

Mark 1:29-34 - Jesus saves for a purpose

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[0 : 00] This morning, we're going to read from Mark chapter 1, verse 29 through 34, and this is what it says. It says, as soon as they left the synagogue, they went with James and John to the home of Simon and Andrew. Simon's mother-in-law was in bed with a fever, and they immediately told Jesus about her.

So he went to her, took her hand, and helped her up. The fever left her, and she began to wait on them. That evening, after sunset, the people brought to Jesus all who were ill and demon-possessed.

The whole town gathered at the door, and Jesus healed many who had various diseases. He also drove out many demons, but he would not let the demons speak because they knew who he was. Thanks, Abby. Welcome again. Let me just pray before we get started. Father, thank you for bringing us together, for bringing us this morning with the beautiful sunshine, reminding us of your goodness. God, we thank you for your word, for what you tell us about yourself in it, how you reveal yourself to us so that we may know you. We might come to understand who you are and what you are doing and have done in our world so that we might find ourselves in you and trust you and follow you. Lord, we submit ourselves this morning to what you have for us. Lord, I pray that the words that I have prepared would not be from me, but God, they would be from you, and that you would teach us all as we sit today. So, Lord, be with us this morning. I pray that you would continue what you've started with our worship and lead us further in to your spirit. In Jesus' name. Amen. Amen. Well, welcome, everyone. Let me say again, I'm really glad to be here, glad to be back up front and being able to bring the word to you today. We're continuing in the book of Mark. If you've been here the last few weeks, we've been journeying through Mark. And Mark, as you might or might not know, is one of four biographies of Jesus that we find in our Bible. And Mark, the person who wrote this one, or possibly more accurately, his name was John Mark, but they didn't want to get him confused with the other John. So Mark is what we get. He's actually not a disciple. He wasn't one that was following Jesus around. Most agree that he was an attendant and a writer for the apostle Peter.

[2 : 45] And so he was writing down accurately and as furiously as he could all the things that Peter was saying as he was following Peter around. Right? And so this is one of four, right? The reason we have four different accounts of the gospel and the biographies of Jesus is they come from four different writers, right? And each of whom have a different purpose for writing it or a different aim in recording their version of the events. And so the ultimate purpose of Mark is that he wants us, he wants to present and defend Jesus's call to discipleship. Right? And Mark's effort in presenting and supporting this is to narrate the identity and the teaching of Jesus. Right? Discipleship, as it's shown in Mark, and I think as we would believe, it's essentially a relationship with Jesus. Right?

It's being with him and following him and doing what he does. Right? It's not following a certain code of conduct. It's not, you know, do these things in this way and then you will be called a disciple. No, it's fellowship with Jesus. Right? That's what's at the heart of a true disciple's life. It's trusting him. It's confessing him. Right? It's taking note of what he's doing and his conduct. It's following his teaching and it's being shaped in your character and in your life by your relationship with him.

Right? And at the end of the day, it's being prepared to face the kind of rejection and the kind of persecution that Jesus himself faced. Right? So what we'll look at is what Mark is doing in this chapter in particular. Right? Chapter one of his story, of his biography. He's showing us something about who Jesus is. Right? So this morning, I want us to help and see just in this little tiny section of a passage, just a few verses. I want us to see four things about Jesus from this passage.

Four things that Mark is trying to communicate to us about Jesus. And then I want to look at one thing that's a little curious that we might see in the passage that I think carries enormous weight for us today. Sound good? Let's do it. So I had a sport-related analogy prepared, but when Steve used one about the football last week, it fell fairly flat. So I've shifted gears. And so maybe you know film and Hollywood a bit better than sport. So has anyone heard of this film? The Good, the Bad, and the Ugly. If you haven't, I recommend it to you. It's a fantastic old western. Clint Eastwood, spaghetti western. I don't know if you're familiar with that. So it's the Italian guys making westerns in Spain, but trying to pretend like the old west in the west of the U.S. But The Good, the Bad, and the Ugly. Right? So it's fantastic. It's one of the best films ever made. Right? So it feels like it's falling flat as well. No one's nodding at me with admiration. So let me tell you about it.

