

Mark 1:16–45

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[0 : 00] Beginning with Mark chapter 1 verses 16-45. Passing alongside the sea of Galilee, he saw Simon and Andrew the brother of Simon casting a net into the sea.

! And Jesus said to them, follow me and I will make you fishers of men. And immediately they left their nets and followed him.

And going on a little farther, he saw James the son of Zebedee and John his brother who were in their boat mending the nets. And immediately he called them and they left their father Zebedee in the boat with the hired servants and followed him.

And they went into Capernaum and immediately on the Sabbath he entered the synagogue and was teaching. And they were astonished at his teaching. For he taught them as one who had authority and not as the scribes.

And immediately there was in their synagogue a man with an unclean spirit and he cried out, What have you do with us, Jesus of Nazareth? Have you come to destroy us?

[1 : 09] I know who you are, the Holy One of God. But Jesus rebuked him saying, be silent and come out of him. And the unclean spirit convulsing him and crying out with a loud voice came out of him.

They were all amazed so that they questioned among themselves saying, What is this? A new teaching with authority. He commands even the unclean spirits and they obey him.

And at once his fame spread everywhere throughout all the surrounding region of Galilee. And immediately he left the synagogue and entered the house of Simon and Andrew with James and John.

Now Simon's mother-in-law lay ill with a fever and immediately they told him about her. And he came and took her by the hand and lifted her up. And the fever left her and she began to serve them.

That evening at sundown they brought to him all who were sick or oppressed by demons. And the whole city was gathered together at the door. And he healed many who were sick with various diseases and cast out many demons.

[2 : 15] And he would not permit the demons to speak because they knew him. And rising very early in the morning, while it was still dark, he departed and went out to a desolate place.

And there he prayed. And Simon and those who were with him searched for him. And they found him and said to him, Everyone is looking for you. And he said to them, Let us go on to the next towns that I may preach there also.

For that is why I came out. And he went throughout all Galilee, preaching in their synagogues and casting out demons. And a leper came to him, imploring him and kneeling, said to him, If you will, you can make me clean.

Moved with pity, he stretched out his hand and touched him and said to him, I will be clean. And immediately the leprosy left him. And he was made clean.

And Jesus sternly charged him and sent him away at once and said to him, See that you say nothing to anyone, but go, show yourself to the priest, and offer for your cleansing what Moses commanded for a proof to them.

[3 : 24] But he went out and began to talk freely about it and to spread the news so that Jesus could no longer openly enter a town, but was out in desolate places.

And people were coming to him from every quarter. This is the word of the Lord. You may be seated. Well, good morning.

Great to have you here. And what a joy we have. I hope you keep the text open before you. Snow drops, and by that I mean the flowering kind that emerged from the earth, not the flaky kind that fall

from the sky.

Snow drops are God's announcement of good news. They are the first to proclaim that the thaw is melting, that winter is ending, that new life will be emerging.

And in one sense, then, the snow drops provide the dawn of what will be a declaration of the fullness of spring.

[4 : 52] The arrival of snow drops we look for every year in our home, but it's the activity of spring that we're in the midst of now that we begin to long for because the snow drops eventually give way to crocus and to daffodils, to forsythia and to redbud.

And you know now that the activity of new life is in full flower. I open with that analogy by way of declaring to you that last week in the prologue of Mark, we saw the snow drops of good news. We saw four declarations, as it were, from the prophetic scriptures, from the Baptist himself to God's voice from heaven, and then even Satan's opposition, that Jesus was going to fulfill something of good news.

But in this text, there are four descriptions of the activity of good news that are emerging in the text. And you might have noticed, even in the reading, four or five times, Mark's inclusion of this word immediately, immediately. As from scene to scene, he's shifting from the early announcement of good news to now the declaration and description of what that news looks like.

[6 : 25] I asked you last week, anyone in need of some good news? And we all were, but today we begin to see what that good news looks like.

Four times over. The first, with those disciples that began following him. Keep your eyes on the text. There it is, verses 16 to 20. He's passing along the sea. The announcement of good news has been made. And he sees two sets of brothers.

Notice, brothers. Even there in the text, this hidden note of familial renewal. There he is.

