

Proclaimed

SESSION 2

Mark 1:35-45

Memory Verse: Mark 1:17

Jesus is worthy of us telling others about Him.

Jesus approached His earthly ministry with a missionary mentality. He never asked for money and never expected any kind of reward for what He said or did. He simply demonstrated compassion to people who needed it. As a result, people flocked to Him. They recognized genuine love when they saw it. They saw something in Jesus that they weren't seeing in the religious leaders of the day and they responded by wanting to know more.

Jesus proved that messianic proclamation and sincere compassion were not mutually exclusive. In fact, when we allow them to work together, they are a powerfully effective way to share the gospel with a skeptical world. As you study this session from Mark's Gospel, reflect on how Jesus is worthy of our testimony about Him and consider how you demonstrate His salvation through both your words and your actions.



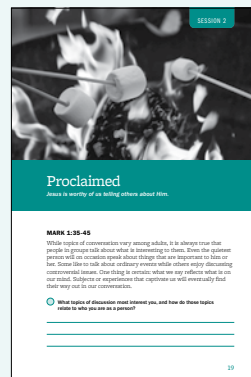
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While topics of conversation vary among adults, it is always true that people in groups talk about what is interesting to them. Even the quietest person will on occasion speak about things that are important to him or her. Some like to talk about ordinary events while others enjoy discussing controversial issues. One thing is certain: what we say reflects what is on our mind. Subjects or experiences that captivate us will eventually find their way out in our conversation. (PSG, p. 19)

What topics most interest you? How do those topics relate to you as a person?



Understand the Context (Mark 1:14–3:6)

After recording Jesus’s interactions with His first disciples (Mark 1:16-20), Mark described a series of miraculous events. In addition to revealing Jesus’s power and compassion, these accounts continued to validate Mark’s argument that Jesus was the long-awaited Messiah and that the kingdom of God had come to earth.

In the first story, Jesus displayed His authority over Satan by exorcising a demon (Mark 1:21-28). The afflicted man had disrupted Jesus’s teaching in the synagogue at Capernaum, but He rebuked the evil spirit and healed the man—to the amazement of the onlookers. In the next account, Mark shared how Jesus healed Peter’s mother-in-law, along with many other residents of Capernaum (1:29-34).

This was followed by the cleansing of a leper in another part of Galilee (1:39-45). Again, the people were astonished and recognized that Jesus was no ordinary person. In just a few short verses, Mark had showed Jesus’s authority through teaching, calling, exorcising, and healing.

The healings in Capernaum and the healing of the leper are separated by a brief, but important, passage about Jesus’s prayer life (1:35-38). In the midst of a busy and successful ministry, Jesus found His way to an isolated area where He could be alone with the Father. The passage suggests that even the Messiah needed to connect with the heavenly Father. His response to the disciples indicates that His time in prayer had given Him focus and direction for His next steps (v. 38).

In chapter 2, Mark emphasized Jesus’s power over not only spiritual and physical illness, but also over sin itself (2:1-12). Seeing the faith of a lame man and his friends, Jesus went a step farther and declared that the paralytic’s sins had been forgiven. This proclamation created a stir among the religious leaders who were present. To counter their accusations of blasphemy, Jesus healed the man’s physical affliction. Like forgiving sins, such a healing was something only God could do. So, the argument was clear: Jesus had the same authority and power as God.

This was the first indication of a conflict between Jesus and the leaders of His day. It would not be the last, however, as Mark highlighted more debates. After calling a tax collector named Levi (Matthew), Jesus spent time with some of his friends (2:13-17). Since these friends were considered “sinners” by the religious leaders, they questioned Jesus’s credentials as an orthodox rabbi. Later, they raised similar concerns because He didn’t fast like they did (2:18-22) or observe the Sabbath as they did (2:23–3:6). In each case, Jesus responded by reinterpreting the law from God’s perspective.

