

Jesus Messiah: Seeing Christ In The Gospel Of Mark

*“The time is fulfilled, and the kingdom of God is at hand; repent and believe in the gospel.”
(Mark 1:15 ESV)*

*And the curtain of the temple was torn in two, from top to bottom. And when the centurion, who stood facing him, saw that in this way he breathed his last, he said,
“Truly this man was the Son of God!”
(Mark 15:38–39 ESV)*

Do Not Fear, Only Believe

June 11th, 2017

Mark 5:21-43

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Introduction:

Good morning. I want to invite you to open your Bibles to Mark 5:21; that’s on page 840 in your pew Bibles. Let me begin by reminding you that Mark is an evangelist. He is known in church history not as Mark the Apostle – he was not an apostle – he is known as Mark the Evangelist. Scholars generally believe that he invented the genre of Gospel! Now, I’m not saying Mark invented “the Gospel” I am saying that he invented the GENRE of Gospel. He was the first one to write down the story of Jesus in an explicitly EVANGELISTIC WAY. That is important for us to realize. Mark did not write a BIOGRAPHY. That is not what the Gospel of Mark is. It is not the BIOGRAPHY OF JESUS – for one thing, Mark skips the first 30 years of Jesus’ life – ok, that is not how you write a biography, but that isn’t what Mark is writing. Mark is selecting stories from the life and ministry of Jesus EXPLICITLY TO CONVINCING US that Jesus is God, he is the Saviour that we need and we should trust him. Mark told us that he was doing that in the very first verses of the Gospel and remembering that will help you understand why Mark tells this story the way that he does.

Hear now the Word of the Lord beginning at verse 21:

And when Jesus had crossed again in the boat to the other side, a great crowd gathered about him, and he was beside the sea. 22 Then came one of the rulers of the synagogue, Jairus by name, and seeing him, he fell at his feet 23 and implored him earnestly, saying, “My little daughter is at the point of death. Come and lay your hands on her, so that

she may be made well and live.”

24 And he went with him. And a great crowd followed him and thronged about him. 25 And there was a woman who had had a discharge of blood for twelve years, 26 and who had suffered much under many physicians, and had spent all that she had, and was no better but rather grew worse. 27 She had heard the reports about Jesus and came up behind him in the crowd and touched his garment. 28 For she said, “If I touch even his garments, I will be made well.” 29 And immediately the flow of blood dried up, and she felt in her body that she was healed of her disease. 30 And Jesus, perceiving in himself that power had gone out from him, immediately turned about in the crowd and said, “Who touched my garments?” 31 And his disciples said to him, “You see the crowd pressing around you, and yet you say, ‘Who touched me?’” 32 And he looked around to see who had done it. 33 But the woman, knowing what had happened to her, came in fear and trembling and fell down before him and told him the whole truth. 34 And he said to her, “Daughter, your faith has made you well; go in peace, and be healed of your disease.” 35 While he was still speaking, there came from the ruler’s house some who said, “Your daughter is dead. Why trouble the Teacher any further?” 36 But overhearing what they said, Jesus said to the ruler of the synagogue, “Do not fear, only believe.” 37 And he allowed no one to follow him except Peter and James and John the brother of James. 38 They came to the house of the ruler of the synagogue, and Jesus saw a commotion, people weeping and wailing loudly. 39 And when he had entered, he said to them, “Why are you making a commotion and weeping? The child is not dead but sleeping.” 40 And they laughed at him. But he put them all outside and took the child’s father and mother and those who were with him and went in where the child was. 41 Taking her by the hand he said to her, “Talitha cumi,” which means, “Little girl, I say to you, arise.” 42 And immediately the girl got up and began walking (for she was twelve years of age), and they were immediately overcome with amazement. 43 And he strictly charged them that no one should know this, and told them to give her something to eat. (Mark 5:21–43 ESV)

This is the Word of the Lord, thanks be to God!

Well, as I mentioned, Mark tells this story for a reason. He wants us to see that Jesus is God, that he is the Saviour that we need and that we should no longer fear, but rather believe, so let’s look at this story according to those categories. Let’s look at it first of all in terms of what evidence it provides to support Mark’s contention that Jesus is God.

Jesus Is God

The first thing we see as evidence of Jesus’ Divinity is the fact that in this story, Jesus is shown doing things that no one else can do.

