**The Gospel of Mark**

**A Disciple’s Mirror**

***Reflections on Following Jesus --*** From A Handbook on Cross-Bearing

**Mark 1:21-45**

***Messiah: Message or Miracles --*** Or, What do you want most from Jesus?

**What’s (happening in) the story?** Miracle trumps message.

Just as Mark plunges into the narrative of Jesus, so also Jesus plunges into His ministry. Having chosen disciples to become fishers of men, He now takes them fishing. He begins by teaching an authoritative message (that is, the good news of forgiveness) in the synagogue, in the process casting out and silencing the demons who identify Him. The scene means instant fame for Jesus as the Miracle Man of Galilee.

Ironically, that’s a problem, for the crowds increasingly come to Him for healing, not forgiveness. Miracle obscures message, because people see their physical needs, but not their spiritual ones. When He is crowded out and into another village, His healing of a leper becomes widely known and the crowds again find Him. While demons obey, people do not!

**What’s the challenge in the story?** Why do I follow Jesus?

Jesus’ single-mindedness and intensity are in His message, not His miracles, which are solely to support the message. Jesus’ miracles are themselves proclamations that God’s Kingdom has drawn near.

**What are the key elements in the story?**

Last week (in Mark 1:1-20) we saw Jesus calling disciples, and why they could be secure in following Him. He is, after all, God’s Son. But exorcisms and healings upstage the message of God’s grace. John 6:14, 15.

1. Jesus’ word = power. He subdues and silences demons. vv. 21-28

2. Peter’s mother-in-law’s healing sparks a miracle landslide. vv. 29-34

3. Jesus withdraws to refocus upon His true mission. vv. 35-38

4. When yet another miracle is disobediently *proclaimed* as the message, Jesus is displaced to the wilderness. vv. 40-45

**What’s the big idea (main point) of the story?**

***While Jesus is a compassionate healer and capable exorcist, His ultimate mission is to proclaim grace to repentant sinners.***

***So, let’s take a look at ourselves in Mark’s mirror. . .***

What is it that you desire most from Jesus?

Rather than look for His Kingdom, we may want Jesus merely to bless our own. Mark 10:17-31

Am I interested in Jesus’ power, but not His authority?

When I pray, “Thy will be done. . .” do I mean it absolutely?

When I come to Jesus, what am I expecting from Him? Is it something He has promised? MT 5:1-12

Am I grateful for what He has given me, or unhappy about what He has withheld? Philippians 4:10-13

Is my greatest gift the forgiveness of sins? Colossians 1:13, 14

Do I live in fear, not realizing Jesus’ power over evil? Rom. 8:28