As you read Mark 1:35-45, note the ways in which Jesus exercised authority, by either word or action. Compare the calling of His disciples (1:16-20) with the casting out of demons (1:21-28). Which is the greatest display of authority? How do they relate to each other?



PRIOR TO THE SESSION: Make a list of topics that people might enjoy discussing. (*Examples: Sports, hobbies, children/grandchildren’s activities, travel, and so forth*)

DISCUSS: As adults arrive, encourage them to suggest topics that people like to discuss. Talk about why those topics might be good icebreakers. Allow a volunteer to read the paragraph in First Thoughts (PSG, p. 19). Ask: **Why do people find it easy to discuss topics that interest them?**

TRANSITION: *In today’s session, we’ll take a look at some people who were excited about what Jesus had done for them. In fact, they were so excited that they couldn’t help but share it with their families and friends.*

NOTES

Group Activity Option

Music

Provide adults with copies of the *Baptist Hymnal* (2008). Direct attention to #530, “I’d Rather Have Jesus” by Rhea F. Miller. Lead the group to sing the song together or to read it responsively. Encourage adults to list things in the song that might be distractions from following Jesus and fulfilling His mission for our lives and to reflect on those things during today’s session.

Focused (Mark 1:35-39)

35 And rising very early in the morning, while it was still dark, he departed and went out to a desolate place, and there he prayed. **36** And Simon and those who were with him searched for him, **37** and they found him and said to him, “Everyone is looking for you.” **38** And he said to them, “Let us go on to the next towns, that I may preach there also, for that is why I came out.” **39** And he went throughout all Galilee, preaching in their synagogues and casting out demons.

(v. 35) Very early in the morning: Jesus had not gotten much rest after a busy day of ministry. Still, He felt the need to rise early and connect with His Father. Mark noted that Jesus went out even before the sun came up. This enabled Him to leave without anyone noticing him.

Throughout the Gospels, Jesus made time alone with God a priority in His life. In fact, Luke shared that Jesus had a habit of pulling away from the crowds and finding quiet places to pray (Luke 5:15-16). Jesus understood the lure of the crowds and the temptations of popularity. That’s why He was so careful about setting aside time to talk with His Father. Likewise, He calls His followers to remove the distractions of life and to spend time with God regularly.

(v. 35) Desolate place: The Greek wording here is the same as what Mark used to describe the wilderness where John the Baptist preached (Mark 1:4). As noted, throughout Jesus’s ministry, He would find quiet places to spend time with the Father. The crowds were amazed by His teaching and, especially, by His miracles. But Jesus knew He had come to do so much more than preach and heal. This time alone was crucial for Jesus to regain His strength and to plug into His true Source of power.

(v. 36) Searched for him: Simon Peter and some other disciples eventually discovered that Jesus was missing and went looking for Him. The crowd wanted to know where He was so He could perform more healings, and the disciples were eager to maintain the momentum of the previous day’s ministry.

The term Mark used here is a verb that means to “track down.” In the Greek, it was usually used in a hostile way, though that was probably not the context here. If anything, Peter and the others were enthusiastic about finding Jesus and taking the next step in establishing the kingdom He had promised.

Of course, the disciples were still new in their relationship with Jesus and didn’t understand His need to be alone with the Father. They also didn’t totally understand all that His mission or the kingdom of

God entailed. The disciples were excited that the crowd’s response demonstrated the rising popularity of their Master, and they were confident that He would be pleased as well. This would have been especially important to the disciples as the crowds were coming from their hometowns and villages.

(v. 38) Let us go: While the crowd was expecting more miracles, Jesus told the disciples that it was time to move on. This was a bold statement that clarified His purpose. Jesus’s mission was not necessarily to draw large crowds or to meet their expectations. He had come to preach the good news of God’s kingdom to as many people as possible.

