



**Adult Sunday School Lesson Summary for July 13, 2008
Released on Wednesday, July 9, 2008**

“Christ as Healer”

Lesson Text: Mark 1:29–45.

Background Scripture: Mark 1:14–45.

Devotional Reading: Isaiah 61:1–4.

Mark 1:29–45

29 And forthwith, when they were come out of the synagogue, they entered into the house of Simon and Andrew, with James and John.

30 But Simon’s wife’s mother lay sick of a fever; and anon they tell him of her.

31 And he came and took her by the hand, and lifted her up; and immediately the fever left her, and she ministered unto them.

32 And at even, when the sun did set, they brought unto him all that were diseased, and them that were possessed with devils.

33 And all the city was gathered together at the door.

34 And he healed many that were sick of divers diseases, and cast out many devils; and suffered not the devils to speak, because they knew him.

35 And in the morning, rising up a great while before day, he went out, and departed into a solitary place, and there prayed.

36 And Simon and they that were with him followed after him.

37 And when they had found him, they said unto him, All men seek for thee.

38 And he said unto them, Let us go into the next towns, that I may preach there also: for therefore came I forth.

39 And he preached in their synagogues throughout all Galilee, and cast out devils.

40 And there came a leper to him, beseeching him, and kneeling down to him, and saying unto him, If thou wilt, thou canst make me clean.

41 And Jesus, moved with compassion, put forth his hand, and touched him, and saith unto him, I will; be thou clean.

42 And as soon as he had spoken, immediately the leprosy departed from him, and he was cleansed.

43 And he straitly charged him, and forthwith sent him away;

44 And saith unto him, See thou say nothing to any man: but go thy way, show thyself to the priest, and offer for thy cleansing those things which Moses commanded, for a testimony unto them.

45 But he went out, and began to publish it much, and to blaze abroad the matter, insomuch that Jesus could no more openly enter into the city, but was without in desert places: and they came to him from every quarter.

LESSON AIMS

After participating in this lesson, each student will be able to:

1. Describe Jesus’ early ministry in and around Capernaum.
2. Tell what Jesus’ healing ministry reveals to us today about who Jesus is.

3. Articulate one way to share the good news of Jesus' healing presence.

INTRODUCTION:

In our last lesson we saw Jesus as Teacher, speaking with divine authority. This week we will focus on His role as Healer, which, as already noted, was never divorced from His teaching role.

Wherever Jesus went and amongst whomsoever, he took with him a heart sensitive to the appeal of human need, suffering, and sin; he took with him a hand open to give, stretched out to help and deliver. In city and country, among Jews and foreigners, with high and low, in the society of men, women, and children, he was always the same—the Helper, the Comforter, the Healer, the Friend of man.

Jesus Heals (Mark 1:29–34)

1. Who was the woman in Capernaum who was healed of a fever (Mark 1:29, 30)?

Our lesson begins with an incident that occurred just after the synagogue service of last week's study, at which Jesus released a man from demon possession (vs. 23-28). Immediately ("forthwith," [v. 29]), He went to the house of Simon (also known as Peter) and Andrew, accompanied by them as well as by James and John.

Simon and Andrew, who were brothers (Mark 1:16; John 1:40-41), had first followed Jesus through contacts with John the Baptist (as, presumably, had John). But more recently these men, along with John's brother James, had left their fishing business completely to become His disciples (Mark 1:16-20).

These two sets of brothers came with Jesus into Simon's house, which must have been near the synagogue. There they found *Simon's wife's mother*, who "lay sick of a fever" (Mark 1:30). They immediately told Jesus about her. After seeing His display of power over demons, they hoped He would also help her.

We do not know what caused her fever, but we do know it was severe. Mark 1:30 says she was bedridden because of it, and Luke 4:38 says she was "taken with a great fever." Today we would say she was in the grip of a high fever.

2. What happened to Simon's mother-in-law as a result of Jesus' healing power (v. 31)?

Upon entering the room, Jesus simply took Simon's mother-in-law by the hand and lifted her up. While physical contact was not necessary to Jesus' healings, His touch identified Him with the sufferer and signified the source of the power that healed. And the impact of that power was evident instantaneously. "Immediately the fever left her, and she ministered unto them" (Mark 1:31).

