

Commentary on Mark Chapter 1:23-45, by Chuck Smith 11.14.21

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November memory verse, Romans 3:23 (NKJV) for all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God,

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And there was in their synagogue a man with an unclean spirit; and he cried out, saying, Let us alone; what have we to do with thee, thou Jesus of Nazareth? art thou come to destroy us? I know thee who thou art, the Holy One of God ([Mar 1:23-24](#)).

James in his epistle said, "You say you believe in God, so what? That doesn't make you a Christian. That doesn't make you saved. For the devils believe and they fear and tremble before Him." So, just believing in God really doesn't bring you salvation, which many people are mistaken in that. They say, "Well, I'm not an atheist; I believe in God." But that isn't salvation. That's just proving you're not a fool. For it is the fool that has said in his heart, "There is no God." So you say you believe in God, then I believe you're not a fool. But it doesn't mean you're saved. Salvation comes by believing into a vital relationship with Jesus Christ, a life-changing relationship with Jesus Christ. "But whosoever believeth into Him," into this vital life-changing relationship with Him, "shall not perish but have everlasting life."

Now, this demon crying out said, "I know Thee, whom Thou art. You're the Holy One of God. What are you doing? You're coming to destroy us?" He recognized the power of Jesus. He acclaimed Jesus to be the Son of God, but he wasn't saved. It is possible for you to recognize the power of Jesus and acclaim that Jesus was the Son of God, and still not be saved. Salvation is a life-changing experience as you believe into this relationship with Jesus Christ.

And Jesus rebuked him, saying, Hold thy peace, and come out of him ([Mar 1:25](#)).

Speaking with authority to the demon. And when the unclean spirit [demon] had torn him, and cried with a loud voice, he came out of him ([Mar 1:26](#)). Mark makes mention of many cases of exorcism by Jesus, demonstrating the power that Jesus had over these unclean spirits or demons

And they were all amazed, insomuch that they questioned among themselves, saying, What thing is this? what new doctrine is this? for with authority commandeth he even the unclean spirits, and they do obey him. And immediately his fame spread abroad throughout all the region round about Galilee ([Mar 1:27-28](#)).

So suddenly around the area of Galilee there's a buzz about Jesus of Nazareth, the things that He is doing, the things that He is saying.

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And forthwith, when they were come out of the synagogue, they entered into the house of Simon and Andrew, with James and John ([Mar 1:29](#)). So, Simon and Andrew had a home there in Capernaum.

But Simon's wife's mother lay sick of a fever, and anon they tell him of her. And he came and took her by the hand, and lifted her up; and immediately the fever left her, and she ministered unto them. [That is, she fixed them dinner.] And at even, when the sun did set, they brought unto him all that were diseased, and them that were possessed with devils [demons] ([Mar 1:30-32](#)).

Not devils, plural, because there's only one devil. And the word translated in Greek is demons. And all the city was gathered together at the door. And he healed many that were sick of divers [different types of] diseases, and cast out many devils [demons]; and suffered not the devils to speak [he did not allow the demons to speak], because they knew Him ([Mar 1:33-34](#)).

A busy day. The beginning of the ministry of Jesus. He started out in the morning with this man with an unclean spirit as Jesus was teaching in the synagogue, and this man with an unclean spirit crying out and being cured. All day long they began to bring people to Him to be healed, on into the evening hours. How late we don't know. "All the city was gathered together there at the door of Simon's house." You'd say, "Ah, what a tough day. We better sleep in tomorrow." You'd been spiritually expended.

And in the morning, rising up a great while before day, he went out, and departed into a solitary place, and there prayed ([Mar 1:35](#)).

It's interesting that Jesus' concept of being renewed in strength and refreshed was not sleeping in, but getting out early before anyone else was up and communing with the Father. And He drew His strength from prayer. I do not know of any greater evidence of the necessity of our praying than the fact that Jesus prayed. Being the Son of God He resorted to prayer for strength, for guidance, for life itself. And if He, being the Son of God, saw the necessity of prayer, how much more do we need prayer? If He saw the need of getting up early to pray, how much more should we realize our need of prayer? How important prayer is to the spiritual life of the believer.

And Simon and they that were with him followed after him. And when they had found him, they said unto him, All men seek for Thee ([Mar 1:36-37](#)).

So later on when they got up, Jesus was gone. But already there was a crowd of people around the door waiting. And when Simon and the others found Him, they said, "Hey, everybody is looking for You."

And he said unto them, Let us go into the next towns, that I may preach there also: for therefore came I forth [this is why I came]. And he preached in their synagogues throughout all Galilee, and cast out devils [or demons] ([Mar 1:38-39](#)).

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And again, Mark makes note of the fact that He was casting out demons. Notice this is the fourth time that Mark makes a special emphasis upon this fact.

