

What the World Really Needs

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[0 : 0 0] But this morning as we continue our sermon series in the Gospel of Mark, I want to begin by asking a question.

The question could be, what does Haiti really need? And the basis for the question is something that should be obvious, and that is that our world is filled with needs.

Very obvious and visible needs. There is poverty among people, there is unrest among nations and within nations, there is crime, there is injustice, there is human exploitation, and the list goes on.

But what does the world really need? Some of you are old enough to remember the song, What the World Needs Now.

It is a song that was made famous by Dionne Warwick. And the chorus of the song answers the question this way.

[1 : 3 2] What the world needs now is love, sweet love. It's the only thing that there's just too little of. What the world needs now is love, sweet love.

Not just for some, but for everyone. So according to Hal David and Bert Bacharach, the authors of this song, what the world needs is love.

Because it's the only thing there's too little of. Now when I think about their answer to the needs of the world, the first thing that comes to my mind is what kind of love are they referring to?

We can be pretty sure it's not romantic love. It's not erotic love. Because the world is filled with that kind of love. Actually, just last week, we had a whole day.

Valentine's Day, dedicated to celebrating that kind of romantic love. And that's been done for centuries. But I think if we were to interview Hal David and Bert Bacharach, they would no doubt tell us that the world still needs love.

[2 : 5 8] They wrote this song back in 65, I think. And they would still tell us the world still needs love. Why is that? And I think the truth is that Hal David and Bert Bacharach are not alone in feeling that what the world needs is more love and calling for more love.

People from all walks of life agree with them. And although they don't clearly define the love that they believe the world needs, I think we all understand that it's not romantic love.

It is not the kind of selfish love that we see in the world. It is the selfless, self-giving love that can truly transform the world. That's the love that they were singing about.

And that's the love that many people believe the world really needs. It's a love that will do good and not harm to others. That's the love that men, women, boys and girls around the world are longing for.

And this is the reason that the sermon that Bishop Michael Curry preached at the royal wedding resonated with the hearts of so many people.

[4 : 2 4] He preached the sermon, love is the way. And the interesting thing is even atheists and irreligious people commended the sermon.

They agree, love is the way. But as I pointed out before, and I'll point out again this morning, the error of Bishop Curry's sermon is that it gave the impression that everyone is capable of that kind of selfless, self-giving love.

And all we need to do is decide to love that way. And if we could decide to love that way, then the world would be a better place. But the sad thing about that is in the very text that Bishop Curry preached from, it contradicts that view.

1 John 4, 7 and 8, which was the text he preached from. In those two verses, the Apostle John makes it clear that only those who have been born of God are able to express that kind of selfless, self-giving love.

The kind of love that will do good and not harm. To others. And so really beneath the presenting need of needing love, what the world really needs, is to be enabled to love the way God calls us to love.

[5 : 59] The way we all desire to be loved. The way our hearts long for love. And that is to experience the new birth. What the world really needs is to have hearts and lives changed and transformed by the power of God to enable us to love in a selfless and a self-giving way.

Jesus understood this. He understood that the world's true need is beneath the surface of all the many needs, the myriads of needs that are presented in people's lives.

And what we see is in Mark's gospel, in this section that we have come to this morning, Jesus understood this. Jesus understood that the deep needs of the world and the deep needs of the many people who were coming to him were not the needs that were presenting.

Not the sicknesses. Not the demon possession. The need was much greater than that.

And so if you've not yet done so, you kindly turn to the gospel of Mark. This morning we are going to be considering, as we continue our series, verses 29 through 45.

[7 : 24] Mark chapter 1, beginning in verse 29. And please make a note of any questions that you might have. I will leave time at the end for questions and answers.

Mark 1, beginning in verse 29. 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 and oppressed by demons.

And the whole city gathered together at the door. And he healed many who were sick with various diseases and cast out many demons.

[8 : 31] 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 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.

[9 : 58] 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.

Let's pray. Heavenly Father, thank you for your word this morning, and thank you for our gathering as a church. We pause, Lord, in this moment to cry out to you to speak to our hearts.

