

Mark 1:16-39 “A Few Busy Days”

So last week we began our study in the Gospel of Mark and remember that Mark said right away that this was just the beginning of the good news of Jesus. It's amazing to think that the work of Jesus Christ we are told in Revelation 13:8 began before the foundation of the world and simply said it will continue on into eternity.

In our study last week we saw that there was one who was prophesied that would come as an individual that would prepare the way before the Lord. We read about John the Baptist the odd man who was out in the wilderness dressed in camel skins and eating bugs and honey.

This man had a message that people were to prepare for the coming of the One that would be so great that John himself would not be worthy to untie his shoes. Someone awesome was going to show up on the scene and John in preparation for his arrival was giving the message that people needed to repent of their sins and we saw that multitudes of people were going out into the desert to be baptized in water.

Then came Jesus on to the scene and He Himself was also baptized and of course He was not baptized for His sins for he never had one but instead when He was baptized it was symbolic of His identity with sinful man that He would take our sins upon Himself. His baptism was also the beginning of His public ministry as both the Father and the Spirit were present.

Jesus was then sent out into the wilderness to be tempted by the devil for 40 days and remember we said last week that the key to Jesus overcoming all the temptations he faced was that He relied on the

Word of God and used it as a weapon to cut through the lies of the devil.

Jesus was then seen in Galilee and He immediately began to teach that those who heard must repent and believe in the good news...I would remind you that the only way to having a right relationship with God is through the sacrifice of Jesus Christ as He laid down His life to pay for the sins of the world...When an individual turns from their life away from God and chooses to instead believe in Jesus Christ that individual is then saved from their sins and given new spiritual life.

Now let's look here at verses 16-20 as we continue our study and those verses say ¹⁶And as He walked by the Sea of Galilee, He saw Simon and Andrew his brother casting a net into the sea; for they were fishermen. ¹⁷Then Jesus said to them, "Follow Me, and I will make you become fishers of men." ¹⁸They immediately left their nets and followed Him.

¹⁹When He had gone a little farther from there, He saw James the son of Zebedee, and John his brother, who also were in the boat mending their nets. ²⁰And immediately He called them, and they left their father Zebedee in the boat with the hired servants, and went after Him.

The Sea of Galilee is a famous place in the life of Jesus for it is here that much ministry transpired. Here we see that the first four disciples are called to "Follow Him."

If you follow professional sports at all you know that every year before the season begins they have what is called the draft...and it's a time when the teams will actually pick players to be on their team. Each

year the news will talk about the best picks and how great they are going to be and they will look at their history in the sport and almost always those top picks have had lives that were dedicated to the sport they play.

If you and I were going to set up a draft system for those that might be called to be followers of Jesus guess who wouldn't be on that list? The four fishermen that we find here in our narrative. These were perhaps the last ones in the world's eyes that the Lord might pick. These men were common men, they had no credentials, they had no status in life, they had no religious training.

The fact that Jesus chose these men is puzzling indeed...and yet I believe that Jesus chose them not for who they were but for who they would become as Jesus tells them that He "Would make them become fishers of men" This tells us that Jesus had a plan for these men, that He was going to work with them and help them to become the men that they needed to be and we know that one day these men will indeed reach the world.

I think that this is good news for you and I as we look at this for the Word says in 1 Corinthians 1:26-29 the following which says
²⁶ For ^[k]you see your calling, brethren, that not many wise according to the flesh, not many mighty, not many ^[l]noble, are called. ²⁷ But God has chosen the foolish things of the world to put to shame the wise, and God has chosen the weak things of the world to put to shame the things which are mighty; ²⁸ and the ^[m]base things of the world and the things which are despised God has chosen, and the things which are not, to bring to nothing the things that are, ²⁹ that no flesh should glory in His presence.

I know that before I came to follow Jesus you could most assuredly look at my life and say that I had nothing to offer, that I was a nobody, that my life was heading for an early exit over the choices I was making. And yet the Lord saw fit to call me to Himself and then use me to minister to others.

