



Mark 1

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Tape #8029
By Chuck Smith

John Mark was a nephew of Barnabas. He was a young man, a young boy, actually, during the public ministry of Jesus. Thought to be around twelve years old at the time of the crucifixion. John Mark gives to us an interesting insight concerning when Jesus was arrested in the garden of Gethsemane. How that they grabbed a young boy there in the garden, who wriggled free and fled from the garden, and it is believed that John is giving there a personal testimony of what happened to him. He went with Paul and Barnabas on the first missionary journey. However, he left them and did not continue the first journey with them. When Paul and Barnabas were ready to head out on the second missionary journey, Barnabas wanted to take his nephew Mark again, but Paul objected and there came a dispute between Paul and Barnabas over the issue of taking Mark and so the dispute was so great that they decided to part company. Paul would take Silas and go out and Barnabas would take Mark and go out. And thus, there were two missionary teams instead of one.

There is room for disagreement within the body of Christ and God oftentimes uses such things to expand His work, as He did there in the case of Paul and Barnabas, creating two missionary teams instead of one, doubling the foreign effort. But those disputes or differences that arise never remain. And so when Paul was in Rome, Mark was with him and ministered to him. And later in writing to Timothy, Paul requested that Mark come for he was, Paul said, of great comfort to me.

So he is the author of this book that is titled the gospel according to Mark. Mark was too young to really be a full eyewitness to these accounts. Mark was to Peter, probably what Timothy was to Paul. And Mark spent most of his time with Peter, listening to Peter tell the stories of Jesus. And so through Mark, you actually have Peter's account. But it is given to us by Mark who listened to Peter as he would rehearse these stories.

It is thought that Mark is one of the earliest of the gospels. But this is always up for dispute, these men are always trying to split hairs and it really doesn't make any difference which one was first or whatever. But that's what the general opinion of the scholarship is.

In the gospel of Mark, we find Jesus presented as the servant of God. And so as we look at it, he doesn't begin with the birth of Christ; as does Luke and Matthew, the other synoptic gospels, but he begins with the baptism of John the Baptist or the prophecies concerning the ministry of John the Baptist. So,

The beginning of the gospel of Jesus Christ, the Son of God (1:1);

The gospel means "good news." This is the beginning of the good news of Jesus Christ, the Son of God. Going back to the prophets,

As it is written in the prophets, Behold, I send my messenger before thy face, which will prepare thy way before thee (1:2).

This is from Malachi chapter three, and it might be interesting to look at the prophecy in Malachi chapter three because he gives us only a portion of that prophecy, chapter three, verse one, "Behold, I will send my messenger, he shall prepare the way before me: and the Lord, whom ye seek, shall suddenly come to his temple" (Malachi 3:1),

So here the Messiah that they were seeking will suddenly come to His temple, the messenger John the Baptist will come to prepare the way and the Lord whom ye seek, will then come to His temple,

"even the messenger of the covenant, whom ye delight in: behold, he shall come, saith Jehovah of hosts" (Malachi 3:1). So taking the prophecy of Malachi concerning the forerunner, and then turning to Isaiah verse three,

The voice of one crying in the wilderness, Prepare ye the way of the Lord, make his paths straight (1:3).

So again, turning back to Isaiah chapter forty, he takes this prophecy of Isaiah in which he calls them to prepare ye the way of the Lord, "The voice [verse three] of him that crieth in the wilderness, Prepare the way of Jehovah, make straight in the desert a highway for our God. Every valley shall be exalted, every mountain

and hill shall be made low” (Isaiah 40:3,4):

Now notice this, the prophecy of Isaiah, “Prepare the way of Jehovah.” Who was John preparing the way for? Who did he come to prepare the way for? Jesus, who is Jehovah Shewa. Jehovah Witnesses, if they really understood a little more of the scriptures, would have great difficulty with this. But unfortunately, they don’t understand the scriptures that well, and they pass over something like this. But when you go back to the prophecy in Isaiah, this word in the Greek “curios,” in the Hebrew is Jehovah. “Prepare the way of Jehovah, make his paths straight.”

They say that oftentimes when kings would travel through their provinces, that they would have those that would go before them to prepare the highways for the king’s coming. To straighten out the crooked places, to fill in the culverts, the valleys and to take down the mountains, that is to prepare the highway for the kings. And that is what John the Baptist was doing in a spiritual sense, preparing the way for the coming of the king.

