

2025-07-06

Staying Focused

Mark 1:29-45

I am finding out that as I age, I have to learn to keep better focused on things. As we get older, we seem to want to take the easier path. When I get hungry, it is easier to reach in the cookie jar and eat a few cookies to curb my appetite or grab a bag of chips instead of fixing a healthy sandwich or a balanced meal. I am glad Sally does the cooking and fixes good meals. Being alone, it must be harder to eat healthy on a regular basis. We have to stay focused on eating healthier meals. It is good for your body and your brain. It is also easier to sit down and turn on the TV or watch things on our phones. Before you know it, **hours have passed** and now you don't have time to read your Bible or to get to that project you have been wanting to do. We have to stay focused on doing those things which help us mature as followers of Jesus. This is a major reason why we are still here on this earth. God does not keep us alive on this earth after we become His follower just so we can always be entertained or only do those things that please us all the time. *"For we are His workmanship created in Christ Jesus for good works, which God prepared beforehand that we should walk in them"* (Ephesians 2:10). *"For whom He foreknew, He also predestined to be conformed to the image of His Son"* (Romans 8:29).

As we look into the life of Jesus, Mark records more events in a day in the life of Jesus. The morning of this one Sabbath, as was His custom, Jesus spent in the synagogue. We saw last Sunday that after Jesus taught the people in the synagogue, an evil spirit challenged Jesus. This evil spirit heard Jesus preach but still would not follow Jesus. So, Jesus cast the evil spirit out of the man. This act should have caused all those watching this miracle to bow down before Jesus and confess their sinfulness, but it did not. At least the people were amazed at the ability of Jesus to cast out demons. They should have recognized that Jesus was the Messiah and they should have chosen to follow Him. Instead, the miracle just caused all the people to talk about what Jesus did and not what Jesus had taught them. It is interesting that no one accused Jesus of doing anything wrong by healing a man on the Sabbath in their synagogue.

Mark 1:29-30 *"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."* Some things do not change much over time. After their worship in the synagogue Peter and Andrew, along with James and John invited Jesus over to Peter's house for lunch. Most of us, maybe all of us will leave church today and go somewhere for lunch. We will go to our homes

or to a restaurant and get something to eat. It is that time of the day. For these men, as they entered Peter's house, they did not find a meal prepared for them. They found Peter's wife's mother in bed with a fever. Did you know that Peter was married? Are you wondering where is Peter's wife? We would think that if she was in this house with her sick mother, she would be mentioned, but she is not. It is possible that Peter's wife had died and Peter has taken the responsibility of caring for his mother-in-law. I also wonder how long Peter's mother-in-law was sick. Was she sick for days, or maybe just hours, or maybe she just became sick while the men were at the synagogue. This last thought is what I think happened. After their worship in the synagogue the men went home accompanied by Jesus, for lunch. When they came in the house, lunch was not ready. Instead, they found Peter's wife's mother lying down with a fever she had just gotten.

Verse 31 *"So He came and took her by the hand and lifted her up, and immediately the fever left her. And she served them."* Because this is the first healing recorded in Mark, I wonder how much Peter, Andrew, James and John know about Jesus. Do they know He has the power to heal people? There is no indication that Peter brought Jesus to his house specifically to heal his mother-in-law. When Jesus was told about her condition, **Jesus did what He could to help her**. He could heal her, so He did. When I visit people and learn that a light bulb is burned out that they cannot reach or the A/C filter needs replaced that they cannot do or any number of other things. I will do it for them **because I am able to help them**. When we learn about someone with financial needs that they cannot meet, we help them because we can. **God expects us to do what we can to help people** (Matthew 25:35-40). God does not expect us to do things we cannot do, just the things we can. Once Peter's mother-in-law was healed, she got busy serving them lunch. That is the thing she could do. Again, no one questioned Jesus' healing on the Sabbath.

Verses 32-33 *"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."* For the Jews, the Sabbath day ended at sunset. Now people were able to travel farther and do physical labor like carrying a person. People from around the city brought everyone who was sick and all those possessed by an evil spirit, to Peter's house because Jesus was there. There was a crowd at Peter's house. They did not enter the house. The crowd was too large. Jesus ministered from the doorway. Everyone was coming to Jesus to be healed not because of what He taught.

Verse 34 *"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."* Jesus probably stayed up late to take care of all the needs of the people. He did what

He could to help people. This was the mind of Christ. *“Let each of you look out not only for his own interests, but also for the interests of others”* (Philippians 2:4-5). We are not to neglect or overlook the bills we have to pay or the work that we have to do. When God gives us the opportunity to help others, we should help others from our abundance. Here, it does say that Jesus helped “*many*” people. It does not say that He helped all the people. There are even some people that Jesus cannot help for whatever reason. Again, we are reminded that the demons know who Jesus is. Unfortunately, **the people do not know who Jesus is**. They seem to get their healing and be on their way. There will be many people we help, they want our help but they do not want to know Jesus. I would hope that Jesus told the people the importance of repenting of their sins and following Him, believing the gospel. We do not hear that these people repented and followed Jesus. They seem to get what they came for, healing. If only they came to know Jesus and His love for them through sacrifice. Jesus would not let the demons speak about who He was. Jesus wanted the people to believe in Him because of who He was, what He taught, and what He did.

