

When Perfect Health Is Not Enough

Mark 1:35-45

October 7, 2012

Introduction

Mark 1:35-45

(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) Filled with compassion, Jesus reached out His hand and touched the man. "I am willing," He said. "Be clean!"

(42) Immediately the leprosy left him and he was cured.

(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.

I. Everybody Wants Perfect Health

Mark 1:33-34 *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.*

Note: Jesus had a busy night. Everybody in Capernaum came to see Jesus and receive healing. The next day, Jesus leaves to pray.

- Jesus' prayer
 - Solitude
 - Early in morning

Note: I have read many books on prayer and many say the same thing: our best time to pray is in the morning. They often use this text to prove their point. This is an example of taking Scripture out of its context. Mark was not subscribing the time of prayer, but describing what Jesus was doing. Mark mentions of another time when Jesus prayed:

Mark 6:45-48 *Immediately Jesus made His disciples get into the boat and go on ahead of Him to Bethsaida, while He dismissed the crowd.⁴⁶ After leaving them, He went up on a mountainside to pray.⁴⁷ When evening came, the boat was in the middle of the lake, and He was alone on land.⁴⁸ He saw the disciples straining at the oars, because the wind was against them. About the fourth watch of the night (3:00 AM) He went out to them, walking on the lake. He was about to pass by them.*

Here Jesus starts praying in the afternoon and goes all into the night. Does this mean that this is the best time to pray? No. What we see in the two instances is that Jesus is alone praying. He goes off by Himself to pray. There is no set time for prayer, but aloneness.

- Solitary place
 - Same word in Greek as in Mark 1:4 (wilderness)
 - Does not mean that Jesus traveled far into the desert
 - NIV good job of choosing solitary place
- Why did Jesus pray?
 - To subject Himself to His Father's will
 - To subject Himself to the power of the Holy Spirit

John 4:34 *"My food," said Jesus, "is to do the will of Him who sent Me and to finish His work."*

John 6:38-40 *For I have come down from heaven not to do My will but to do the will of Him who sent Me. ³⁹And this is the will of Him who sent Me, that I shall lose none of all that He has given Me, but raise them up at the last day. ⁴⁰For My Father's will is that everyone who looks to the Son and believes in Him shall have eternal life, and I will raise him up at the last day.*

Note: Jesus' words and works (revealing what the Father wants and under the power of the Holy Spirit) was perfect. He was in perfect obedience to the Father.

- Disciples' response
 - went to look for Him
 - pursued Him—dogged search for Him
 - interrupted His prayer
 - "Everyone is looking for You!"

Note: The disciples at this point in time (very early in Jesus' ministry) had no idea of Jesus' plan or purpose. They noticed that He was gone in the morning, so they went out to look for Him. Why? There was more healing to be done, more perfect health to be had. The people were not interested in what Jesus had to say. They were interested only in His healing ability. The people in the area had the idea that God was going to establish an utopia where everybody is healthy, and His kingdom was going to be established.

- Jesus' purpose
 - Go to other villages
 - Greek word = town of moderate sizes (think Belmont)
 - To preach

Isaiah 61:1 *The Spirit of the Sovereign LORD is on Me, because the LORD has anointed Me to preach good news to the poor. He has sent Me to bind up the brokenhearted, to proclaim freedom for the captives and release from darkness for the prisoners.*

- Preached in synagogues

Note: Mark is implying that every time He entered a synagogue, the demons reveal themselves and He drives them out.

II. Perfect Health or Perfect Salvation

- Man with leprosy
 - Leprosy = skin disease (covers all types of skin disease)
 - Very visible skin disease

Luke 5:12 *While Jesus was in one of the towns, a man came along who was covered with leprosy. When he saw Jesus, he fell with his face to the ground and begged Him, "Lord, if You are willing, You can make me clean."*

Note: We are not sure which skin disease it is, but if it is the true leprosy, then that man is suffering. True leprosy (or Hansen's disease) is caused by bacteria and it destroys the nerves.