Simon and Andrew. And then you have James and John. Now, what are these two doing as like flowering tulips that emerge as four sentinels in the text?

[7 : 29] Really, in one sense, they are describing a new appointment for the purpose of replacement. Let me say it again. And the appointment of these four and eventually twelve serve as replacement of what had been given by way of promise to Jacob and his twelve sons.

You might be able to just think of it in this sense, that in Mark's gospel, immediately there's a replication of the old covenant, but that now will bring new growth.

Followers of Jesus. Let me give you an example. Recently, I had to put my name on a legal document that indicated an element of being a trustee of something.

And on legal documents, those who have studied law might tell me, yes, and usually there's a secondary line. If the first cannot complete the agreement or fulfill the obligations, if the first should die or be incapacitated, then we already know the familial names of those who will carry it out.

That's what's happening here. The first set held in promised form to Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob with Reuben and Simeon all the way through Joseph and Benjamin.

[9 : 02] They're dead. In fact, the old covenant under which they were to keep it, they were incapacitated. They couldn't fulfill it. And so what you see here is the activity of spring.

Jesus initially, immediately, doing something familial with good news. These are the trustees that will fulfill a gospel role that the law itself could never complete.

But he moves on quickly. The second of four, verses 21 to 28. Not only does the good news describe something familial taking place, but something spiritual.

Just take a look at it there. They went into Capernaum and immediately on the Sabbath, he enters the synagogue and his teaching. And while they're astonished at his teaching, there is immediately, again, one in the synagogue with an unclean spirit.

What do you have to do with me, Jesus? Now I know that in 21st century America, there may be those who yet think, mistakenly, that we simply live in a material world.

[10 : 20] Philosophical materialism, even. That there's no spiritual dimension to life. In fact, those who have a spiritual dimension are simply projecting something in order to cope with the world as it really is.

But they're mistaken. There's a spiritual world. There's an unseen world. There are created beings, according to the scripture, that live in rebellion to the rule of God.

The principalities of the air are at work. And there are, on occasion, activities in the lives of men and women and children that are harassed and oppressed.

Now I know that this text can be abused. It doesn't take into consideration mental health, does it? It needs to.

We need to think fully on these things. Not everything that is claiming an oppressed life, an uncleanness of sorts, according to the spirit, is demonic.

[11 : 35] But, here it is, the kingdom of God is breaking in through the person of Jesus and he is immediately at war with a spiritual world that is wreaking havoc on God's good created order.

So Jesus comes and displaces them. He throws them out. He tells them to be silent. Interestingly, and you'll see this over the coming weeks, it's this spiritual dimension that both early and everlastingly in the gospel know who Jesus is.

It's the followers, it's the people who have to come on to it slowly and along the way. But here's Jesus rebuking him, verse 25, calling him out and they're amazed.

See, this is, this is another indication of the, of description of what happens with the springtime of this gospel. So the snow drops of 1 to 15 have given way to the tulips like sentinels in the disciples and flowers and now we have the crocuses in a sense that are calling out things that have infested the ground.

In other words, the good news is that Jesus is doing something even on a spiritual plane. But he doesn't waste time moving on, does he?

[13 : 14] He moves immediately and, and quickly to now a movement into the, the healing of Peter's, Simon's mother-in-law.

You can see it there in 29 and 30 and immediately he's on the move again. He's in the house of Simon and Andrew with James and John and Simon's mother-in-law is ill with a fever and immediately they told him about her and he came and took her by the hand, lifted her up and the fever left her and she began to serve them.

Now, get it straight then because it's all coming so fast for Mark. The good news by way of description has something familial, something spiritual, something physical.

Jesus cares about your physical frame. The fever of a mother-in-law. Now, we'll see soon that Jesus is not obligated to heal everyone from every illness.

In fact, we'll see that he's moving on rather than setting up a medical center. He moves on for proclamation which we'll say something about in a moment but these are down payments.

[14 : 29] These are rising blossoms that say Jesus is concerned with your spiritual frame and that the kingdom of God is doing something about every aspect of life that is wrong in the world which is why we were just singing were we not something about this very thing.

