

Sunday, March 16, 2025

More Like Jesus

Mark 1:29-45

- Rachel and I went on a trip down to a golf tournament this past week, for one last little trip before baby #2 comes
 - So Wednesday we were driving down to my parents house in South Georgia
 - Then Thursday we were going to the tournament, about 2 hours south of my parents, then going back my parents Thursday night before we drove back home Friday
 - So we were about to do like 16 hours of driving in 3 days
- And Rachel has this habit, routine, addiction (if you will) of having to wash the car before we go on a trip like this

- If we're going to the beach, the car has to be washed. If we're going to the mountains, gotta wash the car...any type of extended road trip whatsoever, the car has to get a make over before we go
- Which makes absolutely no sense to me because in my mind, the car is going to get absolutely filthy on this drive.
- You know what the car looked like by the time we got back from our trip this week?? The wind shield was covered in bugs and the car was half green from the pollen!
- I can't help but think, why does she have to wash the car??
- Well I'm really glad I don't think about my spiritual life that way
 - How many of us come to church, spend time in prayer and the Word trying to find some cleanliness in such a messy world?
 - But then so many start to think what's the point?

- Because no matter how hard we try to be good and do good, we still fall, we mess up...we fall victim to this broken, unclean world time and time again
- We talked about a couple of weeks ago how the Jewish people had all of their purification rituals of the hand and foot washings and the baptisms
 - Any time they entered any type of worship or religious oriented meals or events, they would have some sort of symbolic washing trying to make themselves clean spiritually
- And they had all of these recurring washings because of the uncleanness of this life, this world, and the sin that exists in it and in them
 - There was this constant attempt to try and make the unclean, clean...but they knew it could never stay that way
- But I believe that Jesus is going to show them in the end of Mark chapter 1, how they can get clean and stay clean spiritually.
- So to finish out Mark chapter 1, look with me in verse 29:
- ***“Now as soon as they had come out of the synagogue, they entered the house of Simon and Andrew, with James and John. But Simon’s wife’s mother lay sick with a fever, and they told Him about her at once. So He came and took her by the hand and lifted her up, and immediately the fever left her. And she served them. At evening, when the sun had set, they brought to Him all who were sick and those who were demon-possessed. And the whole city was gathered together at the door. 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.” -Mark 1:29-34 (NKJV)***
- Last week in our study, we saw that Jesus was teaching in the synagogue at Capernaum on the Sabbath, and not only was He showing His

authority through His teaching, but He also showed His authority over demons whenever He silenced an unclean spirit and casted it out of the one it was possessing

- And people started talking about it. Verse 28 says that His fame began to spread immediately throughout the region of Galilee
- So after church that Sabbath day, Jesus leaves the synagogue to go for Sunday lunch, so to speak, over at Peter and Andrew's family home nearby
 - Many historians believe that Peter's house was only a few hundred feet away from the Synagogue
- And they let Jesus know that Peter's mother in law is laid up sick with a fever
 - Now the word "fever" is translated pretty mildly here, because this word in the original language can be translated as a Fiery Heat
 - So she's not just laid up with a 100 degree fever

- She has been stricken with a serious disease and she is more than likely on her death bed

- But Jesus takes her by the hand, lifts her up, and *immediately* the fever leaves her
- Showing not only that Jesus has power over the spiritual, but the physical as well!
- But we always have to keep in mind, that every time that Jesus heals a physical need, He is always doing so to point us toward a spiritual need.

- **EVERY MIRACLE IS A MESSAGE**

- Even in this healing of Peter's Mother-in-law, we see such a clear picture of the Gospel
 - *When it says Jesus took her by the hand, in the original language it means: To hold fast in order to not be sent away*
 - *When it says He lifted her up, that means: To be raised up to life*
 - *And delivers her from the fiery heat*

