

Mark 1:29-45 ~ Scripture Verses

Jesus Heals Many

²⁹ As soon as they left the synagogue, they went with James and John to the home of Simon and Andrew. ³⁰ Simon's mother-in-law was in bed with a fever, and they told Jesus about her. ³¹ So he went to her, took her hand and helped her up. The fever left her and she began to wait on them.

³² That evening after sunset the people brought to Jesus all the sick and demon-possessed. ³³ The whole town gathered at the door, ³⁴ and Jesus healed many who had various diseases. He also drove out many demons, but he would not let the demons speak because they knew who he was.

Jesus Prays in a Solitary Place

³⁵ Very early in the morning, while it was still dark, Jesus got up, left the house and went off to a solitary place, where he prayed. ³⁶ Simon and his companions went to look for him, ³⁷ and when they found him, they exclaimed: "Everyone is looking for you!"

³⁸ Jesus replied, "Let us go somewhere else—to the nearby villages—so I can preach there also. That is why I have come." ³⁹ So he traveled throughout Galilee, preaching in their synagogues and driving out demons.

A Man With Leprosy

⁴⁰ A man with leprosy [a] came to him and begged him on his knees, "If you are willing, you can make me clean."

⁴¹ Filled with compassion, Jesus reached out his hand and touched the man. "I am willing," he said. "Be clean!" ⁴² Immediately the leprosy left him and he was cured.

⁴³ Jesus sent him away at once with a strong warning: ⁴⁴ "See that you don't tell this to anyone. But go, show yourself to the priest and offer the sacrifices that Moses commanded for your cleansing, as a testimony to them." ⁴⁵ Instead he went out and began to talk freely, spreading the news. As a result, Jesus could no longer enter a town openly but stayed outside in lonely places. Yet the people still came to him from everywhere.

Footnotes:

a. Mark 1:40 – The Greek word was used for various diseases affecting the skin—not necessarily leprosy.

Mark 1:29-45 ~ Discussion Questions

1. Jesus had previously called the first four apostles to “come, follow me” and “at once they left their nets and followed him.” (1:17-18) Do you think that any of the apostles were married? (Mark 1:30, 1 Corinthians 9:5)
2. When the apostles told Jesus about Peter’s mother-in-law being ill, how did he respond? What does this suggest that our attitude should be about helping others (even after a long, tiring day)? Why should we follow the disciple’s example of bringing our problems to Jesus?
3. What was the woman’s immediate response to Jesus healing her? (Mark 1:31) Following the example, what should we do when others serve or help us?
4. Why did Jesus not want the demons to speak about him (Mark 1:34, Luke 4:41) and not want the man with leprosy to tell that Jesus healed him (Mark 1:44)?
5. Here in the middle of a busy schedule, Jesus goes to a solitary place to pray (1:35). Why do you think Jesus spent so much time in prayer if he was the Son of God? How should we follow his example? Is early morning a good time to pray?
6. Do you ever start a prayer by saying, “If you are willing, please do thus and so” or do you ever close a prayer by saying, “if it be your will” or “your will, not mine, be done?” What do the man’s words tell about his faith? (Mark 1:40)
7. Considering the laws of Moses, Jesus touching the man with leprosy and telling him to show himself to the priest were somewhat contradictory. How so?
8. How did the leper respond to all that happened to him? How did this affect Jesus’ ministry? (Mark 1:45)
9. Have you ever done the opposite of what you knew Jesus wanted you to do?
10. Looking at the leper’s example, what attitude do you think is crucial to receive healing from the Lord?
11. Why do you think God sometimes heals people miraculously and at other times chooses not to? Is it because of their attitude or something else?

Mark 1:29-45 ~ Leader's Guide

1. Jesus had previously called the first four apostles to “come, follow me” and “at once they left their nets and followed him.” (1:17-18) Do you think that any of the apostles were married? (Mark 1:30, 1 Corinthians 9:5) If so, do you think their wives accompanied them on their travels?

