

THE BEST IS YET TO COME

Mark 1:29-39

INTRODUCTION

Let's walk through the text with Mark and see what happens.

TEXT: Mark 1:29-39

29 And immediately he left the synagogue and entered the house of Simon and Andrew, with James and John.

Jesus went to the synagogues to teach. The synagogues would become the models for the early church. They were places where the common man went to hear the Word of God preached and taught, and to pray. They were independent, local, and ruled by the people of the area. People gathered there on Saturdays for Sabbath worship, but they often also gathered there at other times. Jesus teaching in a synagogue brought with it a certain appropriateness. He was a Jew who taught the Jewish Scriptures.

When they left, they went to Simon and Andrew's place. Notice that the brother lives with Simon and his family. James and John were brothers, and both fisherman who worked closely with Simon and Andrew in business.

30 Now Simon's mother-in-law lay ill with a fever, and immediately they told him about her.

31 And he came and took her by the hand and lifted her up, and the fever left her, and she began to serve them.

It seems natural to point out that a person in the family had a fever. Jesus's reaction was to heal her. Her reaction was to do what she would have done when her children and guests were present: feed them!

32 That evening at sundown they brought to him all who were sick or oppressed by demons.

33 And the whole city was gathered together at the door.

34 And he healed many who were sick with various diseases, and cast out many demons. And he would not permit the demons to speak, because they knew him.

Jesus's reputation as a healer and as one who could cast out demons had spread. In the hometown of His closest men, word spread quickly that Jesus was at the home of Simon. The villages around the regions of North Galilee were rather large, small cities made up of 15,000 people or more. It is hard to know how many people showed up for healing, but they didn't fit in the door. We know that. The text seems to indicate that He healed all who asked. There were many people at the door. This shouldn't surprise us. We have bodies, and when healthy, we take them for granted. When sick, we look to God to make us feel better. Prayers for bodily healing are good, for they remind us that God loves us and is our only real help.

People are perplexed and fascinated by the amount of demonic oppression that surrounded the ministry of Jesus. Some people wonder if this demonic oppression is really

mental illness, but the peoples of long ago did not have that understanding. There is no reason that this should be so. People of all times have understood madness. Some also wonder why we don't see so many demonically possessed or oppressed people today, and if we did, how would we know? To that, I would say that the times of Jesus are unique. We are not given an explanation of why there is so much demonic possession at this time, but we do see Jesus's authority over the forces of evil. Jesus, living in us, gives us authority over demons also, but there is no mandate in the Scripture for us to do the things that Jesus does in the way He did. Some people get off into some strange ideas and stray from the truth as they seek demons to fight.

Instead of looking for demons around every corner, remember that the number one weapon of our enemy is lies, and the power of the Gospel preached is strong enough to set anyone free.

Notice that Jesus told the demons to say nothing about Him, because they knew more about Him than the people did! And the demons had to obey Him. All the demonic world is under His authority. They are only allowed to do the evil He permits, and He has a purpose for that. They are doomed, and their punishment is both soon coming and certain. Never fear Satan nor his demons. Fear God and run to Him who has power over the forces of evil!

35 And rising very early in the morning, while it was still dark, he departed and went out to a desolate place, and there he prayed.

Though He had served people into the evening, Jesus still rose early to pray.

36 And Simon and those who were with him searched for him,

37 and they found him and said to him, "Everyone is looking for you."

Simon lost his important house guest. He woke up and Jesus was gone. No doubt his brother and his mother-in-law were trying to arrange breakfast. Beyond the household, the town is waking up, and people who didn't get a chance to see this prophet the night before are looking for Him. Simon seems to want to bring Him back.

38 And he said to them, "Let us go on to the next towns, that I may preach there also, for that is why I came out."

39 And he went throughout all Galilee, preaching in their synagogues and casting out demons.

Jesus had no desire to go back to that town at that time. He had work to do. It was not time to set up churches. The people had their synagogues. He had a mission to go throughout Israel, telling the people about the good news of forgiveness of sins. He began in the towns surrounding Galilee. There were quite a few of them. There was much work to do.

Let's finish examining this passage by asking and answering two questions:

1. Why did Jesus heal the people and cast out demons?

This might seem like a silly question? Why did Jesus heal? Because that's what Jesus does! Because He's a nice man! Because He can! Of course, that seems obvious. But the Bible indicates that something more important is going on.

To answer this question, the first thing we must remember is that the teaching and the preaching of Jesus are, by far, more important than the miracles that He does. The miracles are exciting and fun. They draw a crowd. They bring the needy out. But they are of much less importance than His preaching. Look back at our text and see what He says about moving on:

38 And he said to them, "Let us go on to the next towns, that I may preach there also, for that is why I came out."

He did not say, "Let's go to the next towns and hold healing services there too." He came to preach. If we go back a few verses to last week's passage, we see Jesus's ministry summed up with these words:

Now after John was arrested, Jesus came into Galilee, proclaiming the gospel of God, and saying, "The time is fulfilled, and the kingdom of God is at hand; repent and believe in the gospel." (Mar 1:14-15 ESV)

Jesus went about "proclaiming the Gospel of God." The time had come to "repent and believe in the good news, the gospel." Jesus came first to bring a message. This message, which would grow to include the proclamation of the death of Jesus on a cross, of His resurrection, of His ascension into Heaven, of His return to save His own and judge the wicked, is the message He came to bring to the earth. Preaching is His first priority!