- Without Jesus, we are nothing but laying on a death bed, not knowing true life
 - But Jesus comes to us, He holds us fast, He raises us up to life, and delivers us from any threats of the fiery heat of hell, to make sure that we will never sent away to eternal separation from Him
- In this first account of Jesus performing a physical healing in Mark's Gospel, we are given such a clear picture of the spiritual work that Jesus has come to do
- But that's not what the people are seeing as of yet...
- The Word of Jesus' power over demons and disease spreads throughout the region, and that very evening, at sunset the whole city is gathering at the doorsteps at Peter's house
 - Now that the sun had set, the sabbath is now officially over, because the Jewish calendar day started at sunset rather than sun-up
- So now, the people are free of the sabbath travel limitations...and they are flocking to Jesus
- And He spends all evening, ministering to all of these people coming to Him, healing diseases and casting out demons
- And in the disciples minds, the ministry is now taking off!
 - John the Baptist is in prison now, so the multitudes are now flocking to them!
 - They're the biggest thing in town right now... Jesus is now the most famous Person in Galilee and they're His guys!
- They could be thinking that they've hit the big time! They're successful now
 - And no doubt the ministering that they did late into the the night was exhausting, trying to organize the crowd and all those coming to Jesus, but... I can imagine how fulfilling it could have been at the same time

- And whenever they get the chance to get some much needed rest that night, I can imagine they get up the next morning, ready to get back at it, excited to see all the cool things that Jesus is going to do next
- But...to they're confusion...Jesus is nowhere to be found
 - They frantically look around the house, but Jesus isn't there
 - Crowds are starting to form at the doorstep again, people demanding to see Jesus
 - And Peter not knowing what to tell the people just asks them to sit tight...and he and the other disciples go on a search party
- But Mark explains in verse 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. And Simon and those who were with Him searched for Him. When they found Him,***

they said to Him, “Everyone is looking for You.” -Mark 1:35-27 (NKJV)

- You can almost feel a bit of rebuke here, from the disciples.
- They're saying, *“Jesus, we got crowds forming out here, we got great momentum, you have a full schedule today, what are you doing out here??”*
- They could be thinking, *“Jesus, You're a busy man now, You don't have time to be coming out here to these solitary places!”*
- But for our second point:
- **THE BUSIER JESUS GOT, THE MORE HE PROTECTED AND PRIORITIZED HIS TIME WITH THE FATHER**
 - He knows how busy His schedule is
 - He knows that there is no person walking the earth that is in higher demand than He is right now

- But He also knew: that the only way that He could be Who He needed to be, and do all the things that He needed to do was to make sure that His power, strength, and wisdom came directly from His time with the Father
 - *When life sped up, He slowed Himself down*
 - *His day with the masses would be fueled by His moments of Solitude with the Father*
- Man, if that is not a lesson that we could learn from.
 - We probably have the busiest generation in history
 - Life moves at such a rapid pace in every facet of our days
 - But, if we are to be more like Jesus, and be who we are called to be and do what we are called to do, we *MUST* protect and prioritize our time with the Father
 - *I read a quote from a ministry leader named John Kuhrt this week that stated: “**Busyness***

is the enemy of spirituality. It is essentially laziness. It is doing the easy thing instead of the hard thing. It is filling our time with our own actions instead of paying attentions to God’s actions.” -Jon Kuhrt

- It is only in moments of prayer and solitude with the Father, that we will ever be able to recognize the priorities of God in our lives
 - I always loved what Pastor Wayne Corderio once said, he said, “Prayer is the act of setting the mind on God”
 - I love that Word picture, because whenever we set our minds on Him, His Person, His Actions, His Ways, His Word, it is impossible for us not to see how much we need Him!
- And the dangers of not protecting and prioritizing our time with the Father is that we will start to think that we don’t
 - We will just spend our days reacting to the busyness in our schedules and we’ll start to

think that we can do all of this within our own power

- And it's not until we get burnt out and broken that we then go to the Father for help
 - And yes, He will be there to pick you up and put you back together
 - But He is always ready and available to spend time with you, to protect you from falling into that brokenness and help you coordinate your schedule and busyness around His priorities
- You see, the disciples didn't quite get this yet
 - They're hounding Jesus saying, *"You gotta get back, we can't keep all of these people waiting, we might start to lose our following and we just got started!"*
- And in verse 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.' And He was preaching in their synagogues throughout all Galilee,***

and casting out demons." -Mark 1:38-39 (NKJV)

- Now, if I was one of the disciples here, I would have been so confused
- *"Wait, we're just going to leave? We got a great thing going here! Let's keep building up this ministry! We have a great crowd outside of Peter's house right now! We have his mother in law telling the story of You healing her just to buy us some time till we can get back!"*
- *"Let's just go back there and do some more miracles, let's heal some more people and cast out some more demons!"*
- But Jesus says, "No, that's not why I came. That's not the main priority"
- Now the miracles and healings were great. They were important. They showed and affirmed His Messianic Power and He was fulfilling prophecies

