

Bibles

The Word of God is the Absolute Truth and the Final Authority.

In October of 2011, I had just arrived to my hotel in China and normally because I struggle with jetlag, I will turn on the TV.

I noticed that in all the channels they kept showing the same video over and over again.

You see, earlier that week in Southern China, a two year old girl was walking through a busy market and not one but two minivans ran her over. To make matters worse, 18 people proceeded to walk next to the little girl, and did nothing about it. People were seen in the video walking around the little girl as if she were a puddle.

It wasn't until an old man that was hired to sweep the roads spotted her that he reached down and starting to get the attention of the people.

The little did die from her injuries.

The video cause outrage in China as people started to question their priorities. Had the nation lost its sense of compassion?? That was the headlines on the English newspaper.

Now, this lack of compassion is not a China problem – it is a flesh problem. We tend to only think about ourselves.

Yet, we are commanded to be compassionate.

You see, compassion is more than feeling sorry for a person; compassion is all about understanding the troubles of others and actually doing something about it.

This morning, Jesus is going to demonstrate to us compassion as He encounters several individuals that carried heavy burdens.

And by doing, He will provide us with the example of exercising compassion toward others.

Let's pray...

[Mar 1:21-28 NKJV] 21 Then they went into Capernaum, and immediately on the Sabbath He entered the synagogue and taught. 22 And they were astonished at His teaching, for He taught them as one having authority, and not as the scribes.

23 Now there was a man in their synagogue with an unclean spirit. And he cried out, 24 saying, "Let [us] alone! What have we to do with You, Jesus of Nazareth? Did You come to destroy us? I know who You are--the Holy One of God!" 25 But Jesus rebuked him, saying, "Be quiet, and come out of him!" 26 And when the unclean spirit had convulsed him and cried out with a loud voice, he came out of him. 27 Then they were all amazed, so that they questioned among themselves, saying, "What is this? What new doctrine [is] this? For with authority He commands even the unclean spirits, and they obey Him." 28 And immediately His fame spread throughout all the region around Galilee.

So last week we covered the first half of chapter one and really what we covered was the beginning of the ministry of Jesus Christ.

We saw Jesus begin His ministry with humility and authority.

We saw His humility as He submitted to the will of the Father by allowing Himself to be baptized.

We saw His humility as He submitted to the will of the Father by allowing the Holy Spirit to lead Him into the wilderness where He was tempted for 40 days

However, we did see His authority as well.

We read that upon His baptism, that a voice from heaven declared that “You are my beloved Son in whom I am well pleased.” – Their can’t be any greater authority than that.

We saw His authority as He preached repentance and for the people to believe in the gospel.

We saw His authority as the angels ministered to Him after He endured the time in the wilderness.

We saw His authority as He called disciples unto Himself.

So, Jesus has His orders, He has His message to proclaim, He also now has a group of guys around that He chose.

All He needs now is an audience – and He chooses the place to begin His ministry where people are already assembled waiting for a message from God – the synagogue.

This synagogue is in Capernaum – where Peter lived.

Now, I want to make sure that we don’t confuse the synagogues with the temple.

In those days, as long as there were 10 Jewish men in a city, they would congregate in a synagogue.

When one reads the Book of Acts, every city that Paul went to, he first went to the local synagogue to preach.

There was however, only one temple and that is the one that was in Jerusalem, this is where the Holy of Holies was and where all the sacrifices were done.

The synagogue was the place of instruction.

This is where people would come to listen to the scribes read from the Torah.

And the way they explained it was that they would usually quote another scribe or rabbi.

However, Jesus walks into the synagogue, reads the text and then proceeds to provide the interpretation to what it all means.

He didn't have to quote from other men – He quoted directly from God because

He is God.

Look at the portion of scripture again – the second part of verse 21 -

He entered the synagogue and taught. 22 And they were astonished at His teaching, for He taught them as one having authority, and not as the scribes.

The idea here is that Jesus expounded the scriptures; He explained them to the listeners.

When one proclaims the truth they present it in a way that calls for a decision to either accept or reject it.

When one teaches the truth, they explain why something is true and connect truth in a way that helps the listener understand and learn the truth. Jesus both preached and taught the truth of God.

Jesus taught and explained who He was and is and He explained the word of God so people could understand it and respond to it.

That is what should be happening at every church service on Sunday mornings.

Jesus didn't go into the synagogue and complain about the Roman government – He didn't go into the synagogue to entertain the multitudes – He went in there to teach to them the word of God.

Turn with me to 2 Timothy,

[2Ti 3:16-17 NKJV] 16 All Scripture [is] given by inspiration of God, and [is] profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness, 17 that the man of God may be complete, thoroughly equipped for every good work.

We have to be open to what the word of God is trying to teach us. That way we can share the word of God with others.

Jesus casts out an unclean spirit.

[Mar 1:23-24 NKJV] 23 Now there was a man in their synagogue with an unclean spirit. And he cried out, 24 saying, "Let [us] alone! What have we to do with You, Jesus of Nazareth? Did You come to destroy us? I know who You are--the Holy One of God!"

