

The Gospel According To Mark

Part Five

Mark 1:29-34 [New King James] *“Now as soon as they had come out of the synagogue, they entered the house of Simon and Andrew, with James and John. But Simon’s wife’s mother lay sick with a fever, and they told Him about her at once. So He came and took her by the hand and lifted her up, and immediately the fever left her. And she served them. At evening, when the sun had set, they brought to Him all who were sick and those who were demon-possessed. And the whole city was gathered together at the door. Then He healed many who were sick with various diseases, and cast out many demons; and He did not allow the demons to speak, because they knew Him.”*

According to Jewish custom the main Sabbath meal was immediately after the Sabbath service, about midday.

This tells us that Jesus did **not** require an audience to exert His power.

He was just as ready to heal in a family setting, and was never too tired to help. The need of others took precedence over His own desire to rest.

This also tells us something about Jesus’ disciples, they had not known Jesus Christ long, but even in that short acquaintanceship they had begun to take their troubles to Him.

This also tells us something about Peter’s wife’s mother. No sooner was she healed than she began to attend to their needs.

We are saved by Jesus Christ to serve others.

The things that Jesus Christ had done in Capernaum could not be concealed.

So the evening found Peter’s house besieged with crowds seeking Jesus Christ’s healing touch.

They had waited until evening came because the law forbade the carrying of any burden through a town on the Sabbath day [**Jeremiah 17:24**].

This was the third time that Jesus Christ had healed within 24 hours to three different situations. He recognised the need and claims of all people at any time.

Mark 1:35-39 [New King James] *“Now in the morning, having risen a long while before daylight, He went out and departed to a solitary place; and there He prayed. And Simon and those who were with Him searched for Him. When they found Him, they said to Him, ‘Everyone is looking for You.’ But He said to them, ‘Let us go into the next towns, that I may preach there also, because for this purpose I have come forth.’ And He was preaching in their synagogues throughout all Galilee, and casting out demons.”*

Jesus Christ knew that He could not go on giving out, He must be also taking in, summon spiritual reinforcements to His aid. He knew He could not live without prayerful contact with God the Father while He remained in physical form as the Son of Man.

If Jesus Christ needed this contact, how much more do we?

Yet even at this early hour, before dawn, people were seeking Jesus Christ, there was no way that He could shut the door of His heart to the needs of other people.

Jesus Christ did **not** ask people 40 questions before He healed them, evaluating their worthiness to be blessed in that way, He just went ahead and healed them.

Jesus Christ has **not** changed, that is why we can today bring all our problems to Him, trusting Him to do what is best for us.

Without prayer, we fall into fear, anxious worry and even despair.

Prayer is the kind of priority that lies at the root of life itself. Prayer is like eating food, unless we eat our physical health will suffer, we become weak and sick.

If we rarely pray our spiritual life will lack vitality and growth.

Prayer is a therapy not a duty.

Prayer is not a substitute for action, this is why Jesus Christ got up before dawn.

James 2:14-17 [New King James] *“What does it profit, my brethren, if someone says he has faith but does not have works? Can faith save him? If a brother or sister is naked and destitute of daily food, and one of you says to them, ‘Depart in peace, be warmed and filled,’ but you do not give them the things which are needed for the body, what does it profit? Thus also faith by itself, if it does not have works, is dead.”*

Faith that God will provide for those in need in answer to our prayers is **not** enough, for we may be the vehicle that God wants to use to provide for their needs, [**Matthew 25:31-40**].

Mark 1:40-45 [New King James] *“Now a leper came to Him, imploring Him, kneeling down to Him and saying to Him, ‘If You are willing, You can make me clean.’ Then Jesus, moved with compassion, stretched out His hand and touched him, and said to him, ‘I am willing; be cleansed.’ As soon as He had spoken, immediately the leprosy left him, and he was cleansed. And He strictly warned him and sent him away at once, and said to him, ‘See that you say nothing to anyone; but go your way, show yourself to the priest, and offer for your cleansing those things which Moses commanded, as a testimony to them.’ However, he went out and began to proclaim it freely, and to spread the matter, so that Jesus could no longer openly enter the city, but was outside in deserted places; and they came to Him from every direction.”*

In keeping with the law in Leviticus chapters 13 and 14, Jewish leaders declared people with leprosy as unclean.

This meant that lepers were unfit to participate in any religious or social event.

Because the law said that contact with any unclean person made the other person unclean too, some people even threw rocks at lepers to keep them at a safe distance.

But Jesus Christ touched this man who had leprosy.

The real value of a person is inside, their mind and human spirit, not their physical body even if it is deformed or diseased.

The person inside is to God no less valuable. No person is too disgusting for God to touch.

Sending the healed leper to the priest was a way of verifying Jesus Christ’s miracle to the community.

Why did Jesus Christ tell the healed leper **not** to tell other people about his healing, only the priest?

John 6:44 [New King James] *“No one can come to Me unless the Father who sent Me draws him; and I will raise him up at the last day.”*

Only God the Father knows when is the best time for us to be called to accept Jesus Christ as our Saviour.

John 16:8 [New King James] *“And when He has come, He will convict the world of sin, and of righteousness, and of judgment:”*

It is the work of the Holy Spirit [see context] to convict people of sin, show them what is true righteousness and prepare them for their day of judgement before Jesus Christ, [**2 Corinthians 5:10-12**].

The vast majority of human beings will only be called for their chance of salvation **after** the Second Coming of Jesus Christ, or a 1000 years later through a resurrection back to physical life, [**Revelation 20:4-6 and Revelation 4:11-13**].