When Jesus told these men that He would make them fishers of men this surely would have spoken to these guys for they knew all about fishing as it was their profession. All their lives were spent trying to find where the fish were biting and trying to bring in as many fish as they possibly could. As a fisherman your whole job was focused on just one thing and all you did circled around that one job of bringing in fish to make a living.

So these men as they followed Jesus would learn the greatest skill that you and I could ever learn and it was how to catch people for the sake of the kingdom. This task was so important to Jesus that before He ascended one of the very last things He said to His disciples if you listen to Mark 16:15 was this ¹⁵**And He said to them, “Go into all the world and preach the gospel to every creature.”**

These men as they matured in their relationship with Christ and were then filled with the Spirit early in the book of Acts would then find themselves with a great catch of souls in their lives. Thousands would come to know Jesus as Lord and Savior through the preaching of the good news of Jesus Christ through them.

Today you and I have that same calling in our lives. We are called to fish for men, to be ready with an answer for the hope we have, to live a life that demonstrates that the God of the Universe is real and at work in our lives through the power of the Holy Spirit. I would simply ask

Are we the fishers of men that God has called us to be? We must not forget that we have a great calling in our lives to make disciples of Jesus.

When Jesus called these men to “Follow Him” they had to make a choice and for these fishermen they had to decide if they were going to hold on to what they knew and what they had come to trust for provision in their lives or were they going to leave it all behind to follow Jesus.

Similarly you and I have that same choice as we go through life. We must ask will I live for myself and what I want and what I know or will I take a leap of faith and follow the Lord Jesus Christ? In Mark 8:34-38 the Lord had the following to say of following Him when He said

³⁴When He had called the people to *Himself*, with His disciples also, He said to them, “Whoever desires to come after Me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross, and follow Me. ³⁵For whoever desires to save his life will lose it, but whoever loses his life for My sake and the gospel’s will save it. ³⁶For what will it profit a man if he gains the whole world, and loses his own soul? ³⁷Or what will a man give in exchange for his soul? ³⁸For whoever is ashamed of Me and My words in this adulterous and sinful generation, of him the Son of Man also will be ashamed when He comes in the glory of His Father with the holy angels.”

Every individual must decide if it is worth it to follow Jesus, we must ask ourselves if we are willing to take up our cross that we might follow. To follow Jesus will always cost us something and yet I would say that choosing Jesus brings about great gain.

You can hang on to this world and all it has to offer and yet we are told in the verses that we just read that you will lose your soul...We might ask is it worth it to have a little money in the bank, or a nice home? The Bible says all these things will burn one day and all that will be left is what we have in Jesus Christ...So is it worth it to follow Jesus? Absolutely for in Jesus is found the purpose of life...In Jesus is found the abundant life that we all want to have...In Jesus we can find that which our heart desires most.

One final note about these four fishermen...Simon and Andrew were brothers Simon one day would receive a new name from Jesus and that name will be Peter. James and John were two brothers as well and they must have been men that were up for a fight for Jesus gave them the nickname Boanerges which means Sons of Thunder...These two brothers at one point in Luke 9 as some people from Samaria refused to receive them will ask the Lord if they should call down fire from heaven to consume them...of course Jesus will decline to give them that desire.

So these men as they were called by the Lord began to follow as they decided that knowing Jesus was far more important than anything else the world could offer.

Look with me at verses 21-22 which say ²¹**Then they went into Capernaum, and immediately on the Sabbath He entered the synagogue and taught.** ²²**And they were astonished at His teaching, for He taught them as one having authority, and not as the scribes.**

Capernaum was a city on the Northern side of the Sea of Galilee and we will learn in the coming verses that this was the city that Simon

Peter's mother in law lived in and we will see that Jesus spent a great deal of time in this area as the Gospels unfolds. An important road called the Roman Road or the Via Maris ran right through here providing a connection between Damascus to the North and Egypt to the south. This would bring much trade to the markets in Capernaum along with travelers and Roman soldiers. Since it was so busy and so many travelled through it, it would then provide an easy way for the work of Jesus to spread as people carried news from one city to the next.

