

20:20 Vision Ministries -- Devotions by Roger Browning Week 18 (April 28-May 4, 2013)

Jesus teaches that the miracles He does in His Father's Name verify that He is the Son of God (John 10:37-38). That is why the unbelieving world rejects His miracles (see John 14:11). We will look in Mark's gospel to study some of the miraculous healings during the earthly ministry of Jesus Christ.

Sunday -- April 28 (Mark 1:21-28)

Jesus is teaching in the Jewish synagogue in Capernaum when a demon-possessed man yells out to Him (v. 21-24). The Jews are already amazed at the authority of the Word of God coming from the lips of this carpenter from Nazareth (v. 22). The man with the demonic spirit recognizes Jesus and shouts out in fear (v. 24). The supernatural world knows that Satan's power is limited and that the devil is under the supervision of God. They know that their power on earth will come to an end when God wills it to do so. The demon is begging for a little more time (v. 24) to do his evil works. Our Lord rebukes the demonic spirit and casts him out (v. 25-26). The Jews are amazed that even the demons submit to the authority of Jesus (v. 27-28). What can be our excuse for refusing to do the same?

Monday -- April 29 (Mark 1:29-34)

Jesus goes with James and John to the home of Simon (Peter) and Andrew (v. 29). Simon's mother-in-law is bedridden due to a fever (v. 30). Our Lord takes her by the hand and helps her up. As He does this, the fever leaves her body. She goes immediately to work serving Simon's guests (v. 31). Several important truths are shown in this miracle: 1) Our Lord can heal with the touch of His hand; 2) The healing often takes place when we have enough faith to take His hand and get up; and 3) Those who experience a healing touch should be eager to serve Him. These two miracles (see yesterday's devotions also) done on the Sabbath become known in Capernaum and the whole town gather outside Simon's door bringing prospects (v. 32-33). Jesus does not let the demons speak because He is not yet ready to reveal His identity (v. 34).

Tuesday -- April 30 (Mark 1:35-39)

Very early the next morning, Jesus goes to "a solitary place" of His choosing to pray. He needs to re-energize His human body from a day of demands (v. 35). The disciples go out to find Him and exclaim, "Everyone is looking for you" (v. 36-37)! He informs His men that He came to earth primarily to preach the gospel. While He is able to heal the physical body, He came to heal the soul. Like in the days of His earthly ministry, many more people come to Him today for physical healings than for anything spiritual. Our church prayer lists are filled with requests to heal the body. It's not that Jesus doesn't still heal bodies; it's just that the spiritual needs are so much more important. Next, He leads His men throughout Galilee where He drives out more demons as He presents God's Word to a new audience (v. 39).

Wednesday -- May 1 (Mark 1:40-45)

Jesus heals another person with a touch, but this one is more controversial because Jewish law forbids the touching of a leper. The Lord's compassion is greater than any man-made law, so He grants the poor man's request (v. 40-42). He commands the man to keep quiet about the miracle and tells him to go to a priest who can restore him back to society according to their law (v. 43-44). The next verse (v. 45) begins with "instead." Jesus already has more than enough people requesting physical miracles, so He doesn't need more advertisements from the recipients. This man's "instead" drives our Lord outside the towns to "lonely places." These may be the same locations as the "solitary places" (v. 35). The only difference is the fact that He **chooses** to go to the solitary places to pray, but He is **driven** to the lonely places because of disobedience. Watch out for your personal "instead!"

Thursday -- May 2 (Mark 2:1-5)

Jesus returns home to His ministry headquarters in Capernaum (v. 1). The good news spreads quickly and a huge crowd gathers to listen as He preaches the word to them (v. 2). About a decade ago, God convicted me that I need to do nothing but "preach the word" as I minister to those He has assigned to me (see 2 Timothy 4:1-2). Expository preaching (see Nehemiah 8:8) replaced my fancy outlines with all points starting with the same letter. God wants His **Word** to be remembered after the sermon, not my preaching style. I still believe that His Word will ultimately bring in such a crowd that folks will be outside the door waiting for the next service. I have witnessed many physical healings in my ministry, but the **main thing** is to make sure that the **main thing** remains the **main thing**. Nothing can ever replace the clear presentation of His infallible Word! The rest of this story will be addressed tomorrow.

Friday -- May 3 (Mark 2:1-5)

I admire the faith of the four men who bring their friend into the presence of Jesus in spite of numerous obstacles. He is still in bed, but they bring him to the service bed and all (v. 3)! The place is too crowded by the time they arrive, but that does not deter them either. They climb up on Simon Peter's roof and dig a hole large enough to lower the man down to Jesus (v. 4). That's faith! Don't miss the pronoun in v. 5, "When Jesus saw **their** faith." These four men believe that the Lord can heal their friend so He rewards **their** faith and heals the man's affliction. He goes beyond that, however. He **forgives** the paralyzed man and gives him eternal life (v. 5)! As I said yesterday, that's the **main thing**! Physical healings are great, but they are temporary. Spiritual healings last forever!

Saturday -- May 4 (Mark 2:6-12)

The ever-present religious critics complain about the forgiveness of sins (v. 6-7). They are right that no one can forgive sins but God alone. What they are missing is the fact that **Jesus is God in the flesh** (see John 1:14). Our Lord is omniscient (all knowing) so He addresses their complaint (8-10). He has "authority **on earth** to forgive sins" because He is marching forward to the cross on which all our sins would be nailed. The worshippers are amazed by the power of Jesus (v. 11-12). I pray that your services will also be filled with power as your minister preaches the Word. I would love to hear you exclaim, "We have never seen anything like this!"