He is my savior. He is my healer. He is my deliverer. Familial, spiritual, physical. It's there.

I've seen it even this last week. Founding member of this church for decades anchoring the platform with the human soul sounds of a cello.

Lay in a hospital bed downtown on the verge of death. Not gonna make it was the word we heard. We prayed knowing God's not obligated. Indeed, our dear sister said, don't be mad at God.

[15 : 52] He's got me. Whatever's gonna happen here. But over the last few days we've seen miraculous strength emerge medical procedures that had very little chance of succeeding succeed.

Sons and family members gathering and this morning I declare to you not for a funeral but for sitting in a chair and eating solid food and waiting for the fullness of recovery.

Thank you. And God is just merciful even when he doesn't have to be.

It's a declaration, a description of the good news. And so I would tell you even here this morning if you feel like I'm not sure I could get into God's family, God's doing something familial and it's not by bloodline is going to be open to anyone.

God's doing something spiritual. He wants us to be in our right mind and we pray for it and labor and live with one another to see it.

[17 : 17] God's doing something physical. These are the growth emerging from the ground of a kingdom that is replacing the infestation of a fallen world and the consequences of our own sin.

That's why you have a summary line there in 32 to 34 while he's been staccato like in his flowering passage describing what good news looks like.

He says that evening at sundown man they were bringing him to all the sick all the oppressed the whole city. He's healing many and he's casting out demons and he is just happening.

Spring is emerging everywhere. The red buds are out and the petals have not yet fallen to the ground. There's one more and I just want to run over a couple of verses here to get there.

Take a look put your own eye on it. Verse 40 a leper a leper comes to him says you know you can make me clean and in pity he stretched out his hand and touched him and said I will be clean and immediately there it is again the leprosy left him and he was made clean.

[18 : 41] Now you need to know a couple things about leprosy and if you weren't here for our astounding series through the book of Leviticus let me put it this way leprosy isn't a blood condition it's a skin disease and it's not necessarily contracted due to someone's sin on the part of the individual leprosy is just airborne and would come bacteria through droplets it's just an effect of living in a contaminated world you ever been subject to something that you're like it's not my fault but I got it that's what leprosy was now the difficulty of having leprosy in the covenant community of God's family was in the book of Leviticus we read that the leprous person shall wear torn clothes and let the hair of his head hang loose he shall cover his upper lip and he shall cry out unclean unclean and he shall remain unclean as long as he has the disease he's unclean he shall live alone he shall dwell outside the camp in other words the emphasis on the implication of the disease was social what Jesus is doing now is saying oh let me get the fullness of spring in the air

I'm doing something familial I'm doing something spiritual I'm doing something physical the kingdom is doing something social it's taking the outcast and saying you can enter back into the kingdom you can enter back into the family you can enter through the doors of a church no matter what condition it was that you had in fact you can be at table now this is what God's kingdom does it's incredible isn't it the kingdom Jesus brings has the power to do something for us socially spiritually physically familiarly we have access four scenes on the heels of those four witnesses that announced the kingdom you now see the activity of that kingdom in play but I skipped a paragraph didn't I yeah the arrangement of the sermon intentionally bounced over something that I've come to think is not quite like the others you ever play that game one of these things is not like the other well if you grew up with what was his name on TV channel 11

Mr. Rogers yeah Mr. Rogers one of these things is not like the other four or five things were on the screen you'd have to select the one that like that one's different and while we've seen four scenes describing the fullness of the spring of good news this scene right here 35 through 39 is not quite like the others I think it's the scene we're to draw our attention to let me read it then again and rising very early in the morning while it was still dark he departed and went out to a desolate place and there he prayed and Simon and those who were with him searched for him and they found him and said to him everyone's looking for you I bet they were and he said to them let us go on to the next towns that I may preach there also here's a purpose clause for that is why I came out and he went throughout all Galilee preaching in their synagogues and casting out demons this singular scene reveals the primacy of his mission the priority you could say and the priority is this somebody's got to get this news out this news that the kingdom of God that the rule of God that the restoration of his original intention in the garden is in play through this one person

