

That is Why I Have Come

Mark 1:21-45

Key Verse: 1:38

“Jesus replied, ‘Let us go somewhere else—to the nearby villages—so I can preach there also. That is why I have come.’”

Jesus began gospel work by proclaiming, “The kingdom of God is near. Repent and believe the good news!” As we see today, Jesus’ message was accompanied by spiritual works that brought the kingdom tangibly to Capernaum. The kingdom of God was not established there geographically; yet it was revealed spiritually. We find two great characteristics of the kingdom of God: the authority of Jesus’ word, and Jesus’ compassion on the sick and needy. The kingdom of God is real and it comes in palpable ways. Wherever Jesus is, the kingdom of God comes and grows and expands. Today Jesus emphasizes that in kingdom work, the primary emphasis must be on preaching the message. Jesus maintained a clear purpose in God to do so through prayer. So Jesus said with confidence, “That is why I have come.” Many say, “I have no idea why I am here.” Jesus teaches us that through prayer, we can find our purpose in God and say with confidence, “That is why I have come.”

First, the authority of Jesus’ word (21-28).

Verse 21 says, “They went to Capernaum, and when the Sabbath came, Jesus went into the synagogue and began to teach.” Mark does not mention the contents of Jesus’ teaching, in contrast to Matthew. Mark focuses on the fact that Jesus taught and there was a great result. Look at verse 22. “The people were amazed at his teaching, because he taught them as one who had authority, not as the teachers of the law.” As soon as Jesus began to speak, people’s hearts were captured. They knew he was unique. Jesus taught “as one who had authority.”

What kind of authority did Jesus exercise? It was not legal authority; there is no record that Jesus issued even a single parking ticket. It was not political or military authority, for Jesus refused to be such a king. It was not academic authority that came from a degree, or institutional authority that came from a position. Then what was it? It was spiritual authority. This is illustrated by what happened next.

Look at verses 23-24. “Just then a man in their synagogue who was possessed by an evil spirit cried out, ‘What do you want with us, Jesus of Nazareth? Have you come to destroy us? I know who you are—the Holy One of God!’” Most likely, this man had come to the synagogue before and sat through the long, boring messages of the teachers of the law without revealing his true condition. But when Jesus began to teach, he reacted strongly. In fact, it was the evil spirit who reacted. Jesus’ word exposes demons, no matter how cleverly hidden.

When the evil spirit was exposed, he did his best to fight against Jesus. He despised Jesus' human background to arouse local rivalries. He used the expression "us" to gain sympathy from the audience. He tried to make Jesus seem threatening and abusive. He tried to show his special insight to impress people. His words were spiritual poison.

Look at verses 25-26. "'Be quiet!' said Jesus sternly. 'Come out of him!' The evil spirit shook the man violently and came out of him with a shriek." Jesus' first word was "Be quiet!" The evil spirit did not speak another word after this. Praise Jesus! Evil spirits are making noise throughout our society. Through bitter people, they spew nasty slander against godly people. Through those who are slaves of lust, they spread all manner of vile pornography. When mere human beings say, "Be quiet!" nothing happens. But Jesus can mute these evil spirits.

Then Jesus said, "Come out of him!" This was a command. It was an eviction notice. Upon hearing this word of command, the evil spirit had no choice but to evacuate. The evil spirit did not repent, for he still demonstrated his rebellion visibly by shaking the man and shrieking. But the demon had to go. The demon could not resist Jesus' word. Jesus did not bargain with the demon. Jesus drove out the demon with his word of command.

Look at verse 27. "The people were all so amazed that they asked each other, 'What is this? A new teaching—and with authority! He even gives orders to evil spirits and they obey him.'" They saw clearly what had happened. The news about Jesus spread quickly over the whole region of Galilee (28). When suffering people heard the news, they found new hope, while the evil spirits trembled.

What was the secret to Jesus' authority? In the context of Mark's gospel, it was the presence of the Holy Spirit. By the power of the Holy Spirit, Jesus had defeated Satan in the desert and taught the word of God. We can be powerful Bible teachers by the power of the Holy Spirit. When one word of God is spoken by the power of the Holy Spirit, it shakes Satan and sets captives free. For this to happen, we must pray earnestly and persistently. We must pray for all of our Easter Bible Conference messengers to receive the Holy Spirit as of first importance.

