

Mark | The Making of Christ Followers

08 Jesus' Mission

October 1, 2017

I. Introduction

How do you picture Jesus? I wonder what it would look like if you could put into a painting what you see in your head when the name Jesus is mentioned. Is he radiant with beams of light pouring out from his every pore?

Is he torn and beat beyond recognition upon a wooden cross in your mind? Is he white, with white robes and well groomed hair and beard kissing babies? Is he walking alongside a road having a jolly time talking with his disciples? Or is he an angry man screaming repent?

Either way, we need to acknowledge that we more than likely carry with us a certain image of Jesus that just might not be on par to who he really is. The reason this is significant is because we tend to follow whatever that image is. How we see Jesus, determines how we follow him. If he is a well groomed white dude in very clean clothing walking about with others who look just like him...well, we are going to do the same. If he is only angry casting judgment then we will tend to do the same. But if he is a Kingly Servant who uses his authority and power to lay down his life, then we will tend to do the same.

If he is the mighty one who tells the truth bathed in grace, then we will do the same. If he is compassionate then we will do the same. If his clothes are stained with the stench of the sick then we will do the same. If he walks with sinners and touches the least among us, then we will do the same.

Since Jesus is the center then it matters how we see him! The gospel of Mark is painting a picture of Jesus. Presenting him from many angles to help us see Him more full and not just one snippet, but all of Him.

So far we have seen him as Promised Messiah from OT, Conquering King in the wilderness, Authoritative speaking, and now compassionate Jesus.

II. Compassionate Jesus Healing

- A. *Peter's mother-in-law*...Peter had a family, the call to become a fisher of men now abruptly slaps us in the face and we see the true cost of Peter's following. Peter, and the rest of the fishermen, we already observed, left everything to follow Jesus.

Here we are clued into another detail about Peter's life, he had a family. Not that he followed Jesus at the neglect of his family but it places more weight on the decision to stop fishing/making money to follow Jesus. He had mouths to feed, a family to care for and now Jesus is moved to help his mother-in-law.

- B. *They told Jesus about her*...not sure to what extent they knew her problem but there is an awareness that the sickness had been ongoing for some reason. The moment Jesus sees her sickness they tell him about her.

We do know that it was a long standing belief that many ailments were brought on by sin, not always the case but the biblical perspective sees the body more holistically with the physical and spiritual.

For instances Ps 38:3, *“There is no soundness in my flesh because of your indignation; there is no health in my bones because of my sin.”* Being made right/well/whole was through the work of God, and now Jesus.

They often viewed sickness as God’s displeasure, so leaned heavily upon God to heal. They had no health care to lean on, just God to re-order life, to renew health. It was God, YHWH who they believed could heal—Which Exodus 15:26 says explicitly.

After all, they, we are created in the IOG. So, with Jesus healing her, God had truly show up. In essence, it is a sign that the Kingdom of God is breaking in and pushing back darkness...Jesus brings the kingdom and it is evident because even sickness can be overcome by Him.

Whatever the cause or reason for the ailment, in a deep show of compassion...

- C. Jesus steps down and touches her hand and lifts her up. This is so different than what we just saw a few verses before of Jesus commanding the unclean spirit. Here he kneels down and touches her. There is no command but at his touch the fever leaves her. Jesus is not bothered by the reasons she has problems, he simply has compassion upon her and the...
- D. Fever left her (αφίημι)...Jesus touch worked and the fever left, it was not permitted to bother her any longer.
- E. She then served them...the compassion that had been extended to her is now being used to extend compassion to those in the room. She serves!

- F. Then compassionate Jesus works through the night healing from sickness and demon possession. Now the question may arise here, why do we not see as many acts of healing these days?¹

Jesus is spending a tremendous amount of time here focused on healing. It would seem that the continuation of miraculous healing by the hands of Christ followers would further affirm the power and presence of the Kingdom of God.

Well, there are many volumes of books devoted to answer this question. But let me give a few thoughts here. We know beyond a shadow of doubt that here, with Jesus, this healing is screaming his divine nature—it was believed that only God could heal. It also tells of his compassion—he heals the hurting and will certainly fully identify with the hurting when he hangs on the cross.

But does this practice still happen today—this act of healing someone? If you have spent any amount of time in the Scriptures you might remember Acts, which is after the gospels—meaning that Jesus has already went to the cross and been resurrected.

Acts records the beginnings of the early church which were marked by the apostles doing miraculous things such as healing. But the act of healing someone is not as often seen today.

¹ Both David Garland, *Mark (NIVAC)* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan Publishing House, 1996) and *Are Miraculous Gifts for Today? Four Views*, ed. Wayne Grudem (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1996) were helpful for this section.

There are a few ways of seeing this. 1) Miraculous healing like Jesus performed ceased with the apostles, 2) Still happens but proceed with caution, or 3) reject the biblical worldview, which says that God can intervene into the natural order of things, and dismiss miracles all together.