Mark 1:30 says they “went to the home of Simon [Peter] and Andrew [Peter’s brother]” where Peter’s mother-in-law was in bed with a fever. Clearly, then, Peter is married and Paul’s letter to the Corinthians suggests that other apostles were married as well.

1 Corinthians 9:5 – Don’t we have the right to take a believing wife along with us, as do the other apostles and the Lord’s brothers and Cephas [Peter]?

In Biblical days it was common to count and speak mainly of men. Mark 6:44, for example, says of the feeding of the 5,000 that “the number of *men* who had eaten was five thousand.” And again in the feeding of the 4,000, Mark 8:9 says, “About four thousand *men* were present,” although earlier in both cases Mark talks about crowds of *people*. We don’t know specifically if the wives of the apostles accompanied them on their travels, but Paul’s letter suggests that they may have.

2. When the apostles told Jesus about Peter’s mother-in-law being ill, how did he respond? What does this suggest that our attitude should be about helping others (even after a long, tiring day)? Why should we follow the disciple’s example of bringing our problems to Jesus?

Jesus went to her immediately. He healed her in a miraculous way, which we may not always be able to do. Nevertheless, we should always be willing to offer aid, comfort, and personal contact immediately to someone in need.

My wife, Betsy, recently got home late after a long, tiring day in Newark evaluating projects for Beyond the Walls, a missions partnership organization of which she is executive director. She obviously didn’t feel like cooking and nuked some TV dinners for us. But then she got out the mixing bowls and started a major project. “What are you doing,” I asked. “Well,” she said, “I just heard that John was feeling low, so I’m making some of his favorite cookies for our meeting tomorrow morning.” In our house Betsy sets the example of caring and compassion and often puts me to shame.

Not only should we follow Jesus’ example and respond to the problems of others, but we should bring our problems to Jesus, confident that he will immediately respond to them.

3. What was the woman's immediate response to Jesus healing her? (Mark 1:31)
Following the example, what should we do when others serve or help us?

Peter's mother-in-law immediately got up and began to serve them. It's tempting to think of this as a bit unfair—after all, isn't she entitled to some time off, some rest after being sick? Actually I think the story illustrates the high value the Bible places on Christian service. And by the way, although a woman was the subject of this story, the example applies to men as well. Basically, if you are physically and mentally able to serve others, you have an obligation as a Christian to do so, not just when you feel like it, but whenever others are in need.

4. Why did Jesus not want the demons to speak about him (Mark 1:34, Luke 4:41) and not want the man with leprosy to tell that Jesus healed him (Mark 1:44)?

Luke 4:41 – Moreover, demons came out of many people, shouting, “You are the Son of God!” But he rebuked them and would not allow them to speak, because they knew he was the Messiah.

Jesus wanted to first show by his own words and deeds the kind of Messiah he was in contrast to the popular notion that he was coming to overthrow the oppressive Roman government. Jesus did not want the people to get the wrong idea from the demons, nor did he want them saying he was the Son of God before he clearly declared that himself. He also did not want his teaching hindered by too much publicity being given to his healing miracles; he didn't want to be considered just a miracle worker.

5. Here in the middle of a busy schedule, Jesus goes to a solitary place to pray (1:35). Why do you think Jesus spent so much time in prayer if he was the Son of God? How should we follow his example? Is early morning a good time to pray?

Jesus, the Son of God—actually God himself—felt a great and constant need to share his needs and concerns with the Father. Clearly he prayed about everything, little things and big things. He prayed for courage, for wisdom, for strength, for help, and even for obedience. He gave thanks. Some of his prayers were public, some were with small groups, but most were solitary.

We should follow his example and, as Paul said, pray unceasingly (1 Thess 5:17). Jesus' prayers set an example for us, but that's not the reason he prayed.

Early morning is a good time to pray to prepare yourself for the day ahead. But Jesus also prayed in the evening (Mark 6:46-47), all night (Luke 6:12), and before and during meals. Any time is a good time to pray.