The messianic agenda had nothing in its playbook about being popular or becoming famous. Instead, Jesus’s ministry and message involved far more than just one or two towns. It was a message for all to hear and that meant sharing in places that had yet to hear Him. As Christ followers, this is also our purpose and ministry. Christians aren’t called to build great followings or to make a name for ourselves. We are commissioned to take the good news to those who have not yet heard about Jesus, letting them know that salvation is only available through Him.

(v. 39) Throughout all Galilee: In the first century, the promised land was divided into three sections. Judea, including the city of Jerusalem and the village of Bethlehem, were located in the southern region. The central region was called Samaria, and most devout Jews avoided this area. **Galilee**, which included Jesus’s hometown of Nazareth and his base of operations in Capernaum, was the northernmost area.

Key Questions

- How did the focus of the disciples differ from the focus of Jesus? (PSG, p. 22)
 - Why might a person get confused about the mission of Jesus? (PSG, p. 22)
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APPLICATION POINT: Believers must share the gospel in places that have not yet heard about Jesus.

READ: Invite a volunteer to read Mark 1:35-39, instructing the group to focus on Jesus's mission.

EXAMINE: Invite the group to briefly skim Mark 1:21-34. Ask: **Why was everyone looking for Jesus?** Encourage adults to think about times when they've wanted to get away for some peace and quiet. Ask: **Where did Jesus go and what did He do? How did this fit into His ministry focus?** Point out that Jesus's disciples had a different idea about what Jesus should be doing, but He never wavered from His mission. He had come to preach good news.

REFLECT: Emphasize that the crowd was looking for more miracles, but Jesus recognized the importance of shutting out the distractions and focusing on God's mission for His life. Talk about what believers today can learn from Jesus's example and how they can apply it to their lives.

TRANSITION: *Let's continue to look at the response of those who felt the impact of Jesus's mission and ministry.*

NOTES

Group Activity Option

Scripture Memory

Give each adult an index card and some colored pencils. Direct them to write this session's memory verse, Mark 1:17, on one side of the index card. Lead the group to list two or three characteristics of what it means to follow Jesus on the other side of the card. Read the memory verse aloud together as a group a few times, and encourage adults to memorize it over the coming week.

Compassionate (Mark 1:40-42)

40 And a leper came to him, imploring him, and kneeling said to him, “If you will, you can make me clean.”

41 Moved with pity, he stretched out his hand and touched him and said to him, “I will; be clean.” **42** And immediately the leprosy left him, and he was made clean.

(v. 40) Leper: According to the World Health Organization, leprosy still affects more than 200,000 people worldwide today; but it can be treated, and most people are able to live normal lives. In the first century, though, it was a feared and dreadful disease.

The biblical term “leprosy” could have described many skin diseases, but it commonly affected every part of the body. In worst cases, it would slowly eat away and rot the body, putting its victim under a guaranteed death sentence.

We know from the Old Testament that lepers were isolated from social interactions and placed in leper colonies outside the city. The priests would have examined them, and, if found to be unclean with a skin disease, they were quarantined. They would have to dress like people in mourning by wearing torn clothes and a face covering.

Lepers were not allowed to keep their hair clean because they were considered the equivalent of walking dead. When other people approached, they were required to shout out that they were unclean so those people could avoid them.

(v. 40) Came to him: This man would have broken the law by coming to Jesus and asking to be healed. He was desperate and knew that this disease would ultimately take his life. His boldness was measured with humility, as he fell to his knees and pleaded with Jesus to **make him clean**. It’s interesting to note that the man only asked Jesus to make him clean instead of healing him from the disease. He had faith enough to know that Jesus had the power to heal him, but his question to Jesus was one of willingness.

(v. 41) Moved with pity: Mark is the only Gospel writer to record that Jesus was moved with emotion toward this man. When people saw lepers in the first century, they would avoid them. Their appearance alone, especially someone in the advanced stages of leprosy, would repulse people.