Right? But the idea is that there's three characters. There's a guy who is the good, and then there's one that's the bad, and then there's one who's the ugly. Right? And funny enough, this one you might like actually better. Who's a fan of The Holiday? The Christmas film, The Holiday? Anyone know that one? Anyway, this guy, this actor, is the old man in The Holiday, like 50, 60 years later. So just FYI. But anyway, so this is what happens at the beginning of the film.

[6:21] They do a quick little montage of each of these characters, and then it pops up this screen where it says, the good, or the bad, or the ugly. Right? And it's introducing the character and telling you something about that person so that when you watch the rest of the film, you know kind of what the context is. Right? This one's the good guy. Okay? This one's the bad guy.

And then that one, he's just the ugly guy. The funny thing is, in the film, as you see, like, those lines are blurred. The good guy's maybe not as good as he seems, and the bad guy, maybe, well, he's definitely bad, but the ugly guy, he's kind of fun. He's comedic relief. But the point is, they're telling you something about them so that you know what to expect. Right? And I think that's what Mark is doing here at the beginning of his book. Right? He's going to tell us something about who Jesus is. So first, you know what? I don't have a Bible with me up here. Can I have one? I've got all these references I've got to read, and I don't have it with me. Apologies.

So the first thing Mark says, he begins to give us an idea of who Jesus is. And if you look through chapter 1, there's a bunch of other characters in the story, and they say something about Jesus. So let's look real quick. In verse 1 of chapter 1, it says, this is the beginning of the good news about Jesus, the Messiah. Right? Or the Christ, if you look at other versions. Right? He's telling us not just, this is Jesus. He's a character in this story. He's saying, no, this is Jesus, the Messiah, the one that you've been waiting for. Right? If you're in the Jewish audience, you understand the concept of a Messiah, a Savior that's supposed to come. And Mark is saying, this is him. Right? And then it keeps going. He says, about Jesus, the Messiah, comma, the Son of God. Right? So in case you were unclear what it meant that the Messiah was, he says, let me tell you, just to be certain, he's the Son of God. Right? And then it keeps going.

Verse 7, John, the Baptist, who is the messenger who came in front, he says, and this was John's message, he says, after me comes the one more powerful than I, the straps of whose sandals I'm not worthy to stoop down and untie. Right? He's saying something about this Jesus. He's more powerful. Right? Everyone was following. John had a lot of followers. And John is saying, no, not me, this guy. Right? And then he goes going. And in verse 8, he says, look, I baptize you with water, but he will baptize you with the Holy Spirit. And then in verse 11, John is baptizing Jesus. Right? And this amazing thing happens. The heavens split open. A voice comes from heaven and a dove descends and the voice from heaven says, you are my son whom I love and with whom I am well pleased. Right? So if you didn't believe Mark saying this is the son of God, God himself is saying, look, you are my son. And then as you keep going, we get to the story that Steve preached on last week. And in verse 24, there's this man possessed by a demon, by an impure spirit. And in verse 24, it says, what do you want with us,

Jesus of Nazareth? Have you come to destroy us? I know who you are, the Holy One of God. Right? So we've got all of these characters telling us something. And what are they telling us? One is Jesus is God. Right? If you were unclear, if you were unsure about who this man was, he is the son of God. He is the Messiah. He is more powerful. He baptizes with the Holy Spirit. He is the Holy One of God. Right? So very clear. This is who he is. Right? If you go to the store, you go to Waterstones or Daunt or someplace and you buy a book and you look at the book and you don't know much about it. You don't know the author. You flip it over on the back or just inside the cover. And what do you see? What's in there? Right? It's a bunch of other authors, probably ones that

have more notoriety, more recognition, right?

[10:26] That you might know that name. Right? And they say something about it. They say, look, here's my recommendation. You trust me. You don't know this guy yet, but here's my recommendation to read this book. Right? It's to emphasize the validity of the message.