1. He can do what no one else can do

That’s the whole point of verses 25-26. Mark says:

there was a woman who had had a discharge of blood for twelve years, 26 and who had suffered much under many physicians, and had spent all that she had, and was no better but rather grew worse. (Mark 5:25–26 ESV)

This woman had tried everything! She had been to every doctor! She had tried every medicine! In today’s terms we would say, she had tried traditional therapies, she had tried natural therapies,

she had poured oil on it, she had named it and claimed it, she had taken pills and she had visualized healing – and still nothing worked. She was hopeless, helpless and at the end of her rope.

In that sense she has a lot in common with the demon possessed man in the last story. He had tried everything too! The villagers had tried everything too. They tried binding him, they tried driving him away and nothing worked. He kept hurting people and he kept hurting himself. He too was at the end of himself and he too was completely out of options. What we are supposed to see here is that Jesus can do what no one else can do! He can help people that no one else can help! One commentator even says:

“Mark 5 might be called the “St. Jude chapter” (the saint of hopeless causes), for the Gerasene demoniac, the menstruating woman, and Jairus each find hope in Jesus when all human hopes are exhausted.¹”

Are you seeing that? If Jesus can do what humans cannot do, then Jesus must be more than human. That is what Mark wants you to see. He is building a case for the divinity of Jesus.

The particular details in these stories argue that Jesus can do what normal humans cannot do, **BUT MORE THAN THAT** they also argue that Jesus can do what only God can do! That’s the next leg in the argument.

2. He can do what only God can do

I mentioned last week that many scholars believe that these stories – the calming of the sea, the exorcism of the demons and these two healings back in Capernaum – are all intended to show Jesus fulfilling in specific detail the conditions of Psalm 65:7. Psalm 65:7 says:

who stills the roaring of the seas, the roaring of their waves, the tumult of the peoples (Psalms 65:7 ESV)

Who does that? Answer: Only God can do that.

And yet, in these stories we see Jesus doing **ALL OF THAT**. He stills the roaring of the seas, he stills the roaring of the waves and he stills the tumult of the people. He is Sovereign over the

1. James R. Edwards, *The Gospel According to Mark*, Pillar New Testament Commentary. Accordance electronic ed. (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2002), 161.

storms out there and he is Sovereign over the storms in here. He is God.

The NKJV preserves this intention better with its translation of verse 38. Listen:

Then He came to the house of the ruler of the synagogue, and **saw a tumult** and those who wept and wailed loudly. (Mark 5:38 NKJV)

Jesus saw a tumult – he saw a human storm and he came to bring peace. Is there any storm more devastating than the storm of losing a child? Is there anything more destabilizing than that? Is there anything that makes you feel more vulnerable than that? Is there anything that makes you feel more powerless than that? That’s a tumult. That’s a storm and Jesus brought them peace.

He did the same thing for the woman with the issue of blood. Her whole life had been one giant storm. Having a chronic disease is probably the second most destabilizing event in a human life. For her it would likely have meant the end of her marriage. It would certainly have meant childlessness. It would have meant isolation – because she was constantly ritually unclean she would not have been allowed to go to the temple to worship and no one would have touched her – ever – because if they touched her they would have been unclean and unable themselves to go to the temple. And so this woman lived her whole life in a storm. Alone on her little boat. All by herself against the wind and the waves.

And Jesus brought her peace. Look at what he says to her:

Go in peace, and be healed of your affliction.” (Mark 5:34 NKJV)

Only God says that because only God is Sovereign over wind and wave.

That is Mark’s main point. That will be the main point of just about every sermon you preach from the Gospel of Mark. Mark wants us to know – Mark wants us to be CONVINCED – that Jesus is God. And that is what we should see when we see Jesus in this passage.

And we should also see that Jesus is the Saviour that we need.

Jesus Is The Saviour That We Need

Jesus is not “just God” – as if you could be “just God” but in fact, he is more than “just God” – he is God WITH US! He is Emmanuel! And He is GOD FOR US and that is what you are supposed to see in this story also. He is POWERFUL – YES! – BUT he is also RESPONSIVE TO HUMAN NEED.

