

All in a Day's Work

Mark 1:21-34 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. 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. 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.

A day in the life of a billionaire. A day in the life of a fireman. A day in the life of a deep-sea diver. A day in the life of a rock star. We often watch documentaries and TV shows which profile a famous person or an interesting career and they show us what is supposed to be an average day in the life of that person. What they do in the morning; who they meet; where they go; what they eat, into the afternoon, the evening and the night. We enjoy some of these things because one day in someone's life gives us an idea of that person's life.

What would it have been like to spend one day with Jesus? A day in the life of the Messiah might be the title of verses 21 to 34 of Mark 1. Mark wants to show us what one day in Jesus' life involved, what happened in it. Just like following a pilot or a CEO or a billionaire around for a day will reveal much of who that person is, so one day with Jesus, reveals a large amount of truth about who Jesus is.

A day in the life of Jesus had enough significant events to fill days or weeks of other men's lives. One simple Sabbath day included three things; powerful preaching, personal compassion, and public sacrifice. So as Mark holds the camera, we walk with Jesus through one 24-hour journey, and we learn three truths about Jesus Christ.

I. Jesus is a Preacher You Can Trust

²¹ Then they went into Capernaum, and immediately on the Sabbath He entered the synagogue and taught.

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After the call of Andrew and Peter, James and John, they headed into Capernaum. This was where Peter and Andrew, and James and John, and also Matthew, the tax collector, lived. In fact, having been rejected by His own home-town of Nazareth (Lk 4:16-30), this is the town that Jesus turned into His headquarters during His ministry in Galilee (Mt 4:13). He would do preaching tours, and then return back up to Capernaum. Capernaum was basically a fishing village, with perhaps around 1500 inhabitants around this time.

Since the brothers would not have been fishing on the Sabbath, He must have called them a day or a few days before then. But on the Sabbath day, He goes into the synagogue, and begins to teach.

How could Jesus just enter the synagogue and start teaching? The synagogue was not anything like the Temple in Jerusalem. It was not ruled by priests, nor was it a place of sacrifice. Synagogues

were led by a group of elders, and overseen by a ruler. It was customary to ask a visiting teacher to read the Scriptures and/or teach.. Jesus had already established his reputation, and it was natural for the ruler of the synagogue to ask him to preach.

We don't know what Jesus taught that day, but we do know what the reaction was. The Bible tells us that they were astonished. The word in the original has the idea of being struck out of your senses. They were astounded, they were overwhelmed. Jesus' preaching was breathtaking, shocking, dazzling.

What was so striking about His preaching? Mark tells us: "For He taught them as one having authority, and not as the scribes.

Jesus taught with authority. Someone put it this way: The scribes quoted from authority, but Jesus spoke with authority. The scribes typically quoted the findings of another rabbi, comparing one rabbi with another. Imagine year after year of hearing one scribe compare the commentaries of other scribes, speaking almost to themselves. Every Sabbath, the Jews dutifully sat through scribes quoting each other.

To give you a taste of what first-century Jews sat through, let me read you a portion of Sanhedrin 101a, a rabbinic commentary, discussing Sabbath laws:

"Our Rabbis taught: ... snakes and serpents may be charmed on the Sabbath, and an article may be placed over the eye on the Sabbath. R. Simeon b. Gamliel said: This applies only to articles which may be handled; but those which may not be handled are forbidden; nor may demons be consulted on the Sabbath. R. Jose said: This is forbidden even on week-days. R. Huna said: The halacha is not as R. Jose [said], and even he said it only on account of its danger, as in the case of R. Isaac b. Joseph, who was swallowed up in a cedar tree..."

By comparison, Jesus' teaching was original, fresh, engaging, challenging, simple and direct. The common man could understand him, and he did not have to quote other scribes to gain credibility. They had simply never heard anything like this. From the black-and-white monotone droning of the scribes, in comes a full-colour, dynamic, riveting preacher. For some it must have been like water in the desert. For others, it must have been an annoyance – an upstart, upsetting the age-old tradition of boring preachers satisfied with complacent people. In comes this thirty-something year old preacher, calling on people to repent and believe, showing them the truth in ways that must have felt like waking up from a deep sleep.

Preaching with this kind of power changes lives, converts souls, transforms people. So when it is present, you can be sure some kind of opposition will rear its head. In this case, it was a vocal and hostile interruption of Jesus' sermon.

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!"

A man was present with an unclean spirit. That does not mean he himself had an unclean spirit, it means this evil spirit-being, this defiled, corrupt and unclean spirit being was residing inside this man. This was a demon, a fallen spirit being that seeks to reside within people, and upon residing, it defiles, corrupts and tortures the one it inhabits. We find a large amount of demon-possessed people in the Gospels, and we might want to ask, why were there so many? Compared to today where there seem to be relatively few.

Three answers:

- 1) Opposition to Jesus rose when He appeared, so there was a spike in demonic activity.
- 2) Demonic activity had been far more rampant in the world before Christ came. Before the gospel arrived, demonic possession was common.
- 3) The Jewish rabbis had been involved in many forms of magic, calling up the dead, and other forms of forbidden activities, growing the kinds of superstitions that demons prey on.