Every year around this time, we see the advertisement of scary movies just prior to Halloween.

And over the years, what happens is that these movies simply become darker and darker.

We see more of a demonic influence in the movies and people simply play it off as fiction and they don't realize the dangers.

Playing with Ouija boards??? Why?

Church, spiritual warfare is real.

[Eph 6:12 NKJV] 12 For we do not wrestle against flesh and blood, but against principalities, against powers, against the rulers of the darkness of this age, against spiritual [hosts] of wickedness in the heavenly [places].

So, Jesus is preaching in the synagogue and a man with an unclean spirit cries out.

Now, in order for this man to be in the synagogue, he had to be Jewish. The man doesn't speak out when the other scribes spoke – it was only when Jesus spoke.

The words of the scribes had no effect on this man.

Pop Quiz – can a believer be demon possessed?

No – scriptures tell us that the Holy Spirit cannot cohabit with demons. 2 Cor 6:15-

As believers, we have the Holy Spirit residing in us; there is not one instance in scripture of a believer that became demon possessed.

So the demon acknowledges who Jesus Christ is, “I know who you are the Holy One of God.”

So what did Jesus do to the man?

Did he sprinkle him with holy water? No –

Did he set up an elaborate ritual? No –

He simply said – Shut up and get out!

Jesus with one word of clear, simple, brief authority exorcised the demon.

No one had ever seen anything like this before.

The power was not in the spell, the formula, the chant, the elaborate rite; the power was in Jesus and the people reacted with astonishment.

So this is the first miracle that Mark writes about – in the synagogue.

The next miracle that Jesus performs is going to be a more intimate one.

[Mar 1:29-31 NKJV] 29 Now as soon as they had come out of the synagogue, they entered the house of Simon and Andrew, with James and John. 30 But Simon's wife's mother lay sick with a fever, and they told Him about her at once. 31 So He came and took her by the hand and lifted her up, and immediately the fever left her. And she served them.

Here Jesus heals Peter's mother in law.

I promised myself I wouldn't make a mother in law joke.

Now, there are many traditions that state that Peter was single all of his life. But, here the scriptures point out that he was indeed married.

These three verses provide another example of the compassion that Jesus had toward the people as well as His servant heart.

He was never too tired to help; the need of the others took precedence over His own desires to rest.

These verses also provide a glimpse into the hearts of the disciples as they begin to take their troubles to Jesus.

In verse 31, we see Peter's mother-in-law healed and immediately she begins to serve them.

We must always remember that God's ultimate desire isn't to simply heal us but to serve Him – to bring honor and glory to Him.

[Mar 1:32-34 NKJV] 32 At evening, when the sun had set, they brought to Him all who were sick and those who were demon-possessed. 33 And the whole city was gathered together at the door. 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.

Here we see Jesus continuing to serve the people. It had already been a busy day for Him as He had spent the day in the synagogue and then He healed Peter's mother-in-law, now He has the multitude bringing all who are sick for Him to heal.

Once again we have Jesus preventing the demons from declaring who He was to the multitudes.

You see, Jesus didn't want free advertising from the demons. This is why He shuts them up.

Jesus wanted witnessing by believers.

The people that Jesus wants talking about who He is are those who actually know Him and have been changed by Him.

Those who demonstrate the power of the gospel. You and me.

[Mar 1:35-39 NKJV] 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. 36 And Simon and those [who were] with Him searched for Him. 37 When they found Him, they said to Him, "Everyone is looking for You." 38 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." 39 And He was preaching in their synagogues throughout all Galilee, and casting out demons.

So after a long day of serving people, Jesus wakes up early the next morning and He goes out to pray.

To start each day to be used by God, we need to start each day with God. That is what prayer is all about.

Having a conversation with God to make sure that our will and His will for us are the same. If they are not the same then we have to remember that prayer is not about changing God's will but, our will.

Jesus did not need to pray because He was weak, He prayed because He was strong.

You see, the source of His strength was His relationship with God the Father.

Up until His death on the cross, we find Him praying all the time.

So Jesus is in the midst of His prayer and the disciples finally find Him and tell Him that there are people looking for Him. And His response is "Let us go into the next towns, that I may preach there also, because for this purpose I have come forth."

You see, God had given Him different instructions. It was time to split.

Jesus could have stayed there. He had a big following now.

However, that was never His ministry.

For all the physical healings that He was doing, He was more concerned with spiritual healing. That was the will of the Father. That is why He didn't stick around.

He was being obedient to the Father.

[Mar 1:40-45 NKJV] 40 Now a leper came to Him, imploring Him, kneeling down to Him and saying to Him, "If You are willing, You can make me clean." 41 Then Jesus, moved with compassion, stretched out [His] hand and touched him, and said to him, "I am willing; be cleansed." 42 As soon as He had spoken, immediately the leprosy left him, and he was cleansed. 43 And He strictly warned him and sent him away at once, 44 and said to him, "See that you say nothing to anyone; but go your way, show yourself to the priest, and offer for your cleansing those things which Moses commanded, as a testimony to them." 45 However, he went out and began to proclaim [it] freely, and to spread the matter, so that Jesus could no longer openly enter the city, but was outside in deserted places; and they came to Him from every direction.

