

Scrolls

Meeting the Messiah The Authority of Jesus

Week 4
January 26, 2025

Mark 1:29-34

WORD STUDY

Serve (Diakoneo):

It means to minister, wait upon, care for one's needs and supply. This is the picture of Christianity. We all need help from time to time but we should also be looking for ways to serve others and not only be looking out for our own necessities.

LIFE LESSON

DON'T LET THE SIN IN YOUR PAST BE WHAT DEFINES YOU. THE WORK OF GRACE THAT JESUS HAS OR WILL ACCOMPLISH IN YOUR LIFE IS A MUCH MORE SIGNIFICANT PART OF YOUR SALVATION. ACCEPT THE GRACE OF CHRIST AS HE LIFTS YOU UP THEN GET OUT THERE AND SERVE HIM BY SERVING HIS PEOPLE.

I. V. 29

Not far from the synagogue is what seems to be the remains of Peter's house. The windows in this house look into an inward room and not out into the streets. The dwelling has gone through some renovations throughout the centuries but with the help of archaeologists, there have been religious graffiti in Greek, Latin, Syriac and Aramaic scratched into the walls. At the very least it appears that this was a place where Christians gathered and possibly even a house church. It is possible according to James R. Edwards that Jesus may have even stayed in this house since there is not specific mentioning in scripture or in tradition of where Jesus' house was located or if He even had one (Matthew 8:20). The fact that Jesus did not speak of where He lived could be reminding us that our earthly homes are not to be our priority. We are not permanent residents here as Peter reminds us in I Peter 2:11 "Dear friends, I urge you as strangers and exiles to abstain from sinful desires that wage war against the soul." As much as we can appreciate the blessing of having a warm place to live, we should pursue our work and responsibility more.

II. VV. 30-31

Staying with the theme of verses 21-28 we see that this is still the sabbath. The fact that they told Jesus immediately about the lady's fever reveals that they had confidence in the authority of Jesus and His teachings to some degree since He was not a doctor. Jesus responds to their request and goes to the house where Peter's mother-in-law was lying sick with a fever. We do not have enough information to know what had caused the fever and in ancient

times many believed that a fever was its own disease and not caused by an infection that the body was fighting off. The wording of Luke 4:39 where it reads that Jesus “rebuked” the fever and it left her has caused some to believe that the fever could have been caused by demonic possession which would fall in line with some New Testament teachings and rabbinic traditions. Mark’s account does not give any indication of what caused the fever, only that she had one.

The fact that Mark does not give any detail of the cause of the fever only that Jesus healed it is a reminder that the authority of Jesus is the main emphasis of Mark’s narrative. This can be a reminder to us that when we are telling our own Jesus story, we should not spend too much time glorifying the specific sins we were involved in or how often we did them, but that Jesus has set us free from their grasp. No one needs to know how to sin, but they do need to know that the power of God can set us free from them and their condemnation on our lives. For Jesus to perform a miracle is not too farfetched. There are some who will say that miracles are impossible, but there have been countless reports from eyewitnesses and personal benefactors of miracles to just dismiss them. Also, just because we do not see the miracle does not mean one has not occurred. For example, imagine that you are driving seventy-five miles per hour down the interstate and unknowingly to you your brake caliper is about to fall off because a bolt has come loose. God could easily tighten that bolt to protect you, and you would be none the wiser. That would be just as much a miracle as the parting of the Red Sea. So, regardless of all the skeptics in the world, there is no way to definitively disprove miracles.

The healing of the lady is totally of work of Jesus who went to her and helped her up. There were no special incantations, Jesus went to her and helped her up. The power and authority of Jesus over evil and sickness does not need any dramatizations but only for Him to be willing to heal. The healing that Jesus perpetrated was complete and left no side effects. When Jesus does something, He does it right. We see this in the fact that the woman immediately began to serve Him as soon as she was lifted. This was not her womanly duties to cook, it was her response to Jesus for what He had done for her. The Greek word for “serve” is the same word used to describe what the angels did for Jesus during His time of temptation in the wilderness and where Jesus said, “For even the Son of Man did not come to be served, but to serve, and to give His life as a ransom for many.” (Mark 10:45) This is a reminder for us who have been saved that we have been saved completely and that it is now our responsibility and privilege to serve Jesus and His church.