So Jesus comes to this city and he then enters the synagogue that was found there and it was the Sabbath. Now a synagogue was not the same thing as the temple which was in Jerusalem but instead it could be seen as a local gathering place or what we would call a church building for those that wanted to hear the Law of God, throughout the week there would be a local priest or scribe who would regularly teach. On the Sabbath though they would often times find those religious teachers that were travelling and they would invite them to come and share.

This is probably how Jesus was able to come in and begin to teach...and as He taught we are told that the crowd was astonished by what He had to say as they simply said that He taught them as one that had authority and not like the scribes. Typically when the scribes and religious leaders taught they would read from the scriptures and then they would actually quote someone else that came before them to help build a case for their words.

Jesus though didn't teach like that...and let me just share an example with you of how Jesus taught if you listen to what Matthew 5:27-28

says when Jesus said ²⁷ “You have heard that it was said ^[h]to those of old, ‘You shall not commit adultery.’ ²⁸ But I say to you that whoever looks at a woman to lust for her has already committed adultery with her in his heart. So Jesus would take things much further asserting things from Himself rather than trying to justify what He said by quoting others.

Another astonishing way that Jesus taught was that He actually would read the scriptures and then speak of how it applied to Him...Listen to what Luke 4:16-22 says ¹⁶ So He came to Nazareth, where He had been brought up. And as His custom was, He went into the synagogue on the Sabbath day, and stood up to read. ¹⁷ And He was handed the book of the prophet Isaiah. And when He had opened the book, He found the place where it was written:

¹⁸ “The Spirit of the Lord is upon Me,
Because He has anointed Me
To preach the gospel to *the* poor;
He has sent Me ^[i]to heal the brokenhearted,
To proclaim liberty to *the* captives
And recovery of sight to *the* blind,
To set at liberty those who are ^[i]oppressed;
¹⁹ To proclaim the acceptable year of the Lord.”

²⁰ Then He closed the book, and gave *it* back to the attendant and sat down. And the eyes of all who were in the synagogue were fixed on Him. ²¹ And He began to say to them, “Today this Scripture is fulfilled in your hearing.” ²² So all bore witness to Him, and marveled at the gracious words which proceeded out of His mouth. And they said, “Is this not Joseph’s son?”

So you can see that Jesus certainly spoke as no one ever had before and the people probably loved it...They probably had questions for sure for some of the things Jesus said could have been received as blasphemous or outside of what was normal and yet we know that every word was truth.

Can you imagine one day as we are in eternity and the Lord Himself will surely be speaking to us? Man what a day that will be for those of that have placed our faith in Jesus. I'm sad to say if you don't have Jesus in your heart you'll never have that opportunity...I would tell you today that if you don't have Jesus you are missing out on so much...I was talking with a brother the other day and he was telling me how different his life is now that he is living for Jesus...and we both said we wish people could just somehow see how wonderful it is to know Jesus. We both concluded that God must show Himself to them and they must come to that place that they cry out to the Lord.

So the people are amazed at what Jesus is saying, the room is probably silent hanging on to every word and one thing I can tell you is that when God is on the move the enemy isn't happy about it and sometimes Satan and his henchmen known as demons will try to bring about confusion and discord and that's just what we see here in verses 23-26 which say ²³ **Now there was a man in their synagogue with an unclean spirit. And he cried out, ²⁴ saying,**

"Let us alone! What have we to do with You, Jesus of Nazareth? Did You come to destroy us? I know who You are—the Holy One of God!"

²⁵ But Jesus rebuked him, saying, ^[a]“Be quiet, and come out of him!” ²⁶ And when the unclean spirit had convulsed him and cried out with a loud voice, he came out of him.

A man was there who had a demon and you can imagine that suddenly as Jesus is teaching this man cries out screaming, demanding Jesus leave them alone and declaring that he knew who he was saying He was the Holy One of God!