The miracle was twofold. Not only did the fever and its outward symptoms leave her; she also had an infusion of strength. Normally a fever leaves a person exhausted after it subsides, and strength returns only gradually. But in this case the woman's strength returned immediately so that she could get up and minister to the needs of her guests. She probably assisted Peter's wife in preparing a meal and showing other tokens of hospitality.

3. Think of a time when you or a loved one prayed for physical healing. What motivated the request? How was the motivation like or unlike that of those who sought healing from Jesus?

It is certainly proper to pray for physical healing (James 5:14). The best motive possible is for healing to occur so that the sick person may continue to serve Christ.

We keep a proper perspective when we realize that earthly, physical healing is a temporary fix. We may safely assume that the people whom Jesus raised from the

dead died again. The thrust of Jesus' message is heavenly, not earthly (John 3:6, 12). Miraculous healings in the Bible are meant to point to the power of God. That power will take us into His eternal presence.

4. Why did the people of Capernaum wait until evening to bring their loved ones for healing (vs. 32,33)?

News of Jesus' healing power traveled quickly throughout Capernaum. While Mark's language "at even, when the sun did set" (v. 32) may sound redundant, it stresses that sunset marks the end of Sabbath. This day had been a Sabbath, on which no work was to be done; so the townsmen had refrained from carrying loved ones to Jesus for healing until the Sabbath ended. Thus the people can now bring "unto him all that were diseased, and them that were possessed with devils."

The note that "all the city is gathered together at the door" (v. 33) underscores Jesus' growing popularity. The word has gotten out!

5. What two kinds of miracles in Capernaum are singled out (v. 34)?

Notice again that Mark makes a distinction between those who are "diseased" and those who are "possessed" (see vs. 32, 34) Thus it is not accurate to conclude that ancient people confuse medical conditions such as schizophrenia with demon possession. While occasionally those possessed by demons do exhibit certain forms of physical afflictions (Mark 9:17, 18), it is simply not the case that all people of antiquity attribute every medical condition to demonic possession. See also Mark 6:13 for a clear distinction between the two.

Nevertheless, Jesus' ministry of healing is comprehensive. This is indicated by the terms translated "divers diseases" (in verse 34 of our lesson). There are no conditions that Jesus cannot remedy.

We note that the demons are silenced once again (compare 1:25). In this case the reason is given: *because they knew him*. The fact that Jesus is able to silence the demons demonstrates who is really in charge here.

Jesus' identity can be appreciated fully only in the light of His redemptive message. That's a reality no demon can possibly understand.

Jesus Prays (Mark 1:35-37)

6. Where did Jesus go early in the morning? Why did the people seek Him (vs. 35-37)?

In spite of the full day of ministry Jesus had just completed, He did not sleep a full night at Capernaum. While others at Simon's house rested, He arose early in the morning, a long time before the sun rose. He made His way to "a solitary place" where He prayed.

The exhilarating but draining work of the preceding day led Jesus to seek spiritual refreshment through renewed communion with His Father. Perhaps He thanked Him for all that had been accomplished. Almost certainly He prayed for renewed physical and spiritual strength to face the challenges of the day ahead. What a great example for us to follow! If our sovereign Lord needed an infusion of divine strength, how arrogant must we be to assume that we can trust our own?

In verse 36 we see that *Simon*, and others with him, embark on an urgent mission in pursuit of Jesus. They are not content to wait until Jesus returns on His own. Upon finding Jesus, they informed Him that everyone was looking for Him (v. 37). Perhaps, they think that Jesus in His isolation is failing to take advantage of His growing popularity. They would have Jesus accommodate His surge of popularity by returning to Capernaum and building on His newfound fame.

According to Luke, they tried to prevent Him from leaving them (Luke 4:42). In so doing they revealed their ignorance of His broader purposes (which we will see in answer #7).

