

Mark
“Disobedient Praise”

1:35-45

- I. **Introduction**
- II. **Vs. 35-39 Intimate exposure**
- III. **Vs. 40-45 Lessons from the leper**

I. **Introduction**

After a full day of ministry Mark records two more things about the teaching ministry of Jesus the Son of God, having written of Jesus authority.

- 1. Vs. 35-39 The source of its authority, communion with the Father
- 2. Vs. 40-45 Its chief opposition, success

II. **Vs. 35-39 Intimate exposure**

Vs. 35 Someone well said that, *“Prayer is time exposure to God, the more we spend with Him the more we bear His image!”* Spurgeon was found of admonishing his students, *“Look no man in the face till thou hast seen the face of God. Speak thou with none till thou hast had speech with the Most High”*. The one thing that refueled Jesus was talking with the Father. Some might be tempted to call *prayer the secret of Jesus earthly ministry* but if so it is a secret hidden in plain sight, it is only a secret to us because we do so little of it. I believe that Mark’s point in including this is to show that Jesus’ authority came from His intimate relationship with the Father. The apostle John would elaborate on this much more in his gospel writing about that abiding relationship with the Father in John 14:10. Jesus would say to Phillip who had asked *“Show us the Father”*, to which Jesus responded, *“Do you not believe that I am in the Father, and the Father in Me? The*

words that I speak to you I do not speak on My own authority; but the Father who dwells in me does the works.”

Vs. 36-37 The word “*searched*” in the Greek is a word that means “*tracked him down*”.

Peter’s assumption was that Jesus was missing precious opportunities and needed to be brought back at once. Instead of helping facilitate the time that Jesus would take to be near the Father he and the others became part of the problem. If you want **the biblical**

approach to a hectic life we only need to reverse the order of these verses: “*Everyone is looking for you*” “*a long while before daylight go out to a solitary place and pray.*”

I’m sure that many of you can relate to those five words, “*Everyone is looking for you*”!

It is what almost drove Moses to ruin until his father-in-law suggested that many hands make light work. As true as that statement is Jesus found someone better than “*many hands*”, the hand of the Father!

Vs. 38-39 There are two opinions as to the meaning of Jesus statement “*for this purpose I have come forth*”:

- A. That Jesus was speaking geographical and local as if He meant that He came forth from Capernaum. The problem is that He hadn’t been at Capernaum as he was on the hill side giving a rather long teaching session we call His Sermon on the Mount.
- B. The 2nd interpretation (*and I believe the correct one*) is that Jesus is speaking essential and eternal and was speaking of His essential fellowship with the Father as He was dependent upon the Father and the Father had spoken and filled His Son for the work that lay ahead.

There will always be someone or something demanding that we drop everything at once but when we come into prayer the Lord directs us to the next towns. Jesus ministry could have only been in one city but through prayer it compassed all of Galilee which meant more people who were held captive were liberated as Jesus went to them instead of them having to come to Him.

III. Vs. 40-45 Lessons from the leper

Vs. 40 Luke the physician / historian's account is that the Leper was "*full or covered with leprosy*". The disease had run its course. Josephus wrote that lepers were treated as "dead men". A professor of ancient biblical diseases commented that "*No other disease reduced a human for so many years to so hideous a wreck. No other disease was regarded with more terror and pity than leprosy.*" Today there are more than 15 million people across the world with leprosy mostly in 3rd world nations. Matthew also records the healing of the leper but gives the timing of the event as being right after Jesus delivered His long sermon that we call the "*Sermon on the Mount*", which makes this the first healing of the day prior to Jesus teaching in the synagogue. There are ***four things that make this incident to the Roman reader a clear distinction of the superiority of Jesus over earthly Caesars:***

1. **Vs. 40 Appeal to Jesus' will:** What is unique in the healings of Jesus is that this is the only recorded healing where the persons request was appealed to Jesus willingness to do so. It seems as though the leper had come to the conclusion of divine purpose as it related to his circumstance. There are two words in the Greek that describe a person's "*willingness*", the 1st speaks of a desire that comes from a person's emotions the 2nd from a person's reason and the leper used the 1st word as ***he appealed not to Jesus'***

reason by tugged upon His heart. It is apparent that the leper has no doubt of Jesus' Power to heal him as he had heard of this ability, what he doubts is his willingness to do so and both the power and the will are necessary. What the leper meant was, "*If my healing is not out of line with the purpose of God, then you can make me clean.*" A great amount of believers inflected with illness far less than this would not care if it was out of line with the purpose or plan of God, just heal me.

