

A Day in the Life of Jesus: Mark 1:29-39
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Last week we looked at the authority of Jesus in Mark 1:16-28. We saw His authority in calling disciples. We saw His authority in His teaching. And we saw His authority in casting out a demon. All of this is to show that Jesus is, indeed, the Son of God. Mark wrote in the very first verse that this is “the beginning of the gospel of Jesus Christ, the Son of God.” And what we’re seeing now in the opening of Jesus’ ministry is proof that this is, in fact, the case. He is the One. He was affirmed by the Spirit and the Father following His baptism. He resisted the temptation of Satan in the wilderness. And now He is calling disciples effectually, teaching with authority, and even demonstrating His authority in casting out a demon.

This morning we’re going to look at a day in the life of Jesus. Notice that verses 21-39 record the events of one 24-hour period. In verses 21-28, which we studied last time, Jesus and the disciples are in the synagogue on the Sabbath. That is where the people were astonished at His teaching and then amazed at His power over the unclean spirit. Then in verse 29 He immediately goes to the house of Simon and Andrew. Then, verse 32, it’s that evening that Jesus heals many. And then, verse 35, He rises very early the next morning to pray. This is a snapshot of Jesus’ life during the opening of His public ministry. This is a day in the life of Jesus.

We’ll study this in three pieces. First, Jesus heals in verses 29-34. Second, Jesus prays in verses 35-37. Third, Jesus preaches in verses 38-39.

Jesus Heals (verses 29-34)

First is the account of Jesus healing Simon’s mother-in-law. This is not only a demonstration of Jesus’ healing power, but it’s also a very personal story of Jesus’ love for His disciples. This must have been a very precious memory for Simon Peter—the memory of Jesus coming into his own house and miraculously healing his mother-in-law.

Jesus had called four disciples at this point—two sets of brothers. Simon and Andrew, and James and John. And when they left the synagogue that day they went to the house of Simon and Andrew. They were in Capernaum, as it says in verse 21. And this is where Simon and Andrew lived. In fact, if you go to Capernaum today you can see the ruins of the synagogue and close by you can also see the ruins of a house that is believed to be Peter’s house. It was a dwelling for the extended family—we’re

told here of at least the brothers Simon and Andrew, and Simon's mother-in-law. 1 Corinthians 9:5 refers to Peter having a wife whom he would take with him on missionary journeys. And here in Mark 1 we meet Peter's mother-in-law.

She had a fever. She must have been pretty sick because she was lying down. She wasn't able to do anything. And Simon and Andrew were concerned for her because they immediately told Jesus about her condition. And look at what Jesus did in verse 31, showing His authority and power over sickness and also showing His love for His disciples and their loved ones. Jesus came and took her by the hand. We're going to see this again when Jesus cleanses the leper. Jesus reaches out His hand to people. He changes people with the power of His touch. Here He takes this woman by the hand and lifts her up. She had been lying down, very ill with a fever, but Jesus lifts her up with his hand. And then the astounding conclusion of the event is that the fever left her, and she began to serve them. This was an instantaneous and complete healing. One moment she was lying on her back unable to do any work, and the next moment she is working hard in preparing them a meal. No time of recovery was needed.

This is the very personal story of Jesus healing one woman, Simon's mother-in-law. And then the story moves to that evening when Jesus healed many and cast out many demons. Verse 32 specifies that it was that evening at sundown. This was significant because sundown on Saturday evening marks the end of the Sabbath. The Sabbath begins at sundown on Friday and ends at sundown on Saturday. And the Jews could not work or travel during that span of time. But after sunset the people all come out carrying the sick and bringing those who were demon-possessed. They had heard about what happened at the synagogue earlier that day, and they could hardly wait to experience the power of this healer. So there they all are, the whole city gathered together at the door of Simon's house, wanting to be healed by Jesus. And Jesus healed them. Verse 34 says He healed "many." That doesn't mean He only healed some of those who were brought to Him. It means He healed all who were brought to Him, and the "all" were many. The "all" of verse 32, where it says "they brought to him all who were sick or oppressed by demons," is the same as the "many" of verse 34, where it says "he healed many."

He healed people who were sick with various diseases, and he also cast out many demons. Again and again and again, Jesus is demonstrating His authority and His power. He has authority over the physical realm, and He has authority over the spiritual realm. He is in control. He has the power to heal diseases, and He has power to cast out demons.

