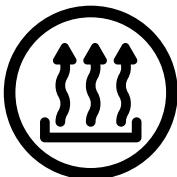




The Gospel of Mark



WARM-UP

Sometimes those who do good things for others can get overwhelmed by the NEED people present them with in repeated contexts, i.e. donating money or time, or doing favors. Talk about a time when you or someone you know struggled with how much to give in a situation where there was more need than could be met.

Pray for your time together as a group.



What happened last week in the book of Mark?

Read out loud as a group

MARK 1:21-34 (NIV)

21 They went to Capernaum, and when the Sabbath came, Jesus went into the synagogue and began to teach. 22 The people were amazed at his teaching, because he taught them as one who had authority, not as the teachers of the law. 23 Just then a man in their synagogue who was possessed by an impure spirit cried out, 24 ‘What do you want with us, Jesus of Nazareth? Have you come to destroy us? I know who you are—the Holy One of God!’

25 “Be quiet!” said Jesus sternly. “Come out of him!” 26 The impure spirit shook the man violently and came out of him with a shriek.

27 The people were all so amazed that they asked each other, “What is this? A new teaching—and with authority! He even gives orders to impure spirits and they obey him.” 28 News about him spread quickly over the whole region of Galilee.

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 immediately 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.



What stands out to you?

Possible Answers: Answers will vary.



The people noticed Jesus' authority in teaching and then in casting out demons. Do you think it's important that Jesus started with teaching? Why?

Possible Answers: Jesus main priority was to spread the Good News. The miracles were not the main point but they pointed to something greater. A physical healing that pointed to the spiritual healing. He taught with authority and then showed his authority. The miracles were used as signs and also used to back up his words. Look ahead to vs 38 or back to vs 15.



Jesus was giving both his message (the kingdom of God is near) and using his gifts (healing and casting out demons). Why do you think that people seemed to value one more than the other? How can we appreciate the eternal Good News that Jesus brought as much as the temporary healing that Jesus did?

Possible Answers: Suffering is hard to ignore, and physical distress is immediate and pressing. It's easy to understand why people wanted to be healed. It's important to have an eternal mindset: to remember that our sin was killing us even more surely than any physical affliction could, and that the Good News about Jesus has given us permanent life and healing even as our physical bodies fade away.

Read out loud as a group

MARK 1:35-45 (NIV)

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.

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

41 Jesus was indignant. ⁱ He reached out his hand and touched the man. "I am willing," he said. "Be clean!" 42 Immediately the leprosy left him and he was cleansed.

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.

Read out loud as a group

“The law required unclean people to live outside the camp until they were free of disease and to present a sacrifice as part of a cleansing ceremony. The purpose of this law was to prevent what is unclean from coming into contact with what is holy, which would be dangerous for the unclean person and for the whole community. The law did not imply that the unclean person was under God’s condemnation or that he or she would be excluded from the love of the community”

- Commentary from the ESV Global Study Bible



Jesus was on a roll, healing and casting out demons all over the place, and yet he left the house and went to be by himself in a solitary place. Why do you think he did this? What are your quiet places?

Possible answers: Jesus wanted to talk and connect to His Father, to have some respite by himself, and to continue His ministry. He didn't want to be tied to just one place, He wanted to share the truth with all of Galilee. Answers may vary.



What reversals are happening with Jesus and the leper?

Possible Answers: 1. when someone is unclean, everything they touch becomes unclean. Yet here we see Jesus doesn't become unclean rather he makes the unclean new and clean. 2. Lepers tend to live outside the city. After Jesus healed him, the leper got to enter the city and community life once again and Jesus was sent outside the city. They literally swapped places pointing to the ultimate spiritual swap!



Jesus touched an untouchable man. What are the things in your life that feel untouchable?

Possible Answers: Answers will vary.

DISCUSSION FOR ACCOUNTABILITY



- What parts of the Good News about Jesus are easiest for you to accept? What parts are the hardest?
- How can you encourage an eternal mindset in yourself and others as you think about Jesus' ministry and message?