I would submit to you that this demon knew that his days were numbered. The Bible says in James 2:19 the following about demons when it says ¹⁹ You believe that there is one God. You do well. Even the demons believe—and tremble! Demons know all about Jesus and they tremble at His presence and certainly in this case the demon is looking to cause a commotion, to distract the people from hearing what was said...Perhaps he was even foolishly challenging Jesus.

I am thankful that while demons may seem to have a lot of power and they do have more power than we do that they are no match for the living God, they are no match for Jesus they are no match for the power of the Holy Spirit.

I want to add here that if you are a believer in Jesus there is no evidence in the Bible that you can be possessed. Perhaps a demon can mess with you from the outside or seek to influence you but the Bible is clear that when you accept Jesus into your heart you are given a deposit in your life that guarantees that which will one day come and that deposit is the Holy Spirit...and simply said when the Holy Spirit takes up residence He isn't about to share you with a demon.

I love what Jesus does in response to this outburst...He doesn't answer any of the questions, He does not engage in some long drawn out conversation, He does not ask the demon for its name...Instead He simply commands this demon to leave and it does so...When it says that the demon convulsed the man it gives the idea that he threw the man down violently.

I will confess that I don't have much experience with demons and I haven't really been a part of casting one out of an individual but I will say that Jesus does have authority over every demon...and that when people cry out to Him that He will step in and set an individual free.

I will say in reference to the spiritual realm that we so often I believe have no clue what is happening around us. There is an entire spiritual world that you and I are rarely privy to though we know the Word does teach us in Ephesians 6:12 the following when it says ¹²**For we do not wrestle against flesh and blood, but against principalities, against powers, against the rulers of ^[c]the darkness of this age, against spiritual hosts of wickedness in the heavenly places.**

As we pass through this world we should understand that just like Jesus as He spoke truth and found Himself confronted by the enemy so will we. I can remember multiple times being out evangelizing during Senior Week in Ocean City Maryland and as we are speaking to someone and you can see the Lord is doing a work in them and they are close to making that decision to trust in Jesus that suddenly from out of nowhere a distraction would show up pulling that person away.

I am thankful that Jesus at the end of the day is the all powerful, all mighty God and that He in His love has a way of breaking through the lies of the enemy saving the souls of men.

Look at verses 27-28 which say ²⁷Then they were all amazed, so that they questioned among themselves, saying, ^[b]“What is this? What new ^[c]doctrine is this? For with authority He commands even the unclean spirits, and they obey Him.” ²⁸And immediately His fame spread throughout all the region around Galilee.

The people as they watched Jesus easily flick this demon off and away from this man were in response amazed and they began to question themselves saying What and Who on earth is this and what is it this man is teaching that he not only speaks but then the demons are fleeing.

I want you to notice that the people were more focused on the teaching of Jesus and the doctrine that He presented to them than anything...and I would say that Jesus was far more interested in teaching the people and ministering to them than He was in performing miracles...The miracles Jesus did simply verified the teaching and brought proof of His authority and who He was.

You can imagine that Jesus was the talk of the town and we can see that His fame quickly spread throughout the region.

Look with me at verses 29-31 which say ²⁹Now as soon as they had come out of the synagogue, they entered the house of Simon and Andrew, with James and John. ³⁰ But Simon’s wife’s mother lay sick with a fever, and they told Him about her at once. ³¹ So He came and took her by the hand and lifted her up, and immediately the fever left her. And she served them.

From a busy synagogue to the home of Simon and Andrew we now find Jesus. We are told here that Simon’s wife’s mother was sick with

a fever...Now if you have any catholic background you might look at this and scratch your head for the catholic church asserts that Peter was the first pope and of course to be a priest or a pope means you are in a life of celibacy...Peter right from the beginning we learn was married. His marriage continued later on into his life as well for Paul said the following in 1 Corinthians 9:5 when he said ⁵**Do we have no right to take along ^[c]a believing wife, as do also the other apostles, the brothers of the Lord, and Cephas?** Cephas was another name for Peter.