Now the third option is easy to reject as it does not account for the powerful intervention of God into nature by his sovereign right. The miracles recorded within the scriptures did indeed happen.

But with the advancement of modern medicine there is often little room for the religious in terms of sickness. Spiritual is not considered helpful in getting well and miracles recorded here in Mark are not as prevalent.

Well, some explain this shortage by saying that the act of healing performed by the apostles was only necessary to validate the apostles work. They served as a temporary purpose and demonstrated God's power to the doubting but now have ceased with the apostles.

Though I agree there is a difference from the foundational period of the church and it's uniqueness compared to today, the scripture is not clear that this foundational period leads to a complete cessation of healings.

I think it best to see healing as open but proceed with caution. I say all this because I want to get to the heart of how we follow Jesus...

- Do we ask God to heal us, heal others, heal our families
—YES!

- Should we suspect any promise of complete healing with an appeal to money—YES! Nowhere does the bible promise health, but it does promise wholeness in Christ.
- Should we distrust anyone who performs miracles like a three ring circus act boasting of their ability to heal anyone at anytime—YES!
- Should we question someones faith when they are not healed—NO!
- Should we labor in prayer for years asking God to take cancer away from our loved ones—YES!
- Should we ask others to come alongside us to touch and pray for the sick—YES!

Seek help from Jesus the compassionate one

III. Compassionate Jesus helping those oppressed by demons

- A. Introduced to a new element. Jesus did not permit (αφιημι) the demons to speak. Interesting that the word translated here not permitted is the same word used to describe how the fever left Peter's mother-in-law. I find it fascinating and a clear point to the authority of Jesus over illness and demons. But why does Jesus not permit them to speak?
1. *Not credible witnesses*...the demons know exactly who he is and the surrounding people are still coming to grips with this man Jesus.

If the demons keep confessing who he is and having knowledge of him perhaps others could confuse Jesus association, much like those who later in Marks gospel saying that he, Jesus, was “possessed by Beelzebul” and “by the prince of demons he cast out demons” (Mark 3:22).

2. *Not in this for the fame...* Jesus had no desire to gain fame for himself, which we will see very clearly next week. This section alongside Jesus preaching in Galilee, the calling of the 4, and the teaching in the synagogue, was one day—verses 14-34. And already, the whole city was gathered at the door of Peter's house.

IV. Therefore...

Seek help from the compassionate Jesus and serve him with the compassion he extends to you.

- A. **Jesus**...is pushing back the darkness and you should to. He is not distant nor aloof to our struggles. He is near and administers healing. He steps down, we should be just as willing to step into the lives of others no matter their ailment and help...step into the hurts and pains of others.

1. We are so good at standing from a distance behind our privacy fences and pointing out problems but rarely do we step down into the hurt with others. It is more comfortable to just sit back and offer opinions on Facebook but very difficult to step down to lift someone up, to actual touch someone.
2. It is easy to pronounce that someone's ailment is their own doing and they deserve it, sure alcohol can lead to cirrhosis and sexual promiscuity can lead to HIV, but it seems to me our savior still steps down and touches even those.

He touches and willingly interacts with the hurting. He does not point out their failures. Not exactly sure why Peter's mother-in-law has a fever but Jesus does not care, and in a few verses later Jesus even touches a man

with leprosy. He does not drive them into deeper despair.

But this is not the only thing that is tough for us, we also find it...

3. Very difficult to step out of our ideology usually driven by our arrogance and hear the hurts and pains of others that are hurt by your ideology...that are hurt by your way of thinking.

You could be wrong and rather than pushing back the darkness of sin with the gospel of Jesus Christ, which is always right, you add to the darkness with your arrogance. Rather than bearing witness to the Kingdom of God that brings salvation to men, you bear witness to your lack of Christlikeness.

Sunday morning across the United States bears witness to our lack of Christlikeness when the seats are full of people with the same color, same economic status, same generational category, same, same, same, our sameness condemns us...this can only mean that we are not like the compassionate Jesus who steps down into the world of others not like us.

This is precisely what Jesus did and the OT told us he would do. The OT mentions that the Kingly Servant who was to come would do something tremendous. Isaiah 53 tells us many things but verse 5 in particular is compelling...

But he was pierced for our transgressions; he was crushed for our iniquities; upon him was the

chastisement that brought us peace, and with his wounds we are healed.

- D. **Following Jesus**...Is NOT a bunch of check marks on a survey, attendance at Christian gatherings, or mom and dad being Christians so therefore you are, we face a unique belief that being an American makes you Christian—makes you a follower of Christ...NO!!!!

A follower of Christ acts and speaks like Christ. Imagine the thoughts of these four men following Jesus—“He says crazy things and does even crazier stuff and we are suppose to follow Him?!” Jesus requires complete obedience, sacrifice, and radical trust.

We put our entire lives in God’s hands. Because we have not only seen Jesus deliver people from the physical ailments but he also frees us from the oppression of things, of our stuff.