

1 **In His Steps**

Mark 1:21-45 NLT

2 **We're in that time of year when we focus on the life and work of Jesus.**

- As we've said before, it's that time just after Advent and Christmas when we remember and celebrate the birth of Christ.
- And now in these days before Easter, we focus on how Jesus actually lived and walked among us.
- Let's be clear – if the gospel story is true – there is no more extraordinary person than Jesus.
 - Jesus described himself as not just an expression of God – or as some religions would put it, an avatar, or reincarnation of the divine.
 - Jesus described himself as God, one of a kind
 - In the Jewish, monotheistic worldview, this could only mean one thing –
 - That the God who created the world and all that's in it, and who sustains it by his mighty power had somehow compressed himself into human form.
 - This was Jesus' understanding of himself. As C.S. Lewis so aptly puts it, since Jesus clearly claims this, you can either call him a liar, a lunatic or Lord.
 - You may call him a liar who intentionally tried to deceive us. But that hardly seems consistent with his character.
 - A lunatic who believed what he said, but was unfortunately crazy. But as we read the gospels, we get a completely different sense. Rather than crazy, Jesus comes across as the sanest personality we've ever met.
 - Not a liar or lunatic, we are left to consider his claim, that he is the eternal, one-of-a-kind, living God and Lord of the universe. If that fact is so, that changes everything!

3 **Over the next four weeks we will consider episodes in the life of Christ.**

- Why? Because if you want to know what the eternal, invisible God is like you must first and foremost look at Jesus.
- As Hebrews 1:3 puts it

4 **The Son radiates God's own glory and expresses the very character of God, and he sustains everything by the mighty power of his command. Hebrews 1:3 NLT**5 **And if this is true as the Bible clearly says it is, his life has profound and life-changing implications for you and me.**

- The way he lived, and taught us to live, if he is Lord, must become the pattern for us.
- Here's the way that writer Troy Schmidt describes it in the opening of his documentary on walking in the shoes of Christ.

6 **Show opening of "In His Shoes"**7 **Today we focus on an opening episode in the ministry of Jesus from Mark 1:21-45. This is a bit longer passage than usual but I feel it's important to hear it in order to get a sense of what it'd be like to spend a day with Jesus.**

- As I read, you can read along as usual, or you may just want to close your eyes and try to imagine the action as it unfolds in your imagination.

8 **21 Jesus and his companions went to the town of Capernaum. When the Sabbath day came, he went into the synagogue and began to teach. 22 The people were amazed at his teaching, for he taught with real authority—quite unlike the teachers of religious law.**9 **23 Suddenly, a man in the synagogue who was possessed by an evil^hspirit began shouting, 24 "Why are you interfering with us, Jesus of Nazareth? Have you come to destroy us? I know who you are—the Holy One of God!"**

- 10 **25 Jesus cut him short. "Be quiet! Come out of the man," he ordered. 26 At that, the evil spirit screamed, threw the man into a convulsion, and then came out of him.**
- 11 **27 Amazement gripped the audience, and they began to discuss what had happened. "What sort of new teaching is this?" they asked excitedly. "It has such authority! Even evil spirits obey his orders!"²⁸ The news about Jesus spread quickly throughout the entire region of Galilee.**
- 12 **29 After Jesus left the synagogue with James and John, they went to Simon and Andrew's home.³⁰ Now Simon's mother-in-law was sick in bed with a high fever. They told Jesus about her right away.³¹ So he went to her bedside, took her by the hand, and helped her sit up. Then the fever left her, and she prepared a meal for them.**
- 13 **32 That evening after sunset, many sick and demon-possessed people were brought to Jesus.³³ The whole town gathered at the door to watch. 34 So Jesus healed many people who were sick with various diseases, and he cast out many demons. But because the demons knew who he was, he did not allow them to speak.**
- 14 **35 Before daybreak the next morning, Jesus got up and went out to an isolated place to pray.³⁶ Later Simon and the others went out to find him. 37 When they found him, they said, "Everyone is looking for you."**
- 15 **38 But Jesus replied, "We must go on to other towns as well, and I will preach to them, too. That is why I came." 39 So he traveled throughout the region of Galilee, preaching in the synagogues and casting out demons.**
- 16 **40 A man with leprosy came and knelt in front of Jesus, begging to be healed. "If you are willing, you can heal me and make me clean," he said.**
- 17 **41 Moved with compassion,^[i] Jesus reached out and touched him. "I am willing," he said. "Be healed!" 42 Instantly the leprosy disappeared, and the man was healed.⁴³ Then Jesus sent him on his way with a stern warning:**
- 18 **44 "Don't tell anyone about this. Instead, go to the priest and let him examine you. Take along the offering required in the law of Moses for those who have been healed of leprosy.^[j] This will be a public testimony that you have been cleansed."**
- 19 **45 But the man went and spread the word, proclaiming to everyone what had happened. As a result, large crowds soon surrounded Jesus, and he couldn't publicly enter a town anywhere. He had to stay out in the secluded places, but people from everywhere kept coming to him.**
- 20 **We find that this day in the life of Jesus shows us His emphasis on 3 particular activities:**
- prayer,
 - proclamation,
 - pity
- 21 **I. A Ministry of Prayer (1:35)**
- 22 **35 And in the morning, rising up a great while before day, he went out, and departed into a solitary place, and there prayed.**
- 23 **A. The Priority – "... And in the morning..." (Psalm 5:3; 88:13)**
- 1. He did this first.
 - 2. Remember to put the "big rocks" in first.