In any case here we have Jesus in this home and the fishermen who were with Jesus told him about her at once...and we can see that Jesus graciously took her by the hand and lifted her up healing her. Isn't that amazing to see? I am reminded that Jesus can and does heal individuals of their infirmities...Perhaps today you and I would like to see the Lord heal much more often and I would agree but simply said Jesus can heal as He ministers to us. We should ask for that healing and we should at the same time submit to His will for our lives.

Notice that as this woman was lifted up that her next action was to begin to serve right away and I believe that as Jesus touches us and works in our lives that one of the first things we should have in our hearts is to look to see how we can serve the Lord. I hope that you have experienced that in your life...I know I did when I came to Christ I began to say "Lord please use me to reach the world, please use me to minister to others, please use me to be a blessing to those around me" and I will say that the Lord has given me many opportunities in my life.

I appreciate that our Lord not only desires to minister to the crowds in the synagogue but to the woman in a home. Jesus cares about the individual as much as He does the multitudes.

When Jesus is around I am reminded that great things can happen...Sometimes we need only to invite Him into the situation just as the disciples did here in our text...Perhaps they just wanted to see what Jesus might do and of course the Lord did not disappoint.

It's been a long day for Jesus at this point. He began in the synagogue teaching those that were there on the Sabbath and then after teaching he had to remove a demon from a man and then after that he went to a home where he healed a woman...Perhaps Jesus at this point wanted to rest, perhaps he wanted to spend some time with His friends but look at what happened in verses 32-34 where we read ³²**At evening, when the sun had set, they brought to Him all who were sick and those who were demon-possessed.** ³³**And the whole city was gathered together at the door.** ³⁴**Then He healed many who were sick with various diseases, and cast out many demons; and He did not allow the demons to speak, because they knew Him.**

We should remember that for the Jewish people a day began when the sun set and it ended the next day at the setting of the sun and when the Sabbath day came it would both begin and end it with the blowing of a trumpet...and so you can imagine that the city is hearing of a man that is there who has cured a person of demon possession and they are hearing that He speaks and teaches differently and they as a city suddenly had hope that perhaps there was someone that could heal and help those they loved who were sick and possessed.

And so they brought to Jesus ALL who were suffering just as soon as the Sabbath had finished and you can imagine that Jesus as He was relaxing heard the trumpet blown and not that much later He began to hear the people coming and they probably surrounded the home Jesus was in and you might think that Jesus would want to just be left alone but we don't see that at all as we are told He went and healed many who were sick with all kinds of diseases and would not allow the demons to speak.

I want to just remind us all that Jesus is never too busy or too tired to hear what we might have to say...Jesus values your life, the Father was intimately involved in your creation in the womb, Jesus wants to hear from you, He wants to be your best friend, He wants to be your Savior. Jesus never goes on vacation and He never needs a bathroom break. I believe that Jesus just loves it when we as His children run to Him that He is just waiting for us to call out to Him...and He delights to work greatly in our lives.

We might have a question in our minds about Jesus and His actions with demons and why He would not allow them to speak...If the demons knew who Jesus was and they would declare loudly that Jesus was the Son of God we might say "well wouldn't that just bring even more evidence of who Jesus is?" I would simply say that Jesus refused to allow a corrupt influence become a representative of His kingdom.

Jesus must have been exhausted at this point of the evening. It's been a tremendous day of ministry. You might think that Jesus would say that the next day would be a day of rest or that He might sleep in a few hours to rest up but instead we see this in verse 35 which says

³⁵ Now in the morning, having risen a long while before daylight, He went out and departed to a ^[d]solitary place; and there He prayed.

Jesus knew that when life got busy His greatest need was to be in the presence of His Father. What an incredible example for you and I rather than taking a break Jesus pressed in, He took the time to seek out His Father. When it says He was up in the morning before daylight He probably got up during the first watch of the day which was between 3 and 6 AM.