In the book of Leviticus, we have two entire chapters dealing with people that were inflicted with leprosy.

To be a leper during these times was to be an outcast.

You couldn't even walk down the same street with anyone who was a leper. The leper as you approached him/her would shout out "unclean" "unclean" so that one wouldn't come in contact with them.

One was not allowed to come within 6 feet of a leper.

You were separated from your family, having to live with those that were also affected by the horrible disease.

To give you an idea of what the leper went through,

Leprosy would start as small red spots on the skin.

Before too long the spots get bigger and start to turn white, with a shiny or scaly appearance.

The spots soon spread over the body and hair begins to fall out – first from the head, then even from the eyebrows.

As things get worse, fingernails and toenails become loose; they start to rot and eventually fall off. Then the joints of fingers and toes begin to rot and fall off, piece

by piece. Gums begin to shrink, and they can't hold the teeth anymore, so each tooth is lost.

Leprosy keeps eating away at the face until the nose, the palate, and even the eyes rot – and the leper wastes away until he or she dies.

Now leprosy is often seen in the scriptures as a picture of sin.

Sin is deadly – the consequence of sin is death.

Sin works to numb us and then kills us.

It is incurable by man.

However, there is someone that can cure a sinner – and of course that is Jesus Christ.

And that is who this leper is kneeling in front of.

Let's look again at what the leper asked Jesus.

If You are willing, You can make me clean.

There are two Greek different words that the leper could have used. There is a word that speaks of being willing with the mind, a mental choice – this is not the word that the leper uses here.

He uses the Greek word (thelo) which speaks of being willing with emotion, in other words, a choice that is made within the heart.

It is the heart of Jesus that the leper appeals to when he asks Jesus for help.

And then verse 41 tells us that Jesus was moved with compassion, stretched out His hand and touched him, and said to him, “I am willing, be cleansed”

Now, according to the Law of Moses, it was forbidden to touch an unclean leper.

But as you study the grammar that is used here, it indicates that Jesus speaks the words, I will, as He is reaching His hand to touch the leper.

So Jesus didn't touch the leper in order to cleanse him. He touched the leper to demonstrate that leper had already been cleansed by Jesus' words.

Jesus then commanded the man to go demonstrate to the priests that he is clean according to what was written in the law.

Now, let's go the book of Leviticus 14.

[Lev 14:1-7 NKJV] 1 Then the LORD spoke to Moses, saying, 2 "This shall be the law of the leper for the day of his cleansing: He shall be brought to the priest. 3 "And the priest shall go out of the camp, and the priest shall examine [him]; and indeed, [if] the leprosy is healed in the leper, 4 "then the priest shall command to take for him who is to be cleansed two living [and] clean birds, cedar wood, scarlet, and hyssop. 5 "And the priest shall command that one of the birds be killed in an earthen vessel over running water. 6 "As for the living bird, he shall take it, the cedar wood and the scarlet and the hyssop, and dip them and the living bird in the blood of the bird [that was] killed over the running water. 7 "And he shall sprinkle it seven times on him who is to be cleansed from the leprosy, and shall pronounce him clean, and shall let the living bird loose in the open field.

This ceremony described here in Leviticus presents a beautiful picture of the redemption that we have through Jesus Christ.

First of all, notice how the priest is the one that would declare the leper clean – Jesus, our High Priest has declared us clean.

Also, the priest is the one who would offer the sacrifice – Jesus, our High Priest offered Himself, as the sacrifice.

The two birds represent two different aspects of our Lord's ministry: The first bird being put into an earthen vessel and then getting killed represents Jesus' incarnation and death, and the other bird getting stained with the blood and then being set free represents His resurrection and ascension.

Jesus then commanded the man not to tell anyone.

Over and over again in the gospel accounts, we will see Jesus tell those that He had compassion not to tell anyone – and He did this because everything had to be done according to God's timing.

It wasn't until His resurrection that we finally hear Jesus say – Go and tell everyone!

Yet many of us struggle with this command.

You see all these individuals they had a problem; an unclean spirit, a fever, different diseases but, Jesus showed compassion to them all. He did something about it.

Our greatest opportunity to demonstrate our compassion to a sick world is to proclaim the gospel to those that do not know Him,

Always remember, as we show compassion, we will be pointing others to the One who poured out His heart of grace and compassion on us.

Amen,

Let's pray...

To Receive Christ do the following:

Admit, "I am a sinner."

Confess and be willing to turn from your sin.

Believe, by faith that Jesus Christ died for you on the cross.

Receive, through prayer, Jesus Christ into your heart and receive eternal life.

Dear Lord Jesus,

I know that I am a sinner and need Your forgiveness. I believe that You died on the cross for my sins. Please forgive me for my sins and cleanse me by Your blood. I accept You by faith as my personal Lord and Savior. Give me a thirst for Your Word and Help me to follow You all of my days. In Jesus' name I pray, Amen.

