**JESUS’ POWER TO HEAL**

January 19, 2020

Mark 1:21-45

Key Verse 1:34a “and Jesus healed many who had various diseases. He also drove out many demons.”

As the Messiah of the world, Jesus had to do many things. But at the beginning of his earthly messianic ministry, Jesus did mainly two things. First, he taught the word of God; second, he healed the sick. People were amazed at the power and authority of his word. People were amazed that Jesus had power to heal. Jesus’ word has authority and power to heal.

**First**, the authority of Jesus’ word (21-28). After John’s baptism and God’s ordination of Jesus as the Messiah, Jesus returned from the region of the Jordan River to Capernaum. There he started his messianic ministry. What did Jesus do at the initial stage of his messianic work? Verse 21b says, “...Jesus went into the synagogue and began to teach.” Jesus began his messianic work by teaching the word of God in the synagogue. Wherever there were as many as ten Jewish families, there was a synagogue. Wherever they went, Jewish people built a synagogue as the center of their lives of faith. Their synagogue was primarily a Bible house and a prayer house. In the synagogue, the Bible was taught not by the professionals but mostly by the laymen. In some sense, it reminds us of UBF house churches. When Jesus went in to teach, immediately his teaching had impact. According to verse 23, the people were amazed at his teaching. Why? Because he taught them as one who had authority, not as the teachers of the law. What did the teachers of the law teach? They did not teach and expound on the Scriptures, nor did they believe what they taught. Instead, they taught many traditions and rules and regulations to the people. They talked monotone and without any dialogue to the people. As they taught, many people’s minds wandered away. Some yawned and still to others eye lids felt like they weighed a thousand pounds. Their teaching had no power and no life in it. Therefore, people’s spiritual lives were very dry.

But Jesus’ teaching was not like the teachers of the law. This is because he is the author of the Bible and he taught with authority. This means he taught the Bible with faith believing that the Bible is the living and active and absolute word of God (Heb.4:12). He believed that the Bible makes people wise for salvation (2 Tim.3:15-17). He believed that the Bible could set men’s hearts free from sin. Jesus taught them the love of God and the glorious hope in the kingdom of God. Jesus believed the power of God’s word could change these people if they really repented and believed his teachings. When they heard it, they were amazed because they saw that he really believed it. It was so refreshing and inspiring. When we believe the Bible and teach it with faith like Jesus, we can move the heart of people and even amaze them.

When Dr. Samuel Lee gave messages, many students were inspired by his messages. What was the difference between his messages and others? The difference was that he delivered messages with decision to obey what the Bible says. When he studied the gospels, he realized that the gospels always ended with world mission command, “Go into all the world and preach the gospel.” He wanted to obey Jesus’ world mission command. But the problem was that he had no money to send out missionaries. Many people discouraged him, saying, “Missionary sending is possible only for Americans and Canadians who have money.” But he prayed. In 1968 he learned that some UBF nurses were going to Germany as contract laborers. By faith, he went to the airport and persuaded them to delay leaving until they had received missionary training. Amazingly several women responded. They were sent out as missionaries after 2 weeks of training. Eventually, Dr. Samuel Lee himself was sent out as a missionary in 1977 to Chicago. UBF sent out over 1,500 missionaries to the whole world. When we study the Bible with a decision to obey what it says, it will have power and authority. But if we study the Bible like literature without decision to obey, the Bible study will not have power and authority to change lives.

**Second**, Jesus’ word has power to drive out demons (23-25). There was a man in the synagogue who was possessed by an impure spirit. Look at verse 24. As soon as he heard Jesus’ teaching, he 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!” The impure spirit made the man suffer from the power of sin and death. The impure spirit made him utterly despair. The impure spirit deprives many of a sense of honor. The impure spirit makes many waste money on drugs and then have hangovers. The impure spirit is not afraid of a nuclear bomb. But he is really afraid of Jesus. Look at verse 25. “’Be quiet!’ said Jesus sternly. ‘Come out of him!’” At this, the impure spirit shook the man violently and came out of him with a shriek (26). Jesus’ word had power to drive out the impure spirit. The people were all so amazed that they said to each other, “Wow! What is this? A new teaching—and with authority! He even gives orders to impure spirits, and they obey him” (27). Until now, they were under the power of the impure spirit. But Jesus drove out the impure spirit with one word. We must believe the word of God has power to drive out impure spirits from men’s hearts. When we believe this, we can help others.

**Third**, Jesus’ power to heal (23-29). After driving out an impure spirit at the synagogue, Jesus went to the home of Simon and Andrew. Jesus’ young disciples must have been hungry after the meeting at the synagogue. They had to go somewhere to fill their empty stomachs. But too bad! Simon’s mother-in-law was sick. Maybe she became sick with worry when she heard that her son-in-law had quit his job to follow Jesus. She worried about how her daughter could survive by living with such an impulsive man. Jesus heard that she was sick and went to her. When Jesus took this woman by the hand and helped her up, her fever left her and she could wait on them. After this, she said to Simon Peter, “It was not a mistake for my daughter to marry you. You are my favorite son-in-law.”

After this healing, it was time to retire for the evening and relax. However, there came a knocking at the front door of Simon Peter’s home. It started small and grew. Look at verses 32-34a. “That evening after sunset the people brought to Jesus all the sick and demon-possessed. The whole town gathered at the door, and Jesus healed many who had various diseases. He also drove out many demons.” Some brought the paralyzed. Some came with very depressed people who cried a lot. Those who had tooth aches came to Jesus. Those who had many demons were brought to Jesus to be healed. Every kind of sick and lame people came or was brought to Jesus. This scene might look like a big hospital with much confusion. Everyone demanded of Jesus thinking their problem was the worst. It became very noisy. What could Jesus do? He could say to these people, “It is late, and I am tired. Come back at 9AM tomorrow morning.” However, Jesus did not reject these helpless people who needed his personal attention. Instead he healed them. According to Luke 4:40, Jesus healed them one by one. Jesus took care of each one of them with the personal love and touch of God. This is indeed amazing and very moving. Jesus is the true shepherd of all mankind. Jesus came to this world to heal the sick and bind up the wounded and anoint the broken-hearted. Jesus came to this world to heal sinsick souls.