At the end of verse 34 it says more about the demons, that Jesus “would not permit the demons to speak, because they knew him.” The demons knew who Jesus was. And at this point in Jesus’ ministry they were really the only ones who knew who He was. They understood that He was the Son of God, the Messiah. Jesus was not yet ready to fully disclose this, however. And He certainly didn’t want the news to come from the mouths of demons. So He silenced the demons. We’ll see this call to silence again in the story of the leper, and then other places throughout Mark as well.

The interesting thing about the demons is that they have the answer to the question that the people are asking. The people are wondering who this man is, and demons know who He is. The people ask in 1:27, “What is this? A new teaching with authority!” The scribes ask in 2:7, “Why does this man speak like that?” The disciples ask in 4:41, “Who then is this, that even the wind and the sea obey him?” The people ask in 6:2, “Where did this man get these things? What is the wisdom given to him? How are such mighty works done by his hands?” There is a mystery about Jesus’ identity that is evident in all of these questions. People are in awe of Him but are not sure what to make of Him. Who is He?

But the demons know. The demons, in a sense, answer these questions. The demon says in 1:24, “I know who you are—the Holy One of God.” They would cry out, as in 3:11, and say, “You are the Son of God.” And in 5:7 another demon calls Jesus “Son of the Most High God.” The spiritual significance of Jesus’ ministry is not a mystery to the demons. They understand what is going on, and they are terrified.

Jesus Prays (verses 35-37)

Mark doesn’t tell us how late into the evening this lasted—the healings and exorcisms. But we can imagine that this was a late night for our Lord. The people came to Him at sundown, and it was quite a crowd who came. It would have taken quite a bit of time for the crowd to finally disperse after all of this excitement, quite awhile before Jesus would have had a chance to get some sleep. The next thing we’re told, in verse 35, is that Jesus rose very early in the morning, while it was still dark. And what was the purpose of Him rising so early, even after such a late night of ministering to hurting people and confronting the forces of evil? Jesus *is* fully human, remember. Just because He’s God doesn’t mean He can go without sleep and not feel the effects of it. He would have felt weary and tired. And yet He rose very early. Why? So that He could go to a desolate place and pray.

This is a very powerful scene that Mark conveys to us here. It’s so brief, just this one verse, just this one little statement that

Jesus prayed. But it is such a powerful reality that our Lord Jesus Christ rose early in the morning to pray. We don't know what He prayed on this occasion. We don't know how long He prayed. But we see here that Jesus was communing with His Heavenly Father in prayer. Here is a glimpse into the infinitely joyous fellowship of the Trinity. The Three Persons of the Trinity delight in one another. The Father and the Son and the Holy Spirit experience a gladness in one another, and they have had this delight from eternity past and it will last forever and ever. We also see in this, more specifically, the Son's submission to the Father. Jesus humbles Himself before the will of God, fully conforming His will to the Father's will. Jesus is entirely obedient to the Father. This simple statement about Jesus praying points us to these mysteries of the Trinity and the relationships within the Trinity.

And then this statement is also a powerful example for us. Jesus is first and foremost the object of our faith. He is the One in whom we place our trust. We believe in Him as the One who can save us from our sin and grant us eternal life. But in addition to this we also see Jesus as a model of faith. He is an example of faith for us. His perfect life of dependence on the Spirit and submission to the Father is a model for us of how we ought to depend on the Spirit and submit to the Father. Here we have an example of prayer.

We can ask ourselves this question: If Jesus Christ, the God-Man, felt the need to rise early in the morning to pray, how much more so do we need this? Jesus got up early, even though He must have been exhausted and weary, because He longed for that intimate fellowship with the Father. It was not a burden for Him to do this. He wanted to! And notice that He was very deliberate in this. He rose, departed, went to a desolate place, and prayed. He had a plan. He knew what He wanted to do. He knew that He wanted to be alone with the Father. And so He got up before anyone else, and went to a place where nobody was, and there He prayed.