And there came a leper to him, beseeching him, and kneeling down to him, and saying unto him, If thou wilt, thou canst make me clean. And Jesus, moved with compassion, put forth his hand, and touched him, and said unto him, I will [or, I am willing]; be thou clean. And as soon as he had spoken, immediately the leprosy departed from him, and he was cleansed. And he straitly [sternly] charged him, and forthwith sent him away; And saith unto him, See thou say nothing to any man: but go thy way, show thyself to the priest, and offer for thy cleansing those things which Moses commanded, for a testimony unto them. But he went out, and began to publish it much, and to blaze abroad the matter, insomuch that Jesus could no more openly enter into the city, but was without [had to stay out] in desert places: and they came to Him from every quarter ([Mar 1:40-45](#)).

Now, Jesus was trying to have, perhaps, a little more freedom of movement. But when the news was going out the leper was cleansed and all of the healings that were being done, it got so bad that He could not come into the cities any more because of the throngs. In fact, we find Him spending a lot of His time in a little boat off shore so that they couldn't press around Him so much. The crowds so often get unruly, pushing, shoving. And so, He would push out a little ways from shore in the boat, and there He would speak to them from the boat as they would stand on the shore. And His purpose in telling this man not to tell anybody is to give Him a little more freedom of movement, but the fellow didn't obey and went everywhere telling everybody what had happened to him. It's hard to keep a secret when God has worked in your life.

Now, it's interesting, Jesus didn't say, "Now look, I want to teach you how to witness, friend. Take this little booklet, the Four Spiritual Laws, and you go out and you take this religious survey and you ask all these questions, which opens the door. And then you say, 'Well, do you know the four spiritual laws?'" You see, when God has done a marvelous work in your life, witnessing is the most natural thing in the world. How can you help but just share what God has done in your life? It's just something that becomes so much a part of your life. That witnessing is a very natural thing, not a programmed thing, but a very natural thing. You couldn't shut these people up. He didn't have to have a Tuesday night witnessing night where we go out and canvas the neighborhood. God was working in the lives of the people. They were being affected and touched by that work of God and they naturally sought to share what God had done for them.

The interesting thing about this leper is, number one; his statement to Jesus, "If you are willing." Is the Lord willing to heal us? Jesus looked upon him with compassion and said, "I'm willing." The second thing is that Jesus touched him. Now, it was unlawful to touch a leper. If you touched a leper, you yourself were considered unclean for a period of time. However, Jesus touched him. But that really wasn't unlawful, because the moment He touched him, he was cleansed. So he was no longer a leper. Immediately, he was cleansed. Jesus said, "Now go and show yourself to the priest, and offer those things which the law prescribed...go through the little ritual."

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So, it is interesting to me that God, in the law, made provisions for a man who had an incurable disease, which ostracized him from society. God made provisions for that man with an incurable disease to be returned to society when he was healed of an incurable disease. But how can you be healed of an incurable disease? God made provision for Himself to work as He so desired. So this is the law for the leper in the day of his cleansing. And God, under the law, gave that law for the leper in the day of his cleansing. He come and showed himself unto the priest; he examines him and then he puts him in a house apart. And after seven days, he examines him again to see if there be any new blotches of spots for whatever. And if he is clean after the seven days, then he is to bring in this dove and they are to kill it...two doves, actually. They are to kill the one, put the blood in the basin and all, and they're to take the live dove and dip it in this bloody water and then turn it free. And it flies away with the wings flapping of the blood and all of the dove that was killed as a sacrifice for his cleansing. And he was then cleansed and could return to society.

Interesting though, to me, that God would make provision for Him to work. Oh, let's always give allowance for God to work. Let's not try to put God in a box. So, leprosy is incurable. Well, give God the opportunity to work if He so desires. God left Himself room to work. And if God leaves Himself room to work, surely we ought to leave room for God to work. This is the law of the leper in the day of his cleansing. That, to me, is just absolutely remarkable. I love that particular portion of the Levitical law where God made provision for Him to do a miracle. "If I want to work and heal a leper, all right, this is the law for the leper in the day of his cleansing."

It is interesting in that leprosy is always used in the scripture as a type of sin, because it was such a horrible, loathsome disease that slowly ate away. First of all, it actually doesn't eat away, except that it destroys the nerve endings. And so, people became deformed as the result of the leprosy because they lost feeling. First it began in the extremities of their bodies, usually in their fingers or on their feet. And the first thing that leprosy does is numb your senses. It kills the nerves so you don't feel anything. And because they can't feel anything, pain or whatever, they've lost their sense of feeling. The lepers quite often have their feet gnawed away by rats, and they don't feel it. While they are sleeping at night, the rats will just eat their feet and they don't feel it because of the leprosy having destroyed the nerves. Or they will put their hand down on a hot plate or so, and they will burn their hands and get the gangrene and all as a result of the burns. They can't feel it. And so the damage is done actually because they don't have feeling. They say, "Oh, his finger dropped off." No, a leper's finger doesn't drop off, but because they have lost the feeling in their hands, in their fingers, many times they are burned or destroyed in other ways because of this loss of feeling.

Sin has a way of just anesthetizing a person. A loss of feeling, and slowly you're destroyed. It's incurable, except by a divine work of God. And so Jesus said, "I'm willing; be thou clean, go. Show yourself to the priest."