But more than anything else, we need to hear from you. We live by every word that proceeds out of your mouth. So, Father, help us to hear your proceeding word from your word to our hearts.

We ask in Jesus' name. Amen. Now, prior to this point that we have come to this morning in Mark's gospel, the ministry of Jesus could probably be likened unto what we call a soft opening.

Sometimes when you have businesses, before they open to the public, they open, they do a soft opening. And so prior to this section that we have just read, we see Jesus preaching, we see him calling disciples, and we see him going into the synagogue on a Sabbath day.

[11 : 39] He teaches and he heals, he delivers one person from demon possession. And then we read in verse 28 that at once his fame spread from everywhere throughout all the surrounding region of Galilee.

And it seems like that's the transition point where Jesus is moving from this, what we may call a soft opening of his ministry to this grand opening of his ministry.

And the flurry of activity that we find in these verses that we just read from verse 29 to verse 45 is nothing short of amazing. We see in verse 29 that Jesus leaves the synagogue and goes right into Simon and James' house and he heals Simon's mother-in-law who is in bed with a fever.

Then we see in verse 32 later at sundown and the picture here is that the Sabbath is over now and people are able to freely move about which they were not doing before.

So now Mark tells us that they brought all who were sick and oppressed of demons. They bring them to Jesus and we are told that they were that in verse 33 that the whole city was gathered together at the door.

[13 : 16] Now obviously I don't think every single person literally was there but it was so dramatic in terms of the crowd that it probably is a faithful representation saying man the whole city was there everybody was there at the door.

And then we see in verse 35 that the next morning Jesus arises early and he goes out to a place he says a great while before it was day when it was still dark he goes out he goes out to pray to a desolate place and Simon and the others seek him out they come to him and they say Lord what are you doing everyone is looking for you.

And I think the implication again is that there was a huge crowd not literally every single person was looking for him but the crowd was so great he said man everyone is looking for you.

And they invite Jesus basically to come and to minister to these people. But what we see in verse 38 is that Jesus invites them to join him and go into the next towns that he might preach there also.

And then we see in verse 39 that Jesus does go he goes into these other regions of Galilee preaching in their synagogues and casting out demons. And then the chapter closes with the cleansing or the healing of this leper.

[14 : 48] and Mark tells us the very last thing he tells us in verse 45 is that people were coming to Jesus from every quarter. Everywhere they were coming from to Jesus.

When we consider these verses in Mark's gospel what we see is that Mark gives us a window into the world in which Jesus is now commencing his grand ministry.

It is the world filled with great needs. Massive needs. Sick people, demon possessed people, social outcasts like this leper whose circumstances were hopeless.

He was cut off from his family, cut off from community. Jesus enters into this needy world of enormous concentrated needs.

Concentrated needs. And how he conducts his ministry is very instructive for us. How he conducts his ministry is helpful for us to see what the world needs and what the resulting priority should be.

[16 : 07] what Jesus helps us to see in how he conducts his ministry is this. The world's greatest need is not physical, it's spiritual.

And the way we know this is based on the ministry priority of Jesus. What we are able to see is that Jesus in the midst of a very busy life of ministry placed priority on preaching the gospel.

He didn't place priority on healing the sick or casting out demons or feeding the poor as we will later see in Mark's gospel. He did those things but those were not his priority.

And even when Jesus healed the sick and cast out demons and fed the poor the point was not so much that he was healing the sick and casting out demons! the poor.

The point was that he was demonstrating the message that he was preaching that God's kingdom had come near. And it had come near not just in word but it had come near in deed as well.

[17 : 22] The word of God's kingdom was supported by the visible power of God's kingdom. Well now remaining time this morning I want us to look more closely at this passage to see how the ministry priority of Jesus was preaching the gospel and to see how healings and casting out demons were secondary to that priority.

So this morning I have two simple points in there number one preaching the gospel of God's kingdom and number two demonstrating the gospel of God's kingdom.

So first preaching the gospel of God's kingdom. This account as I said before is filled with massive numbers of people coming to be healed by Jesus from various diseases and to be delivered from demons and so it is easy to make the mistake in thinking that that must have been the priority of the ministry of Jesus.