- But He also knew that the people were going to start wanting a Genie Jesus
- You see, whenever we chase miracles, we begin to care more about the miracle than the Miracle Worker
- We begin to love the gift more than the Giver
- We're really just wanting a Genie— not a Savior, Not a Lord, Not a Master
- We just want a Genie at our beckon call, Someone just to grant our wishes and do everything that we ask
- And we know from the context of all of the Gospels that that is exactly what happened to these people in Capernaum
 - This was the city that Jesus performed the most miracles, but it was also the city that rejected Him the most
- And Jesus still healed many! He healed because He loved, because He cared
- But He also knew that a momentary healing wouldn't solve an eternal problem
- And Jesus said that the main reason He came was to Preach:
 - That word ***“Preach” (kēryssō): the public proclamation of the gospel and matters pertaining to it***
- This was the main priority, to teach about the Kingdom Come, the Salvation that Jesus has come to bring!
- To lead people to repentance that leads to Salvation...there is no greater priority than that.
 - I know I told this story not long ago, but years back whenever I was leading a college ministry while I was in school:
 - It was a great season of my life, it was a ministry mostly based on prayer and it just grew and grew over the couple of years that we were there
 - And you know, whenever you base something in prayer, you see God move

- And we were seeing God move in all kinds of crazy ways that we hadn't expected or really thought much about before
- We were seeing miracles and healings, and awesome stuff
- But one semester whenever we got back from break and gathered together, I went up to one of our worship leaders who had just gotten back from a mission trip to Haiti
- And I asked him, "Hey man, how did it go??"
- And he said, "Eh, it was alright."
 - "Want do you mean?"
- "Well nothing really happened...I mean some people got saved, but no one got healed or anything..."
- And I thought, "Are you kidding me?! Someone's entire eternity has been changed! People went from death to life in Christ! And just because you didn't see a temporary healing, you think nothing happened???"
- And that made me reprioritize the way that we went about our entire ministry!
- Because yes, I believe that we serve a God that still heals, I believe we serve a miracle-working God
 - But if we do not see the Public Proclamation of the Gospel and the Matters pertaining to it- in the miracle- then we have missed the point!
- Every miracle that Jesus performed preached a message
- And I believe that one of the most powerful ones we see is in the conclusion of this chapter:
- **"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." Then Jesus, moved with compassion, stretched out His hand and touched him, and said to him, "I am willing; be cleansed." As soon as He had**

spoken, immediately the leprosy left him, and he was cleansed. And He strictly warned him and sent him away at once, 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.” -Mark 1: 40-44 (NKJV)

- Now leprosy was arguably the most serious disease that these people in the ancient world dealt with at this time
- It was a term used for various skin diseases that were highly contagious and spread quickly
- The common thought among the Jewish people, was that leprosy was a direct punishment from God for some sort of sin in your life
- It was almost a living, physical, representation and example of sin to these people

- And because of that sin, they believed you were inflicted with this hideous disease that would literally eat the skin off of your body
- If you were found to be with leprosy, you would be deemed unclean: you could not participate in any form of worship in the temple, you would be forced to leave your family, live outside of the city walls, and you could not come within 50 paces from any other healthy human being.
- You would have to present yourself in a way that you could be easily identified as a leper:
 - You would have to wear torn clothing, always keep the lower part of your face covered at all times, and if someone healthy happened to be unintentionally coming close to you, you would have to immediately yell out UNCLEAN, UNCLEAN!!
 - To warn any unsuspecting travelers not to cross your path
- If you had contracted Leprosy, your life was over. You may still be alive, but you're already

considered as dead. Your children are already considered to have lost their parent, your spouse is already considered to be a widow

- And in the context of this man from our passage, it's likely that one morning he noticed a discoloration on his skin

- *He tried to wipe it off, but it wasn't coming off, and it was sore and hurt*
- *And he probably knew right away what this meant...*
- *He didn't want to believe it to be true, and a part of him just wanted to ignore it, but he also knew that he couldn't risk the health and lives of his wife and his children*

- *So he goes to the temple to be inspected by the priest*

- *And he gets the most devastating news of his life, when the priest declares him unclean*
- *He doesn't get to go home and say goodbye, his clothes are immediately torn, his head gets shaved, his face covered, and gets sent*

outside of the walls of the city to live out the rest of his days as he rots away and dies.

