

Christ The Healer or Preacher

The Priority of Proclamation

Mark 1:29-39

July 6, 2025

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²⁸ And at once his fame spread everywhere throughout all the surrounding region of Galilee. ²⁹ And immediately he left the synagogue and entered the house of Simon and Andrew, with James and John. 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.

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.

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. 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." 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.

There is a TV documentary or show titled "Death by Fame". The show is about how people go to Hollywood in search of fame and fortune and some have ended up dead. Hollywood is not the only place where people become famous. You have in this country and even around the world, sadly, celebrity preachers, or pastors who drive around in expensive cars, personal jets and live in some fancy houses. Such people are an insult to the cause of Christ and the Gospel.

Here we see the Lord Jesus Christ becoming very popular after he taught in a synagogue. Jesus taught with authority. Jesus healed a demon possessed man. And people are impressed. People are amazed and the word about Jesus spreads. Jesus' fame doesn't remain in the synagogue but spreads throughout the surrounding regions. However, notice, Jesus doesn't crave the attention. It's one thing to become popular and famous. It's another thing to crave the fame, the name and the adulation of people. The Lord Jesus Christ didn't come to become famous. He knew that people would come and try to make

him a local celebrity. But what do we see in verse 29, we see that, *immediately*, he left the synagogue. Jesus leaves to the home of Peter.

Our Lord Jesus Christ didn't come even to heal. And, yes, Jesus did a lot of healing. Jesus healed everyone who came to him.

Why did Jesus come?

Jesus tells us in verse 38 “...*Let us go on to the next towns, that I may preach there also, for that is why I came out.*”.

When we look around and see people hurting, people oppressed, people in sickness, people in homelessness and living in desperation, it can be natural to provide help. And that response out of human compassion and kindness is the right thing to do. Christ commends those who show compassion to the needy. There are so many groups and organizations that do this sort of thing, providing in times of crisis, in times of disaster etc.

However, should the Gospel become second priority when human needs become too many? How does Jesus Christ save sinners today? Jesus saves through the proclamation of the Gospel. Why do we call Gospel the good news? Here is why: Apart from the Gospel of Jesus Christ there is no good news. If we removed the “good” from good news, all news is not only not good but also very grave.

This morning, I would like for us to consider this question, do you seek the benefits of Christ or do you seek Christ himself? Seeking the benefits of Christ is easy but seeking Christ is harder.

We should seek Christ for Christ' sake not Christ for his benefits. Seek Christ and you get the benefits too.

Seeking Christ gives glory to God.

Four implications as we walk through this passage:

First implication: Jesus served. So must we.

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Andrew, with James and John. 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.

Last week, you saw that Jesus has authority over demonic forces and darkness. Jesus commands the demons to leave. Now we see Jesus' authority over the human body, over sickness. Notice how Jesus deals with Peter's mother-in-law woman. Jesus takes her by the hand and lifts her up. Jesus deals with the unclean spirits by a command but he deals with this woman with a personal touch, with gentleness. Never underestimate the power of a personal touch. As Jesus lifted up others, you too are called to lift up others.

And what happens as a result of this healing at Peter's home? Peter's mother-in-law does not sit and relax. She immediately begins serving others. When you receive a blessing from the Lord, Jesus wants you to bless others. What a wonderful testimony about this woman. She knows that by serving others she is serving the King of Kings.

Paul writes to the church in Rome that believers are to "*contribute to the needs of the saints*". Romans 12:13.

Paul also writes to the church in Corinth how the house of Stephanas became a blessing to others after they were saved. 1 Corinthians 16:15.

Have you been blessed? Then bless others!

We see that Jesus has authority over sickness and heals Peter's mother-in-law. And as she serves others, the news of her healing quickly travels around and what happens? By sundown. Meaning by Sabbath evening. No work was allowed on Sabbath. So the people wait until the Sabbath is over and then arrive at Peter's home.

Verses 32 and 33.

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.

We see that the needs of the people are too many. Sick people. Oppressed people. People with all kinds of needs show up at Peter's home. How many? The whole city is gathered at Peter's home.

What does Jesus do with them?

Verse 34.

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 heals many. Doesn't mean Jesus left some out. Jesus heals all of them. Nothing is impossible for Christ. The word for healed is "*therapon*" in Greek. This is where we get the word "therapy" or "therapeutic" in English.