Now once again we notice from the time he appeared in the synagogue at Capernaum where he taught and cast out demons out of a man. Verse 29 tells us his fame spread abroad and there were people coming from everywhere throughout the surrounding region of Galilee.

Now I want you to think about this. Jesus the people in the synagogue marveled that Jesus with a word could cast out demons but that's not all they marveled about.

[19 : 09] They also marveled that he taught with authority. Now I want you to think about this question. Why do you think Everyone the whole city was at the door of the house where Jesus was staying?

You think they were gathered there because they wanted to hear the word that he was preaching? I don't think so. They were gathered there because they had desperate difficulties and circumstances whether sickness or demon possession and they saw those things as their greatest need and they wanted!

Jesus whose name had been spread abroad to bring deliverance in their lives and I think if we could interview those people and ask them what's your greatest need they would not have said I need to hear a word from Jesus they would have said I need to be healed I need to get these demons out of my life they would have seen their obvious and visible needs as their greatest needs and what we see is interestingly with Jesus Jesus was not interested in the publicity Jesus was not interested in trying to see how many people he could heal so they could go abroad and spread the word about him we see this in the fact that he refused to allow the demons to speak when he cast them out and we also see it in terms of how he said to the leper who he healed don't tell anyone and he was we were told by

Mark that he couldn't go into a city openly because there were so many people coming to him and so he would stay in desolate places clearly not the actions of someone who wants to be widely known and who had the power and the authority to heal every single disease and cast out every single demon he wasn't interested but here's the most telling part about this account that helps us to see the priority of Jesus we see in verses 35 through 39 Jesus getting up very early and brothers and sisters if there's ever an indication to us about the priority of prayer and the importance of prayer that prayer should have in our lives it's this account because Jesus after a long day you could imagine people coming to him

Mark describes it as the whole city gathered at the door at sunset and so Jesus was probably ministering to people for an extended period of time and he had the authority and the power just to say be healed all of you we have no record of him doing that the record is that he ministered to people in a very personal and intimate way and so he would have been up late into the night but what we see is the next morning early in the morning the son of God makes prayer a priority the one who was God in the flesh the one who had all authority and power given to him is finding himself in the place of prayer communing with his heavenly father brothers and sisters!

[22 : 55] that be instructed for us that prayer needs to have that kind of priority in our lives but Peter and the others they come looking for Jesus they find him and they say man everyone is looking for you and you would think that the immediate response would be from Jesus oh my goodness I stayed too long in prayer let's go and heal these people and cast out these demons!

the indication is that Jesus one may even say was indifferent he doesn't respond in that particular way doesn't jump up doesn't react to it he simply says to them in verse 38 let us go on to the next towns that I may preach there also but that is why I came out the NIV simply says but that is why I came and what Jesus does in this statement is he is giving us his mission he's pointing to the mission he's pointing to say this is why I came from the father this is why I came into the world this is why I came he tells us his mission was primarily to preach he came to preach to a fallen world a broken rebellious world to say to them

God has graciously brought the kingdom near and he's calling you to repent he's calling you to believe the good news that entrance into his kingdom is now possible again and so despite all the amazing displays of power through healing and casting out demons Jesus came to preach the gospel of God's kingdom that brothers and sisters was his priority that was the lasting priority and that truly is the only permanent thing that can result from the ministry of Jesus and keep that in your head that may sound like an odd statement but I think as we work our way through this passage you will see that that's a very true statement and so what we see in verse 39 is that

Jesus did exactly what he told them he leaves the people he leaves all those who are looking for him no doubt with very real conditions very real issues in their lives and we can safely say not coming to him to hear a word not coming to him to hear preaching he goes out into all of Galilee and he is preaching in their synagogues and he's casting out demons now it doesn't mention in verse 39 that he was healing the sick but I think we can safely assume that he was healing the sick as well healing the sick casting out demons but most of all preaching because that's why he wanted to go to these other towns!