Jesus Preaches (Mark 1:38, 39)

7. Into what province did Jesus expand His preaching? In what setting did He usually teach (vs. 38, 39)?

But Jesus would not be swayed by popular pressure. Turning to His disciples, He invited them to join Him in a wider endeavor. While the people had emphasized His miracles, He emphasized His message—He had to preach the good news of God’s kingdom (Mark 1:14, 15). The miracles would come—but only to accredit His message.

Jesus pointed out that it was for this broader ministry that He had come. Eventually Jesus extended His ministry throughout all Galilee" (Mark 1:39). Galilee was the northernmost province of Palestine, where Jews and Gentiles lived in close proximity. Here Jesus also preaches the message of God’s kingdom and reinforces its reality by overthrowing the agents of Satan.

Jesus Cleanses a Leper (Mark 1:40–45)

8. What was the usual condition of lepers in Jesus' day (Mark 1:40)?

Following the general description of Jesus’ itinerant ministry (v. 39), Mark now focuses on one particular man who makes a request. He is a *leper*, a general term in the ancient world for someone who has some kind of skin disease (not necessarily leprosy in the modern sense).

There was no more hopeless or despised person in Israel than a leper. The priests are charged with determining the severity of such problems along with the necessary course of action (Leviticus 13:1–46; 14:1–32), but there was no known cure.

Lepers were not permitted inside any walled city, and they could associate only with other lepers. With clothes torn, heads uncovered, hair disheveled, and the lower part of their faces covered with a cloth, they were forced to warn all who come near with the words “unclean, unclean” (Leviticus 13:45, 46). Rabbis usually attributed leprosy to sin.

9. How was the leper's approach to Jesus bold? How was it humble?

It is remarkable that this leper dared to approach Jesus (Mark 1:40), since close contact with a leper was considered defiling. His boldness undoubtedly came from the conviction that Jesus was different from other rabbis.

He also displayed humility. He knelt before Jesus and begged. He acknowledged Jesus' power to cleanse him, but he questioned His willingness to do so. He probably felt unworthy.

10. What instructions did Jesus give the cleansed leper? Why (vs. 41-44)?

Jesus' answer revealed both compassion and power. So He did what no one had purposely done before—He *touched* him.

The leper had stated his faith in the declaration "If thou wilt" (Mark 1:40). Jesus responded with a simple reassurance: "I will; be thou clean" (v. 41). The power of this word brought immediate results. But now Jesus' compassion turned to serious instruction (v. 43). He told him not to tell anyone what had hap-

pened to him. Part of the reason for this may have been that Jesus did not need any more popular publicity.

But there was another reason. He had to go to the priest and offer the prescribed sacrifice (Mark 1:44; cf. Lev. 14:1-7). This would also serve as a testimony to the religious leaders. Seeing one whom Jesus had cleansed would be a strong testimony of His Messiahship.

11. How did the cleansed man's disobedience hinder Jesus' work (v. 45)?

In spite of Jesus' strict injunction to silence, this man went out and "began to publish it much." Out of joy and gratitude, he told his story repeatedly. Whether he ever visited the priest we do not know.

This outright disobedience may seem excusable. But in the end it hindered Jesus' ministry in Galilee. No longer could He enter any town and speak in its synagogue. The crowds looking for miracles were too great.

Still, Jesus was able to continue His ministry in remote areas, where people from every quarter sought Him out. Even today, thank God for His grace, Christ continues to work in the world in spite of our disobedience.

CONCLUSION:

REPENTANCE?

Jesus' display of healing powers catapulted Him to instant fame and celebrity status. Yet Jesus showed no interest in seeking the headlines or even remaining in the public eye. The adulation of the crowds rang hollow without their understanding and repentance. In the final analysis, *complete physical healing plus no repentance equals nothing*. This should cause us to reflect on how we approach Jesus today.

PRAYER

Father, please help us to counter the world's definition of power by modeling Jesus' merciful spirit. Empower Your people that we might find the strength to be merciful in an age of brutality. Through Jesus we beseech You, amen.

THOUGHT TO REMEMBER

Jesus can heal your spirit, if you allow Him to.

ANTICIPATING NEXT WEEK'S LESSON:

Next week's lesson gives us a great example to follow as we see Jesus assuming the role of a servant. Study John 3:1-20 "**Christ as Servant**" in preparation of this lesson.

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