

“A Day in the Life of Jesus”

Mark 1.29-34

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. [ESV]

HOPE

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I. Introduction

"You are There" was televised on CBS (Sunday afternoon at 5?) from 1953 to 1957. "Reporters" in 20th-century dress visited scenes of historical events and interviewed participants – Ben Franklin's kite experiment; Benedict Arnold's treasonous efforts to turn West Point over to the British; Lincoln on issuing the Emancipation Proclamation; the capture of John Wilkes Booth; the gunfight at the OK corral; Teddy Roosevelt after the assassination attempt on his life. I remember "The Hoax of the Cardiff Giant," an episode which aired in November, 1955. It was a recreation of the "discovery" of the oldest human bones – "planted" by their discoverer near Cardiff, NY. It seemed strange to me that people would go to such lengths to perpetrate a lie. Only one story line in the 4+ years of airing the program was taken from the Bible; they missed some really good material.

The program always ended with these words, usually intoned by the host, Walter Cronkite: "What sort of day was it? A day like all days, filled with those events that alter and illuminate our times... and you were there." There is a sense in which, if you have trusted Christ for salvation, *you were there with Him on the day we've just read about.*

And please remember – as we take a detour to discuss our union with Christ, which is what we'll do next – please remember what Mark was doing in this gospel: Mark's intent was to portray the person and mission of Jesus Christ for Roman Christians undergoing persecution under Nero. What would those Roman Christians have learned about Him from this part of Mark's story?

Those Christians were united with Christ – just as we are – but Mark doesn't tell us much about that union. Paul probably tells us more. Joel Beeke, in his introduction to Walter Marshall **The Gospel Mystery of Sanctification**, reminds us that union with Christ is the foundation of our entire spiritual life. Paul teaches us that Christ was not acting as a private person but as representative of His people. According to Beeke, Paul even coins new words to express union. He takes Greek verbs and adds prefixes to them to mean "together with." We do that in English.

Conjoin – *really* join

Confuse – fuse to the point of being unable to segregate

The exercise must have been much the same for Paul in Greek as it is for us in English. Examples: Gal. 2.20 – "I have been crucified with Christ." Romans 6.4 – "We were buried therefore with him." Eph. 2.5-6 – "even when we were dead in our trespasses, *made us alive together with* Christ—by grace you have been saved— and raised us up with him and *seated us with him* in the heavenly places in Christ Jesus." Rom. 8.17 – "we may also be glorified with him." [emphases added]

I have invited you in previous sermons in this series to "put yourself in the story." I repeat that invitation today with particular emphasis on your union with Christ: You are already in the story anyway.

So what sort of day was it? It was filled with those events that alter and illuminate our times – all times since Christ, for that matter. But was it a day like all days? Let's see.

II. MORNING: In the synagogue (vv. 21-28)

- A. Teaches like no one else taught
- B. Exorcism – authority even over demons
- C. Jesus as the ultimate answer to the "Sez Who?" question and as the forgiver of sins. He has the ability right here on earth to increase your life. His authority augments it. (The July 18 sermon text is posted on line if you want to see how Jesus' amazing authority *increases your life*.)

III. NOON (vv. 29-31): Healing Peter's mother [Nothing in the text tells us exactly when this was; we end our worship just before noon; I assume Jews did.]

- A. Not "working" (helped her up from her bed), though He had previously on Sabbath; this is not a defiance of the ruling class; just a compassionate act.
- B. Luke suggests this was an exorcism. (Lk. 4.39 – "And he stood over her and rebuked the fever." Jesus never *rebukes* anything as intangible as an illness; usually either demons or forces of nature like wind and waves. Luke thus infers that the fever was caused by a demon.)
- C. She becomes a servant and, in that way, a prototype for each believer.

Bishop Ryle writes about her being healed. (Do you hear his pastoral concern in this exposition?): "We learn from these verses what a complete and perfect cure the Lord Jesus makes when He heals. He takes the sick woman by the hand and lifts her up and 'immediately the fever left her.' But this was not all. A greater miracle remained [to be displayed]. At once we are told "she ministered unto them." That weakness and prostration of strength which, as a general rule, a fever leaves behind it in her case was entirely removed. The fevered woman was not only made well in a moment but in the same moment made strong and able to work.

"We may see in this case a lively emblem of Christ's dealing with sin-sick souls. That blessed Saviour not only gives mercy and forgiveness; -- He gives renewing grace besides. To as many as receive Him as their Physician, He gives power to become the sons of God. He cleanses them by His Spirit when He washes them in His precious blood. Those whom He justifies, He also sanctifies. When He bestows an absolution, He also bestows a new heart. When He grants free forgiveness for the past, He also grants strength to 'minister' to Him for the time to come. The sin-sick soul is not merely cured and then left to itself. It is also supplied with a new heart and a right spirit and enabled so to live as to please God."¹

¹ J. C. Ryle, **Expository Thoughts on Mark**, The Banner of Truth Trust (first published 1957), page 15 (minor grammatical editing by the preacher)

Doctrine 1: Jesus heals His own for service to Him. Am I trying to “prove” too much from this part of the passage – particularly verse 31? Remember that nothing is in this Book “by accident.” [Here I am not so much preaching Christ as teaching how to read His book . . . how to learn about Him . . . some of the “mechanics” of being a disciple.] Time for another brief detour, this time into . . .

1. Westminster Confession of Faith, chapter I, paragraph 6: “The whole counsel of God concerning all things necessary for his own glory, man’s salvation, faith and life, is either expressly set down in Scripture or by good and necessary consequence may be deduced from Scripture . . .”