I want to ask you today what happens when you get busy in life? Does your spiritual life head to the back burner, does your Bible start collecting dust or do you force yourself to get up and get into the presence of the Lord? It's a hard thing indeed isn't it? Sometimes we may need to get creative in how we use our time...we may have to get up earlier to spend time with Jesus...Our usual prayer times may need to get shifted around...but we must make being with Jesus a priority in our lives.

If Jesus was willing and knew that He needed to get up early to be in the presence of His Father how much more should you and I need to be seeking the Lord?

Now watch what happens when the snoozers Simon and those with him finally crawled out of bed if you look at verses 36-39 which say

³⁶ And Simon and those *who were* with Him searched for Him. ³⁷ When they found Him, they said to Him, "Everyone is looking for You."

³⁸ But He said to them, "Let us go into the next towns, that I may preach there also, because for this purpose I have come forth."

³⁹ And He was preaching in their synagogues throughout all Galilee, and casting out demons.

When they got up they realized He wasn't there and they took off looking for Him...and I think the disciples were probably super excited at what the Lord was doing and perhaps they thought that Jesus would seize the moment as the people were quickly supporting Him.

And then they found Him and they excitedly tell Jesus that "Everyone is looking for you" and then to have the Lord tell you that its time to move on somewhere else because He needed to preach to them also would have been a shock.

I would say that the Lord does not always work how men might think He should. You and I can face this in our lives also as we follow the Lord. We must be careful not to do things because it seems like it's the right thing to do or it seems like it's the logical thing to do.

Sometimes the Lord might ask us to go and do something that seems like it is of lesser importance...To the natural mind staying right here in Capernaum and ministering to the people made the greatest sense but Jesus knew the picture was much bigger than that.

As a pastor I think this is a great word for me to think about as I make decisions. There are times that I am challenged to go against the normal routines that have been established here at the church...There may be times the Lord might lead me to make decisions that may not be popular...and that's a scary thing for me to walk through and yet it is the way of faith often times.

There may come a time in your life that the Lord reveals to you that it is time to step out in faith in a certain area of your life or that its time to

move your family to a different location, or that you need to do some things that may not be all that accepted...It's good to be open to the Holy Spirit's leading in our lives...I think we forget that following Jesus is an adventure, that new challenges await us, that there is a whole world that needs to hear and see the truth in their lives.

Jesus really when He called those four fisherman was asking them to go against everything that they knew as normal. There were no guarantees for them that they would get rich or that they would be blessed...And yet those men as they looked at Jesus as they got to know Him they could see that following Jesus was far more important than what anyone else thought.

Tonight as we close I would just ask you are you willing to do whatever the Lord might ask in your life? Are you willing to do that which no one else will? For Jesus the most important thing was to be in the center of His Father's will and as He sought the Father in prayer it became apparent that it was time to move on to the next fishing grounds in His search for the souls of men...that there were more that needed to hear the truth of the Word of God and so Jesus went we are told preaching in synagogues throughout Galilee and casting out demons.

As we close today I just have to ask you how is your walk with the Lord? Are you spending time with Him? Are you following Him? Are you His disciple? Are you looking to be a Fisher of Men? Are you looking to tell others the good news of Jesus Christ? If the Lord is speaking to you tonight calling you deeper in your relationship with Him I would simply say to respond to that great work in your life.

And today if you are here and you have not given your heart to Jesus I would say the Lord is calling you to trust in Him alone for your

salvation...Following Jesus is the greatest and really the only decision I have ever made in my life that really matters. If today you need to give your hear to Jesus just hang around for a few minutes after we close as I would love to pray with you and you can receive Jesus Christ as your lord and Savior.

let's pray.

Mark 1:16-39 “A Few Busy Days”

Cross References

Verses 16-20

1 Corinthians 1:26-29

Mark 16:15

Mark 8:34-38

Verses 21-22

Matthew 5:27-28

Luke 4:16-22

Verses 23-26

James 2:19

Ephesians 6:12

Verses 29-31

1 Corinthians 9:5