Right? You describe, look, I'm giving credence to this. Right? These people are recognizing, they're saying this is something to listen to. And so this is what's happening. Right? This is how that's working. Right? In a similar way, if you're on trial, you're in a court. Right? And it's something you hadn't done. What would, who would you bring to establish your character? Right? You'd bring a witness. Someone who knows you. Someone who is of good report on their own accord. And you would say, they will vouch for me.

They'll tell you who I am. Right? They will give witness and testimony to who I am and what I stand for. Therefore, the court who doesn't know me yet knows who you are. Right?

So this is kind of what Mark is doing. He's putting some people. He's saying, look, if you don't listen to me, listen to these people, here's all the people that Jesus is running into. And they're saying this about him. Right? They're saying it. Right? So he's saying, look at him. See what they're saying. It's clear. This is Jesus. He's the one you've been waiting for. He's God. Right? So that's one. Next, as we keep reading, we see that Mark shows us something about Jesus that he has authority. Look at 27. 27. The people are all so amazed. They ask each other, what is this? This new teaching. And with authority. He gives orders to impure spirits and they obey him. Right? And back in verse 22, the people were amazed at Jesus' teaching because he taught them as one with authority. Not like the teachers of the law. Right? In 25 and 26, he looks at that impure spirit. He says, be quiet. Come out of him. And the impure spirit leaves. He doesn't. He shrieks and gets out. So Jesus has power and authority over the impure spirit. And in today's chapter, in today's verses, in 31, he goes to Peter's mom, mother-in-law. He takes her hand. He lifts her up. And the fever just leaves. Peter. Jesus has power over a fever. He has power over disease. Right? In 34, he heals many who came with various diseases. People keep coming. And he has power over demons. Right? He also drove out many demons. And he wouldn't let them even let them speak because they knew who he was. Right? The point is, Jesus has authority. And Mark wants us to know that he has authority. Right? Reinforcing what we said about him. It's like, oh, this is, he's from God? He is God? Right? Well, how do

I know? Look. Look at what he's able to do. It would seem, right, that Jesus can't even be around sickness. Right? He can't help himself but heal people who come near him. Right?

[13:25] The darkness and the sickness and the brokenness, they can't even be where he is. What does the Bible say about heaven? Right? Revelation 21, it says, there will be no more death. There will be no more mourning. There will be no more crying. No more pain. For those have passed away. Right? And heaven is what? It's where we are in communion with God. And so Jesus walking around on the ground in Israel, it's a little bit of this heaven, this kingdom of heaven that he's just declared is coming. It's following around. It's overlapping the world. And sickness can't even exist. Things just get fixed when he's there. Right? So how does someone establish authority? Right? They build trust by being consistent. They demonstrate competence by delivering results. And so Mark is showing us the authority of Jesus. He's trustworthy.

Look at what he's done. Look at who he is. He's consistent. He keeps doing it. He's competent. He has authority and power over these things. And he delivers results. These people get up and they walk. The demons come out. Right? It was true then and it's true today. Jesus has authority. Right? Because he's God. So let's keep going. The next thing Mark shows us is that look at all the people who come into contact with Jesus. Right? Well, what do they do? They can't help themselves but start sharing about him. Right? Look at verse 28.

News about him spread quickly over the whole region of Galilee. And then you keep going. And so what we see then is that it says in 33, the whole town gathered at the door. Right? That's how quickly this news had spread about Jesus. That the whole town came to see Jesus. Right?

Everyone who had a sick friend, a sick mom, they came and they said, well, we must know. We've heard about you. Right? And then if you keep going, I'm bleeding into future weeks, but I think it's important. In verse 45, Jesus actually commands some people. He heals them and he says, look, don't talk about this. Just go do, show yourselves to the, to the elders. And instead, this man goes out and he talks freely. He's spreading the news and he can't help himself. And in verse five, yeah, 45, he spreads the news such that Jesus couldn't even go out anymore. Right?

Have you seen, you know, a famous person? Actually, I was walking on Kilburn High Road a year ago and it was right before the FA Cup and Man United was staying at the Marriott on Kilburn. [16:09] Right? And so you're walking up and there's the, the, the bus is outside the, the coach, right? That's going to take them over to the stadium. And what was, what was around? There was like hordes of people around the door waiting for, to get a glimpse at this, you know, footballer that's going to come out. United's not even any good, but there was people everywhere. Right? And so they, they wanted to see this thing that they'd heard about and they go, right? Jesus is, is worth sharing. Right? These people see it. They're like, something happened here.