Second, Jesus spreads the kingdom to a home and community (29-34).

"As soon as they left the synagogue, they went with James and John to the home of Simon and Andrew" (29). To some people, the end of Sunday worship service means its time to enjoy the world again. But for Jesus and his disciples, it was just part one of the holy Sabbath day. They continued godly fellowship in the home of Simon. No doubt they talked about the event in the synagogue and Jesus expounded the Scriptures to them. Then it came time for the Sabbath dinner. Jesus and his hungry disciples were there, but no food was being prepared, because Simon's mother-in-law was in bed with a fever. Perhaps her fever came after she heard about Peter's decision to follow Jesus, leaving everything behind. She worried about her daughter's future. When they told Jesus about her, he went to her, took her hand and helped her up. The fever left her and she began to wait on them (30-31).

Through Jesus' action we can learn two things. First of all, Jesus was mindful of a sick older woman. To many, another person's fever is not so serious. Many young men are indifferent to the suffering of motherly women, having no idea to serve them. Jesus had a servant's mind toward Peter's mother-in-law. Jesus gently healed her fever. Though Jesus is mighty in spiritual authority, Jesus served this woman tenderly. When she was healed, she was happy to serve Jesus.

The second thing we learn here is Jesus' care for his disciple Peter. Peter's decision to follow Jesus was clear and absolute. Jesus expected this kind of commitment from Peter. But Jesus did not abandon or ignore Peter's family. Jesus visited and blessed Peter's family. Later, Peter's wife became his dear missionary coworker and accompanied him on his journeys (1Cor 9:5). When a disciple commits his life to Jesus, Jesus blesses his family abundantly.

Look at verse 32. That evening, when the Sabbath was officially over, the people brought to Jesus all the sick and demon-possessed. This shows us that although Capernaum seemed to be a normal city, Satan was ruling behind the scenes. Jesus' words and deeds revealed that the kingdom of God had come. People found real hope in Jesus. Suddenly, the whole town gathered at the door. And Jesus healed many who had various diseases. Jesus also drove out many demons. Jesus' kingdom spread from the synagogue, to one house, and to the entire community. When Jesus is welcomed and accepted, any home or community can be transformed, and reflect the kingdom of God.

Third, Jesus decides to preach all over Galilee through prayer (35-39).

Jesus must have been tired after working day and night. What did he do? Look at verse 35. "Very early in the morning, while it was still dark, Jesus got up, left the house and went off to a solitary place, where he prayed." Jesus renewed his strength through prayer. If Jesus prayed like this, how much more should we. The disciples were surprised that Jesus was gone. When they found him, they exclaimed: "Everyone is looking for you!" (37). Some people wanted Jesus to take leadership of their synagogue. Others wanted to make Jesus mayor of Capernaum. The hospital wanted him to join their infectious disease unit. The school district wanted him as a disciplinarian. How did Jesus respond? Look at verse 38. "Jesus replied, 'Let us go somewhere else—to the nearby villages—so I can preach there also. That is why I have come.'" Jesus was ready to go somewhere else, leaving Capernaum right away. Jesus was ready to spread the good news all over Galilee. Through prayer, Jesus' passion for Galilean evangelism was kindled. Through prayer, Jesus shared God's heart for all those who were under Satan's rule. Through prayer, Jesus kept on the offensive against the work of Satan.

When we see verse 38 carefully, we find that Jesus set the direction of his ministry according to God's will through prayer. Jesus defined his mission field—Galilee, and his main task—preaching the message. Though there were many good opportunities in Capernaum, Jesus left there. Though there was pressure to engage in healing and social work, Jesus decided to give first priority to preaching. Jesus' ministry was guided by God through prayer. Jesus renewed his purpose in God through prayer. Jesus knew with certainty what God wanted him to do. Jesus said confidently, "That is why I have come."

There are many people who are not sure why they are here. We can learn from Jesus to find our purpose of life in God through prayer. We cannot find our purpose in our situation, or by listening to people's demands. We can find our purpose of life in God through prayer. Then we can say, "That is why I have come." We can have great confidence in doing God's work. This gives us real joy and peace.