- 3. Psalm 5:3 - My voice shalt thou hear in the morning, O LORD; in the morning will I direct my prayer unto thee, and will look up.

24 **B. The Period –“rising up a great while before day...”**

- Set aside a period of time to pray and meditate.
- Lester Roloff -“What you do before sunup determines whether you have victory before sundown.”

25 **C. The Place –“...and departed into a solitary place...”**

- 1. Jesus could find no solitude and silence in Peter’s crowded house; He had to get away.
- 2. We all need a “closet.”
- 3. Matthew 6:6, “But you when you pray, enter into thy closet, and when you shut the door, pray to thy Father which is in secret; and thy Father who sees in secret shall reward you openly.”

26 **I. A Ministry Of Prayer**

27 **II. A Ministry of Proclamation (1:36-39)**

28 **A. Good communication is a primary task. Jesus made it a priority to communicate well his faith and so should we.**

29 **38 But Jesus replied, “We must go on to other towns as well, and I will preach to them, too. That is why I came.” 39 So he traveled throughout the region of Galilee, preaching in the synagogues and casting out demons.**

30 **But preaching is not just something done from a pulpit.**

- It’s speaking the right word at the right time – an opportune word.
- St. Francis said, “Always be preaching the gospel. When necessary use words.”

31 **Effective communication should be our priority.**

32 **I Corinthians 1:21 Since God in his wisdom saw to it that the world would never know him through human wisdom, he has used our foolish preaching to save those who believe.**

33 **c. The proclamation of the gospel is the birthright and privilege of every Christian.**

- And it’s very simple really: We should make the focus of that communication Jesus.
- A researcher asked 50 students at the U. of Colorado at Boulder how they’d feel about someone talking with them about church. 50 out of 50 said they weren’t so sure they’d like that.
- The researcher asked 50 more students how they feel about someone talking about Jesus. 50 out of 50 responded positively.
- Pray and look for opportunities to communicate Christ and God will give them to you.
- So Jesus emphasized ...

34 **I. Prayer**

II. Proclamation

35 **III. Pity and Compassion (1:40-45)**

36 **40 A man with leprosy came and knelt in front of Jesus, begging to be healed. “If you are willing, you can heal me and make me clean,” he said.**

37 **Notice some things about his condition.**

38 **a. He was ill - very ill.**

39 **Billie Friel describes leprosy this way, "Leprosy is a chronic, infectious disease that attacks the skin, peripheral nerves, and mucous membranes. The disease begins with a little pain that continues on a sure course with definite stages: skin discoloration; then multiple lesions accompanied by sensory loss in the affected areas; sensory loss in the extremities (fingers and toes); as cases advance, gangrene sets in, causing parts of the body to become deformed and die; the victim's breath becomes foul and the voice becomes a croak; the bones and interior organs deteriorate, which makes the person vulnerable to other diseases."**

40 **b. He Was Isolated –A leper lost his family, friends, and his future.**

41 **c. He Was Incurable**

42 **A documentary featured hunters in India. They spoke of the deadly king cobra snakes in a particular area and they asked the guide what they should do if they were bitten. The guide replied, "you go over and sit in the shade and die like a man!" When a person got leprosy, all he could do is try to accept their fate. There was no cure!**

43 **But also notice Jesus' touch.**

44 **41 Moved with compassion,^[1] Jesus reached out and touched him. "I am willing," he said. "Be healed!" 42 Instantly the leprosy disappeared, and the man was healed.**

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- 1. The word touch here does not refer to the way you would touch a hot iron.
- 2. "Touch" (Greek aptomai) –"to fasten oneself to, to adhere to, to cling to, to grasp, to hold"
- 3. Jesus could have just thought it or spoken the healing, but He chose to touch him.
 - a. A touch of acceptance
 - b. A touch of understanding
 - c. A touch of identification

46 **Hebrews 4:15 This High Priest of ours understands our weaknesses, for he faced all of the same testings we do, yet he did not sin.**

47 **So what are the important principles we can take away from spending a day with Jesus?**

- 48 **1. The Principle of Priority –We should begin each day with prayer.**
2. The Principle of Proclamation –A believer must be willing to open his mouth and tell others what has happened to him – to share their faith.
3. The Principle of Pity and Compassion –We should have a consuming passion to help others. – to be available. Jesus "went about doing good" (Acts 10:38).

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