Touching someone with leprosy was also strictly forbidden by the Old Testament law and would have made Jesus ceremonially unclean Himself. However, Jesus was so moved by the man’s request that He chose to personally touch the man and bring healing

to him. He could have healed him in a variety of ways, but Jesus chose to touch him, showing His love and genuine **pity** toward him. In doing so, Jesus demonstrated that He placed love and compassion over rituals and regulations. Mark recorded one of the two times in the New Testament where someone was healed of a skin disease.

(v. 41) I will: Once again, Jesus demonstrated His power over disease, even the most feared disease of His time. Jesus recognizes and honors genuine faith. When we come to Him with a sincere heart, He hears our requests and moves to meet our needs. While His timing may not align with our agendas, we never have to question His willingness to work in our lives and to bring good from even the worst possible scenario.

(v. 42) Made clean: Mark’s emphasis was on timing. The man’s healing was immediate. The **leprosy** was cured as soon as Jesus spoke the word.

Mark’s wording also could indicate a double meaning. On one hand, Jesus made the man ceremonially **clean** in the eyes of the Mosaic law. Though he was healed, he would need to show himself to the priest to be readmitted to first-century Jewish religious life. However, Mark also could have been referring to the man’s spiritual cleansing. Along with being healed of leprosy, it is reasonable to think that he also had been healed from the poison of sin.

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.)

EXPLORE Mark 1:40-42



APPLICATION POINT: Believers show compassion by helping others in Jesus's name.

READ: Invite a volunteer to read Mark 1:40-42.

EXAMINE: Group adults into teams of two or three. Direct them to read through verses 40-42 again, along with the content from pages 23-24 of the PSG. Encourage them to create a one-sentence summary of these verses. After a few minutes, allow volunteers to share their summaries.

EXPLAIN: Point out that leprosy made this man unclean according to the law. Emphasize that he would have been considered an outcast, both because he had a disease and because many Jews believed that disease was the result of sin in his life.

DISCUSS: On the board, write *Clean* and *Unclean*. Instruct the group to outline characteristics of a person who is clean and one who is unclean. Talk about how prejudice played into the clean/unclean conversation. Encourage adults to think about people who would probably be considered unclean today.

CHALLENGE: Highlight the fact that Jesus didn't limit His ministry to certain groups. Note that He entered into people's needs, refusing to shrink back from helping whoever needed Him. Remind adults that believers today have the same responsibility.

NOTES

Group Activity Option

Object Lesson

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.

Proclaimed (Mark 1:43-45)

43 And Jesus sternly charged him and sent him away at once, **44** and said to him, “See that you say nothing to anyone, but go, show yourself to the priest and offer for your cleansing what Moses commanded, for a proof to them.” **45** But he went out and began to talk freely about it, and to spread the news, so that Jesus could no longer openly enter a town, but was out in desolate places, and people were coming to him from every quarter.

(v. 43) Sternly charged: There are two verbs used in the context of this verse, one about warning and one about sending. Both give us the hint that Jesus was quite serious about the man not telling anyone.

(v. 44) Say nothing: Immediately after Jesus had touched and healed the man, he warned him not to tell anyone about him being healed. At first glance we might take that to be a very odd warning. However, Jesus was emphasizing that His mission was not to just heal people. Jesus didn’t want the reputation of another miracle worker or healer. He didn’t want massive crowds coming to him just to be healed from whatever ailment they were suffering from.

Jesus was committed to revealing the kingdom of God on earth. So, He was remaining true to His mission. By avoiding the distractions that the healing could create, He was focusing on His message of redemption and His work to bring the good news of salvation to everyone.

(v. 44) Show yourself to the priest: In keeping with the levitical law (Lev. 13:47-14:54) and its requirements for one who had been made clean from leprosy, Jesus told the man to go and **show himself to the priest**. He also would need to make the necessary sacrifices so that he could be declared clean and rejoin life at home and at the temple.