2. The divines gave us no proof text for “good and necessary consequence,” so do we give that argument less weight than we give those arguments which *are* “proof-texted”? Not at all. We see that Paul “did” “Good and Necessary Consequence” *all the time* – e. g., Rom. 9.6- 13. His statement in v. 8 “This means that” = G and NC.

So, I repeat that the doctrine from vv. 29-31 is that Jesus heals His own for service to Him.

IV. NIGHT (vv. 32-34): The Jews gather after the Sabbath ends at sunset and, with its end, the prohibition on work/travel also ends.

A. “Whole city was gathered together at the door” (probably 1,500 people). The “whole city” reference is hyperbole. The event took place at Peter’s house; Mark is his scribe; we know that Peter thinks and acts hyperbolically . . . but still there were many in attendance.

B. “Healed many” (not that some were excluded but that those healed made up a great number)

R. C. Sproul: The life of Jesus was a blaze of miracles.² Example from Matthew’s gospel – “And he went throughout all Galilee, teaching in their synagogues and proclaiming the gospel of the kingdom and healing every disease and every affliction among the people. So his fame spread throughout all Syria, and they brought him all the sick, those afflicted with various diseases and pains, those oppressed by demons, epileptics, and paralytics, and he healed them.” Matt. 4.23-24

Sproul also says He performed so many miracles that we become jaded in the hearing of them. They weren’t routine to the people of the day. How do they appear to you – sitting (as you might imagine yourself in the scene) on an overturned wheelbarrow off to the side as first a lame man and then a blind woman and then a child with a cancerous lump on his abdomen is brought forward and, one by one, they are instantly healed and go – leaping, shouting, rejoicing – on their way? Are you allowing your soul to be caught up in the glory of it all?

² **Holiness of God**, page 52

And now – at night – Jesus is going to repeat something He did in the morning.

C. Silencing the demons.

This is at least the second time today Jesus has silenced the demons. Why? If you or I were the Messiah, would we hold back from letting that be known – indeed, from proclaiming it from the rooftops? Edwards offers three reasons for this silence,³ and, in the third, we find the final doctrine of this passage: Jesus cannot be known by miracles alone.

1. The command to silence “protected” Jesus, as it were, from false messianic expectations. “Messiah” carried with it images of a military hero – like King David – who would drive the Romans out of Palestine. Jesus will compare himself to David just a very few days from now,^{2,25} and Bartimaeus^{10,47} and others will identify Him with David. But there remains the fundamental difference that David came with the warrior’s sword and Christ with the servant’s towel. For now, the less said, the better.

Jesus had no campaign strategists or marketing gurus to help Him reach this conclusion. The Father had said of Him, “Behold, my servant shall act wisely.”^{Is. 52.13a} He did not have to sit down and figure it all out, mentally “testing” various approaches. We say of God that He is a Spirit, infinite, eternal and unchangeable in His being, wisdom *etc.* That sort of wisdom is “in the DNA” of the godhead, so to speak, and does not require a weighing of options.

2. Second, Jesus concealed His power because He knew that faith could not be “forced” by a spectacle. Saving knowledge comes through experiencing Jesus Himself – as a person – and not through reports of astounding deeds. The miracles authenticated Jesus as the Son of God; they regenerated no one.

3. “Finally, Mark employs the secrecy theme in order to teach that until the cross Jesus cannot be rightly known for who he is. The leper may be cleansed,^{1:44} but Jesus enjoins him to silence lest he proclaim Jesus merely as a wonder worker; the demons may call Jesus the ‘Son of God,’^{3:11-12} but Jesus silences them because those who oppose him cannot be his heralds; even the chief apostle is commanded to silence after confessing Jesus to be the Christ^{8:30} – not because he was wrong but because he didn’t fully grasp the meaning of his confession. **Nor could he.**”⁴

Here we must be cautious about inferring doctrine from the passage. Mark has not taken us to Calvary yet. That’s chapter 15. For now, we are still in Capernaum, and Jesus has not yet begun even to foreshadow – conversationally – His death and resurrection. Thus, we are limited by our text to a denial in stating doctrine 2: Jesus cannot be known by miracles alone. Or in another form: **When we see Jesus performing miracles, we do not see Him at His best.**

³ James R. Edwards, *The Gospel According to Mark*, p. 44 (hereafter “Edw.”) Edwards is also to be credited with the title for this sermon.

⁴ Edw., p. 19 (emphasis added)

V. Jesus at His best.

But we will get there; we will get to the cross – where we do see Him at His best – and what a glorious sight awaits us! “Only at the cross can Jesus be rightly known, not simply as a great moral teacher or as the most noble person who ever lived; nor only as a miracle worker or as an answer to this or that pressing question of the world. At the cross Jesus is revealed as the suffering Son of God, whose rejection, suffering, and death reveal the triumph of God. Only at Golgotha can Jesus be rightly known as God incognito who reveals himself to those who”⁵ – by God’s Spirit – have been reborn and been given the desire **and the ability** to deny themselves and follow him in costly – but delightful – discipleship.

Was it, then, a day like all days? Let’s think back on the day. It was a day of worship . . . of rest in the Lord . . . of teaching with amazing authority . . . of commanding unclean spirits . . . of Christ’s fame spreading everywhere . . . of healing a woman sick with a fever . . . of receiving service from a disciple . . . of receiving a “whole city” of 1,500 people . . . of healing many who were sick with various diseases . . . of casting out many demons . . . and of silencing those who knew him.

Hardly “a day like all days.” Hardly a savior like any other savior. Is He **your** savior?

⁵ Edw., *loc. cit.*