And so the priority of Jesus then how are we to understand the miraculous healings and the casting out of demons that are so prominently recorded in Mark's gospel and the other gospels how are we to understand that if this is the priority of Jesus which is to preach well that brings you to my second and final point demonstrating the gospel of God's kingdom now an obvious question that comes to mind is this if the many people or the many accounts of people being healed and demons being cast out are not the priority of Jesus or they weren't the priority of Jesus then why are they featured so prominently in

[27 : 21] Mark's gospel and the other gospels if they aren't his priority if they weren't his priority why are they featured so prominently well first and foremost the reason that these miraculous healings and the casting of the demons are seen and recorded in the gospels that Jesus performed they're all designed to help us to see or to give evidence to the message that Jesus was preaching to point to his unique authority they would point to the unique authority that Jesus possessed and the healing of bodies and the casting out of demons were also to give evidence to the fact that a new day had dawned that the coming of Jesus had ushered in a new day a new day when the kingdom of God would once again be available to women men boys and girls who had previously rebelled against

God that's the purpose that these miracles the healings the casting out of demons served!

God emphasis on Jesus did not place primary emphasis on and I think the reason is that they have not truly studied the ministry priority of Jesus which was not healing which was not casting out devils but was preaching the gospel and I think it's also because they failed to realize some of the realities of healing and deliverance even in the ministry of Jesus let me share some of these realities with you you may have thought of them but you may not have first reality is this Jesus did not heal every single person who was sick he did not cast out every single demon out of every person who was possessed by demons he didn't do that when

Jesus hung on the cross there were still sick people in the region that he administered in and we can be assured that there were still people possessed with demons and all the people this is another reality all the people who received miracles from Jesus still died even if they didn't die from the same condition they could have been totally healed from that and that never came back but they all died even those Jesus rose from the dead those he raised from the dead they died Lazarus!

died died died and you know the demons that Jesus cast out the demons that Jesus cast out went into other people Jesus did not destroy the demons they went into other people in Matthew 12 Mark does not record this but Matthew does and Luke does listen to what Matthew says when he records Jesus is saying in Matthew 12 43 through 45 when the unclean spirit has gone out of a person it passes through waterless places seeking rest but finds none then it says I will return to my house which from which I came and when it comes it finds the house empty swept and put in order then it goes and brings with it seven other spirits more evil than itself and they enter and dwell there and the last state of that person is worse than the first so also will it be with this evil generation now the point is that when demons are cast out of a person if all the person does is leave the house empty and the

[32 : 22] Holy Spirit is not resonant in that person the house is vacant and according to Jesus the demons cast out will be looking for some other place to reside and they will easily think well you know what why wander around let's go back to where we came from and if they find it empty and inviting then they return my point is this the Bible tells us that there's coming a day when Satan and his demonic forces will be finally and ultimately deltrious but the day hasn't come yet and so as Jesus cast out demons he was not destroying demons never to inhabit people anymore he was simply casting the demons out of those who were presenting you may remember this one account where Jesus was casting out the legion of demons out of this man and they begged and said let us go into the herd of pigs and

Jesus permitted them to go into those animals yet despite these realities about miraculous healings and about demons being cast out there are people today who believe that if we saw more miracles of healing if we saw more demons being cast out that more people will come to believe in Jesus more people will put their faith in Jesus that is not true if it were true it happen more so when the full expression of the power of God walked the face of the earth why is it that after he died there could only be found 120 people waiting in an upper room in accordance with his promise when we consider the incredible miracles that he performed two different occasions multiplied a few loaves and fish to feed 5,000 and 4,000 worked on water raised the dead did all those things and yet when he left the earth 120 would be found if that is true that more healings and more casting out of demons will cause more people to believe the entire region of

Palestine where Jesus ministered should have been totally converted because of the countless undeniable healings and deliverances that took place in the ministry of Jesus but once again these healings and deliverances were not just to get people to believe in Jesus as a matter of fact they were not even primarily to heal the people or to deliver the people in a very strict sense they were primarily to point back to Jesus to point to the one who was doing it to point to the fact that he was the one who was ushering in this new day and this new dawn of the kingdom of God a day that will come in fullness when there will be no more sickness and there will be no more Satan and demonic possessions and there will be an earth in which righteousness fully dwells that was the ultimate purpose for these healings and for these deliverances to point to the authenticity of Jesus and the message he was preaching those miracles were to support that message he preached and then he demonstrated he supported and gave evidence to what he was preaching in this passage

