

Proclaimed

Jesus is worthy of us telling others about Him.

Mark 1:35-45

35 Very early in the morning, **A** while it was still dark, he got up, went out, and made his way to a **deserted place**; **B** and there he was praying. **36** **Simon and his companions** **C** searched **D** for him, **37** and when they found him they said, **“Everyone is looking for you.”** **E** **38** And he said to them, “Let’s go on to the neighboring villages so that **I may preach** **F** there too. This is why I have come.” **39** He went into all of Galilee, preaching in their synagogues and driving out demons. **40** Then a man with **leprosy** **G** came to him and, on his knees, begged him, **“If you are willing,** **H** you can make me clean.” **41** **Moved with compassion,** **I** Jesus reached out his hand and **touched him.** **J** “I am willing,” he told him. “Be made clean.” **42** Immediately the leprosy left him, and he was made clean. **43** Then he sternly warned him and sent him away at once, **44** telling him, “See that you **say nothing to anyone;** **K** but go and show yourself to the priest, and offer what Moses commanded for your cleansing, **as a testimony to them.**” **L** **45** Yet he went out and began to proclaim it widely and to spread the news, with the result that Jesus could no longer enter a town openly. But he was out in deserted places, and they came to him from everywhere.

Exploring Key Words

- A** Jesus did not get much rest after the previous night’s activity, but He still made time with the Father a priority.
- B** The Greek word *erēmos* has also been translated “solitary place” (NIV; KJV) or “secluded place” (NASB).
- C** Mark had identified four disciples who had followed Jesus: Peter, Andrew, James, and John (Mark 1:16-20). Philip and Nathanael were also early converts (John 1:43-51).
- D** The wording often implies pursuing with a hostile intent. While the disciples were not antagonistic toward Jesus, their arrival was an unwelcome intrusion on His time with God.
- E** The disciples did not think Jesus was where He should have been.
- F** Jesus’s primary mission was to preach. The miracles simply validated His message.
- G** This term covered a variety of serious skin diseases in the first century. (See Lev. 13-14).
- H** Jesus assured the man that He was both willing and able to grant His request.
- I** “Pity” (ESV). Jesus was emotionally moved by the situation and showed compassion by touching the leper.
- J** According to Mosaic law, touching a leper brought spiritual defilement (Lev. 5:2; 13:45-46). Jesus’s compassion superseded ceremonial laws.
- K** Jesus did not want to gain the reputation of being just a miracle worker. This would hinder His ability to spread the good news.
- L** Jesus instructed the healed man to show himself to the priest so he could be pronounced ceremonially clean (Lev. 14:2-31).



Focused (Mark 1:35-39)

- Jesus went to a deserted place early in the morning to pray.
- When Peter and others found Jesus and let Him know that people were seeking Him, Jesus announced He would be going to other areas to preach.
- Mark revealed that Jesus then went to other parts of Galilee, preaching in synagogues and driving out demons.

Compassionate (Mark 1:40-42)

- While Jesus was preaching, a leprous man begged Him for healing. Jesus had compassion on the man, touched him, and declared him clean.
- The man was immediately healed.

Proclaimed (Mark 1:43-45)

- Jesus directed the man to tell no one about his healing and to seek out a priest to make the necessary sacrifices to be declared clean.
- The former leper failed to obey Jesus and word spread quickly. As a result, Jesus was forced to remain outside of cities in deserted places. Still, people managed to find Him and come to Him.

Summary Statements

Jesus is worthy of us telling others about Him.

- Believers must share the gospel in places that have not yet heard about Jesus.
- Believers show compassion by helping others in Jesus's name.
- Believers demonstrate thankfulness by telling about the work of Jesus.

Memory Verse

Mark 1:17

Key Doctrine

Missions

It is the duty of every child of God to seek constantly to win the lost to Christ by verbal witness undergirded by a Christian lifestyle, and by other methods in harmony with the gospel of Christ. (See Matthew 9:37-38; Acts 1:8.)

ENGAGE

What topics of discussion most interest you, and how do those topics relate to who you are as a person? (PSG, p. 19)

- While topics of conversation vary among adults, people usually talk about what's interesting to them. Even the quietest people will speak about things that are important to them.
- Some like to talk about ordinary events, while others enjoy controversy. One thing is certain: What we say reflects what's on our mind. Subjects or experiences that captivate us will eventually find their way into our conversation.

EXPLORE

1. FOCUSED (MARK 1:35-39)

Bonus: What are some things you will get up early for? What makes them worth the extra effort?

- Spending time in prayer was characteristic of Jesus (Mark 6:46; 14:32). It is noteworthy that Jesus found a quiet place to pray "very early in the morning," expressing its priority in His life. This description should drive us to examine our own commitment to communion with God.
- Participation in prayer is proportionate to the depth of dependence felt by every follower of Jesus. Its presence or absence in our lives is revealing.