Then why did He heal and cast out demons? He tells us one reason in John's Gospel:

". . . do you say of him whom the Father consecrated and sent into the world, 'You are blaspheming,' because I said, 'I am the Son of God'? If I am not doing the works of my Father, then do not believe me; but if I do them, even though you do not believe me, believe the works, that you may know and understand that the Father is in me and I am in the Father." (Joh 10:36-38 ESV)

He does these works so that they would believe His words, that they would believe that He is the Son of God and all His other words are true. So, one reason He does these things is because they confirm the more important thing: His claims and His preaching.

But why these things? Moses showed the power of God by doing miracles too. He brought frogs and fire and locusts and blood, and all the rest, showing God's mightiness. Elijah also brought fire down from Heaven. These are impressive miracles that also prove that God is with the prophet. False prophets from other religions supposedly did mighty deeds too, like slaying dragons, or talking to angels who gave them special books, and other such deeds.

Since Jesus was the Son of God, He could have done any show of power to prove His words. He could have made dogs fly. He could have written His name in fire in the sky. He could have created creatures from the dust. But He did not do these things. Why? Because His works were ones meant to demonstrate the affections of God and the reality of the

Kingdom that is to come. In the Kingdom to come, there will be no sickness. God has compassion on the sick. God is a healing God, a loving God, and a compassionate God.

Now, all that were healed that day would one day get sick again and die. Someone may ask, "If God is so compassionate, why are all not healed forever, with no death at all?" The answer is that God offers that very thing in His preaching. All who believe in the Gospel will receive eternal life.

Does not the prophet Daniel teach us:

And many of those who sleep in the dust of the earth shall awake, some to everlasting life, and some to shame and everlasting contempt. (Dan 12:2 ESV)?

And does not John declare, in the last book of the Bible:

And I saw the holy city, new Jerusalem, coming down out of heaven from God, prepared as a bride adorned for her husband. And I heard a loud voice from the throne saying, "Behold, the dwelling place of God is with man. He will dwell with them, and they will be his people, and God himself will be with them as their God. He will wipe away every tear from their eyes, and death shall be no more, neither shall there be mourning, nor crying, nor pain anymore, for the former things have passed away." And he who was seated on the throne said, "Behold, I am making all things new." Also he said, "Write this down, for these words are trustworthy and true." (Rev 21:2-5 ESV)?

This earth is filled with the goodness of God, but it is flawed by death and sin, and all living creatures suffer under the judgement that comes from sin. However, a new world is coming, a new Kingdom, where Jesus reigns. In that Kingdom, there is none who are sick, none who die, none who weep, none who are tormented by demons, evil, or fear. As Jesus preached the Kingdom to come, He was displaying the love of God, proving that He was truly the Son of God and truly the Messiah, by bringing love and kindness to the hurting of the world.

2. How should this passage change our lives today? By remembering and acting on three truths:

1. The message is still the point.

The message that Jesus preached is one that we have in all its fullness. We know what the Apostles learned under His teachings and after His resurrection, and this message was entrusted to all of us to bring to this world until He returns. Why? Because this message is the power to set people free from this doomed world, from all their sins and sorrows, and to give them life forever.

We must preach this message in every way we can.

We tell people our stories about how Jesus came into our lives. We invite people to church, where they message is preached. We invite people into our homes and read the Bible

with them. We send missionaries out to tell the world. We plant new campuses, where more people can come and hear the good news.

In doing these things, we must never forget these two great realities revealed in Scripture:

So I am eager to preach the gospel to you . . . For I am not ashamed of the gospel, for it is the power of God for salvation to everyone who believes, to the Jew first and also to the Greek. (Rom 1:15-16 ESV)

And, as Jesus has said,

"This gospel of the kingdom shall be preached in the whole world as a testimony to all the nations, and then the end will come." (Mat 24:14 NAU)

We are a people brought from death to life by a message. We are a people who have believed the words of Jesus, and who have received Him, eternal life, and forgiveness of sins. We are a people who tell the world this great news that has saved us.

2. Church is not just for church, but for all places.

Interestingly, the word "synagogue" comes from a Greek word meaning, "bringing together." The local synagogues of the Jews in Jesus's day did not need a building. Primarily, they were a gathering of people. Later, the buildings they met in would share the name "synagogue." Likewise, the word "church" comes from a Greek word that means, "The assembly of people." The church needs no building. The church is the gathering of His people. However, over time, the buildings we meet in began to be called "churches" also.

Now, Jesus had just taught in the synagogue. He had done the religious thing in the religious place. He had taught and prayed at the official gathering in the official gathering place. But then, He went to the home of believers, and the ministry continued. He taught and healed in the house and outside. He preached everywhere He went.

Like Jesus, His followers, when they properly understand what it is to follow Him, do church things everywhere they go. In their homes, they preach to their mother-in-laws and everyone in the house. They pray outside and inside. They take Jesus with them on vacation, to work, and everywhere.

3. Look to the hope of the day when His Kingdom comes it all of its fullness.

When we declare the Gospel of Jesus Christ, the best things that we are promising to others (through Jesus) are yet to come. The best is always yet to come. No matter how good a day you have here, it is nothing compared to what you will receive when the Kingdom comes in all of its fullness.

When you have a bad day, week, month, or year, you can endure, knowing that it is for an instant only. Do no doubt the victory that Jesus has won over death. Do not doubt the resurrection. Whenever you are tempted to do so, remember the words of Jesus to the Sadducees, who said that there was no resurrection:

"But regarding the fact that the dead rise again, have you not read in the book of Moses, in the passage about the burning bush, how God spoke to him, saying, 'I AM THE GOD OF ABRAHAM, AND THE GOD OF ISAAC, and the God of Jacob '? He is not the God of the dead, but of the living; you are greatly mistaken." (Mar 12:26-27)

Those who think there is no hope after the grave are greatly mistaken.