Mark references many healings but he highlights two of them the first one he highlights is the healing of Peter's mother-in-law and this one is somewhat interesting in the sense that it doesn't seem like an incredible miracle I imagine that in that day people recovered from fevers I don't think that fevers were necessarily a life threatening illness sometimes a fever comes and it breaks over time but Jesus still healed her miraculously from this fever but what's interesting about that is that it certainly was one of the kind of events that could be proven because it's not just Mark saying something happened but Mark is saying that Peter was there and James was there and John was there Andrew was there when this healing took place and what we are told from church history is that

Mark got his gospel account from the apostle Peter whose disciple he was and Peter would have obviously this would have been very near and dear to Peter that one of the first things Jesus did when he started his ministry was he healed his mother-in-law but what we see is the personal care of Jesus in ministering to Peter's mother-in-law he could have simply spoken the word and say be healed he doesn't do that he goes to her takes her by the hand lifts her up and the Bible says the fever left her but the case of the leper is far more noteworthy it's far more noteworthy the case of the leper being healed is far more noteworthy than all the other healings that have been referenced again

[38 : 41] Jesus could have healed this man with a word he could have simply said be healed he doesn't do that what Mark records him doing in verse 41 is touching the man and why does Mark tell us that he touched him he was moved with pity he was moved with compassion on the man see Jesus understood what leprosy meant in that day leprosy meant in that day that you are hopeless you were isolated you were separated because there was no cure for your leprosy here's what Leviticus 13 45 to 46 say about lepers what they were supposed to do the leprous person who has the disease shall wear torn clothes and let the hair of his head hang loose and he shall cover his upper lip and cry out unclean unclean and he shall remain unclean as long as he has the disease he is unclean he shall live alone his dwelling shall be outside the camp that was the lot of those who had leprosy again it's very instructive that

Mark would highlight this particular miracle above the others and again although the healing of Peter's mother-in-law was a healing she was not healed from a disease she was not healed from some lifelong incurable illness as a matter of fact I think it's fair to say that the nature of leprosy made it the worst disease that you could have in that day because it was the only disease that caused you to be isolated the only disease that caused you to be separated that caused you to be excluded all the other illnesses that you could have had you could have still been a part of community which would have mitigated and made it much easier to deal with your sicknesses but this disease resulted in isolation and hopelessness and being cut off from everything that you knew to be normal so why does Mark highlight it again remember

Mark is not just giving us random information Mark is telling a story Mark is telling a story I believe that Mark highlights this man's leprosy because in scripture leprosy is the best illustration of the incurable nature of sin and how sin puts an entire community at risk and how sin can infiltrate a community and infect a community the same way leprosy can and how sin separates sin like leprosy is contagious and this is why scripture calls us to deal with sin both in our lives and in our midst and in the same way that only Jesus could heal this man from his shameful isolating condition of leprosy only Jesus can heal the shameful isolating condition of sin and just as Jesus touched this leper and was that touch that brought about his healing and the total transformation of his life now he can be restored to family and restored to normalcy only the touch of Jesus touching a sinner can transform his life or her life and the truth is that there's no need to tell anyone the same way

Jesus told this man don't tell anyone that you're healed of your leprosy it was going to be obvious to people he was going to be restored back in community they would say to him how come you are here you're supposed to be isolated the same is true when the Lord touches our lives when he touches our sinful lives and he transforms our lives we don't we don't not that we shouldn't share with others what the Lord has done for us but the transformation will be obvious the transformation will be seen and Jesus does the same with sinners think about how in this entire region there's no one else who would have associated with that leper because one had they done so they themselves would be unclean but there was one in that area who could associate with the leper and instead of the leper making him unclean he makes the leper clean and this is why