1. He is responsive to human need

Look at verses 21-24:

And when Jesus had crossed again in the boat to the other side, a great crowd gathered about him, and he was beside the sea. 22 Then came one of the rulers of the synagogue, Jairus by name, and seeing him, he fell at his feet 23 and implored him earnestly, saying, “My little daughter is at the point of death. Come and lay your hands on her, so that she may be made well and live.” 24 And he went with him. (Mark 5:21–24 ESV)

In these stories it looks for all the world like Jesus just moved around on the earth in response to human need! He crossed over the Sea of Galilee into territory that no respectable Jew would enter into in order to liberate a Gentile man held captive to many demons. And then he goes back across the Sea of Galilee to his home base in Capernaum and he has barely set his feet upon the soil when once again he is off on another mission of mercy in response to human need. That is JESUS IN A NUTSHELL!

He is not just God in the heavens he is God FOR HUMAN NEED!

Do you have any idea how unique this is? There is nothing like this in Hinduism. There is nothing like this in Roman paganism. In those religions the “gods” are not interested in human affairs – O, of course you want to have more followers and more worshippers than the god next door, but by and large, human beings are an irritant in those religions. You have to bribe them and make a lot of noise to get their attention, because in and of themselves the gods in those religions are not terribly interested in human life and they are not naturally responsive to situations of human need.

Enter Jesus!

God over us.

God with us.

God for us.

There was absolutely no precedent for this idea in the religions of the ancient world. But there was the promise of it in Judaism. There was the hope of it, because God had said:

Behold, I, I myself will search for my sheep and will seek them out. ... I will rescue them from all places where they have been scattered... I will feed them with good pasture... I myself will be the shepherd of my sheep... I will seek the lost, and I will bring back the strayed, and I will bind up the injured, and I will strengthen the weak..." (Ezekiel 34:11–16 ESV)

God said that. God promised that he would come and he would CARE about human need. He would be the Shepherd and the Saviour that we need and we see that – GLORIOUSLY – in this story.

We also see that:

2. He cares about all people regardless of their age, race, gender or social standing

The breadth of Christ's concern in these stories is absolutely remarkable! In the story of the Gerasene demoniac we see his concern for the Gentiles. He is not MERELY the Saviour of the Jews! In these two stories that we are looking at this morning we see his concern for young and old. The little girl we are told was 12 years old. The woman was far older than that – she had been SICK for 12 years so she was at least a middle aged woman. And let me emphasize the obvious – SHE WAS A WOMAN. The little girl was a woman. Mark wanted it to be clear – JESUS WANTED IT TO BE CLEAR – he came for WOMEN. No other religious leader ever made that claim.

He came for Jews and for Gentiles.

He came for young and for old.

He came for men and for women.

He came for rich and for poor.

The whole spectrum of human society is represented in Mark 5! Jairus was a rich man – a RULER of the synagogue. The woman was a poor, social outcast! In this story we see Christ's concern FOR ALL!

Now, let me pause here and make a point that needs to be made in our day and age. What we see in this story is the universal dignity and worth of all human beings. What we see here is God's ESTIMATION of human value. It is an estimation that extends to all people of all ages and all genders and all socio-economic standing. It is all encompassing and you should know it was entirely without precedent.

No other religion – no other culture – made this kind of claim. Our belief today in the West that all human beings have dignity and worth and therefore that all human beings have certain intrinsic and inalienable rights and protections – that idea goes back to the text of the Bible. More than that, it goes back to the person and work of Jesus Christ.

Now, here is what's interesting, that idea – the idea of universal human rights - is by and large the one vestige of Christianity that our culture refuses to let go of. Here in the West we are a POST CHRISTIAN CULTURE. And yet, we still believe in universal human rights – and I am not saying we shouldn't – I am glad that we believe in universal human rights. But you should know something – that concept is not self evident to all the people in the world. It is not taught by all the religions in the world. Watching the news over the last 2 weeks ought to have convinced you of that. Not all religions teach the value of every human life. Not all religions teach that people have TREMENDOUS DIGNITY AND WORTH IRRESPECTIVE of race, age, gender or economic standing. Only Christianity teaches that.

And let's be clear, there is no rational basis for that belief in the secular materialist worldview that has replaced Christianity as the worldview of the West. Think about that. What does the secular materialist worldview say about human beings? It says that we are a cosmic accident.

