# **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