# **The Gospel According to St. Mark**

**Mark 1:29-45**

**Concordia Commentary – Dr. James Voelz, 2013**

Mark 1:29-34 – Jesus Heals

* Immediately – They are on the move again.
	+ Note what day this still is!
* Peter’s mother-in-law is ill with a high fever
	+ There is a stress on the “high”
	+ So she is really sick.
* Jesus takes her by the hand
	+ The importance of the touch of Jesus
* After sundown…
	+ An odd time to be bringing sick people out
		- Word got out
		- Illnesses increase in severity at sundown (???)
		- People were off of work?
	+ We will see this time again for more healing.
* The whole city.
	+ Jesus is a popular Guy!
* He healed many
	+ This is a fulfilment of the prophesized reign of God on earth.
		- But were people responding to His Word or His miracles?
* He expelled demons
	+ There is a spiritual warfare trying to oppose Jesus’ ministry/reign
	+ Jesus keeps them quiet
		- The “messianic secret”
* V.34 Some manuscripts have added “they knew Him *to be the Christ/anointed one*.”
	+ Unlikely original, but possible.

Mark 1:35-45 – Jesus heals a what???

* Jesus leaves in the middle of the night
	+ Secrecy under the cover of darkness
	+ The deserted place was where contact with the supernatural is taking place
		- Baptism
		- Satan
	+ One of only three accounts in Mark’s Gospel when Jesus prays
* Peter and the others are upset
	+ Why would they be upset Jesus has “escaped?”
* Time to move on
	+ An emphasis on preaching elsewhere
		- “Ya know, for this I have come out”
			* The healing ministry is distracting from His primary mission
* “towns”
	+ Denotes a market town
		- Not big enough to be a city
			* Normally walled
		- Larger than a village
			* Villages did not have enough men to carry out synagogue functions
	+ Why the small towns?
* Preaching and kicking out demons
	+ Parallels the start of Jesus’ ministry
	+ Stresses two key factors of that ministry
		- The proclamation of the Good News
		- Dealing with forces opposed to it
* A Leper
	+ A term that could cover a great deal of serious skin disease and comes under the Levitical code.
		- Individual had to be isolated from society (Leviticus 13:46)
		- Cry out “Unclean! Unclean!” to give others fair warning (Leviticus 13:45)
		- Only the priest could declare someone leprous (Leviticus 13:13)
		- Only the priest could declare a leprous person cured (Leviticus 14:3-4)
		- The infected person was both ill and unclean (Leviticus 13:3, 8, 11)
		- After healing, one had to be made clean again with ritual sacrifices (Leviticus 14:4-32)
	+ A serious affliction
		- The Jewish Study Bible
			* Seen as a gradual erosion of the skin, was thought to culminate, unless the patient recovered, in the ultimate disintegration of the flesh, which was taken as a manifestation of the gradual escape of life. The person afflicted with it was looked upon as potentially dead (Numbers 12:12), death itself having begun to consume his body (Job 18:13). This “leakage of life… creates impurity.”
			* Is also seen as a divine penalty (Numbers 12:10; 2 Kings 15:5). Rabbinic thought agreed, suggesting that the person afflicted with leprosy was being punished thereby for the sin of slander.
				+ Jesus nor Mark share this view that it is a punishment for sin.
		- Not just a Jewish problem – 5th Century BC, Herodotus
			* “The citizen who has leprosy or the white sickness may not come into a town or consort with other Persians.”
* Jesus deals with the unclean
	+ Earlier Jesus dealt with a man in an unclean spirit (1:23-26)
	+ Both men are unclean which means both are not under the reign and rule of God.
		- Remember, washing denotes cleanness, as a prerequisite for, and characteristic of, the reign and rule of God.
		- To be unclean is to be unwashed… not ready for, and not under God’s reign and rule
			* “Thy kingdom come…”
	+ Two men unclean
		- One spiritual
		- One physical
		- Jesus heals both
* The significance of “if”
	+ What is he saying??
* Pity/Anger
	+ A later manuscript and Old Latin manuscripts have used the term “angry” to parallel and justify Jesus’ actions in v.43
		- Rejected for reasons such as
			* That manuscript oversimplified many such verses
			* Mark’s Gospel portrays Jesus as one who does differently than expected.
* “I will”
	+ The man contributes nothing to his healing
	+ With Jesus granting permission for this leper to approach Him AND Jesus TOUCHING him (remember that would otherwise make Jesus unclean!), the old Law is passing away!
* Immediately
	+ Cleansed
		- The man is now clean in every way
			* Healed
			* Purified and in proper communion with God and man
		- Remember, the Jewish and popular belief was that the healing of leprosy is outside of human ability.
		- If leprosy is viewed as the walking dead, what does that say about what Jesus has control over?
* An air of perturbed
	+ harrumphing
		- The snorting sound a horse makes
	+ Reasons
		- The leper broke the Law when he approached Jesus
		- The leper interrupted His preaching ministry
		- The leper implied doubt of Jesus’ will to heal
			* Sees Jesus as only a miracle worker and not the bringer of God’s reign and rule
		- With regard to the nature of the horrible disease
		- At Satan because of his disfigurement of God’s creature
		- For a reason unknown to us.
* Say nothing
	+ Messianic secret
	+ If he goes and tells, he will not say the right reasons
		- Miracle man vs the Son of God
* Go show yourself
	+ Jesus conforms to the requirement of the Levitical code.
		- But if He has fully healed him, then why go?
* Offer for your cleansing
	+ Ritual purification, not healing
	+ Leviticus 14:32, 15:13
		- Jesus does not disregard the provisions of the Mosaic Law
		- Jesus is also ushering in something new
	+ It is about relationships
		- As he was fully cleansed, he could
			* Be with God under His reign and rule
			* Be with others again who were under God’s reign and rule
		- Hence the work of the priest
* Jesus could no longer openly enter a town
	+ The former leper can be in, Jesus cannot
	+ Jesus touches
		- Man becomes clean
		- Jesus becomes unclean
			* 2 Corinthians 5:21