III. VV. 32-34

The towns people would have come after sundown because this would have been the end of the sabbath, and many believed that healing on the sabbath was forbidden. The concept of all who were sick and possessed again distinguishes between physical sickness and spiritual sickness. They were and are two different types of ailments. Regardless of what affliction the people had, we now see the compassion that Jesus showed to Peter's mother-in-law manifested to the people who had come to Him. To quote James Edwards again, "The door to Jesus' compassion and power was open to them..." This still holds true today. Romans 10:13 reads, "For everyone who calls on the name of the Lord will be saved." You will not find anywhere that someone came to Jesus seeking true forgiveness was turned away and you will not be either. In Matthew's account of this same story, we see where "all" were healed. This could mean that Mark was using the word "many" to show that there were a lot of people who came to Him not that He only healed a select few.

We see that demons were shown in the first half of Mark's gospel showing Jesus's power over them and His true identity. In the time of Jesus, people did not know His identity, but the demons did since they were also from the spiritual world. An interesting fact about the casting out of demons is that Jesus told them to be quiet and not tell anyone. We will also see this with human healings later. There could be a few explanations for this. First, if His messiahship is exposed this early the Jews could try to make Him an earthly king and miss the point that He came to set up a heavenly kingdom instead. Also, it could cause unwanted attention from the Roman authorities this early in His ministry. Third, I'm sure Jesus did not want His gospel and identity being spread by demonic forces. This will be and is the job of the church which He has purchased by His blood.

It is imperative that the disciples follow Jesus in humility, servitude and suffering if they were ever going to experience His power. Many who claim to follow Jesus only want to have whatever power or privilege they can gain from it. But the love of Jesus is not best shown through miracles and other displays of power. If we are going to show the love of Jesus in the best way possible, it must be a sacrificial love. John 15:13 reads, "No one has greater love than this: to lay down his life for his friends." The world teaches us to reach for our own promotion, but the gospel teaches us to promote Jesus. This may mean that we don't receive any accolades here on earth, but it does mean that we are investing in what matters for all eternity. Even when our work and sacrifices are not seen by other people, they are seen by God, and we can trust that they do not go unnoticed.

PERSONAL REFLECTION

1. How does verse 30 make you think about the way you respond when someone is in desperate need whether it be physical or spiritual sickness? Though taking someone to the doctor or giving them medicine is a great opportunity that we have here in our country, do we stop there, or do we take the problem to Jesus as well?

2. Does your response to the work of Jesus in your life match that of Peter's mother-in-law? Have you responded to Jesus by serving Him and His church? If so, how?

3. Do you have the faith that no matter what your issue is, Jesus has the time and compassion to hear you out and deal with it in your life? Do you ever think that there are too many people who have bigger problems than yours, so you feel guilty even bringing them to God in prayer?

4. Have we embraced the fact that we are not told to be quiet about what Jesus has done for us? Do you realize that it is now our time to make His name and message known to the world?

One final reason that Jesus may have wanted His messiahship kept silent was because it was not ultimately seen until the cross. It was at the cross where the soldier realized that "surely this was the Son of God." There is a difference between hearing about Jesus and His work and experiencing it for yourself. If you are a follower of Jesus, that means that there was a time when the Holy Spirit convinced you that the gospel of Jesus was true and at that point it became more than a story, it became a reality. The death, burial and resurrection of Jesus was the ultimate display of His divine identity and from that point on it has been the commission of the church to no longer keep His identity a secret but to share it all over the world to all people. We now have His resurrection as absolute proof that Jesus is Who He said He is, and He did what He said He was going to do. On this side of the cross we have the Bible and so we know that His word is all we need today. But in the time of Jesus, they did not have the New Testament, so they did not have the whole story until Jesus died and rose again. Then there was nothing left to do but to go and tell the world what had happened.

We are not to be quiet. We are to tell what we have the privilege to know and experience which is the saving power of Jesus. The world needs to know that there is a compassionate Savior that has enough saving power to go around to anyone who will call upon His name.

COMMENTARIES USED

1. Edwards, James R. 2002. *The Gospel according to Mark*. Grand Rapids; Cambridge: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company.

2. Lane, William L. 2010. *The Gospel according to Mark*. Grand Rapids, Mich: Eerdmans.