Regardless, the man is there in the synagogue. It is a curious thing how often demon-possessed people land up sitting in the pews of churches, listening. But for this demon, it got too much. He burst out with four statements, which sound more like terrified cries. He says, "Leave us alone. What do we have to do with you, Jesus of Nazareth? Did you come to destroy us? I know who you are, the Holy One of God."

Some very revealing things come out of this man's mouth. Firstly, notice the switch from we and us to I. At some point the demon is either referring to himself and the man, and sometimes he speaks alone. Secondly, notice how terrified this evil spirit is. These statements are barely coherent. They are the terrified outbursts of someone who is severely threatened. This demon knew something about Jesus, which others in the room did not. He knew that Jesus represented his own destruction. Third, notice how he is still trying, even though he knows he is doomed, to try to thwart what Jesus is doing. He is trying to disturb, distract, and even discredit. When he says, I know who you are, the Holy One of God, he is telling the truth, but who wants a demon to give you accreditation? When a demon-possessed girl kept telling people that Paul and Silas were servants of the Most High God, he cast it out. Accepting the witness from a demon will only damage your credibility. So here this demon is, even in defeat, trying to distract and disturb those listening to Jesus and discredit Him.

That explains why Jesus next says what He does.

²⁵ *But Jesus rebuked him, saying, "Be quiet, and come out of him!"*

The words, *be quiet*, are literally, *be muzzled*. Silence! Enough of your talking, come out of him. The result?

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."*

Jesus the Preacher simply has to direct His words to a demon, and the demon comes out. The people are absolutely astonished. Once again, they had never seen anything like this. They had seen demons cast out, but never like this. If you read the rabbinic writings of this time, you will see how they went about it.

Berachot 6a: If one wants to discover [demons] let him take sifted ashes and sprinkle around his bed, and in the morning he will see something like the footprints of a cock. If one wishes to see them, let him take the after-birth of a black shecat, the offspring of a black she-cat, the first-born of a first-born, let him roast it in fire and grind it to powder, and then let him put some into his eye, and he will see them...

Rabbi Johanan ben Zakkai on exorcism: What should be done with one so affected? Take roots of herbs, burn them under him, and surround him with water, whereupon the spirit will flee"

Here is Jesus, who uses none of these incantations and magical formulae, but simply commands, and the demon comes out. Notice something interesting. How do the people comment on what they

have just seen? They say, “What is this? What new *doctrine* is this?” As far as they were concerned, Jesus' authority over the demon was part of His teaching, part of His doctrine. The same preacher who was preaching words with astonishing authority, just used those same words to cast out a demon with commanding authority. It is no wonder that word of Him quickly spreads throughout the whole region.

Just look at the faces of two affected groups here. The people are hanging on His every word, amazed at the commanding authority His words have. The enemy of God is terrified and defeated, forced out by the commanding authority His words have.

Now what is right response to a preacher whose words are so filled with authority that they come at you like a flood? What is the right reaction to a preacher whose words can gain obedience from an evil spirit?

The right response is trust. Jesus is a preacher you can trust. Jesus is a teacher whose words you can drink in and believe every one of them. Where do you find His words? The very book we are studying, Mark, along with the other Gospels -- Matthew, Luke and John. Furthermore, Jesus chose men who would preserve and teach His teachings in their own words – the apostles. So the New Testament is made up of books written by these men: Peter, John, Paul, and Christ's own half-brothers, James and Jude. So what sort of attention are you giving these authoritative, life-giving words? They deserve more attention than what we give to fictional novels, or magazines, or websites, or TV, or DVDs. His opponents even said about Him “Never has man spoken like this man.” Jesus is a preacher you can trust.

Just a few hours with Jesus on this day, and we are utterly floored by the power of His words. But there is more. As the day goes on, we find out a second thing about Jesus. Not only is Jesus a preacher you can trust, He is also

II. Jesus is a Helper You Can Turn To

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.

As soon as they left the synagogue, they entered into the house of Simon and Andrew, with James and John. After the synagogue services, they were no doubt looking forward to one of the delicious Sabbath-day meals which would have been prepared. But instead, upon arriving, they find that Peter's wife has no doubt been spending all her time tending to her mother, who is laid up with a fever.

Luke's gospel tells us it was a great fever. This was a serious affliction. So what do the disciples do? Do they go about trying to find cold compresses to bring her fever down? Do they look for more herbal remedies? No our text says, they told Him about her at once.

Jesus is with them. Jesus is there. So they do what so many fail to do – they turn to Him at once. Jesus demonstrates that He was no ivory-tower preacher, unconcerned with the pains and struggles of life. These were His friends, a family member was suffering. Jesus cares enough to be involved in this home and its troubles.

He goes to her, and shows her personal compassion. He takes her by the hand. There were so many

ways that Jesus healed and could have healed. He healed some people by distance. He healed some by simply speaking a word. But, in some cases, He touched people. He took her by the hand, gently lifting her up.