I got to tell someone about this. I can't keep this to myself anymore. Right? And when you, you see what, when you see and experience the glory of God, you can't help but tell someone. If you were miraculously healed, right? If you were sick and you were miraculously healed, would you keep that to yourself? Or would you tell someone? Right? Of course not. You wouldn't be able to keep it to yourself. Right? I mean, this silly thing, Ashley's in the other room so I can tell the story, right? Ashley will, will find something at TK Maxx or whatever, and she's wearing it and someone's, oh, I love your top, blah, blah, blah. She's like, guess what? I got it for a really good deal. Like, she can't help herself but tell you that she got it on sale or that it was like, you know, only, you know, 10 pounds or whatever it was. Right? It's, it's like, I can't help it. Right? If she can't, she can't help herself with that, how much more, right? The savior of the world and someone who's come and healed you. Right? It reminds me of the, the parable of the treasure in the field.

Right? In Matthew 13, uh, there's a man walking in the field and he, he kind of comes across a treasure in the field and he looks at it and he says, this is, this is more money. This is more treasure than I've ever known in my, in my life. And what does he do? He, he covers it up and he goes and he sells everything so he can come back and get it. Right? He's, he's elated. He can't help but do something about when he, when he's found the treasure that's worth sharing, he goes and does it. Right? If we've truly tasted and seen that the Lord is good, we can't help ourselves but share it with others because Jesus is worth sharing. So one more thing that Mark tells us, right? What else do we notice?

So Mark, uh, he's one of my favorite authors because mostly he gets to the point. He doesn't, there's not a lot of fluff. There's not a lot of unnecessary words, right? He gets to it. If you, as you get to know me, uh, you will understand that that's why I, why I say that is I'm really, uh, trying to, I had to fill in, I had like four points and I had to come up with a bunch of other things to say this morning. Uh, I just wanted to get, get to the point, but Mark, he adds the thing in here. It means that it's, it's worth noting, right? So he, he tells us this little note about Peter's mother-in-law. Look at it, um, in 30. It says, Simon's mother-in-law was in bed with a fever and they told Jesus about it. So Jesus goes to her, he takes her hand, he helps her up.

[18:58] The fever left her. And then what? She began to wait on them, right? She, she goes immediately to serve. And so you're like, well, why would he include that little bit? Is that important? Is that necessary?

When it's like, the point is, I think that Jesus saves us for a purpose, right? I think if a neighbor came to your house, right? And you just unannounced, just popped over and they, you welcome them in, right? What are you going to do? You're going to, you're going to offer them a cup of tea, maybe a biscuit. You're going to scrounge for something that you've got in your cupboard and you say, oh, can I give you something? Right? You serve them, right? That's, that's natural, right? If, if, if his Royal Highness King Charles showed up at your house, right? You, you would offer him a cup of tea, right? Uh, you wouldn't get your regular mug either. You'd probably go find the good one. Um, you might pull out the good tea set from the back of the cupboard that you never use, right? You would definitely serve him. If the King of the universe comes to your house and heals you from your sickness in a miraculous fashion, wouldn't you get out your best, bring them anything, do whatever you could to serve this person? I think you would, right? Your gratefulness compels you to serve. And Jesus, right? He doesn't just heal someone for them to feel good about themselves, right? He doesn't, he doesn't heal them to sit around and be pleased, right? If she sat there and she's like, oh, thanks, Jesus, and then just kind of waited for the next thing, would that be right? Would that, would that be what it is? He heals them so they can get back to doing what they were made to do, right? And it's the same with us. Jesus doesn't save us for us to be happy and content about it and just sit on our hands and enjoy the rest of our life. No, he saves us so that we might be with him.