- Why is he begging to be clean?
 - Lepers are outcast

Leviticus 13:45-46 *The person with such an infectious disease must wear torn clothes, let his hair be unkempt, cover the lower part of his face and cry out, "Unclean! Unclean!"⁴⁶ As long as he has the infection he remains unclean. He must live alone; he must live outside the camp.*

Luke 17:12 *As He was going into a village, ten men who had leprosy met Him. They stood at a distance*

- They are forced to live outside cities
- They are forced to cry out "Unclean, unclean" when traveling
- They are forced to stand away from people (50 to 150 feet)
- They were unclean—cannot be part of Jewish society
- Very visible disease

Note: There are rabbinic teachings that forbid rabbis from buying anything on the street that a leper has walked on.

- Leper comes to Jesus
 - He is close to Jesus in distance, breaking the law

Matthew 8:2 *A man with leprosy came and knelt before Him and said, "Lord, if You are willing, You can make me clean."*

Luke 5:12 *While Jesus was in one of the towns, a man came along who was covered with leprosy. When he saw Jesus, he fell with his face to the ground and begged Him, "Lord, if You are willing, You can make me clean."*

- He begs for cleansing and submits to His will

- Jesus' compassion
 - He touched the leper

- Willing to heal
- Jesus' warning
 - Strong warning
 - Jesus gave two commands
 - Don't tell anyone
 - Why did Jesus forbid him from telling everyone?
 - It was a test
 - Go to priest and confirm healing

Leviticus 14:2-8 *These are the regulations for the diseased person at the time of his ceremonial cleansing, when he is brought to the priest: ³The priest is to go outside the camp and examine him. If the person has been healed of his infectious skin disease, ⁴the priest shall order that two live clean birds and some cedar wood, scarlet yarn and hyssop be brought for the one to be cleansed. ⁵Then the priest shall order that one of the birds be killed over fresh water in a clay pot. ⁶He is then to take the live bird and dip it, together with the cedar wood, the scarlet yarn and the hyssop, into the blood of the bird that was killed over the fresh water. ⁷Seven times he shall sprinkle the one to be cleansed of the infectious disease and pronounce him clean. Then he is to release the live bird in the open fields. ⁸The person to be cleansed must wash his clothes, shave off all his hair and bathe with water; then he will be ceremonially clean. After this he may come into the camp, but he must stay outside his tent for seven days.*

Note: There was only one place where he could find a working priest, and that is in the temple of Jerusalem.

- Testimony to them
 - Who are "them"?
 - The priests

Note: Being healed from leprosy was considered impossible. In OT, there are only two instances of lepers being healed. Rabbis would say that healing for lepers is the same as raising people from the dead—for all of us, it is impossible to cure leprosy, but for Jesus, He completely healed the leper. He definitely restored the leper's skin and/or any missing parts of his body. He is completely clean. Jesus said that this healing would be a testimony to them...if they accept that Jesus healed, then they would have accepted the fact that He is the Messiah. However, if they rejected His teaching, then the burden on them is much greater because of the proof that He is the Son of God.

- Jesus the outcast
 - The leper disobedience
 - Began to talk freely, spreading the news
 - Tells everybody he meets that Jesus healed him
 - Result = Jesus couldn't move around Galilee, thus His preaching was limited
 - Stayed outside
 - Jesus switched places with the leper

Conclusion

Why did Jesus heal? It was to verify that He is the Son of God and that He came to save people from their sins. He shows through His healing that He is the Promised One of God, but people ignored His preaching and went straight for the healing.

Matthew 16:24-26 *Then Jesus said to His disciples, "If anyone would come after Me, he must deny himself and take up his cross and follow Me. ²⁵For whoever wants to save his life will lose it, but whoever loses his life for Me will find it. ²⁶What good will it be for a man if he gains the whole world, yet forfeits his soul? Or what can a man give in exchange for his soul?"*

The implication is scary. The people at Capernaum for the most part chose perfect health instead of following Jesus. As a result, they forfeited their souls.

Matthew 11:23-24 *And you, Capernaum, will you be lifted up to the skies? No, you will go down to the depths. If the miracles that were performed in you had been performed in Sodom, it would have remained to this day. ²⁴But I tell you that it will be more bearable for Sodom on the day of judgment than for you."*