In doing this, Jesus was honoring the law of God, as well as giving a testimony to the priest that this incurable disease had been cured. Often, Jesus’s enemies accused Him of treating the law with contempt. However, this incident proves that Jesus respected the Mosaic law as long as it was interpreted and practiced as God intended. Mark’s willingness to highlight this truth was significant since members of the early church could refer to such incidents in their debates with Jews who believed Jesus rejected the law.

(v. 44) To them: **Them** refers to the religious leaders and priests. These were the individuals who would refuse to accept the fact that Jesus had the divine power to heal an incurable disease. While Jesus’s

conflicts with the religious establishment had not yet reached their peak, He understood well enough that they would stubbornly reject Him and anything that suggested that He was the Messiah.

(v. 45) Began to talk freely: The word translated **talk freely** can also mean “to preach.” While the man had good intentions of telling everyone what had happened to him and who had healed him, it would ultimately present a huge challenge for Jesus and his ministry. From this point forward, He would avoid going into most towns because of the large crowds that would gather. Instead, He chose to stay in more isolated areas. But even there, the crowds managed to find Him, and they would come from everywhere to see and hear Him.

(v. 45) News: Mark used the Greek word *logos* here, which is usually rendered “word.” In most contexts, it refers to the Word of God, though it can have a more general meaning (as is the case here). Bible scholars often refer to Jesus’s desire for silence in cases like this as “the messianic secret.” However, the people involved usually were eager to share what happened to them rather than keep their experiences under wraps.

Bible Skill

Dig deeper into the background and usage of key words and 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 lepers would have faced if they had not been cured.



APPLICATION POINT: Believers demonstrate thankfulness by telling about the work of Jesus.

READ: Invite a volunteer to read Mark 1:43-45, encouraging adults to consider why Jesus wanted the man to keep his healing quiet.

EXPLAIN: Use information from pages 25-26 in the PSG to share why Jesus did not want to draw attention to the miracle. *Once again, Jesus wanted to stay focused on His mission. He came to bring spiritual healing to people. He used miracles to make that happen, but He did not want the miracles to draw people's attention away from their greater needs.*

ASK: **How can meeting physical needs open the door for conversations about spiritual needs?**

COMPARE: Read Mark 1:43-45 again to the group. Encourage adults to suggest how the man's reaction differed from Jesus's instructions to Him. Ask: **Why do you think the man failed to obey Jesus's instructions?**

REFLECT: *When someone has experienced Jesus's work in their lives, they can't help but talk about it.* Direct the group to think about a time when they were excited to talk about Jesus. Ask: **What sparked that enthusiasm? What has watered down that enthusiasm since then?** Remind adults that Jesus is still at work in their lives. Encourage them to look for chances to share Him with someone who needs to know about Him this week.

NOTES

Group Activity Option

Bible Skill

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 they can be Jesus's hands and feet to outcasts today.

CHALLENGE

- SUMMARIZE:** Review these points from Apply the Text on page 27 of the Personal Study Guide:
- *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.*
- DISCUSS:** Lead the group to discuss the second question set in Apply the Text (PSG, p. 27). Consider practical ways the group could engage in mercy ministries together as a way to demonstrate compassion and share the gospel.
- CHALLENGE:** Encourage the group to consider how they can imitate Jesus's mission and tell someone about Him this week. Give each adult an index card and instruct them to write their goal for sharing Jesus. Direct them to keep the card with them this week and to let it serve as a reminder to seek opportunities to share Jesus.
- PRAY:** In closing, invite each person to offer a one sentence prayer of gratitude for Jesus's work in their lives.

After the Session

Reinforce the session by examining your own passion for sharing Jesus. Reflect on when you were most excited about telling others about Jesus. Remember how you felt in those moments. Examine your present excitement about sharing Jesus. Contact the group through email or text, reminding them to focus on their goal of sharing Jesus this week.

ADULT COMMENTARY



Want to go deeper in your study?
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(Available for purchase at **Lifeway.com.**)

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