For the last 50 years, God has used UBF as a student movement. Mother Barry met Jesus as a student and taught the Bible to her classmates. Dr. Samuel Lee gave up a church pastor's position to engage in student evangelism. Dr. John Jun began Bible study as a student and brought his classmates. First generation UBF members in Korea and America were called into campus mission in the same way. I met Jesus as a student and found God's calling to shepherd students like myself, who were lost, confused and seeking direction. Many of you can say the same. Individually and collectively we found God's purpose for our lives in campus mission. However, to maintain this focus is not easy. We must adapt to student culture, including language and music. Although we invest a lot, we may not see results for 20 years. As time passes we face many other concerns with growing children and advancing careers. How can we keep our purpose in God to do student work? We must pray like Jesus and set a clear direction to do so. Last year, we went through a drastic reorganization to campus-oriented ministry. It is our sincere prayer to stay focused on student ministry. We must pray constantly to keep this direction.

Although there are many things to do, there is always one thing that God really wants us to do. We must pray for God's guidance to find this one thing. We must pray for the power to accomplish this one thing. Those who devote their lives to the one thing God wants them to do, renewing this decision through daily prayer, are the ones God uses to change the world. As Jesus focused on preaching in Galilee, the kingdom of God spread all over the region (39).

Fourth, Jesus' compassion (40-45).

Right after Jesus decided to focus on preaching, a man came to him for healing. Look at verse 40. "A man with leprosy came to him and begged him on his knees, 'If you are willing, you can make me clean.'" Leprosy was totally debilitating, fatal, and incurable. Lepers were quarantined. It carried a social stigma, being regarded as punishment on sin. This man seemed to be without help and without hope in the world. But one day he heard the good news about Jesus, that Jesus healed any kind of disease. Faith was born in his heart. He found hope in Jesus. So he came to Jesus. We can learn two things about his faith. Firstly, he was humble. He got on his knees before Jesus, like an unworthy subject before the king. He acknowledged that he was unclean. He was totally dependent on Jesus' mercy. Secondly, he believed Jesus could heal him. He was certain of Jesus' power. He acknowledged Jesus' sovereignty, admitting he had no right to be healed; he was not presumptuous. Yet he firmly believed that Jesus could heal him.

How did Jesus respond to this man? Look at verse 41. "Filled with compassion, Jesus reached out his hand and touched the man. 'I am willing,' he said. 'Be clean!'" Jesus was filled with compassion. Jesus put himself in the

leper's place. Jesus understood what the man needed: he needed to be touched. He needed acceptance and affirmation. Jesus reached out his hand and touched the man before healing his leprosy. Jesus accepted the man just as he was, with God's compassion and genuine love. Jesus loved him fully before he was healed. In the same way, Jesus loves us before he forgives and heals us. Romans 5:8b says, "While we were still sinners, Christ died for us." Jesus went on to articulate his willingness. Jesus said, "I am willing." Jesus is not reluctant in healing those who come to him. Jesus is willing and happy to do so. Then with one word, "Be clean!" Jesus transformed him into a vibrant, healthy man, who earned his varsity letter in three sports and was voted "most handsome" in his class.

In some ways, leprosy is like sin. Sin spreads throughout our inner being, making us unclean and a danger to others. Sickness ends in spiritual death. There is no cure. Yet when we come to Jesus as we are, acknowledging our dirty sins and asking his mercy, Jesus will cleanse us from all our sins. 1 John 1:9 says, "If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just and will forgive us our sins and purify us from all unrighteousness." 2 Corinthians 5:17 says, "Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation; the old has gone, the new has come."

After healing the man, Jesus gave him a strong warning not to tell anyone, but to go and show himself to the priest and offer the sacrifices that Moses commanded for his cleansing as a testimony to them. Jesus wanted to give glory to God for the healing. Jesus wanted to observe the law of God. This would help the man enter into society to live a normal life. It would also divert attention from Jesus. However, the man went out and talked freely, spreading the news. As a result, Jesus had to stay outside in lonely places. Still, many people came to him. They were confident that Jesus would welcome them and heal them.

Jesus has authority to drive out evil spirits and heal diseases. Jesus is compassionate toward the needy. Let's come to Jesus as we are. Let's learn from Jesus that we can find our purpose in God through prayer, and say with confidence, saying, "That is why I have come."