Jesus could associate with tax collectors and prostitutes because they could not make him unclean he could make them clean and he wasn't ashamed of them it was not a debilitating thing for Jesus to touch this man who had leprosy although for many it would be the most scornful thing to do but he could reach out because he knew he was perfectly clean and he could make him clean and he does the same for us in our sinful condition in our leprous condition he touches us because we don't make him unclean he makes us clean and so he had no problem associating with tax collectors and prostitutes because he would remain without sin but he transformed so many of their lives that he said to the Pharisees he said the tax collectors and the prostitutes are going into the kingdom of

[45 : 47] God ahead of you they couldn't change Jesus they could not affect him but he could change them and he could affect them brothers this is the same pity the same compassion that Jesus displayed toward that leper is the same pity and the same compassion that God sees and displays towards us sinners and it matters not whether we may consider ourselves what I like to say a blue collar sinner or a white collar sinner whether we were down and out or up and out it doesn't matter we're all lepers we're all lepers with a condition that is incurable except the holy one the

Lord Jesus would reach out and touch us now though Mark highlights this particular condition this particular disease this disease of leprosy in truth all the sicknesses all the sicknesses are pictures of sin and spiritual need I'm not saying that every person who is sick committed some sin I'm not saying that at all we live in a fallen broken world and there are countless millions and perhaps even more than millions of people who are sick have been sick and it's nothing to do with a direct sin that they may have committed but all sin sorry all sickness point to a deeper issue and the deeper issue is sin and the fall the deeper issue is that sin produced sickness darkness and the great darkness that we have in our world and no doubt this is perhaps why the apostle

John in the gospel of John referred to all the miracles of Jesus as signs he referred to them as signs because the sign is not the thing a sign points to the thing so the miracle itself is not what we have to gaze at we have to see the miracle as a sign and see what it points to and it points in two different directions one the miracle points to the root of the disease or the demon possession or whatever the issue was and also points to the one who was able to bring deliverance from it this broken world this needy world that Jesus came into was a world reeling under the effects of the fall under the effects of sin and it's almost as if Jesus could have stepped into the world and said I told you so I told you this is what would come if you disobeyed me speaking to

Adam and his whole fallen race but he doesn't do that he steps into this world he maintains the priority of the gospel which is what this world needs to hear this world needs to hear you have rebelled against God you need to repent and you need to believe the gospel that this gracious God is now making available to you that you may have access once again in his kingdom to live under his rule and under his authority instead of your own rule and your own authority you know often times we think about Adam's rebellion but you know what every one of us in this room has Adam's DNA in us and every one of us in this room at some point rebelled against God knowingly openly rebelled against God concerning his revealed will for us in his world and so it's all a picture of the brokenness of the fallenness and greater need to come under the government of God under the authority and the control of the

Lord Jesus Christ and so brothers and sisters while our world needs love our world's greatest need is to know the God of love because it's only through knowing that God of love through his son Jesus Christ that our lives can be transformed that we can be born again that we can have that kind of love that will make the world a better place that will make the world this place that people long for that people cry out for us we look at the world we long for something better we long for something different and the fact that we have that longing in our hearts tells us that the world is not the way it's supposed to be this was not the good world that God designed he designed something else when he just finished designing it he said it is good and sin changed it all but the good news is that Jesus

[51 : 45] Christ has come to change that condition to change that as well but he doesn't come holding out a miracle holding out a deliverance as the solution to it all no he comes and he brings the good news of the gospel inviting us to repent inviting us to turn from our own way and from sin and turn to God's way and to righteousness because that is the lasting solution for this crisis I said earlier that the only permanent thing that Jesus brought in his ministry is the gospel not the healings not the deliverances there will come a day when God will end sickness and he will deal with

Satan that no one will ever know demon oppression or demonic possession salvation but the one thing that is permanent and eternal even now is the eternal life that God brings us through Jesus Christ Jesus says it this way he says those who come to me I will never turn away never cast out he says all that the father gives to me I will lose none of them and I will raise them up at the last day that is the permanent work that he brings in our lives and so when Jesus comes into our lives and he saves us but he also heals us the healing will not last forever for the healing to last forever if the Lord just perfectly healed us it would mean that heaven is realized in this fallen broken world but it will not be what he gives us in this fallen broken world that is permanent in this life and the life to come because he gives us eternal life is the gospel and those who believe that gospel are given eternal life matters not what's going on with their bodies it matters not what trials and difficulties they face in this fallen world the one permanent lasting thing that they have is that it is well with their souls their sins are forgiven and they will never hear never hear the word of condemnation coming from the lips of their God and Savior and so Mark helps us to see that being forgiven is a greater priority than being healed being forgiven is a greater priority than being delivered and next week when we come to Mark chapter 2 this is going to be even more evident let's pray