So John did baptize in the wilderness, and preached the baptism of repentance for the remission of sins. And there went out unto him all the land of Judaea, and they of Jerusalem, and were all baptized of him in the river of Jordan, confessing their sins (1:4,5).

John the Baptist, the greatest prophet of the old covenant. Of all of the prophets that have ever risen, there was none greater than John. During the ministry of John the Baptist, there was a tremendous spiritual awakening among the common people. Somehow John was attractive to them, and they went out to be baptized by John. John appeared to be quite a character.

He was clothed with camel's hair [which could not be comfortable], and with a girdle of skin about his loins; and he did eat locusts and wild honey (1:6);

And so sort of an ascetic, an interesting character out in the wilderness, in the area of the Jordan river not too far from Jericho near Aenon, baptizing, and multitudes of people coming out of Judaea, having heard of this ministry of John the Baptist. It was a time of spiritual awakening among the common people. But among the religious leaders, there was tremendous skepticism.

John was preaching, saying, There comes one mightier than I after me, the latchet of whose sandals I am not worthy to stoop down and unloose. I have baptized you with water: but he will baptize you with the Holy Spirit (1:7,8).

So John’s prophecy concerning Jesus, “I have baptized you with water: he will baptize you with the Holy Spirit.” Two baptisms: the baptism of John, baptism of repentance for the remission of sins. John was the one baptizing. Water was the element in which they were being baptized. John is saying, There is one who’s coming after me, He’s mightier than I am. I’m not worthy to stoop down and untie His shoe, He’s going to baptize you with the Holy Spirit. So the second baptism is the baptism in the Holy Spirit. It is a baptism of power, “You will receive power,” Jesus said, “when the Holy Spirit has come upon you: and you will be witnesses unto me” (Acts 1:8). Jesus, notice, is the baptizer. He will baptize you, the Holy Spirit is the element in which one is baptized by Jesus. So the thought, as water baptism the submerging in the water, being just immersed in water, so Jesus just immersing us in the Holy Spirit, as He baptizes us with the Holy Spirit.

It came to pass in those days [as John was baptizing], that Jesus came from Nazareth of Galilee, and was baptized of John in Jordan (1:9).

Jesus was thought to be about thirty years old at this time, He had been spending His life in Nazareth in obscurity. Growing up in Nazareth, following the trade of Joseph, learning the trade as a carpenter, He probably spent His time making yokes and plows. Today we think more of a carpenter in the making houses, because we have wooden frame houses. Actually, there in those days, the houses were made of stone. The carpenters were more involved in the making of yokes and plows and perhaps furniture, than they were of building houses. And spending that time in obscurity, no doubt going to the synagogue on the sabbath, reading the scriptures. But now we find Him coming from Nazareth of Galilee, Nazareth the town with the bad reputation as Nathaniel said, “Can any good thing come out of Nazareth” (John 1:46)? Galilee was looked upon with disdain by the religious people in Jerusalem, they called it Galilee of the Gentiles in a disdainful way. And He was baptized of John in Jordan,

And immediately coming up out of the water, he saw the heavens opened, and the Spirit like a dove descending upon him: And there came a voice from heaven, saying, Thou art my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased (1:10,11).

And so we find the Trinity: Jesus, being baptized by John, the Holy Spirit descending upon Him, and the voice of the Father speaking from heaven saying, “Thou art my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased.”

There is a group that is known as the Jesus Only people and they affirm that Jesus is the only one, that He is the Father, He is the Son, He is the Holy Spirit; but again, they have difficulty with passages of scripture. The reason why there is a hang-up with many people concerning the Trinity is that it is a mystery. “Great is the mystery of godliness: God was manifest in the flesh” (1 Timothy 3:16). It is a mystery. We can’t really have anything on the human level that we can use to illustrate the Trinity nor equate to it, and thus, it’s hard for us to conceive of the Trinity of God. The Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit, the persons of the Godhead. And yet one God, manifested in the three persons.

And because of the difficulty of our human minds trying to comprehend divine truths, there are those who try to simplify it such as the Jehovah Witnesses who look only at Jehovah and deny the fact that Jesus is God, and the fact that the Holy Spirit is God. Then there are the Jesus Only who only concentrate on Jesus and say, He is the Father, He is the Son. But think of the Jesus Only for a moment as He is being baptized, He descends upon Himself, and then He throws His voice towards heaven, and declares, “This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased.” So He is a ventriloquist and you see, it’s just better to leave it a mystery and say, Well, yes I believe it, I don’t understand it, no I don’t, but I do believe that there is one God who is manifested in the three persons of the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit. I can’t comprehend it but I don’t need to. All I need to do is just believe it.