6. Do you ever start a prayer by saying, “If you are willing, please do thus and so” or do you ever close a prayer by saying, “if it be your will” or “your will, not mine, be done?” What do the man’s words tell about his faith? (Mark 1:40)

We are often told there are four elements to a good prayer (the acronym ACTS). A is for acclamation, C for confession, T for thanks, and S for supplication. But, in fact, all prayers should have a fifth element, namely a statement along the lines of, “if it be your will.”

Clearly the man with leprosy had faith that Jesus was able to heal him. Should we not have the same faith?

7. Considering the laws of Moses, Jesus touching the man with leprosy and telling him to show himself to the priest were somewhat contradictory. How so?

The contradiction is that Jesus touched the man in disobedience to the Mosaic law but told him to go to the priest and make sacrifices in obedience to the law.

Touching a man with leprosy or an infectious skin disease, according to the law of Moses, caused one to be defiled. That is why lepers and unclean people were not allowed in the camp (Leviticus 13:45-46, 5:2, Numbers 5:1-4). However, Jesus’ compassion for the man superseded ceremonial considerations.

Telling the man to show himself to the priest who would pronounce him ceremonially clean showed that the cure was real. Offering the required sacrifices showed that Jesus respected the Mosaic law. The healing was also testimony to Jesus’ divine power, since the Jews believed that only God could cure leprosy.

8. How did the leper respond to all that happened to him? How did this affect Jesus’ ministry? (Mark 1:45)

The leper told everyone what Jesus had done. As a result, Jesus’ fame and popularity spread, he was followed wherever he went, and he was unable to stay in towns because he would be mobbed by people wanting healing and to see miracles.

9. Have you ever done the opposite of what you knew Jesus wanted you to do?

10. Looking at the leper’s example, what attitude do you think is crucial to receive healing from the Lord?

11. Why do you think God sometimes heals people miraculously and at other times chooses not to? Is it because of their attitude or something else?

Clearly an attitude of humility and of faith is crucial. However, this does not guarantee immediate healing, or maybe not healing at all (Job 30:20, Ezekiel 8:18, 2 Corinthians 12:7-9). As we see in these verses and many other places, it is the Lord's will that will be done and there is no way that we can begin to understand the will and plans of the Lord.

Job 30:20 – “I cry out to you, God, but you do not answer; I stand up, but you merely look at me.”

Ezekiel 8:18 – Therefore, I will respond in fury. I will neither pity nor spare them. And though they cry for mercy, I will not listen.”

2 Corinthians 12:7-9 – ⁷ or because of these surpassingly great revelations. Therefore, in order to keep me from becoming conceited, I was given a thorn in my flesh, a messenger of Satan, to torment me. ⁸ Three times I pleaded with the Lord to take it away from me. ⁹ But he said to me, “My grace is sufficient for you, for my power is made perfect in weakness.” Therefore I will boast all the more gladly about my weaknesses, so that Christ's power may rest on me.

Mark 1:29-45 ~ Additional Discussion Questions

1. What happens to your attitude when you get sick with a bad cold or flu?
2. In Verse 1:32, it says that *after sunset*, people brought sick and demon-possessed people to Jesus for healing. Why wait until after sunset? (Hints: Jewish days begin at sunset and work on the Sabbath is prohibited by the law of Moses.)
3. How do you feel about serving others after a long, hard day?
4. What excuses do you use to neglect serving other people? A) They can take care of themselves. B) I had a long, hard day. C) Let Jason do it; he's had an easy day. D) I'm always the one giving service; let someone else take a turn. E) Not my job. F) I don't have the right skills or strengths (to cook, to heal, to shovel the walk, to mend the clothes, or whatever). G) Some other reason.
5. How would you feel if you went to a solitary place to pray and your friends came bursting in and said, "Everybody is looking for you?" (Mark 1:36-37) How would you respond? How did Jesus respond?
6. When has the Lord ever healed you physically? How about emotionally?
7. How would you react if you saw another person miraculously healed by the Lord?
8. What do these verses tell you about Christ and his attitude toward our pain and suffering?
9. What is one area of your life—*right now*—in which you need physical, emotional, or spiritual healing from God? What are you going to do about it?