How did the focus of the disciples differ from the focus of Jesus? (PSG, p. 22)

- Peter and the others were also up early that morning, but the verb for "search" can convey anxiety or impatience. Jesus's followers were caught up in His rising popularity. They saw it as a kind of marketing opportunity.
- Verse 37 would not be the last time Jesus's disciples failed to recognize His true mission. In contrast, Jesus had a singular vision and pursued it wholeheartedly.
- Jesus's prayer life kept Him focused on His mission and allowed Him to expand His ministry.

Why might a person get confused about the mission of Jesus? (PSG, p. 22)

2. COMPASSIONATE (MARK 1:40-42)

What might keep a person from showing compassion to others? (PSG, p. 24)

- As He pursued His ministry, Jesus was approached by a leper. The word "leprosy" was used for a variety of skin diseases (Lev. 13). In addition to physical issues, it carried a cultural stigma, making lepers social outcasts.
- This leper approached Jesus—a bold act in itself—in humility and asked to be healed. Jesus accepted the man and responded with compassion.

- Jesus touched the leper, an act that was both a social taboo and a religious violation. There's no telling how long it had been since this man had been touched by another person, but Jesus did not hesitate.

Bonus: What can believers learn from Jesus's actions here? What are some ways we can put those principles into action each day?

- According to the law, whenever something clean touched something unclean, the clean became unclean. But with Jesus, when clean touched unclean, the unclean was made clean again.

3. PROCLAIMED (MARK 1:43-45)

Bonus: Why did Jesus warn the man against telling anyone about His healing?

- Under the law, lepers were commanded to go directly to the priests to be declared clean (Lev. 14). Through this instruction, Jesus was honoring the law and the commands of God through Moses.
- More significantly, Jesus wanted to avoid anything that could hinder His mission. Large crowds fueled by ulterior motives might create obstacles for His work.
- While not excusable, it is understandable that the man disregarded Jesus's command. No doubt he was ecstatic. His motives might have been good, but it resulted in Jesus being unable to enter towns and villages.

Since people talk about the things that interest and captivate them, why do believers talk so sparingly about Jesus? (PSG, p. 26)

CHALLENGE

As a group, discuss the important role they play in encouraging one another to give witness to Jesus.

What practice could your group build into its weekly schedule that might inspire each adult to be a witness for Jesus? (PSG, p. 27)

Encourage individuals to list some acts of compassion they could regularly perform for the sake of the gospel.

How can you use the ones you already do as an introduction to sharing a witness for Jesus? What would be the outcome if you do good works but fail to share the gospel? (PSG, p. 27)



For Further Discussion

Scan here for additional discussion questions for this week's study.



BIBLE SKILL (P. 26, PSG)

Dig deeper into the background and usage of key words or phrases.

Focusing on the phrase “show yourself to the priest” (Mark 1:44), do a background study of the requirements that would have been necessary for someone who had leprosy to have been declared clean. Start in Leviticus 13–14. Use a concordance to discover other passages where leprosy is mentioned. Consult a Bible dictionary to help you better understand what leprosy was and what a leper would have faced if they had not been cured.

Lead the group to work in teams of two to four people to complete the Bible Skill activity (PSG, p. 26). After the teams have completed their work, lead the group in a discussion about what life would have been like for an “unclean” person in first-century Jewish life. Urge adults to actively seek ways to be Jesus’s hands and feet to outcasts today.

OBJECT LESSON: T-SHIRTS

Show the group a clean t-shirt and a stain-filled t-shirt. Discuss which one adults would rather wear. Note that people are drawn to “clean” and steer clear of “unclean.” Emphasize that Jesus entered the lives of people who were unclean. Point out that sharing Jesus with people today might mean walking with them in some messy parts of their lives. Encourage the group to consider ways to show compassion to those who may be considered outcasts by society.



DIG DEEPER

HEALING AND LIFE

While Jesus preached, a man with leprosy got down and begged Him for healing (Mark 1:40). “If you are willing” suggests that the man was humbly submitting to the One he believed could heal him.

Leviticus 13-14 provided the rules for skin disease under the Mosaic law. According to the law, lepers should wear certain clothing and warn anyone who approached them. Touching a leper also left one unclean. Knowing this, Jesus still reached out and touched the man, healing him immediately.

Commentators point out that “compassion” can also mean “angry.” If the man’s condition was satanic in origin, righteous anger on the part of Jesus makes sense. He also could have been deeply moved by the general way in which sin had corrupted God’s order and thrown this man’s life into chaos. Whatever the case, Jesus also showed compassion and incredible love.

Jesus warned the man to keep what happened to himself. Instead, his first priority was to show himself to the priest (Lev. 14:2-31). Jesus never sought a reputation as a healer. His focus was on sharing the gospel and revealing the kingdom of God on earth.

Of course, the man’s healing affirmed that Jesus really was the Messiah. In those days, a person with leprosy was akin to the walking dead, so the cleansing was like raising him from the dead. The religious authorities would explain such healing as an act of God, revealing that Jesus was truly God.

The priests said it was as difficult to heal leprosy as it was to raise the dead. Both are impossible for man; both are possible for Jesus. Despite all the man was suffering, he came to Jesus humbly—the same way we must come to Him.