Now immediately the Spirit driveth him into the wilderness. And he was there in the wilderness for forty days, tempted of Satan; and He was with the wild beasts; and the angels ministered unto him (1:12,13).

Interesting that at the beginning of His ministry, when He was first empowered by the Holy Spirit for the ministry, Spirit coming upon Him, the first thing was to be driven by the Spirit into the wilderness. The time of testing, time of temptation, the time of confrontation with the powers of darkness. And there in this time, the angels came and ministered to Him in this spiritual battle that took place there in the wilderness for forty days.

Now after that John was put in prison, Jesus came into Galilee, preaching the gospel of the kingdom of God (1:14),

Between verses thirteen and fourteen, Mark leaves a gap of a year of the life of Jesus. He just passes and there’s a time gap here, John fills in some of the things that took place during this year’s period of time. But Mark jumps over a year of the life of Jesus. And so after John was put in prison, Jesus came into Galilee preaching the gospel or the good news of the kingdom of God,

And saying, The time is fulfilled, and the kingdom of God is at hand: repent ye therefore, and believe the good news (1:15).

Notice the call for repentance. John the Baptist called for repentance. Jesus called for repentance. Why? Because repentance is needed. It is interesting that as Jesus addresses the church at the end of the first century, in the book of Revelation, Jesus is calling upon the church to repent. Over and over, the call went out for repentance, change. And I’m sure that if Jesus was speaking to the church today, if He would write a letter to us today, as He did to the seven churches in the book of Revelation, I am certain that He would point out the flaws, the weaknesses, the places where we have fallen short, and I’m sure that His message today to many of us would be that of repentance, to turn and to become everything He wants His church to be.

Now as he walked by the sea of Galilee, he saw Simon and Andrew his brother and they were casting a net into the sea: for they were fishermen. And Jesus said unto them, Come ye after me, I’ll make you to be fishers of men. And immediately they forsook their nets, and followed him. When he had gone a little farther up the beach, he saw James the son of Zebedee, and John his brother, who were in the ship mending their nets (1:16-19).

Simon and Andrew were casting out their nets. John and his brother James were mending their nets.

And immediately he called them: and they left their father Zebedee with the hired servants, and they went after Jesus (1:20).

So He is beginning now to draw around Himself those men who He would later name as apostles and who He would place in charge of overseeing the church and spreading the gospel into all the world. Normal people, men who were fishermen there at the sea of Galilee. Interesting He didn't go to the religious schools in Jerusalem. He didn't go to Gamaliel to find out his finest students. But He went around the sea of Galilee gathering just plain, ordinary people, fishermen, to place upon them the charge of taking the Gospel to all the world.

And they went into Capernaum (1:21);

where He was to spend the bulk of His ministry in the Galilee region,

and immediately on the sabbath day he entered into the synagogue, and taught. And they were astonished at his doctrine: for he taught them as one that had authority, and not as the scribes (1:21,22).

This also we read at the conclusion of the Sermon on the Mount, they were amazed at the teaching style of Jesus because "He taught as one who had authority, not as the scribes." Whenever the scribes would teach, they would never say anything with real authority, they would say, Rabbi Hallel interprets it this way, and Rabbi Elizer interprets this way, and they would just always be quoting what some rabbi said. Much like today, you go to many churches and you can find out what the different psychologists say. And it just, not teaching with real authority the word of God. In the Sermon on the Mount, Jesus said, You have heard that it hath been said, but I say unto you. And He was teaching with authority. You've heard that this is what they say, but I'm saying to you. And so they were amazed at this teaching method because He taught with authority, something they had not heard before. The word of God being taught with authority. This is what God declares, this is what God says. And He was teaching with authority.

And there was in the synagogue a man with an unclean spirit; and he cried out, Saying, Let us alone (1:23,24);

Interesting, let us alone. That is always what the evil cries out. "A man with an unclean spirit crying out, Let us alone." A little over a year ago, we had a demonstration here at the church because we had men from our church, I guess a couple of years ago now, we had men from our church that were going up to West Hollywood to witness and to teach Bible studies in that community that is dominated by the gay faction. And as the result of their anger against these men who were going up and witnessing, they came down to demonstrate here at the church. Unfortunately, I was in Hawaii at the time. The Lord knew better than to leave me here with that kind of a demonstration. And my son, who is a cooler sort, was in the pulpit that Sunday morning. But it is interesting as I look at some of the videos of the demonstration, the cry was let us alone. Let us alone. Evil doesn't like to be confronted. They want to be left alone. Don't tell us we're wrong. Don't tell us we're sinning, leave us alone. The very same words cried out by this man with an unclean spirit, the demon crying out, Leave us alone.

what have we to do with thee, thou Jesus of Nazareth (1:24)?