What is your prayer life like, brothers and sisters? Is there an eagerness in your heart to commune with God? Do you have a plan for how and when and where to do that on a daily basis? Where and when can you have time alone with God? I know that many of us here have young children, and if you're a mother at home with young children you probably feel like you're never alone. As long as the kids are awake there's constant activity. Maybe you need to rise in the morning before the kids rise, or make time some other way during the day. But don't despair. It is possible. And husbands, we need to be committed to do this and also help our wives find time to be alone for prayer. Pray that God will give you the desire and the determination to seek out a time

and a place where you can be alone with Him. And even when you're tired, even when it seems inconvenient, seek out those times of prayer. Susanna Wesley, the mother of John and Charles Wesley, was very committed to prayer. She had ten children, and she would always find a way to spend time with the Lord in prayer. And if she couldn't find a place to be alone, she would sit down and put her apron over her head, which signaled to the kids that they better be extra quiet because mom was praying. I hope that we'll be inspired by Jesus' example in this passage, that we'll be inspired by His desire and determination, in spite of tiredness, to pursue His Father in prayer.

The other thing to notice here is the relationship between Jesus' private prayer and Jesus' public ministry. The previous night He had been healing many people and casting out demons. The coming day would involve much of the same, preaching and casting out demons. But He rises early, not to heal more people, not to cast out more demons, not to preach another sermon, but to be alone with his Father in prayer. There are these are two related dynamics that we see in Jesus' life. There is a movement toward solitude and private prayer. And there is a movement toward public preaching and teaching and ministry to the crowds. There is a movement away from people and a movement toward people. And the balance of the two is instructive for us.

James Edwards, not to be confused with Jonathan Edwards, says in his commentary on Mark, "Jesus cannot extend himself outward in compassion without first attending to the source of his mission and purpose with the Father; and conversely, his oneness with the Father compels him outward in mission."¹ Do you see the relationship between the two? Jesus departs to a lonely place to be alone with the Father, and there He is strengthened by His fellowship with the Father. And then, strengthened by that fellowship, He is compelled outward toward the needs of the people. In other words, His life is not solely about meeting the needs of the people. Neither is it solely about being alone with the Father. It's both, and the two are interrelated. James Edwards goes on to say that Jesus is "neither contemplative ascetic nor social activist." He doesn't go away just to hide from society. Neither does He make His life entirely about ministering to the people. He does both, and each aspect motivates the other. Time alone with the Father compels Him to move toward the needs of the people, and the needs of the people compel Him to go away to commune with the Father.

Again, this is an example for us. These two interrelated aspects should be present in our lives as well. If you are a person

¹ James R. Edwards, *The Gospel According to Mark*, Pillar (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2002), pg. 66.

who is going to be involved in ministering to people, then you need to be a person of prayer. The needs around us—the spiritual needs and physical needs and emotional needs—should drive us to our knees before the Father, asking Him for wisdom and strength and perseverance. We should be very aware that we are not capable of doing the things God has called us to do. We can't ultimately help anybody. So we pray, and our prayers are an expression of our dependence on God. If we're involved in ministry and are not people of prayer, then we will end up doing ministry in our own strength. And that will result in one of two things. Either we will become so discouraged and depleted that we won't want to have anything to do with ministry, because we've been doing this in our own strength and realize that we don't have the strength for this. Or it will become all about us, because we'll think, Look at what I can do, and I don't even really need God's help. If we're going to be ministering to people, which we must do, then we must also be alone with God in prayer on a daily basis.

And then it works the other as well. As you become a person of prayer, you will also become a person of action. You will become a person who moves toward the needs of people. When we pray to the Father, and the Father's passions become our passions, we will be compelled out into a hurting world to preach the Good News and care for those who are needy. If our time alone with God is not producing a desire to proclaim this Good News and to help those in need, then our time alone with God is not what it should be. Maybe we're reading the Bible in a strictly academic way, trying to get all of our theological points nailed down so we can win the next debate. Or maybe our prayers are focused only on very selfish and materialistic wants. What we need to do is spend time in God's Word and in prayer seeking to be changed into the likeness of our Savior. We need to come to God wanting our own sinful desires to be exposed and expelled and then to see God's holy desires take root in our hearts. We need to come to Him seeking that kind of transformation. And as that happens God will compel us out toward people we can minister to. As we pray for specific unbelievers in our lives, we will be thinking of how we can witness to them. As we pray for struggling marriages we will be thinking of how to encourage those couples. As we pray for the devastation in Haiti right now, we will be thinking about how we can help. As we pray for the needs in our own communities and in this city, we will be strategizing and dreaming about how we can make a difference. A life of ministry will drive us prayer. And prayer will drive us toward needs.