Verse 35 *“Now in the morning, having risen a long while before daylight, He went out and departed to a solitary place; and there He prayed.”* Jesus got up early after a very busy Sabbath. He needed some time alone. He had been dealing with people and helping as many as He could late into the evening. Jesus needed to pray in a place where He would not be interrupted. I imagine that Jesus talked things over with His Heavenly Father. Jesus knows that it is good to help people, but there is something more important than only meeting people’s physical needs. Whether the people like it or not, whether they want to hear it or not, somehow people need to learn that **after this life there is a judgment** (Hebrews 9:27). God knew that when He created people in His image, we would all fall short of His expectations. We would sin. God allowed this to happen so that He could demonstrate His great love for us by providing forgiveness for our sins. Our forgiveness comes by believing in His sacrifice for our sins. His sacrifice is Jesus. Our belief should change our lives to live for Jesus. **Without faith in God’s forgiveness through Jesus, people will die in their sins**. God does not want this to happen, yet He will not force us to believe Him. He gives us the freedom to choose.

Verses 36-38 *“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.’”* The church as a whole and each individual person needs to consider their calling. Sometimes the church has gotten caught up in the ‘social gospel.’ The church at times has gotten caught up in caring for the physical and

emotional needs of people and neglecting the spiritual needs of the people. Often this comes when the church does not embrace the teachings of scripture. When the church does away with an eternal hell for those who refuse to believe in Jesus, then there is no real need for redemption. If no one goes to an eternal hell then there is no need to preach repentance. The church can concentrate on the social needs of people. **Jesus prayed to stay focused on what is really important.** Why was everyone in Capernaum looking for Jesus? Did they want to hear Him preach, “*repent and believe in the gospel*”? No, they just wanted what they could get so they could live comfortably in this world. Jesus is concerned about our life in this world but life here is temporary. Jesus is more concerned about **our eternity**. He came to preach, “*repent and believe in the gospel*” (Matthew 1:15). Jesus needed to leave Capernaum because the people were not interested in listening to Him. Jesus wanted to go to the surrounding towns and preach His message.

Verse 39 “*And He was preaching in their synagogues throughout all Galilee, and casting out demons.*” Jesus was making some headway in the surrounding towns of Galilee. People were coming to the synagogues and listening to Him preach. It seems that Jesus confronted people that were demon possessed in these synagogues.

Verses 40-45 The last event in Chapter 1 is about a man with leprosy. He found Jesus, knelt before Him and said, “*If You are willing, You can make me clean.*” Of course, Jesus is willing. He has compassion on suffering people. As soon as Jesus spoke, “*I am willing; be cleansed,*” the man was healed. Jesus strictly told him not to say anything about this healing. Jesus told him to follow the law of God and show the priest. Instead, this man spread the news that Jesus can heal people. Once the people heard this, the crowds came to Jesus for healing, not to hear His message.

It would have been easy for Jesus to heal the people. He had compassion on them. Those physical healings were only a temporary fix. Jesus wanted to give people an eternal fix, the forgiveness of their sins. By His stripes we are healed (1 Peter 2:24). We are forgiven. That phrase is not about temporary healings. It is about the greatest healing anyone can receive from God: the forgiveness of our sins. He took our sins upon Himself so we can be forgiven. This is what people need and need to know.

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Our mission statement: **Spread the gospel of Jesus Christ;**
Teach believers to worship God; Foster growth in the Christian faith

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Questions to ask yourself:

As a Christian, you have been created by God to do good works towards others. What has God created you to do?

Are you being conformed to the image of Jesus Christ? How? What are you intentionally doing/changing to be more like Jesus?

It was Jesus' custom to attend synagogue. Are you being like Jesus in this area?

What happened to Peter's wife?

Does Jesus have the power to heal? What is His purpose in healing someone?

Does God expect us to help people?

In what ways have you been able to help someone?

What is the mind of Christ? Philippians 2:4-5

Is your mind becoming more like the mind of Christ?

What is the most important teaching the church needs to communicate to people?

What is most important to Jesus?

What is most important to you?

Is a physical healing temporary or permanent?

Is the forgiveness of sins temporary or permanent?

Actions to take:

Seek the mind of Christ. Do something good to other people.

Tell someone the most important thing they need to know.

Next week: Mark 2:1-12

What is Easier to Say?