It is interesting that in the gospel record, He is referred to as Jesus until the time at Caesarea, Philippi. When Jesus was there with His disciples and He said, Whom do men say that I am? And they said, Some are saying that You are John the Baptist, You've come back from the dead. Others are saying, You're Elijah. Some believe You're Jeremiah. Some believe the other prophet. Who do you say that I am? Peter said, You are the Messiah, the Christ, the Son of the living God. It was only after that that He is then referred to as Jesus Christ. But in the gospel He is referred to only as Jesus, in the Jesus of Nazareth here, until the confession of Peter. Son of God is used of Jesus four times in Mark's gospel, twice by demons. And then by the high priest, Are you then the Messiah, the Son of God? And Jesus answered, I am. He answered in the affirmative. So, "Let us alone, what have we to do with thee, thou Jesus of Nazareth?"

Are you come to destroy us? I know you who you are, the Holy One of God (1:24).

I know you, the demon said. The question, Are you come to destroy us? In Luke's gospel we have that case of the demons in the legion in the man at Gadara who again, acknowledged Jesus. And they said, Please don't send us to the abisso, and Jesus then, you remember, gave them leave and they entered into the herd of swine that were there on the side of the mountain, by the sea of Galilee and they stampeded on down in the

sea and were drowned. The demons recognized the authority that Jesus had over them. All power, He said, is given to me in heaven and in earth. And even while on the earth, He had power over the unclean spirits. They recognized that. They acknowledged that. Here the question, Are you come to destroy us? We know who you are. The Holy One of God.

And Jesus rebuked him [that is, the unclean spirit], and said, Hold your peace, and come out of him. And when the unclean spirit had torn him, and cried with a loud voice, he came out of him. And they were all amazed, inasmuch as they questioned among themselves, saying, What is this thing? what new doctrine is this? [Not only did He teach with authority] for with authority he commands even the unclean spirits, and they obey him (1:25-27).

So there began to be a real stir among the people, marveling at the way He taught, with real authority, and marveling at the way He dealt with unclean spirits with great authority. What kind of power is this? Who is this man who commands the unclean spirits and they submit to Him?

And so immediately his fame spread abroad throughout all of the region of the Galilee. And forthwith, when they were come out of the synagogue [that is, on the sabbath day], they entered into the house of Simon and Andrew, with James and John (1:28,29).

The “forthwith,” the idea is right outside of the synagogue, so it is thought that the house of Simon Peter was adjacent near to the synagogue in Capernaum and as the result, when you go to Capernaum today to the synagogue that is there, which is a second century synagogue built over the ruins of the synagogue of Jesus’ day, just outside of that synagogue they have built what looks like a flying saucer over the top of what they call the house of Peter. And this church that they have built is a fairly new church, it’s only in the last few years. It used to be that we could go there and this modernistic style church was not there. But they would point to this one house that had a sign on it, “The House of Simon Peter.” Now they built this church over the top of it. But just whether or not that’s authentic is way out. But evidently, his house was near the synagogue there. And so as we are in Israel, I’ll often say to the people, we are close to the spot, somewhere in this area, it happened. But don’t get too wrapped up in the fact that a church is built and it’s called the Church of the Loaves and the Fishes and so forth, because interestingly enough, the Church of the Loaves and the Fishes has been constructed at Magdala and actually the miracle of the loaves and fishes took place across the lake in Bethsaida. So it was hard to get over there though before they had the bridge across the Jordan river. So it was more simple to just build the church right there at Magdala and say this is the church of the Loaves and the Fishes. How many people really know? So they came out of the synagogue, and nearby, went into the house of Simon Peter.

But Simon's wife's mother (1:30)

Simon then was married. It is interesting to me that though Simon Peter was married and no doubt Andrew, James and John, all of them, that there is really no reference in the gospel records or the New Testament to the families, to the wives, or the children or whatever, of the apostles. This is the only reference we have that lets us know that they were basically family men. And Simon’s wife’s mother

lay sick of a fever, and they told Jesus about her. And so he came and took her by the hand, and lifted her up; and immediately the fever left her, and she ministered unto them (1:30,31).

