



## “MY” JESUS

MARK 1:35-2:12

OCTOBER 11, 2020 | PASTOR KYLE BELDEN



### GET TO KNOW EACH OTHER (USE JUST ONE OR ALL OF THESE QUESTIONS TO CONNECT AS YOU START YOUR CONVERSATION)

- 1** In the following situations, would you rather there be a large crowd in attendance, a small group of people, or to be alone: sporting event, concert, birthday party, doctor appointment, shopping, vacation, elevator ride, worship?

In normal times, we like it when a crowd shows up at church. The bigger the crowd, the more people hear about Jesus. With COVID, that may look a little different (a crowd may be online and on campus). No matter how people show up, true faith - ridiculous faith - is more often found when you have to go against the crowd. This is what we see in our passage in Mark this week. We find Jesus placing huge value on time spent alone with His Father because He knew what He needed most in that moment and He knew what was coming – a leper, a crowd, and a crew of friends on a mission. Each of them teaches us something about faith.

### QUICK REVIEW (OPPORTUNITY FOR PEOPLE TO SHARE WHAT MOST STOOD OUT FROM SUNDAY'S MESSAGE)

Looking back at your notes from this week's message, was there anything you heard that caught your attention, encouraged, challenged, or confused you?

### DIG DEEPER (OBSERVATIONS FROM THE SCRIPTURE OR COMPLEMENTARY SCRIPTURES FROM SUNDAY'S MESSAGE)

- 1** Someone read **Mark 1:35-39** in their Bible.

**After a hectic day of helping others (vs. 29-34), Jesus needed some time to be alone and pray. What do you think He prayed for? How might this time in prayer relate to Jesus' decision to move on (v. 38)?**

**We see Jesus model dependance on His Father – why do we as humans struggle so much with the desire to be independent in so many aspects of our lives?**

- 2** Someone read **Mark 1:40-45** in their Bible.

**Based on what you know about leprosy, why is it worth noting that Jesus “reached out His hand and touched the man” (v. 41)? Read Leviticus 13:1-2, 45-46 for insight. What do you think Jesus' touch meant to the leper?**

**What is the significance of Jesus' two commands in Mark 1:44? How did the man respond to each command? How did the man's disobedience impact Jesus' ministry?**

**What can we learn from Jesus' desire to be about the individual in this scenario, instead of the system of rules put in place by men or getting attention for what He did?**

**2** Someone read Mark 2:1-12.

**What does Jesus' response to the friends tell us about His mission? About our mission?**

**Why were the teachers of the law upset that Jesus offered the paralytic forgiveness?**

**What can we learn from Jesus' response to His critics? How should we respond when our faith is met with skepticism by those around us?**

**LIVE IT OUT** (DISCUSS HOW YOU CAN LIVE OUT THE TRUTHS YOU JUST OBSERVED IN SCRIPTURE)

**1** Can you, like Jesus, confidently say “this is why I came...” (v. 38)? If so, what is your God-given mission, and are you being obedient to it at this time in your life?

**2** Who in Mark 2:1-12 do you currently relate to the most: the crowd, the paralytic, the four friends, or the teachers of the law? Why?

**3** Kyle spoke about the different versions or images of Jesus that we may have developed over time and how that doesn't match the picture of Jesus we read about in the Bible, and specifically in Mark 1:35-2:12. Consider these questions to see if your image of Jesus matches or disagrees with that in the Bible and discuss them as a group.

- Is my Jesus independent or dependent on the Father? (Mk 1:35-39)
- Does my Jesus need to fit within the system and rules of man? (Mk 1:40-45)
- Is my Jesus enough to heal every aspect of my life that is broken? (Mk. 2:1-12)
- When MY Jesus and the real Jesus come into conflict, which one is going to change?

**CLOSING PRAYER**

Close your time in prayer with your group.

**NEXT WEEK: “Jesus” week 4**

Read **MARK 2:13-3:6** before Sunday and your home group. Remember to take good notes so you are ready to add to the discussion your home group will have!

**PRAISE/PRAYER REQUESTS** (TRY TO HAVE ONE OR A FEW PEOPLE PRAY FOR ONE TOPIC AT A TIME)

Use this space or the back of this paper to write the requests and find a way to share those with the group so you can be praying for each other during the week.

## TIPS ON GROUP PRAYER

Prayer is an important part of being in a Home Group. Here are some tips to help make group prayer be a life-giving aspect of your group.