There is no mind or purpose behind the universe. It is the result of a meaningless explosion billions of years ago that will end in a meaningless contraction billions of years from now. It will have meant nothing – and therefore you mean nothing. Nothing you do will survive the contraction of the universe. Nothing you do will even come close to enduring to the contraction of the universe. Long before that our sun will expand and this earth will fry and all human life will cease and you will not be remembered and you will not have mattered. You are a meaningless, accidental animal. You are only here because your ancestors were better at killing, eating and mating than other competing tribes and species.

So let me ask you a question – how do you get from that to universal human rights?

You are a meaningless monkey – therefore love one another?

That doesn't make any sense. If the secular material worldview is true then explain to me why I shouldn't kill you and eat you for lunch. That's what my ancestors did and that's why they passed on their genes to me. They were good at killing and eating and mating – so why shouldn't I kill and eat and maybe mate with you? How in the world did we come by this concept that all human beings should be treated with tremendous dignity and care and should be accorded value and worth? We did not get that from Charles Darwin my friends, we got that from Jesus Christ!

He came to this world because he cares. He cares about men and women, boys and girls, old and young, Jew and Gentile, rich and poor. He cares about ALL PEOPLE and as we also see in this story, he cares about the whole human person.

3. He cares about the whole human person

There are a couple of delightfully subtle details in this story that you must not miss. Look at verses 30-34 again:

And Jesus, perceiving in himself that power had gone out from him, immediately turned about in the crowd and said, "Who touched my garments?" 31 And his disciples said to him, "You see the crowd pressing around you, and yet you say, 'Who touched me?'" 32 And he looked around to see who had done it. 33 But the woman, knowing what had happened to her, came in fear and trembling and fell down before him and told him the whole truth. 34 And he said to her, "Daughter, your faith has made you well; go in peace, and be healed of your disease." (Mark 5:30-34 ESV)

As I mentioned this woman was not just sick – she was a total outcast! She had a perpetual issue of blood which means that she was perpetually unclean and contagious. If anyone even touched her they would be outside the social life of Israel – immediately. She was an OUTCAST! And she needed more than healing she needed RESTORATION and so Jesus did not let her sneak away into the crowd – he called her out. In front of everyone he made it known that she was CLEAN. He made a public declaration so that this woman could come back in from the cold. He wanted her to be welcomed into the front row of church next Sabbath Day! He wanted her invited to the next wedding. He wanted her to walk through the market UNASHAMED. Do you see that?

And do you see what Jesus said after raising the little girl from the dead. Look at verse 43; after raising this girl from the dead and giving her back to her parents Mark says that Jesus:

told them to give her something to eat. (Mark 5:43 ESV)

Who does that? If I were Jesus and I had just raised a child from the dead, I would spike my Torah on the ground and moonwalk out of that house and immediately post a selfie of the two of us together on social media – what does Jesus do? He says, “we need to get this child something to eat.” Are you seeing that? He raises this child from the dead and then he makes her a sandwich.

That’s Jesus in a nutshell! And if you can’t love that – then you are made of stone!

That’s Jesus – in all his beauty and glory.

He has power over demons, over disease, over defilement and even over DEATH! He can do what no one else can do – he can do what only God can do – and he cares! He cares! He is not just God UP THERE – OVER IT ALL; He is God down HERE! IN IT ALL and FOR US ALL². Therefore, do not fear – only believe.

Do Not Fear, Only Believe

² For my theologically precise friends and congregants, be it known that I am using the word “all” here in the sense of “all without exception – Jews, Gentiles, men, women, boys, girls, rich, poor” not “all without distinction”. ☺

Mark is an evangelist and this is, of course, the implied challenge in the text. If Jesus is God, if he can do what only God can do and if he cares and has come for you – then you should trust him. You should believe in him because sooner or later you will discover that you do not have power over those things that would steal your life and destroy the image of God in you. Sooner or later, demons, disease, death – it will all come for you and it will come only to steal, kill and destroy you – but there is One who has come that you might have LIFE! Abundant and eternal.

You should believe in him! You should trust in him! You should COME TO HIM!

Come unto Jesus – RIGHT NOW - and be saved!

Do not delay. Be like the woman in this story. She heard, she came and she touched him. You must do the same.

Because Jesus is God. He is the Saviour that we need and this is the Word of the Lord, thanks be to God, let's pray together.