Both times are when the influence of Satan has been eradicated, so he can no longer deceive and blind people to the real reason why humans have been given life, [**2 Corinthian 4:4; 1 John 5:19; Revelation 12:9**].

1 Peter 3:15 [New King James] *“But sanctify the Lord God in your hearts, and always be ready to give a defence to everyone who asks you a reason for the hope that is in you, with meekness and fear;”*

We are only to tell people of our hope when they personally ask us.

Matthew 5:14-16 [New King James] *“You are the light of the world. A city that is set on a hill cannot be hidden. Nor do they light a lamp and put it under a basket, but on a lampstand, and it gives light to all who are in the house. Let your light so shine before men, that they may see your good works and glorify your Father in heaven.”*

A light is silent but revealing. God may use our example to open a person’s eyes to the truth.

People listen to friends.

People listen to those who have proved that they care.

Ecclesiastes 3:1 [New King James] *“To everything there is a season, a time for every purpose under heaven:”*

Everything has a time and purpose in God’s plan for humanity.

A time to plant and a time to harvest [**verse 2b**], a time to be silent and a time to speak [**verse 7b**].

Even Jesus Christ’s disciples were constantly ignorant about His full identity and His mission, [**Mark 6:52; Mark 8:17**] until after His resurrection.

What is most important is –

1 Peter 4:8 [New King James] *“And above all things have fervent love for one another, for ‘love will cover a multitude of sins.’”*

We must continue to show love to all the people we meet with on a day-to-day basis.

Galatians 6:10 [New King James] *“Therefore, as we have opportunity, let us do good to all, especially to those who are of the household of faith.”*

Be always ready to help people in need, both non-Christians as well as Christians.

Mark 2:1-5 [New King James] *“And again He entered Capernaum after some days, and it was heard that He was in the house. Immediately many gathered together, so that there was no longer room to*

receive them, not even near the door. And He preached the word to them. Then they came to Him, bringing a paralytic who was carried by four men. And when they could not come near Him because of the crowd, they uncovered the roof where He was. So when they had broken through, they let down the bed on which the paralytic was lying. When Jesus saw their faith, He said to the paralytic, 'Son, your sins are forgiven you.'"

After His preaching in Galilee, Jesus Christ returned to Capernaum and very soon crowds assembled in and around the house in which He was staying.

The friends of one paralytic man believed that Jesus Christ could heal their friend, but the crowd stopped them from getting near to Jesus Christ.

The construction of typical Palestinian house in Jesus Christ's day had a flat roof and an outside stair which ascended to this flat roof that was often used as a place of rest and quiet.

The construction of the roof lent itself to what this ingenious four proposed to do.

The roof consisted of beams laid across from wall to wall, up to three feet apart. The space between the beams was filled with brushwood packed tight with clay, then covered with earth, often grassed.

It would have been the easiest thing to dig out the filling between two beams without damaging the house greatly.

When Jesus Christ saw the faith of these men that laughed at barriers He must have smiled.

Jesus Christ then told the paralytic *"your sins are forgiven."*

Mark 2:6-12 [New King James] *"And some of the scribes were sitting there and reasoning in their hearts, 'Why does this Man speak blasphemies like this? Who can forgive sins but God alone?' But immediately, when Jesus perceived in His spirit that they reasoned thus within themselves, He said to them, 'Why do you reason about these things in your hearts? Which is easier, to say to the paralytic, 'Your sins are forgiven you,' or to say, 'Arise, take up your bed and walk'? But that you may know that the Son of Man has power on earth to forgive sins,' He said to the paralytic, 'I say to you, arise, take up your bed, and go to your house.' Immediately he arose, took up the bed, and went out in the presence of them all, so that all were amazed and glorified God, saying, 'We never saw anything like this!'"*

Jesus Christ perceived the thoughts of the scribes and responded with what was a rhetorical question.

Both statements would be impossible for anyone but God!

If Jesus Christ had the authority to heal this man just by uttering the word, then He also had authority to forgive sins, for the power to do either was in God's domain, **not** human.

Any charlatan could say "your sins are forgiven" for there is no physical way to demonstrate whether their words are effective or not.

But to also say "get up and walk" to a paralytic man proves that Jesus Christ's words were true, He did have authority to say both.

In this incident Jesus Christ knew He had signed His own death warrant, as far as the religious authorities were concerned, this was blasphemy.

What does it mean that Jesus Christ can forgive sins

It could mean that Jesus Christ was conveyed God's forgiveness to humans –

After Nathan had rebuked King David for his sins and David had confessed them, God's prophet said *"the Lord has put away your sins, you will not die,"* [2 Samuel 12:1-13].

Nathan was not forgiving David's sins, no human can, whatever "authority" they may have taken on.

Nathan was conveying God's forgiveness of David's sins, and assuring him of the fact.

We could say that Jesus was assuring the paralytic of God's forgiveness, something that God had already given him.

This is certainly true, but it is **not** the whole truth.

We could say that Jesus was acting as God's representations –

John 5:22 [New King James] *"For the Father judges no one, but has committed all judgment to the Son,"*

If judgement is committed to Jesus Christ, then so must forgiveness also be.

Jesus Christ was entrusted with the full power and authority of the Triune God, the word that Jesus Christ spoke was none other than the Word of God, [John 1:1-2, 14].

We could also see another facet of God's relationship with humans –

The whole essence of Jesus Christ's life clearly expressed God's attitude towards human beings.

This attitude is the reverse of what people thought about the Creator God.

It is **not** an attitude of stern, severe, austere justice.

It is **not** an attitude of continual demand.

It is an attitude of perfect love, and a heart yearning and eager to extend to all humans forgiveness, [2 Peter 3:9].