He saves us that we might become like him. He saves us so that we might start doing things that he does, right? Living in to the purpose that he created us for. Whatever that looks like, we don't know. We know what the Bible tells us we should do, and that's the point. You're saved not because just to sit around and be happy about it, but to go and serve him and tell people and do the things that he's made you to do. So there's four things, four things about Jesus that we see in Mark chapter one.

I think that those are important things for us to know about this Jesus. It'll be important things for us to understand as we read the rest of Mark. I hope you wrote them down and you take that home with you, and I want to spend some time thinking about kind of another little piece that's in this that's a little more curious, something maybe when you first read it might make you sit up and say, that's a bit odd. I'm not really sure why Mark would say that. Do you know what I'm talking about?

[21 : 52] Have you picked up on it? Right? If you've fallen asleep, I'm sorry that I bored you to this point, but stand up, sit up. Don't stand up. You can stand up if you need to. Stand up and keep yourself awake, but look at Mark one. Open it back up and look at me, particularly at verses 32 to 34.

It says, He wouldn't let the demons speak because they knew who he was. That part is a little surprising.

I'm not really sure exactly what he's doing there, right? It's not that he just doesn't want them speaking. He doesn't want them to tell everyone who he was, right? Isn't that weird, right? Just a few verses earlier in verse 14, Jesus proclaims to the city that the time is fulfilled. The kingdom of God is at hand, right? He's actually saying, I'm here. Doesn't Jesus want people to know who he is? Isn't that exactly what he came for? So why is Mark telling us this, right? But look, it's not just here. It also happens in the passage we looked at last week. In verse 24, the demon cries out, What have you to do with us, Jesus of Nazareth? I know who you are, the Holy One of God. And what does Jesus say? Be quiet. And then later in that verse 45, a few verses later, he cleanses this leopard and Jesus sternly charges him, See that you say nothing to anyone. It's quite odd, isn't it?

So back to Mark's direct and concise writing style. He doesn't include fluffy language. This isn't frivolous, you know, notes, right? He makes a concerted effort to only write things that carry weight and carry meaning. So we know that the inclusion of these bits in the narrative have purpose, right? Mark included them on purpose for us to understand something about what Jesus is doing here. But what is it saying? What is it meant to show us? See, I think what's happening here, Jesus is aware of it because he's saying it to these people. And I think Mark picks up on it, which is why he includes this bit, is that there's a great danger for these people. There's a danger that's lurking kind of underneath the surface here that Jesus is aware of and Mark picks up on. And this danger puts our eternal destination at risk. And it's so important that Jesus tells people to not talk. Don't do it. Because what we just looked at is Jesus has authority over sickness. He has authority over death. He has authority over demons. He has authority over Satan. He shows that he's able to heal sicknesses. He shows that he's able to drive out demons. He shows that he's able to deliver people from the things that confine them and control them. But he's careful because Jesus isn't looking for the people's praise for his healing or deliverance from their afflictions. Right? He still today has authority over sickness. He has authority over death, over demons, over Satan. Right? If you're sick here, he could look at you. He doesn't have to say a word. He doesn't have to do anything.

[25 : 48] You could be healed in a moment. He's able to heal them. He's able to drive out demons. He's still able to deliver you and me from the things that confine us and control us.

But Jesus is still not looking for your praise or my praise for his healing of my body or the deliverance from that affliction. Say what? Do you know what? Everyone in this story, every one of the people that he healed from the whole town, the hospital was empty so that everyone was healed, guess what? They all eventually died.

Here's the thing. If they were only healed of their bodily sickness, then it was all for nothing. Because they died. If everyone was freed, everyone who was freed from a demon in this story, guess what? They eventually died too. And if they were only freed from the clutches of a physical demon, then it was all for nothing. Don't get me wrong. There is nothing wrong with praying and yearning for physical healing. Right? We should pray for it. We should probably pray for it more than we do. There's nothing wrong with praying for deliverance from the clutches of sin and vice and addiction and depression and anxiety. We should pray for it. We should pray for it more than we do currently. So don't hear me saying that's not the point here. We should pray. But the danger

that exists, like if you get healed, if you're delivered, you might think that that was your biggest problem.