**Fourth**, Jesus made time to pray (35-39). It looks like Jesus had no time because the demands of the people kept growing and growing. However, Jesus made time to pray. 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.” Maybe it was at 4AM when Jesus went to a solitary place to pray. What is prayer? Prayer is listening to God and talking to God. In prayer we can come to God and tell him all our problems. We can cast all our anxieties and burdens on him. Through prayer we can find direction for our lives and new encouragement. Through prayer our souls can be refreshed and restored. Obviously Jesus wanted to find direction for his ministry. Look at verses 36-37, “Simon and his companions went to look for him, and when they found him, they exclaimed: ‘Everyone is looking for you!’” Simon Peter was excited. He thought Jesus should come and show himself to the world and not be in this solitary place on his knees. He thought that Jesus should use this popularity to establish an earthly messianic kingdom. Then he would be the prime minister. Simon Peter was spiritually ignorant. He did not know what he was saying. So Jesus taught him the reason of his coming. 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.’” This verse sums well the ministry of Jesus. It was not to please people or be just a healer or a magician. It was to preach and teach about the kingdom of God. Jesus’ healing was not the major focus. His healings just supported his preaching and teaching ministry. All these miracles were done in order to validate the fact that Jesus is the Son of God. Through prayer he was reminded of why he came. He must go from village to village to preach the good news of the kingdom of God. In this way, people could hear the message and repent and believe and be saved from their sins.

**Fifth**, Jesus heals a man with leprosy (40-45). 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.’” What is leprosy? It is an infectious skin disease that eats away skin and bones. One begins to lose eyes and nose also.

It makes their eyes rot away. It disfigures a person’s whole body. These people had no cure. They would die from their disease. To the Jewish people, lepers were considered as unclean and condemned people. They had to live away from society in special leper towns. If they came within 30 feet of someone who did not have leprosy, they had to cover the lower part of their face and cry out, “Unclean! Unclean!” They were considered as social outcasts and cursed by God. With this kind of view of them and with their leprosy, this leper could only be fatalistic and hopeless about his life. More than disease itself, the belief that he was cursed by God was more unbearable. He viewed himself as despicable. He viewed himself as despised by men. He viewed himself as cursed by God. But he came with the hope that if Jesus is indeed the Son of God, maybe God will change his mind. When he heard that Jesus had healed all kinds of sick people he thought to himself, “Perhaps Jesus will heal me just the way he healed these other people.” In his heart, he believed that Jesus could heal him if only he could go to Jesus. In order to go to Jesus, he had to overcome himself. He worried that Jesus would reject him since he was unclean. He begged Jesus and fell on his knees in desperation and said, “If you are willing, you can make me clean.” Here we also see his doubt. He knew he could lay no claim on God. If God had cursed him this way, maybe God wanted him that way; no healing would come from this One, even if he were the Son of God.

How did Jesus respond to the man’s request? Look at verse 41. “Jesus was indignant. He reached out his hand and touched the man. ‘I am willing’, he said. ‘Be clean!’” Jesus rebuked his lack of faith. The leper must have observed many people who had already been healed by Jesus, which is why he came to Jesus in the first place. But for some reason the leper thought that in his case, because of his own doubts, Jesus might not be willing to heal him. Jesus was angry at his doubt. Jesus was angry at his unbelief. Nevertheless, Jesus’ heart was moved by this man’s coming. Jesus reached out his hand to touch this man, even though Jesus himself risked becoming unclean. We see here that Jesus did not see him as a wretched and cursed creature. He saw him as a human being who was suffering and who needed his healing. Though Jesus is God Almighty, he is humble and understanding. He is full of compassion for those who are suffering. He has compassion on those whom the world rejects. Especially, Jesus never turns down those who have faith in him. Perhaps no one had touched this man in years. As we know, human beings are social creatures. We need fellowship with others. We need a pat on the back, a hug, and a handshake every now and then or we feel worthless and rejected. Jesus reached out and touched this man in order to heal him. He could have just said, “Be clean!” and then that would be it. But Jesus reached out and touched him. This is very personal and caring. This means that God sent Jesus to reach out and touch sinners and heal them.

This man with leprosy represents all sinners. This is because sin is like leprosy. Sin disfigures us who are made in God’s holy image. Sin makes us ugly and miserable inside and out. Because of sin, many people are too ugly to be with. Sin cuts us off from God and from people. What happened when Jesus touched this man with leprosy? Look at verse 42. “Immediately the leprosy left him and he was cured.” Jesus’ touch immediately brought healing to this man. Once the man had been ugly and disfigured. His skin was full of rashes and holes. Now his skin looked like a baby’s skin. It was clean and smooth. His face was no longer disfigured. He had a handsome face. He became a new creation in Christ because the compassionate hand of Jesus had touched him. Praise God who sent Jesus to heal us and make us into new creations! Praise God for the power of Jesus to heal! May God help us to experience the power of Jesus to heal sinners.

In this passage we learned that Jesus has power to heal. Jesus is compassionate toward those who come by faith for healing. At the same time, Jesus is indignant at our doubt and unbelief. May God help us to believe in Jesus’ healing power and be healed.

Big Idea: Jesus has power to heal and if we believe, we will be healed.