In verse 34, we also see that the demons knew the identity of Jesus. Once again, we see the authority of Jesus. The demons speak only if Jesus permits them. Otherwise they will have to keep quiet. He also wants them to keep silent because Jesus wants to reveal who He is on His terms in His own timing.

Also, Jesus doesn't evil forces to witness about him. There is a difference between a godly witness and an ungodly witness. This leads me to my second implication.

Second implication: Strive to be a godly witness.

The day ends with a lot of ministry work done by Jesus. Casting demons. Healing people. Does Jesus relax take a break? What does Jesus do next day morning?

Verse 35.

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.

Third implication: Do not neglect prayer.

There is something so distinctive about our Lord Jesus Christ. Jesus doesn't care about the fame or status that he was gaining. The Lord Jesus is not like sinful men who care for attention after a healing meeting. What does Jesus do instead? He goes to bed early. Wakes up in the morning early while it is still dark. And then he goes into the wilderness. For what? To pray!

After doing so much ministry the previous day and night, our Lord attends to very important business. Communion with his Father.

Prayer is not asking for all kinds of things. It could be. Prayer is communion and fellowship with God.

Do you get away and be with God? Set time away for God.

Paul commends Epaphras for his prayers in the church of Colossae.

“Epaphras, who is one of you, a servant of Christ Jesus, greets you, always struggling on your behalf in his prayers” Colossians 4:12

So, here as Jesus attends to prayer, Peter and the rest haven’t yet realized the importance of prayer. They see human needs as the priority. They form a search party for Jesus. Verses 36 through 39.

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.” 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.

Fourth implication: Proclaim the Gospel.

You see what Jesus tells Peter? Let’s go to other towns. Jesus wants to give Peter on the job training. And he tells them why he came. To preach. To proclaim. To witness.

When Jesus stood before Pilate for trial, Jesus told him – *“For this purpose I was born and for this purpose I have come into the world—to bear witness to the truth”* John 18:37

Years ago, I remember a man confided in me that he struggled with alcohol. He was so distressed. He was in despair. And I told him that if God cares for the sparrow, God cares for him too. I don’t know exactly what effect this Gospel truth had on him. But I saw this man after a year. And I asked how he was doing. His life had turned around. He said he had forgotten all about his past. How wonderful!

You may not be able to do the same acts of healing as our Lord Jesus Christ performed. You may not be able to cast out demons. You may not be able to have the same healing power as our Lord did, but as a disciple of Christ, you have the Holy Spirit in you

You can encourage someone. You can pray. You can intercede. You can call on God. You can petition God for someone else. You can share your testimony. You can tell

someone what God has done in your life. You can be witness for Christ.

There are people out there living in utter hopelessness. Who is going to bring them hope? God may be presenting opportunities right where you are. In your work place. In your family. In your circle of friendship. Will you give priority to Gospel witnessing?

I began this message with sharing about people aspiring to find fame and greatness in Hollywood.

There was a time the disciples asked Jesus about greatness. Jesus' answer is this:

At that time the disciples came to Jesus, saying, "Who is the greatest in the kingdom of heaven?" ² And calling to him a child, he put him in the midst of them ³ and said, *"Truly, I say to you, unless you turn and become like children, you will never enter the kingdom of heaven. ⁴ Whoever humbles himself like this child is the greatest in the kingdom of heaven."* Matthew 18:1-4

Charles Spurgeon commenting on verse Matthew 18:4 said, *"Children do not try to be humble, but they are so; and the same is the case with really gracious persons. The imitation of humility is sickening; the reality is attractive"*

Let us follow Christ – the most humble of all!

----- Discipleship Questions-----

MESSAGE SUMMARY: The Priority of Proclamation. Mark 1:29-39

HEAD: These questions help you examine the truth of God's Word.

1. When many were looking for Jesus, what does Jesus tell Peter and why? What implications can you draw from Jesus' priority for the Gospel?

HEART: These questions help you wrestle with what you believe.

2. Do you believe prayer played a pivotal role in Jesus' ministry? What value do you place prayer in your life as a believer and in witnessing to others?
3. What is God convicting you of and to believe in light of this message?

HANDS/HABITS: These questions help you bring the truth into your everyday life and develop behaviors that change your habits.

4. For personal reflection: How will you pray for others?