- *And who knows how many days, weeks, months or even years this man is out living in that leper colony*

- *But one day, the news about Jesus and His power reaches even out to them*

- *And he gets the idea.... He knows that coming anywhere close to healthy human beings could result in his immediate execution by stoning...but his life is over anyway. What does he have to lose?*
- *So he thinks to himself that if he ever gets the chance, he'll make his way to Jesus*

- In the meantime, after Jesus tells His disciples they are going to go from town to town to preach, they begin travel all around Galilee

- And we know from the context of the Gospel of Matthew, that one of the stops on this preaching tour was what is famously referred to as the Sermon on the Mount

- And this is the longest singular recording of any of Jesus' teachings
 - It spans from Matthew chapters 5 through 7
 - Some scholars believe that this sermon could have lasted for days
- And there are so many beautiful passages in this sermon:
 - *We have the beatitudes, the Lord's Prayer, Don't worry about tomorrow for today's troubles are sufficient on their own, Seek first the Kingdom of God and His righteousness and all these things will be added to you*
 - So many beautiful truths and passages that we go to for encouragement, truths that we still sing about!
- But there were also some pretty hard teachings in this sermon as well
 - At one point Jesus says if you even look at a someone with lust, it's as if you committed adultery in your heart
- He says if your eye causes you to sin, pluck it out
- If your hand causes you to sin, cut it off
- He says to love your enemies, to bless and pray for those who persecute you
- And to cap it off, He tells us to BE PERFECT as your Father in Heaven is Perfect!
- If I'm sitting under this teaching, I'm probably more discouraged than encouraged!
 - I don't have the self discipling to pluck out my eye or cut off my hand
 - I don't want to pray for those persecuting me
 - I CAN'T BE PERFECT LIKE GOD!!
 - This is impossible!!
 - To which I think Jesus would reply, *"I know, that's the point"*
- And it's right after giving this Sermon on the Mount that Jesus encounters this leper

- It's almost as if He gives these daunting teachings and then tells everyone... let's go on a field trip
- And Matthew chapter 8 verse 1 says, ***"When He had come down from the mountain, great multitudes followed Him. And behold, a leper came and worshiped Him, saying, 'Lord, if You are willing, You can make me clean.'"*** -Matthew 8:1-2 (NKJV)
- Now, let's not brush by that first part of verse one
- Because so many times throughout the history of the Hebrew people, the mountain was the symbolic for the meeting place with God.
- Their leaders would travel up the mountain to meet with God
- But the message of Jesus is that GOD CAME DOWN
- How much of our lives do we spend, trying so hard to get to God: by trying to be good, by

trying to be perfect, by trying to do all of the impossible things that we can never fully accomplish?

- But the reality is there isn't enough we could ever do to get to God, So God came down the mountain to us, in the Person of Jesus Christ
- And as Jesus makes His way down the mountain, it's at this time that this leper comes scurrying over to the feet of Jesus
- And all of the nice, healthy, Jewish people following Jesus would have gasped, jumped back, forced their kids behind them, and yell at him, UNCLEAN UNCLEAN!!!
- But Jesus quiets them down, and lets the man speak.
- The man just very humbly states, *"If You are willing, You can make me clean."*
- We can learn so much from this prayer here from this leper. Because he really makes a statement more than a request

- He says, I know what You can do Jesus, but I leave myself at your mercy
- And the people look on in astonishment, as Jesus does the unthinkable
- Going back to Mark, verse 41 says, ***“Then Jesus, moved with compassion, stretched out His hand and touched him, and said to him, “I am willing; be cleansed.” -Mark 1:41 (NKJV)***
 - Why the touch?!
 - If someone were to even walk on the same sidewalk that a leper had just walked on, they would have to go through all of the purification rituals to make sure that they were still clean...“Jesus, You can’t touch this man!”
- But Mark tells us that Jesus was moved with compassion
- Now this is where the translation gets a bit tricky
- Because some of your bibles will say Jesus had pity, some say compassion, but the most accurate translation is indignation
- Jesus was angry. Not with the man, but with the situation. He’s angry at the disease, He’s angry with sin and its effects in the world.
- We see Jesus show the same emotion at Lazarus’ tomb
- But this is the reason I chose the NKJV for the translation for this passage because His indignation is rooted in Jesus’ compassion
- Jesus knows the entire context of this man’s story and what he’s been through
 - *Think about it, when was the last time that this man would felt any human physical contact?*
 - *When was the last time anyone touched him, shook his hand, gave him a hug?*
- Medical studies show that a human can go mentally insane if they go long enough without any form of human contact

