith in Christ.

Though I am guessing here, I would think that everyone that Jesus touched that day....

Heard his message of repentance and believing the gospel.

Our dear Savior would never let an opportunity to share his message of repentance and belief in the gospel to pass by.

And neither should we.

So, now we have seen two scenes where the people have turned to Jesus for the wrong reasons...

The disciples turned to Jesus to see more proof...

The crowds turned to him to see more power...

But then we see in verses 35-39....

We see.....

III. Jesus Turn to His Priority (vv35-39)

Verse 35....

³⁵ In the early morning, while it was still dark, Jesus got up, left the house, and went away to a secluded place, and was praying there.

The healings had probably pushed late into the night.

We assume that Jesus got some rest because the text says that he got up.

And yes, Jesus needed rest.

He was 100% God and 100% man, and as a man, he got tired.

So at times, we will see Him resting.

But he arose early in the morning while it was still dark.

The Jews had two morning periods.

One from 3 AM – 6 AM.

And another from 6 AM – 9 AM.

The would have been the first morning because Mark says that it was still dark.

He goes to a secluded place to pray.

And yes, Jesus prayed to the Father often in his ministry.

After an exhausting day, he needed to talk to His Father.

Just a few quick thoughts here....

Notice that Jesus made time for prayer

People who say or think they are too busy to pray are mistaken.

You must make time, and yes that often means you do with less sleep.

No one says sleep is bad, but when it is more important than God, its an idol.

Second, notice that Jesus did it early in the morning.

You need to share our thoughts with God before the world shares it thoughts with us.

The temptations of the day are slain by spending time in the morning with the Lord.

Third, Jesus sought out a solitary place.

The need to be alone with God.

No spouse, no kids, no noise.

And in this busy world, that can only happen
in the early morning.

Much more could be said here, but the important
thing to see is that if Jesus needed to pray...

How much more do we need to pray.

And the early morning seems to be the pattern that
is being stressed here.

But the praying doesn't last long because the
disciples hunt him down.

Verse 36...

³⁶ *Simon and his companions searched for
Him; ³⁷ they found Him, and *said to Him,
“Everyone is looking for You.”*

This is the first place where Simon Peter is listed
first among the disciples.

He will eventually become the leader of the
disciples.

His name will always be first when the names of the disciples are recorded in Scripture.

Peter will be the spokesman for the group, and right here, we see his leadership showing...

As he leads a group that tracks down Jesus in the early morning.

And why are they looking for Him?

Because everyone was looking for him.

And why are they searching for him?

To see what else he can do for them.

Word is spreading fast, and now people are up before sunrise looking for Jesus.

But how does Jesus respond?

Verses 38 & 39...

*³⁸ He *said to them, "Let us go somewhere else to the towns nearby, so that I may ^[s]preach there also; for that is what I came for." ³⁹ And He went into their synagogues throughout all Galilee, ^[t]preaching and casting out the demons.*

Being famous for the wrong reason can be a great burden.

There are numerous stories of actors, athletes, and other celebrities who want to be known as normal people.

This causes many to leave the entertainment industry, others turn to alcohol and drugs.

Some have even committed suicide to avoid the pressure associated with being famous.

Though Jesus is not capable of any of that, he does decide to move on from Capernaum.

The crowds are closing in, but the sad reality is that they are coming to Jesus for the wrong reasons.

So, Jesus decides to move on.

He has no interest in being known as a healer or someone who cast out demons.

His primary mission is found at the end of verse 38...

He is a preacher with a message.

He has come to seek and save the lost.

Yes, he can heal and cast out.

But he is called to preach and proclaim....

The kingdom is at hand.

The king is here.

Repent and believe.

Enter the kingdom.

That is his focus.

And it was not to be centered in Capernaum.

He was to go to other towns and preach the good news.

According to Jesus, he came to preach.

He had no interest in being labelled a Healer.

He was the Holy One of God.

He resisted being called a miracle worker.

He was Messiah.

How sad is it that so many of today's preachers seek fame as healers and miracle workers?

Millions are sent to charlatans who claim advertise their fame as healers.

And they claim to do it in the name of Jesus.

The sad irony is that Jesus had no desire for such fame.

He departed from people who only wanted physical healing.

Sure, more will come seeking healing...

But Jesus never came seeking fame for it.

His mission was clear.

He said so himself.

He came to preach and call the world to world to repent and believe.

How dare preachers stand up and say their mission is healing people from sickness....

Because that was never the mission of the Lord.

Jesus came to preach and that is what he does...

Verse 39 says that he went to synagogues all throughout Galilee....

And notice what is mentioned first....

He was preaching and then casting out demons.

That is the ministry of Jesus.

Conclusion

Enough power to cast out the strongest demon, but
enough compassion to remove a fever from the an
elderly lady.

That is why we love Him so.

Always compassionate and always purposeful.

Even when people distract from his purposes and
come to Him for the wrong reasons....

The disciples wanted to see more proof.

The city wanted to see more power.

He still meets their need.....

But he never lets them change his focus.

He is going to preach until they nail Him to a cross.

And then He will be raised from the dead and
preach some more.

And even today, his message is still going forth in
our lives...

As we call people to repent and believe the gospel.

A few truths to carry with you this morning from
these verses...

#1 – People come to Jesus for the wrong reasons.

The sick come to be well.

The poor come to get rich.

The gospel makes neither promise.

You may get saved and get sicker.

And you may get saved and get poorer.

But you will not get saved and stay the same.

The Lord can help the sickest man have peace.

And he can help the poorest man sing.

Having your sins forgiven through faith and repentance is the cure for whatever ails you.

True peace is not feeling healthy.

True peace is not a big bank account.

True peace is finding peace with God through the blood of His Son.

#2 – Jesus never lost sight of his mission.

As a church we need to remain focused as well.

Jesus met the needs of the people, but he remembered why he came.

He knew his mission was not to meet physical needs but to meet spiritual needs.

And that why when we try to meet the needs of the sick and poor...

We never leave out the gospel.

Otherwise, we send them to hell with some money and medicine.

When we extend our hand, always point a finger at the truth of the cross.

#3 – Not everybody who comes into contact with Jesus is a follower.

It would be foolish to believe that everyone who came into contact with Jesus that evening...

All became his followers.

Certainly, many came to be healed and never followed him.

It's not enough to come into contact with Jesus.

Or even to know who He is.

If someone asked me, "Do you know the President."

I would say sure I know him.

But that's not completely true.

I know about Him, but I don't know him personally.

And he surely doesn't know me.

The people on this day knew about Jesus.

That's why they came.

And it is possible for you to know about Jesus.

But not know him at all.

You may have heard all the stories in Sunday School....

You may have listened to hundreds of sermons about him.

But do you know Him as more than a famous person in history?

Have you only come this morning to see what you can get from Jesus?

And then return to a life of sin.

Don't be looking for the miracle worker this morning.

Listen to his message.

And that is to repent and believe the gospel.

Amen.

Let us pray.