**PRAY FOR ONE TOPIC AT A TIME:** Anyone in the group is free to introduce a prayer request or praise during the prayer time. Once a topic is introduced, the group focuses on that request alone. Once it's covered, the group moves on to the next request or praise.

**PRAY MORE THAN ONCE:** If your group is focusing on one topic at a time, each person is encouraged to pray several times during the prayer time for those topics they feel most led to pray about. No one should be required to pray.

**KEEP PRAYERS SHORT AND SIMPLE:** Group prayer goes better when members keep their prayers short and to the point. When someone prays for a long time, it's hard for the other members to stay focused and long prayers tend to intimidate those who are just learning to pray out loud in a group. No one should be required to pray out loud.

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### How to Use this Discussion Guide

The guide is meant to serve you and your group as you intentionally create a healthy environment for Gospel community, growing in friendship, and living like Jesus together. Use the guide as a tool to help your unique group.

With that in mind, please review the guide before your group meets to see if some content or questions might resonate more or less with your group. Don't feel pressure to read all the content during your group discussion or to hit on all the questions. The guide is not meant to be something you power through for the sake of completing. Pick the content from the guide you feel will help your group grow in Gospel community.

In addition, spend some time praying for your group each week, preparing your heart, and asking God for wisdom and guidance as you lead. We are praying for you too!

Visit [cpmodesto.org/groupleaders](http://cpmodesto.org/groupleaders) to download the sermon discussion guide every week. Not in a Home Group, but want to be in one? Visit [cpmodesto.org/homegroups](http://cpmodesto.org/homegroups) and use the Home Group Finder!

## COMMENTARY

### MARK 1:35-2:12

**1:35.** The word translated solitary place is the same that is translated desert in 1:3, 4,12,13 and perhaps suggests the same kind of spiritual testing described in the last two. There was no desert near Capernaum, and obviously Jesus wanted to find a secluded place apart from the crowds and even the disciples. The imperfect tense suggests prolonged prayer. In only two other places did Mark indicate that Jesus prayed, in 6:46 after walking on the water and in 14:32-42 in Gethsemane. All three were times of crisis when Jesus was tempted to take an easy way rather than that of suffering and death.

**1:36.** Mark perhaps referred to Simon and his companions (Andrew, James, and John?, vv. 16-20) rather than the disciples because they did not act as disciples should (though Mark did not use the term disciple at all until 2:15). The verb translated went to look for usually means to pursue with hostile intent. Of course it reflects Mark's point of view, not that of the disciples.

**1:37.** Here Mark indicated the error of the disciples. They wanted Jesus to take advantage of His growing popularity and perform more miracles. However, Jesus' primary mission was not to be a miracle-worker but a redeemer. The disciples failed to understand that the popularity itself made Jesus want to withdraw. The people of Capernaum apparently had no interest in Jesus beyond His miracles or any interest in coming under the reign of God. The verb Mark chose near the end of verse 37 is filled with irony. Whatever Aramaic verb the disciples used, they meant it in a good sense. Everywhere else in Mark, however, the Greek verb, which is not the same as in verse 36, translated "looking for" means to seek with evil or inappropriate intention. Mark recognized that the acclaim of the crowd was not good. Verse 37 is the first instance in Mark where the disciples failed to understand the mission of Jesus.

**1:38.** Jesus' answer contains an ambiguity. The last statement could be translated literally, "For this [purpose] I have come out." The question is whether the reference is to leaving Capernaum, going into all of Galilee, or having come from God. Luke's parallel (4:43) takes the third possibility, and Mark probably meant the same thing (cf. Mark 1:24).

**1:39.** This Markan summary characterizes Jesus' ministry as one of synagogue preaching and exorcisms. "Their synagogues" possibly reflects the separation of the church and synagogue in the time of Mark, or it may have been a reference to Galilean synagogues.

**1:40.** Widespread agreement exists among commentators that in the Bible "leprosy" is a general term covering various chronic skin diseases and is not limited to Hansen's disease, as is the contemporary use of the word. Without treatment in a hot climate, many skin diseases were vicious. Not only was the disease painful and debilitating but it rendered the victims religiously and socially unclean. They were required to live outside of cities and towns, have no contact with anyone, and declare themselves unclean when anyone approached. The law regarding leprosy is found in Lev 13–14. The Bible never speaks of healing leprosy, always of cleansing it. Part of the reason may be the loathsome nature of the disease, but a more likely explanation is that leprosy is a symbol of sin that must be cleansed. The episode implies that Jesus can forgive sin and therefore prepares for 2:1-12. The account further implies that, contrary to the law, the man approached very near to Jesus. By the statement "If you are willing," Mark probably did not intend to suggest any doubt on the leper's part.