Lord we thank you this morning for your goodness to us thank you for your word thank you for reminding us that our greatest need is to hear and believe the good news of the gospel Lord help us to remember that as we look at our world and as many problems Lord may we not be carried away with a superficial view of things believing that if only we can eradicate poverty crime will go away if only we can improve education poverty and crime will go away Lord help us to see that the only act that brings a lasting transforming effect in the lives of men women boys and girls and in this world is the good news of the gospel whereby those who believe can be born again and made sons and daughters of

God so Lord help us to maintain this priority in this church and in our lives we ask in Jesus name amen any questions from the sermon this morning and I think those of you who were paying attention would probably notice that the title that was in the bulletin was not the title on the screen and that's because I assigned that title back in October last year and as I studied I just saw it was a more suitable title and so I changed that Ashley so what was the reason that only 120 were left is that the reason they were the only believers of the gospel yeah I think it helps us to see that there are that's a very good question it helps us to see that people many people want what

Jesus gives but they don't want Jesus they want what he gives they want his gifts they want his benefits they want his blessings but they don't want him governing their lives I think one of the places I've seen this very up close and very graphically was in prison ministry which I did for a number of years and you would talk with guys who are saying to you pray with me for the Lord to get my sentence reduced but they had no interest in living for the Lord zero did not want him it's almost like God I could pretty much run my life but I need you to help me with this little problem here help me with that and I'll be okay heal me deliver me but I want to live for myself and so that I think is broadly the reason that you would find that all of these people who were touched and healed by Jesus couldn't be found in terms of following him and then not only following him but obeying his word you would think that if you were healed by someone of some incredible illness that you would want to live a life of gratitude to that person but clearly that's not the case but here's what I would add to it

[58 : 57] I think it helps us to see again that miracles deliverances from demons those things in and of themselves do not bring people to believe you may remember this account where the rich man and Lazarus the rich man died he went to hell Lazarus died he went to what the Bible describes as Abram's bosom and the rich man was saying to Jesus let Lazarus go back to the earth and tell my brothers don't come to this place and Jesus told him if one rose from the dead they still wouldn't believe meaning miracles don't cause people to believe unless God opens eyes and God unless God transforms hearts none of us will believe good question anyone else brother

Kelly I don't know if a pastor or anyone in studying ever come across something theology called redemptive love of God theology I came across several years ago studying a book by a book by a scholar F.G.

Smith and he was teaching on redemption and he mentioned he was refuting an argument and he mentioned this group and basically what they claim is that the fall of man was ordained and orchestrated by God so that he could show man his redemptive love and they made a strong point of it from scripture one of which was for example that Jesus was God's lamb slain before the foundations of the world and they questioned why would God put in effect the redemption of man even long ages before even probably devil fell if he did not ordain and plan for the fall of man and then they went to the garden and showed all of that how would you respond to something like that all right if you connected to a part of the sermon

I think I can which part of the sermon are you thinking about I just thought of you were mentioning the fall the garden of Eden and all of that I know there is some depth of theology in this but to be honest it is one of those things that I have been not supporting their argument I have been thinking about it how do you explain to someone of that view or any other view how a sovereign all powerful God who controls the universe and nothing happens in this universe outside of what he wants the fall brings a lot of questions him well let me just respond to it as succinctly as I can without taking us too far away from the message I think what you just said a while ago leaves no other option than to recognize that the fall was not something that some accident that happened behind

