

Preaching Through the Bible - Chapter 3 Mark 1:21-45

A typical day

Mark now presents a description of a typical day in the ministry of Jesus^{☞1} and a story which explains the next phase of what happened in His work^{☞2}. We begin by looking at a typical day.

☞1 1:21-39

☞2 1:40-45

1. Jesus – a person of great authority

1. Jesus was a person of great authority. He was humble and made no ostentatious claims for Himself. He clearly was not a person who had any special standing in the eyes of the world. So far, He has been described simply as *Jesus*. He is known by nothing other than an ordinary Jewish name. Jesus does not take to Himself any ambitious title. He wants people to see who He is by spiritual discernment, not by His making the kind of claims that all sorts of cranks make. So He does not speak of Himself as *Jesus the rabbi*. He has no political power; He is not *Jesus the governor*. He is simply *Jesus*.

Simply 'Jesus'

And yet He has great authority. People marvel at the authority of His teaching^{☞1}. Then they marvel at the authority He has over the realm of evil spirits^{☞2}. Without any attempts on His side to become famous, He becomes well known. He was not pushing for fame, but He got it without trying. The news spread around about Him^{☞3}. When a man or woman has spiritual power the news gets out. No special advertising is needed. It happened to Jesus; it will happen to us.

☞1 1:21-22

☞2 1:23-27

☞3 1:28

Authority over evil spirits

Authority over sickness

Jesus comes into Simon Peter's house^{☞1}. He has authority over sickness and so is told about Peter's mother-in-law. He heals her^{☞2}. All over the world people are extremely concerned about sickness. People often want Jesus as a healer far more than they want Him as a Saviour from sin.

☞1 1:29

☞2 1:30-31

Jesus demonstrated His faith by His healings. There was no manipulation, no deceit, no over-claiming. It is obvious that when Jesus prayed for the sick, things happened. In *Mark 1:32-34* we see the greatness of His authority. Dozens of people want to see Him. And *Mark 1:21-39* records the events of just twenty-four hours.

2. Drawing on the source of great authority

2. Jesus was a person who drew constantly on the source of great authority. Where did Jesus get His authority from? One might think He had authority because He was the Son of God. That is true, but there was more to it than that. The man-Jesus had received the baptism with the Spirit. Then one might think that the Son of God (baptised with the Holy Spirit) might have all the authority He needed, but having received the Spirit did He need something else? Yes, He needed to pray. And so, in the midst of an extremely busy time, He deliberately absented Himself and prayed^{☞1}.

☞1 1:35

Prayer

3. Preparation for ministry - full of wisdom

3. Jesus was a person whose preparation for ministry was full of wisdom. An extra story is inserted between the one day's activity of *Mark 1:21-39* and the account of rising hostility in *2:1-3:6*. The point is that it was this event that caused Jesus to become famous at this stage of His ministry. A leper came to Him asking for cleansing^{☞1}. Moved with compassion, Jesus healed him^{☞2}.

☞1 1:40

☞2 1:41-42

Compassion

Jesus' compassion balances His authority. People of authority do not usually have much compassion. People of compassion do not normally have much authority. Jesus has both.

Jesus sternly warns the man not to tell anyone what has happened to him. At this time Jesus just wants to get on with His work of preaching.

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Stern warning

He is not in a hurry to become famous. If He becomes well-known it will only hinder His work because, as Jesus knows, the Jewish authorities will be angry about His activities. Jesus has come to Galilee to get away from Jerusalem. He has a lot to do and does not want to be hindered by the Jewish authorities any more than necessary. So this healed leper is told to keep quiet.

News spreads

But despite the great mercy the leper has received from Jesus, he does not have the gratitude to do as Jesus tells him. He spreads the news everywhere and soon, for a while, Jesus is not able to go into the towns of Galilee.

Opposition grows through leper's disobedience

The little story illustrates how Jesus wants our gratitude but does not always get it. Jesus knew what He was doing when He told the man to keep quiet. The disobedience of the healed leper actually did Jesus damage and made Him face opposition from the authorities sooner than He needed to.

Miracles illustrate Jesus' complete authority

Jesus has supreme authority. His miracles are proof of His faith and proof of His power to do anything. They cannot be 'switched on' by the power of any man or woman. The leper was not *taking by faith* a miracle, he was casting himself on Jesus' mercy. The miracle illustrates what Jesus is able to do and His authority over every aspect of life. It is a foretaste of the new Heaven and new earth in which every disease will be totally healed, never to return again.

Cleansing from every sort of defilement

Meanwhile, Mark's Gospel invites us to see Jesus as a person who combines authority and compassion. We are invited to come to Him to be cleansed of every sort of defilement, whether by natural means or by the sheer power of His word. Everything which resembles the *leprosy* of New Testament times (it was not only modern leprosy, but included a collection of infectious skin diseases) is within His power to heal. Leprosy brought suffering, isolation and criticism, and was considered a sign of the judgement of God. Nations which obeyed God were promised freedom from such pestilences, but Israel was apparently full of sickness and disease in the days of Jesus.

The Son of God brings forgiveness, cleansing and deliverance

Authoritative teaching, authority over demons, the ability by His faith to banish disease – they were all signs that this humble person was, in fact, the Son of God come to bring forgiveness, cleansing and deliverance of every kind.

Study 3

Jesus the Messiah

Read Mark Chapter 1 verses 21 to 45

Read: **Preaching Through the Bible: Mark**, Chapter 3 (or Mark Slice 3)

A. Jesus was a person of great authority

1. Jesus was not *ostentatious*. What does that mean? (See the **Glossary** if you're unsure.) What other words have the same meaning?
2. **True** or **false**?
 - a. Jesus was humble.
 - b. Jesus had special standing in the eyes of those around Him.
 - c. The name *Jesus* was an ordinary Jewish name at the time.
 - d. Jesus gave Himself special titles.
 - e. Jesus asked people to call Him *rabbi* (means teacher).
 - f. Jesus was planning to become the governor.
 - g. Jesus wanted people to see who He was for themselves.
3. Complete the sentences:
 - a. Jesus became famous without t.....
 - b. Jesus became famous without a.....
 - c. The news of Jesus s..... around about Him.
4. Jesus healed an identified person. Who was this?
5. Which is generally true a. or b.?

 - a. People want a Saviour more than a healer, or
 - b. People want a healer more than a Saviour?

6. Jesus' healings were a demonstration of
His great f..... and great a.....

B. Drawing on the source of great authority

1. What two particular sources of Jesus' authority are mentioned here?

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2. What habit did Jesus cultivate even though He was extremely busy?

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C. Jesus was a person whose preparation for ministry was full of wisdom

1. What healing event caused Jesus to become famous at this stage of His ministry and what did this illustrate?

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2. Is it common for compassion and great authority to go together?

3. Why did Jesus warn the man not to spread the news about what had happened to him?

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4. What actually happened and what did that lead to?

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5. **True** or **false**?

a. Jesus has ultimate authority.

b. Jesus' miracles prove that He has the power to do anything.

c. Men and women can likewise *switch-on* the power of Jesus.

d. The leper *took his miracle by faith*.

e. The leper cast himself on the mercy of God.

f. Jesus' authority does not apply to other aspects of life.

g. Jesus' miracles pointed forward to what was coming.

6. Cross out the words that do NOT describe what the leper had been experiencing before he met Jesus:

suffering

acceptance

isolation

criticism

inclusion

judgement

freedom

an infectious skin disease