And you might believe that Jesus' greatest work was delivering you from that sickness. And the truth is, guys, it's not. You see, Jesus, we read about in the Bible, this Jesus that is in these verses of Mark, this Jesus that Mark is trying to show us, he is so much better than the one who can heal your body from sickness. He's so much better and has so much more for you than delivering you from some addiction or vice or sin that you can't quite get out of. Like, he can do those things. He will do those things. But he's better than that. Don't minimize him to just that. Jesus wants to heal you of your true and ultimate sickness. He wants to free you from what is truly and ultimately imprisoning you. Right? The truth is, we're all sick. We are all, every one of us, terminally sick. We've been ill with the debilitating disease of self-reliance.

The truth is, we're imprisoned. We are all bound and tied with no hope of escape. We've been shackled with a demoralizing heavy chain of self-dependence. And Jesus knows that we can be free of those things. So he isn't content to heal our bodies. He isn't content to free us just in a physical sense.

[28 : 57] Right? Jesus can heal our souls. And he can free us for eternity. And all we have to do is let him. Right? That's the gospel. So look, I don't know how you got here today. I don't know what you bring with you when you come into this room. Right? Maybe you are physically sick. Maybe you're dealing with something that is a disease or an ailment that you can't get better from. Maybe you love someone who is sick. And you are desperate, desperate to be well again or to have that person be well again.

Right? I've seen God do amazing things and to heal people miraculously, just like in this story from Mark. And I will pray with you and we as a church will pray with you and ask him to do it. And we know because he has the authority over all of it that he can do it. And the thing is, he might do it. He might do it. And I pray that he does. But listen to this. Don't let the hope of that keep you from believing and knowing what he will do. He will heal your soul. He will adopt you into his family. He will give you a chance to live with him in eternity. And where, as we read earlier, there is no death. There is no sickness. There is no pain. There are no tears. Right? He will do that. There are people who didn't get healed of their body in the story. But he offered to each one of them the opportunity to be healed in eternity, to be with him forever. Right? And so maybe you're here today and you feel completely captured by something that you have no control over. Maybe you love someone who is. Right? And you're desperate to be freed from that thing. You're desperate for them to be freed from the suffering and the pain or the clutches of that sin or affliction that's holding you.

Right? And I pray and we'll pray that we'll pray with you that God would set you free in this life.

Right? And he might do it. He has the power to do it. But don't let the hope of that temporary freedom make you miss the hope that Jesus offers an eternal freedom from those things.

Because he will do that. He's promised to do that. You can be freed forever. You can be adopted as his son. You can be adopted as his daughter. You can live in eternity beside him. There's no captivity.

[31 : 35] There is no slave. There is no prison. There's only freedom. There's only love and joy of the father and the son together with us forever. This is what Jesus offers and this is what Mark and Jesus are afraid that we might miss. So if you go tell about people now after I've just healed your body, that's going to be the thing that you tell them. You say, man, this guy can do miracles. He can make me better. He can fix that thing in you. And he can do that. And he might do that. He does it all the time.

But he says, wait, wait, wait. Keep this healing stuff. Keep it quiet. Keep it to yourself. Why?

Because I've got something better to show you. Just wait. I've got something greater to give you.

And it will be worth it. Amen? Let's pray. Father in heaven, thank you so much for how you love us, how you show yourself to us. Lord, I pray that we would not miss who you are.

We would not miss the goodness of your character for the goodness of your gifts. That the things that you can do for us would not overshadow the thing that you are to us.

Lord, I pray that you are our Savior, our God, our King. And we can come to you and be with you forever. Lord, all we have to do is submit and trust you and follow you.

[33 : 08] Lord, I pray that we would. I pray that those who are afflicted with sickness or any sort of ailment that they are desperate to be free from, God, I pray for them now.

Lord, would you see fit that you might do something in their lives? And Lord, even more than that, I pray that you would make yourself real and known to them. And that you have great purposes and plans for them that are wildly, amazingly more and beyond than a healthy body or free from something that holds them back.

God, you are good and you want us to be with you. Thank you, Lord, for being that. We pray in Jesus' name. Amen. Amen.