There is a reason they told Jesus about her: it was not only that they believed He had the power to heal her, it was because they believed He had the tenderness to care. It is pointless knowing someone with great abilities to care for you, if such a person has little desire to care for you.

But the Bible says He does care.

1 Peter 5:7 ⁷ *casting all your care upon Him, for He cares for you.*

Matthew 6:26 *"Look at the birds of the air, for they neither sow nor reap nor gather into barns; yet your heavenly Father feeds them. Are you not of more value than they?"*

Psalm 46:1 *God is our refuge and strength, A very present help in trouble.
Jesus heals her; the fever leaves her immediately.*

Notice what the Bible tells us she did after being healed: she served them. When Christ helps you, it becomes an opportunity to help others. The right response to God's goodness to you is to serve.

In just a few hours of one day, we have already seen that Christ is a preacher that you can trust, He is a helper you can turn to. But there is a third truth about Jesus that this day revealed.

III. Jesus is a Servant Who Will Not Turn You Away

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.*

They have spent the rest of the Sabbath day probably in Peter's house. But now the sun sets, and crowds begin coming to the door. Why did they wait until sunset? Because it was the Jewish Sabbath, and they feared breaking a Sabbath law. As we'll find out, Jesus had no problem healing on the Sabbath, but these folk were afraid of being healed on the Sabbath. So, once the sun has set, it is a new day, the first day of the week, and they bring to Jesus the sick, the afflicted, the demon-possessed. How many people were clamouring for His attention according to verse 33? The whole city. We don't have exact figures, but probably over a thousand people. Not all of them were afflicted, but of those thousand or more, there were no doubt many, many people who were sick and ailing.

Now you can work it out, even if Jesus spent just one minute on one person, how many minutes in an hour? Sixty. He probably worked faster than that, but we are probably not wrong to speculate that Jesus spent many hours that evening, healing and casting out demons. In fact, in the Gospel of Luke 4:40 we find out that that He laid His hands on every one who was sick and healed every one of them. In many of the cases, the people were demon-possessed, and like the one in the synagogue, they wanted to discredit Him, so He would not let them speak.

Have you ever had to deal with one person after another for several hours? Some of you have jobs like that, where you are on the phone all day, or dealing with customers all day, and you know how exhausting that can be. So at what point did Jesus motion to Peter to announce closing time, so that Jesus could slip into the back, the door could be closed, and the disappointed people could come

back the next day? That point never happened.

Instead, Jesus went on healing, helping, delivering. His compassion for people was greater than the physical limits of His human nature. He kept on working, selflessly, tirelessly, sacrificially giving Himself to heal, remove pain, remove suffering, remove bondage to Satan.

When does Jesus finally tell people that come to Him that enough is enough, He cannot help? The good news of Jesus Christ is that He never does that. He said in John 6:37:

John 6:37 ³⁷ *"All that the Father gives Me will come to Me, and the one who comes to Me I will by no means cast out."*

When can we do that?

Hebrews 4:14-16 ¹⁴ *Seeing then that we have a great High Priest who has passed through the heavens, Jesus the Son of God, let us hold fast our confession.* ¹⁵ *For we do not have a High Priest who cannot sympathize with our weaknesses, but was in all points tempted as we are, yet without sin.* ¹⁶ *Let us therefore come boldly to the throne of grace, that we may obtain mercy and find grace to help in time of need.*

If Jesus did not turn people away during His earthly humiliation, when subject to the exhaustion of the human frame, how much less will He turn us away now that He ever lives in His glorified body, in His returned glory that He had with the Father before the world was.

We may come to Him whenever we are in a time of need. In fact, he told parables about the whole idea of being turned away when you come to God in Him. Remember the parable of the friend who bothers his friend at midnight for some loaves, and the friend gives him what he needs simply because he bothers him. The point is, God is not bothered by us, or irritated by us, or exhausted by us. He tells us to come. If we who are evil, give our children the things they need, how much more will a perfectly loving God give us the help we need?

The Father, the Son, the Spirit will never turn away the sincere seeker. Jesus is a servant who will never turn you away. If you are seeking forgiveness from your sins, He will never turn you away. If you are a believer and you pray, He will not turn you away. If you need direction, encouragement, rejuvenation, understanding, relief, He will not turn you away.

What does this day in the life of Jesus call for from us? In one word – faith. He is a preacher who can be trusted, so trust Him, believe and receive His words by faith. He is a helper you can turn to. so turn to Him in faith. He cares for you. In fact, He is a tireless helper who will never cast you out. So come to Him. He is glorified in helping you.

If you have never come to Him for forgiveness of sin, for salvation, then that is the greatest healing that you need. That is the first and greatest way you need His help. You must trust His Words when He says to you that you are a sinner, deserving death and hell, but He has died in your place to take your punishment and allow you to be reconciled to God. You must come to Him as the only One who can help you, by taking your sin, forgiving you, granting you new life.

If you are a Christian, love His Words more than you have. Let them astonish you again. Pray more than you have been, because He delights to show Himself strong to you.

One day with Jesus is more than enough to say – trust his Word, receive His help.