Jesus who is God's good news and so now Jesus in a sense becomes his own herald needing a preacher he preaches and I don't mean just vocationally because this is coming home to your doorstep this morning what he is doing primarily is what sits in the middle of our vision statement the center cut as it were and it's there by design what is Christ Church Chicago why are we here for what reason do we exist we exist to build up a multi ethnic cross cultural church that purpose that proclaims Jesus to everyone and displays the gospel everywhere there it is the proclamation of his name and all that he can do is the purpose behind our union for Jesus the proclamation of the message is the first priority now this hits on something being prayed about this morning and as he was praying it I didn't know he was and I thought this is going to be a dangerous morning for some because now we're all under it if you stay in your profession for the rest of your life great but you know that the priority in your profession comes down to the proclamation of this news you don't have to become a pastor or a full-time global ministry partner but the priority of Jesus needs to be the priority of your life

I'm doing all these things Jesus says I'm a one man first class medical school I'm a one man counselor restorer familial gatherer I'm the one that actually is seeing through the spiritual demise of the culture and calling evil evil and I'm doing something about it I'm the one who's doing all that yet he says you know we got to keep moving got to keep moving I got to keep moving because I came for the purpose of proclaiming this to the ends of the earth and someone here this morning may on this very day feel the tug of God that that's what I'm supposed to do I came here to train as a physician and I'm going to leave here six years from now as a missionary I came here to actually

do education but now

[26 : 33] I've realized that in the vocation of education I'm to bear witness to his name I came here thinking I just got married got pulled into my church through my spouse and I'm raising children and as I do that work I'm supposed to nurture them in the fear and the admonition of the Lord this becomes the singular primary focus of everything you do it's not the only thing you do it's the engine room from which everything you do makes sense herald that's really the word here a couple weeks I'll be back in London I like London I'll walk by St.

James Palace put up by King Henry VIII the 1530s built out of this typically Tudor style red brick with white parapets I'm going to look at the place where the balcony the friary balcony rises above it and I'm going to recall that even in the most recent times September of 2022 that little corner down there was filled and there were trumpeters 12 or more in number on the balcony overlooking the parapets and the council of ascension beneath them and hordes of people and the trumpeters stood with their red crowned outfits emblazoned with the crown on their breast and the trumpets in their air and they heralded they proclaimed they played in unison and when they finished the garter of the king stepped forward and this is what he said whereas it has pleased almighty god to call to his mercy our late sovereign lady queen elizabeth the second of blessed and glorious memory by whose decease the crown of the united kingdom of great britain and northern ireland is solely and rightfully come to the prince charles philip arthur george to whom we do acknowledge all faith and obedience with humble affection beseeching god by whom kings and queens do reign to bless his majesty with long and happy years to reign over us what's happening here in these verses the trumpets have sounded the garter of the king stands beyond the parapet the council of ascension is beneath and all of humanity stands and jesus is saying i am heralding preaching the good news that's relational god has come to set things clear through and in my person and my work which we're going to have to read the rest of the gospel to see what that is but he brings it forth for us this then becomes what he would give to you you are to be a herald of the good news of the gospel you are to speak this week of the mercy and the forgiveness that he offers to you you are to pray for the healing of those who are infirmed around you you are to labor with those who are oppressed you are to gain entrance to your home your family your table those who have been outcasts and never welcomed anywhere and as we do that we always do it as the herald so stand on the parapet this morning have something to say in the coming week about Jesus prayerfully find an opportunity that his name his kingdom his kindness his goodness comes from your lips to someone anyone stop them on the streets if you don't have a friend and simply say can I tell you about my Jesus now if you do that I want to hear about it last week we saw the arrival of the king today we see the king described in full flower his ministry is the centerpiece on your table his life is the pleasant aroma in your home your speech is his gift to the world for that is why we came out our heavenly father we thank you for this gospel this good news and we thank you that your work in the world is not one dimensional we thank you so much that it isn't just as though you care about our souls and not the fullness of ourselves we thank you that you do redeem that you do restore that you do make roots grow up out of dry ground that you flower in our midst may this church be alive with the activity of the kingdom in Jesus name we pray amen amen so have that you that you have that you that you that you that you that you that you that you that you