

“Highlight Reel”
Mark 1.14-45
Small Group Discussion Guide

OPENING QUESTIONS (get everyone involved in discussion):

- When have you interacted with someone who was a genuine authority in their field? How did you feel about being around them?
- Generally, how do you relate with people in authority?

TRANSITION: We’re spending the next few months taking a hard look at Jesus, in our series, “Coming into Focus.” We’re walking through the Gospel of Mark to see all that we can about who Jesus was and is. This week we see an indisputable attribute of Jesus, what he does with that attribute, and how that can re-orient your life. Much of Mark 1 reads like a highlight reel, where Mark takes us through five scenes involving extraordinary events.

READ Mark 1:14-15

- Why do you think that Mark mentions John being imprisoned (v. 14)?
- In v. 15, we see the essence of the message that Jesus went about preaching. How would you describe its content in your own words?

Scene 1: READ Mark 1:16-20

- What details stand out to you in this scene?
- Why do you think Jesus called fishermen, of all the existing trades, to be his first disciples?
- Jesus called his first disciples with a metaphor of fishing. What is your favorite hobby or skill and thus what metaphor would speak to you?
- It was common for rabbis (religious teachers) to have disciples in the first century Jewish culture, but what was unusual about the way this relationship began? (Pastor Josh mentioned two unusual aspects on Sunday).
- What was the essence of Jesus’ invitation?
- What do you learn about Jesus in this passage?
- What do you learn about the disciples in this passage?

Scene 2: Read Mark 1:21-28

- What was so amazing about Jesus’ teaching?
- Have you ever sat under a teacher who drew you in such that you loved listening?
- What is your impression of the interaction with the evil spirit in this scene? Why does Jesus command it to be silent?
- How might Jesus’ authority over evil, as seen here, have a bearing on our lives today? (Have you ever felt helpless over your sin?)
- In v. 27, the people who are watching point to the same attribute underlying both the teaching and the interaction with evil. What is that attribute?
- If you were one of the disciples present, how would it affect you emotionally as you see Jesus teach and heal?

Scene 3: READ Mark 1:29-34

- What strikes you about this scene in the home of Simon and Andrew?
- In what sphere are we now seeing the authority of Jesus?

- From these last three passages, review the scope of Jesus' authority. In what areas or dimensions does he have power?
- If "absolute power corrupts absolutely," there may be some danger with power. But how do we see Jesus using his authority in these stories?
- Is there any area where you doubt that Jesus has authority? Is there some aspect of your life where you doubt that he can transform you or your loved ones? Share at your own level of comfort.

Scene 4: Read Mark 1:35-39

- Why do you think that Jesus left the house before sunrise? Why did he need to go off and pray?
- How do you feel about Jesus' response to Simon and Andrew here?
- From this passage, what do you learn about Jesus' priorities?
- Jesus was able to say "no" because he had a clear mission. What does this teach you about setting "boundaries" on your activities and also on what others ask of you?

Scene 5: Read Mark 1:40-45

- What do you know about leprosy (a highly contagious skin disease with no known cure)?
- Moses had said in the Levitical Law, "The person with such an infectious disease must wear torn clothes, let his hair be unkempt, cover the lower part of his face and cry out, Unclean! Unclean! ... He must live alone; he must live outside the camp." Why were the restrictions so harsh?
- How would you feel after a long time of having to live out this rule?
- Any respectable Jewish man would recoil at the sight of such a leper, but not Jesus. What does this fact tell you about Jesus?
- Why is Jesus "indignant" with the man's request? What offended him?
- Why does Jesus command the leper to be silent about being healed?
- In vv. 44-45, we see one reason why Jesus commanded silence. How was he negatively affected when this healing became widely known?
- Discuss the irony of Jesus being on the "inside" and the leper on the "outside" of the community after Jesus healed him. In what way did they switch places?
- How does this concluding observation foreshadow how Jesus switch places with all of us on the cross?

APPLICATION:

- How would you summarize the way that Jesus used his authority?
- How do you feel about Jesus, knowing that he was cut off so that you could be restored?
- Has your opinion of or response to Jesus changed in view of these scenes?
- In v. 15 we saw the response that Jesus called for: repent and believe the good news. How do Jesus' authority and his use thereof impact your willingness to "repent and believe the good news?" Do you still have any hang-up to responding in that way?
- Is there any area where you currently need to experience the restoration that Jesus can bring?

PRAY: In addition to what you just shared, take time to share with one another some of your current needs, and pray openly for one another.