**1:41-42** This verse contains a more important textual problem. The vast majority of textual witnesses, including those usually considered the most reliable, have a word meaning "filled with compassion." Only one Greek manuscript, four Old Latin manuscripts, and one early Christian writer—all of medium value—have a word meaning "having become angry." Whether Jesus was "filled with compassion" or "moved to anger," He displayed human emotion. Mark had no reservations about depicting the humanity of Jesus. The question then arises, "About what or with whom was Jesus angry?" Was He angry with the leper? Most interpreters insist that such a thing would be out of character for Jesus, and certainly the idea that Jesus was angry with the leper for interrupting Him or approaching Him contrary to the law may be set aside. Most who adopt the variant reading take the position that Jesus was angry with the strangely unnamed religious authorities for being unable or unwilling to help the man or that Jesus was angry with the entire evil order in which suffering has such a prominent part. Before a decision can be made about the object of Jesus' wrath, the stern verbs of verse 43 need to be considered. Jesus was perhaps angered that the leper doubted that the God active in Jesus' ministry desired his cleansing (cf. Jesus' reaction to doubt in 9:22-23).

Before leaving verse 41 we should observe that even if "with compassion" is not the original reading, the compassion of Jesus comes out clearly in the fact that He touched the leper. Such a thing was unheard of and made Jesus ceremonially unclean. Ritual uncleanness, however, was of no consequence to Jesus in comparison with human need. At many points He is depicted as being indifferent to ritualistic prescriptions. To the Jewish leaders, however, such an attitude was a threat to the established order and could not be condoned.

**1:43** The verb translated "sent ... away" usually means to cast out and is often used with reference to expelling demons (vv. 34,39). Unless Mark used the verbs in this verse with milder-than-usual meanings, it appears that Jesus was angry with the man and that He cast him out (of a house or synagogue?). It is highly probable therefore that verse 41 also indicates that Jesus was angry with the leper. If anyone except Jesus had been involved, few would ever have suggested any other interpretation. Why then was Jesus so angry with the man that He threw him out? Jesus may well have realized that the man would disobey His command to be silent and that this would greatly hinder His ministry. Furthermore Jesus—and Mark—wanted to make very plain that His primary ministry was not healing but redemption. This interpretation, as difficult as it may seem, is quite in keeping with the candor Mark displayed elsewhere.

**1:44** Here we find another example of the "messianic secret." In the last part of verse 44, Jesus is pictured as upholding the law, an appropriate balance to the subsequent conflict stories where He appears to have violated it. The early church may have found this account useful in disputes with Jews to show that Jesus did not indiscriminately violate the law. Whether the man had to go to Jerusalem is uncertain. Presumably, a priest anywhere could declare him cleansed, but sacrifices could be made only in the temple. Still another problem is the meaning of the last item in the verse. The word "them" probably refers to the priests, even though the word "priest" earlier in the verse is singular. Alternatively, it could refer to the people generally; but in this case there is no antecedent for the pronoun. In Greek, the testimony can be either "to them" or "against them." If the former, evidence of the healing is presented; but this is so obvious that it need not be stated. If the latter, the priests who do not recognize the power of God at work in Jesus produce evidence against their worthiness to hold the office. In 6:11, the same three words certainly mean "against them," and that is probably the idea here.

**1:45** This verse contains the first instance of disobedience to the command to be silent. The word "preach" or "talk freely" usually refers to the proclamation of the Gospel, and the word "word" often refers to the Word of God; but they sometimes have a more general meaning. The context requires that the reference be to the leper. Why would Jesus preach widely if the result were that He could no longer enter a city? No confident answer can be given. In any event, the secret cannot be kept. So overpowering was Jesus that not even His own command could hide Him.

**2:1-5.** Jesus performed many miracles in Galilee, the region where He grew to adulthood and where much of His earthly ministry occurred. His healing miracles attracted large crowds, but His central focus was always His preaching. Citizens of Capernaum previously had gathered around Jesus to be healed. Learning that Jesus had returned to town, so many gathered that there was no room left, not even outside the door. Jesus taught long and intensely—until He was interrupted by some determined men.