In verse 36 we find out that the disciples and the crowds were not very pleased that Jesus had departed from them to be alone. Simon and the others woke up and realized that Jesus

wasn't there, and they began searching for him. The excitement of the previous night was fresh in their minds, and surely the whole town was eager to see Jesus again and see what He was going to do next. When Simon and the others found Jesus, they said to Him in verse 37, "Everyone is looking for you." As if to say, What do you think you're doing out here all by yourself. Your popularity is exploding, and we need to ride this wave. You have a fan base here. We need to keep the fans happy. What are you going to show them today? The show must go on.

But Jesus is not swayed in the least by the expectations of others. He is not a people-pleaser. He knows what His mission is. He knows what He is to be about in His ministry. He knows that spending time alone with the Father is essential to what He's doing. And He knows that the focus of His ministry is preaching, not healing. The healing is meant to demonstrate His power and therefore validate His teaching. The miracles show who He is. And seeing who He is, we should listen to what He says.

The statement that everyone is looking for Jesus is not meant to imply that they truly believe in Him or desire to submit to His teaching or heed His command to repent and believe in the gospel (v. 15). They are looking for Him because they are in awe of His healing powers. These people are seeking after Him mainly in a superficial way. They were not attentive to the focus of Jesus' ministry. So Jesus, knowing what the focus of His ministry must be, states it clearly to the disciples in verse 38.

Jesus Preaches (verses 38-39)

This brings us to the last two verses that we'll consider for this morning. We've seen Jesus healing. We've seen Jesus praying. And now we see that His focus is preaching. The disciples must have been baffled by Jesus' response in verse 38. They were hoping that He would return to Capernaum and to the crowds of people who were looking for Him. But Jesus said to them, "Let us go on to the next towns, that I may preach there also, for that is why I came out." Jesus came to preach. He was a preacher. He came to proclaim the gospel of God, as verse 14 says. He came to announce, as He does in verse 15, "The time is fulfilled, and the kingdom of God is at hand; repent and believe in the gospel." Healing sicknesses, and even more so casting out demons, showed that His message was true and His authority was real and effective. He was confronting the powers of evil and the effects of the Fall. But the intention was not to heal as many people as possible, but to proclaim the gospel. He was calling people to repent of sin and believe in the Good News that was now present before them.

Therefore instead of returning to Capernaum to continue a healing ministry among the people there, verse 39 says “he went throughout all Galilee, preaching in their synagogues and casting out demons.” The focus was the message rather than the miracles. And the message needed to be proclaimed broadly, not just in one place. So Jesus headed out, preaching *throughout all Galilee* and continuing to confront evil by casting out demons.

In closing I want to challenge all of us to hear and heed Jesus’ preaching. We’re tempted to seek after Jesus just as these crowds sought after Him—in a superficial and selfish way. We want Jesus to heal our sicknesses and fix our problems and provide for us financially. We want Him to give us health, wealth and prosperity. But are we really listening to His message? Do we have ears to hear what He is announcing to us? We should stand in awe of His miraculous powers, but that’s not the main point. The miraculous powers confirm the truthfulness of the radical things He is saying. So we should look at these healings and exorcisms and say, This Man has authority. This Man must be who He says He is. This Man truly is the Son of God. And then we should heed His command to repent and believe in the gospel. We don’t come to Him as the genie in the bottle who is going to grant us our wishes for comfort and pleasure in this life. We must come to Him as the One who has all authority and commands our total allegiance to Him. Repentance means that we turn away from our sinful actions and attitudes and desires. And believing in the gospel means that we look to Him as our only hope of being forgiven for our sin. The Good News is that Jesus came into the world and He took upon Himself the sins of His people. Jesus identifies with His people and goes to the cross to die for His people. And then He rose from the dead on the third day! This is truly good news, friends. By yielding our lives to Him we will receive blessings far greater than physical healing or material prosperity. We will know the joy of walking with our Savior through this life and spending eternity with Him in heaven. Repent of your sin, and believe this Good News.

Like last week, we’ve seen again this morning the authority of Jesus. He has authority over sickness, and He has authority over demons. His preaching and teaching is authoritative. We’ve also seen this morning the personal compassion of Jesus in healing Simon’s mother-in-law. We’ve observed the determination Jesus had to spend time alone with His Father, which is a model for us. And we’ve seen Jesus’ commitment to preach.