



THE GOSPEL OF MARK

Study Guide Full
Mark 1:21-45
July 21, 2019

We are still in our first weeks reading Mark, asking two primary questions: a) Who is Jesus? and b) What does it mean to be his disciple?

Last week we saw that, with the calling of Christ to “Follow me” within the context of the good news of gospel, Jesus is looking for us disciples to respond to the kingdom truth that God is in control.

This week we continue to meditate upon God’s control by considering the *exousia* of Jesus—his power and authority; the irrepressible response to that *exousia*—amazement; and our call as disciples—quiet obedience.

1:21 They went to Capernaum, and when the Sabbath came, Jesus went into the synagogue and began to teach. 22 The people were amazed at his teaching, because he taught them as one who had authority, not as the teachers of the law. 23 Just then a man in their synagogue who was possessed by an impure spirit cried out, 24 “What do you want with us, Jesus of Nazareth? Have you come to destroy us? I know who you are—the Holy One of God!” 25 “Be quiet!” said Jesus sternly. “Come out of him!” 26 The impure spirit shook the man violently and came out of him with a shriek. 27 The people were all so amazed that they asked each other, “What is this? A new teaching—and with authority! He even gives orders to impure spirits and they obey him.” 28 News about him spread quickly over the whole region of Galilee.

29 As soon as they left the synagogue, they went with James and John to the home of Simon and Andrew. 30 Simon’s mother-in-law was in bed with a fever, and they immediately told Jesus about her. 31 So he went to her, took her



hand and helped her up. The fever left her and she began to wait on them. 32 That evening after sunset the people brought to Jesus all the sick and demon-possessed. 33 The whole town gathered at the door, 34 and Jesus healed many who had various diseases. He also drove out many demons, but he would not let the demons speak because they knew who he was.

35 Very early in the morning, while it was still dark, Jesus got up, left the house and went off to a solitary place, where he prayed. 36 Simon and his companions went to look for him, 37 and when they found him, they exclaimed: "Everyone is looking for you!" 38 Jesus replied, "Let us go somewhere else—to the nearby villages—so I can preach there also. That is why I have come." 39 So he traveled throughout Galilee, preaching in their synagogues and driving out demons. 40 A man with leprosy came to him and begged him on his knees, "If you are willing, you can make me clean." 41 Jesus was indignant. He reached out his hand and touched the man. "I am willing," He said. "Be clean!" 42 Immediately the leprosy left him and he was cleansed. 43 Jesus sent him away at once with a strong warning: 44 "See that you don't tell this to anyone. But go, show yourself to the priest and offer the sacrifices that Moses commanded for your cleansing, as a testimony to them." 45 Instead he went out and began to talk freely, spreading the news. As a result, Jesus could no longer enter a town openly but stayed outside in lonely places. Yet the people still came to him from everywhere.

Mark 1:21-45

Notes:

Commentary Notes:

vv. 21-28. Mark teaches his readers on the authority of Jesus, narrating Jesus teaching in the synagogues—that place of Israelite reading, study, and identity. As Mark constructs the narrative, we see that Jesus' teaching in the synagogue

Discussion Questions:

Pray: Ask that all the teaching that you receive through this series, whether from the pulpit, from these study guides,

prompts one main reaction—amazement/astonish (ἐκπλήσσω, *ekplesso* in v. 22; θαμβέω, *thambeo* in v. 27), and that in especially in light of Jesus' ἐξουσία, *exousia*—his power, authority, control. The main theme of this passage is this authority, and the resulting amazement. (So it is that Jesus' call that we follow him as disciples makes a whole world of sense, in light of his power and control.)

Jesus' authority is principally demonstrated here in the command over unclean spirits. He commands the unclean spirit to "be muzzled" and "come out, using the same Greek word φιμόω, *phimoo*, that he will use in another few chapters to silence the waves of the sea. For Mark, the unclean Spirit is the first to fully recognize the authority of Jesus, as the Holy One of God; yet Jesus commands silence, in tune with one of the themes of Mark's gospel—the hidden nature of Jesus' identity.

vv. 29-34. The twin themes of Jesus' authority and the secret of his identity continue in these verses in which Jesus continues to demonstrate his power over demons, as well as sickness and disease. Here we see

or from other discussion, would truly be teaching by the will of the Father, in the authority/control of the Son, through the life of the Spirit.

Discuss: What do you make of the fact that the "coming near of the kingdom of God" results in a clash of powers? What does this say about the ministry of Jesus?

Reflect: If we were to retell these verses, translating them through the centuries into our modern context, how might unclean spirits present themselves today? Into what areas of life is the Spirit speaking to you the authoritative words of Christ—be clean?

Meditate: How is the Spirit, by the authority and power of the Father, whispering Jesus' word of "Be silent" to your heart amidst your fears and uncertainties this week?

Encourage: Noting the rabbinic teaching custom of quoting other rabbis, we recognize the authority of Jesus' speaking uniquely in his own authority. How has the authority of Jesus in your life wonderfully amazed you in the past? Encourage one another.

Discuss: How does Simon Peter's concern for his mother-in-law demonstrate an early "theology of the family" in Mark? How might it also provide, even amidst Mark's brevity, a model of congregational care? Keep in mind that the ancient reader would likely ask the question, "Why be concerned

the compassion of Jesus that leads him into the room of Simon Peter's feverous mother-in-law to take her by the hand and heal her. The Markan narrative stands out in terms of the immediate effectiveness of Christ's healing touch. Also notable are a few implicit realities of the narrative: that Jesus and his disciples have just left synagogue worship on the Sabbath; and that the healings of Simon's mother-in-law and of the earlier unclean spirit are already unleashing an irrepressible word of mouth regarding Jesus' healing authority.

vv. 35-45. Let us simply let the third-century Church Father Origen take the lead from his *Healing of the Leper*: "And why did he touch him, since the law forbade the touching of a leper?...He touches him in his un-touchability, that he might instruct us in humility; that he might teach us that we should despise no one, or regard him as pitiable...let us consider here, beloved, if there be anyone here that has the taint of leprosy in his soul... instantly adoring God, let him say: "Lord, if you will, you can make me clean."

about this common woman?"

Pray: Lift up those in your lives who are in need of physical, emotional, and spiritual healing by the hand of Jesus and by the care of trained medical professionals.

Discern: The healing of Christ naturally results for Simon Peter's mother-in-law in the desire to humbly serve in a role of hospitality. To whom is the healing touch of Christ pointing you in the humble service of hospitality this week? To whom is Christ pointing your Connection Group?

Confess: In refusing to merely follow the crowds pinning to be with him, Jesus rejects the temptation to live for his own name—for society's measuring stick of popularity. How have you felt a similar temptation in your own life? How about in the life of our church?

Reflect: What would it look like for you to have a healthy pattern of "withdrawing to an isolated place"—a place of rest and solitude—during the upcoming summer months? How might others keep you accountable to a healthy Sabbath practice?

Encourage: How does Jesus's willingness to care for Simon's mother-in-law, and for the leper—with a heart of pity/indignation—encourage you?

Listen: YouTube October Wedding's "Leper Song."