- So y'all need to appreciate the huggers in your life, they're just trying to protect your mental health, that's all!
- But with this touch, the miraculous happens... IMMEDIATELY he was cleansed!
 - By law and by nature Jesus should now be contaminated
 - It's nature, what's unclean makes what's clean, unclean. Disease makes what's healthy, sick...that's just the way it goes
 - But Jesus is introducing a completely new era...because now, for the first time, what was clean, made what was unclean, clean.
- Jesus is introducing and showing that He is the most powerful contagion in the entire universe...there is no sickness, disease, there is NO SIN that is more powerful than Him
- Can you see the Message in the Miracle!
 - Jesus comes down from the mountaintop, and just as He gets down to the bottom, He is confronted with this leper.
 - And what He does to touch and heal this man wraps up the entire message of the greatest sermon ever preached
- The leper is not named because WE are the leper! Every man woman and child, following Jesus at that time, who gasped when they saw him, they were the leper!
- Jesus is saying that the disease you think that is so bad on the outside of this man does not even compared to the destructive disease that *you* have in the inside! And it's called sin! AND IT'S EATING YOU ALIVE!
 - It doesn't just affect you!
 - It affects your family, it affects all those around you, it affects your ability to freely worship!

- And Jesus is saying to everyone YOU ARE THIS MAN
 - And There is no cure! Other than the grace, love, and mercy of Jesus Christ! All it takes is trusting Him, and getting to the point of desperation and realization that there is nowhere else to turn other than to Him!
 - We have to get to this point of desperation that we know that we have nothing to lose and everything to gain
- And as we make our way to Him, we'll see that He's already making His way toward us the entire time....and He's there to touch us and to heal us...AND HE DOESN'T STOP THERE
- He sends the man to the priest, because the priest was the only one that could pronounce him to be clean and allow him to reenter society, reunite with his family, and to be able to freely worship in the temple once again
 - Jesus wasn't just healing him, He was giving him his life back
- And this is what Jesus wants to do for all of humanity
 - Yes, He wants to free us and deliver us and cleanse us from the crippling affects of sin, but He wants to give us life
 - He's comes to give us life and life abundantly
- And when you experience the redeeming touch of your Savior, it too doesn't just affect you
 - He wants to bring that abundant life into you, into your family, and into your worship
- And it's interesting how, Jesus tells this man, not to tell anyone
- But he can't help himself, he goes and tells everyone! Verse 45 says:
- ***"However, he 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.” -Mark 1: 45 (NKJV)

- And I think most of the time we use this and make the point, we need to be like this man! Going and telling everyone what Jesus has done!
- And we should... however, the reality of this passage is that this man was disobedient..
- Jesus told him to not tell anyone, but he did, and it affected Jesus' ability to minister the way that He wanted to minister.
- He wanted to go from town to town to preach, but now He couldn't, because He was being pressed in from people on every direction
 - *Some people desperate for a miracle, some people genuinely looking for the Messiah, some people looking for Genie Jesus, some people just wanting to be a part of the hype*
 - Whatever the reasoning, whether genuine or not, Jesus is now being overrun

- What is it with us human beings not wanting to listen to Jesus?
 - When He tells us to tell no one, we tell everyone
 - When He tells us to tell everyone, we tell no one
- Now, does Jesus end up doing all of the things He needed to do and accomplishing all of the things that He needed to accomplish? Yes. He does
- But, man, if we as human beings don't just make the process more difficult than it needs to be
- If we would just listen to Jesus, and do everything within His timing and within His will... we can be a part of something so much greater than ourselves
- And leave Him room to do the things that He needs to do in and through our lives.
- When we protect and prioritize our time with the Father, we can allow Him to make us more

like Jesus, and we can reflect the compassion that He showed toward the leper

- And understand the magnitude of what He saved us from, and all of His Goodness in our lives.