God's back and you say oh my goodness what happened it was certainly within the broad scope of his divine sovereignty and within the mystery of his plans so broadly that's my response to that but what I would say about the question itself is it's not an essential it's not an essential in terms of us knowing that so that debate has been going on for centuries I know the debate it will continue to go on for centuries and it really doesn't matter in the eternal scheme of things where the truth lies in it so that would be my broad answer to it but certainly the fall did not catch God by surprise the fact that he did foreordain Jesus before the foundation of the world is evidence of that and what we know though and this is the last thing

[64 : 01] I will say on it the Bible tells us that it is impossible for God to sin impossible so even however one works out the fact that God foreordained the lamb slain before the foundation of the world however you think through that what is important is this do not charge God with sin see that to me is the most important thing to keep in mind in that debate that argument that's been going on between different groups because it really comes down to those who would believe that God is absolutely sovereign and those who believe that God is just partially sovereign and then there's some things that are his control that he reacts to when they really happen but we can talk more about that privately if that response is not sufficient anyone else any questions about this sermon this morning

Troy so we have ministries that their main priority is dealing with healings and casting out of demons and what not and with many of them you supposedly see good results from these things how does that square with what you were preaching you know of churches that purportedly have healing ministries and deliverance and according to persons they were healed or their financial situation was restored or whatever so can you address that yeah I guess Troy the first thing

I would say is this I pray that I've been faithful enough to show that those are not the priorities of Jesus because again he could have healed every single person but he didn't he could have made everything right in everyone's life but he didn't so I hope I've been faithful to show that that is in fact what Jesus did he didn't say I came into this world to heal or to deliver I came into this world to preach he said it and then he did it and even in the great commission he commissioned us to go and preach and make disciples of all people so what I would say is that even where you may see those good results those results do not justify the over emphasis on what Jesus didn't emphasize and they don't justify the neglect of preaching the gospel because again those people who delivered are not absolutely without any doubt delivered forever there's a possibility they could be redelivered as we've known of so many people who have gone back and forth into demonic oppression and possession and then we know of some people who rather healed from one condition may be afflicted with some other conditions so those are not permanent solutions and then even

I think Troy the main thing with it is that so much of it is so gray that all we can seek to do is to follow the pattern that we see in God's word and it's interesting you remember Jesus said something in the Sermon on the Mount right at the end he said on that day meaning the day of judgment he said many will come to me and say Lord Lord didn't we cast our devils in your name and didn't we do all these mighty works in your name and Jesus said and I will say to them depart from me I never knew you you workers of lawlessness so I don't think that and one thing I would add to it Jesus did not refute their testimony about what they did he didn't say you're lying get out of here he left it he simply said

I don't know you and we know that there are healings that are rooted in demonic activity there are people today who go to certain individuals who have given themselves to demonic activity and darkness and they can produce seemingly surface results in any number of different ways in their lives they go with their issues and these people do their works of darkness and they're able to bring results that is not to say that there aren't legitimate authentic individuals and ministries through which people are healed through which people are delivered what it does say though is that discernment is needed because light and near light can be very close hopefully that responds all right we have time for one more if there are any others we have one more

[70 : 14] I have never been clear on demonic possession on mental illness okay I'm saying that because I'm wondering if at the time when Jesus was ministering were people really mentally ill and they called it demon possession or I just don't know yeah it's a good question I think we can take what the text says that demons were cast out that's what it says in the account of the man in the synagogue where the Bible says that demons were cast out of him actually the demon spoke and the demon said we know who you are so literally he cast out demons and then Mark said it in other places that demons were cast out so I would say these were individuals possessed with demons but to get to your larger question

I do think that some disturbances that people have are more mental illness than demon possession and it's not an exact science and sometimes we aren't able to know right away whether a person is oppressed by demons versus somebody who is simply just mentally ill because the reality is this the same way that our bodies can get physically ill we can be mentally ill in our minds so I think that's important to remember and then to remember as well that not every single mental illness is really demon possession it's a process of praying discerning and just trying to understand what you're actually dealing with but sometimes it is difficult to know that just on the surface but in terms of what we're seeing in the gospel of

Mark so far these were people who were possessed by demons oppressed by demons and Jesus delivered them in some cases the demons spoke other cases he permitted them not to speak so they were real demonic situations good question David ho