2. **Vs. 41-42 Response motivated from compassion:** The 2nd thing that would capture the Roman reader is that the Son of God was moved with compassion and only Mark adds that Jesus then stretched out His hand and touched him saying, "*I am willing, be cleansed*". Very few of us have any familiarity with a person overcome with leprosy but it is a very disfiguring disease. A person's physical appearance is changed till they no longer resemble themselves. The worse part of the illness is that the patient suffers alone, away from family and friends alienated from society and human contact. There is a rule in Greek grammar that says that: The action of the present tense goes on simultaneously with the action of the leading word, which in this case would be Jesus saying "*I am willing, be cleansed*" indicating that they happen at the same time *He was touching the leper.* But here **the construction of this sentence points out that Jesus didn't touch the leper in order to cleanse him, but rather to show him and everyone around that he was cleansed at Jesus spoken word "*I am willing; be cleansed*".** Levitical law forbid a Jew to touch a leper and Jesus obeyed it and at His word the leper was cleansed and the touch was an act of kindness and revelation of what Jesus had done with the authority of His word. There are 8 such recorded touches in Mark's gospel alone.

3. **Vs. 43-44 Complete knowledge**: The purpose of the healing was that the leper was to be a testimony or witness to the priests. The entire 14th chapter of Leviticus, all 32 verses, are dedicated to probably the least read and used section in the Torah. An elaborate ceremony involving 8 days of examination, 2 turtle doves, 2 male lambs, oil and flour the twice shaving off of all hair, the washing of clothes and the body all while the healed person stays in a tent outside of the camp of people. Had this man done so the priests would have been astonished and would have had to research what to do? *“A man healed of leprosy? Why we haven’t had a case of this since... Elisha healed Naaman! And he wasn’t a Jew but a Syrian and commander of their army.”* The priests would have known two things about leprosy and its healing:

- That it was a symbol of sin as God had used it as judgment.
- Prophecies with regard to the healing of a leper being linked to the coming of the Messiah.

Jesus spoke of this when he answered John the Baptists concern with regards to him being the Messiah when Jesus answered in Matthew 11:5 “Tell John the things you hear and see: The blind see and the lame walk; the lepers are cleansed and the deaf hear; the dead are raised up and the poor have the gospel preached to them.” Yet, as Mark points out this was with the full knowledge of Jesus that this leper’s disobedience would lead to a change in Jesus ministry forcing Him outside of the cities. This fact is made clearer when we place it next to the Apostle John’s statement in 2:23-25 **“Jesus did not commit Himself to those at the feast of Passover because He knew all men.”** Jesus was not ignorant nor naive of humanity! This causes us to realize that such complete knowledge didn’t over ride Jesus’ compassion as one

would naturally think. *The only conclusion I can make is that the healing of the man with leprosy was of greater importance than the stated purpose to testify to the religious leaders as to His identity.*

4. **Vs. 45 Something better than praise:** All of the ministry opportunity lost because of this man's "**disobedient praise**". I could easily come to his defense by excusing his disobedient praise by saying, "*This fellow was encased in a loathsome foul disease for a long period of time and we are going to quibble about a little thing like timing of praising the One who healed him?*" Obedience is not only better than sacrifice it is better than praise! The greatest form of praise this healed leper could have given Christ was not to run around blabbing what God had done for him after he was told not to do so but rather to have done exactly what the Lord who touched Him told him immediately after his leprosy had left him. His lack of obedient praise had exactly the opposite results as it hindered others from receiving what he had, healing. Unwittingly and unintentionally the healed leper's praise violated the word whose power had liberated him. Oh what a valuable lesson this is for us as I want no part of disobedient praise.