All Mark recorded about the four men appears in 2:3-5. They were determined to get their sick friend to Jesus because they believed Jesus would heal him. They had more than one obstacle to overcome. The first barrier they faced was their friend's immobility. The friends' unswerving determination to get him to Jesus may imply that his need was desperate, so they carried the paralytic stretcher-style on a mat to the house where Jesus was teaching. The second challenge the friends faced was the crowd who refused to make way. The four were so confident that Jesus would heal their friend that they climbed the outside stairway and made an opening in the roof above Jesus. The friends obviously let nothing hinder their determination to bring the paralytic to Jesus.

Everything the men and their paralytic friend had done is summed up in the words, "Jesus saw their faith." By their actions both the paralyzed man and his friends had clearly declared their faith. The sick man expressed faith in Jesus by allowing his friends to carry him to Jesus and to lower him into the room. The friends showed faith by their determination and bold actions. As the Son of God, Jesus knew that faith was in these men's hearts.

Jesus apparently said nothing about the damaged roof or the incredibly rude interruption. His first word was unexpectedly kind. "Son" (literally "child," a term used to express affection regardless of age) shows that Jesus viewed the paralytic with warmth and respect. Most people probably had ignored or looked down on him because of his apparent long-term disability.

Jesus' next words, "your sins are forgiven," were perhaps not the words the man wanted most to hear. Yet Jesus knew that forgiveness was what he needed most. He knows that having spiritual needs met (forgiveness and a new relationship with God) is far more significant than having temporal needs met.

How did Jesus recognize that the paralytic needed forgiveness of sins? Jesus, of course, knew the man's heart. All people have sinned and stand in need of God's forgiveness. Each individual's primary need is to experience God's forgiveness and to enter into a personal relationship with Him.

**2:6-7.** The teachers of the law, or scribes, were Jewish experts trained in interpreting and applying the Old Testament laws. These religious experts had come to hear Jesus for themselves. When Jesus announced that the paralyzed man's sins were forgiven, these teachers immediately concluded they had caught Jesus in a major theological blunder. To blaspheme meant to treat God's name or character lightly or carelessly. According to Old Testament law, those convicted of blasphemy were stoned to death. The Jews believed that one of the ways humans can attack God's character is to claim prerogatives and privileges that belong only to God. Jesus had made such a claim by declaring the man's sins forgiven.

Furthermore, according to first-century Jewish tradition, not even the Messiah (the Christ) could forgive sins. The teachers of the law were right in their major premise: only God forgives sins. However, their commitment to their traditional religious interpretations blinded them to the reality that Jesus was the Messiah, that He was God in human flesh. Instead, they could only think, "He's blaspheming!" If the teachers were right about Jesus, He was indeed blaspheming and their logic was correct. They were wrong, however. The teachers of the law failed or refused to recognize that Jesus is the Son of God Who truly forgives the sins of those who come to Him in repentance and faith. Sadly, the religious teachers continued in their spiritual blindness. They remained antagonistic to Jesus.

**2:8-12.** Jesus' question, "Why are you thinking these things?" was especially startling to the religious leaders because it was based on what they actually were thinking in their hearts. Jesus knew in His spirit what they were thinking—and revealed it to them. "Spirit" here is used in the sense of the inner person. Bible students have answered Jesus' question "Which is easier?" in two distinct ways. On one hand, saying, 'Your sins are forgiven' is easier because forgiveness is not open to direct observation. Saying, 'Get up, take your mat and walk' is clearly more difficult since everyone can witness the result. On the other hand, in reality both forgiving sins and performing miraculous healings are equally impossible for human beings. Both are the work of God.

Jesus referred to Himself as the Son of Man, His favorite designation for Himself during His earthly ministry. Jesus claimed authority . . . to forgive. Authority implies the moral or legal right to use power. God in Heaven has the sovereign right to forgive sins. The Messiah on Earth as God incarnate had the sovereign right to forgive sins. Jesus then said to the paralytic, "I tell you, get up, take your mat and go home." Here, Jesus was demonstrating His authority to heal on the basis of His word alone, just as His forgiving sins was accomplished on the basis of His word alone.

The man obeyed. He got up, took his mat and walked out. In this case, Jesus performed a miracle as a sign that He was the Son of God. The instant healing of the paralyzed man confirmed Jesus' claim to forgive sins. The crowd was amazed. The people of Capernaum had never seen anything like this because no one like Jesus had ever been among them before. They praised God for His transforming work. God received praise because people recognized His hand at work in Jesus Christ's mighty deeds.