She probably fixed lunch for them.

And at even, when the sun did set (1:32),

In the afternoon, the people don’t do much, too hot. And in the evening after the sun sets, begins to cool off, people come out.

And they brought unto him all that were diseased, and them that were possessed with devils. And all the city was gathered together at the door [presumably the door of the house of Peter]. And he healed many that were sick of divers diseases, and He cast out many devils; and He would not allow the devils to speak, because they knew him (1:32-34).

He did not yet want the public acknowledgement or recognition of Him as the Messiah. He was very conscious of God’s timing. He knew that there was a time that He was to be revealed as the Messiah. And thus, prior to that hour, that time, He was doing His best to keep a lid on things, and thus, here with the demons, the devils, He would not allow them to speak because they knew who He was as was demonstrated

in the case in the synagogue where he said, We know who You are, the holy One of God.

In the morning (1:35),

Here's a busy day, been in the synagogue, He's been teaching with real authority, the man possessed with an unclean spirit has been delivered, He goes to Peter's house, He heals Peter's mother-in-law, and then in the evening, crowds gather, huge crowds, the whole city it seems, is at the door of Peter. They've got their sick people, they've got the demon-possessed people, and Jesus is ministering, probably way up into the late hours of the night. According to our kind of schedule, we say, Boy, let's sleep in tomorrow, this has been a busy day. But we read, and "in the morning,"

rising up a great while before day, he went out, and departed into a solitary place, and there prayed (1:35).

Things are beginning to move, things are beginning to happen. People are beginning to recognize His power. His ministry is beginning to take off. And Jesus sees the necessity of spending time with the Father. And thus, getting up very early before it was even daylight, He goes out to a solitary place and there He prays.

And Simon and they that were with him followed after him. And when they found him, they said unto him, All men are seeking for you (1:36,37).

Crowds are there. People are looking for you.

And he said unto them, Let us go into the next towns, that I may preach there also: for therefore came I forth (1:38).

It would always be easy to go back and establish His church there in Capernaum but He says, Let's go on. Unchartered territory. There's a necessity to bring the gospel to them also.

And so he preached in their synagogues throughout all Galilee, and He cast out devils (1:39).

Again, demonstrating and manifesting His power over the spirit world of evil.

Now there came a leper to him, beseeching him, and kneeling down to him, and saying unto him, If you will, you can make me clean (1:40).

The expression of faith, You can make me clean. Recognizing the power and the authority that Jesus had. I know You can make me clean. In his mind, the only issue was the willingness of the Lord. If You are willing, if it is Your will, You could make me clean. Many times, I think with us, the issue is the willingness of the Lord. It isn't that we lack faith in the power of the Lord to do something, we know that He is able. Our question is, Is He willing to do it? And that is something that we don't always know and that is why when we pray, we say, not according to our will but Your will be done. Lord, "If You are willing, You can make me clean."

Notice the leper came to Jesus, knelt before Him. According to the law, he was not to approach Jesus. According to the law, he was to cry "Unclean" if Jesus approached him. But this man is desperate. We talked in the morning message concerning leprosy, especially the biblical leprosy. And some of the Mosaic law concerning leprosy. And if you weren't here you can get the tape of the morning message because we're not going to repeat some of the details of leprosy. But to suffice, leprosy was incurable at that time. Today, leprosy, though still incurable, can be arrested and its progression in the body can be stopped so that people who have leprosy today can live fairly normal lives. But not so in those days, they had no sulfate drugs. And thus, leprosy was progressive and it kills the nerves, destroys the senses. A person with leprosy, where the leprosy has attacked the nerve and destroyed the nerve cells, has no sense or consciousness of pain. And that's one of the real dangers of leprosy because a person who say, has leprosy in his hand can put his hand down on a hot stove and not even feel the heat, and thus be terribly burned. And much of the problem with the leper was the fact that they have no sense of pain and thus, they can be injured and not even realize it. They can bleed to death, not even knowing that they were cut, or be scorched or their hand severely burnt and then the blood poisoning and so forth as a result, so they usually did not die of leprosy but of some other factor that was related to the leprosy. But a man who had leprosy was hopeless and thus desperate. And this man came to Jesus, knelt before Him, beseeching Him with the words, "If You are willing, You could make me clean." And then we read,

And Jesus, moved with compassion, put forth his hand, and touched him (1:41),

As we pointed out today, because of the nature of leprosy, it has been used as a type of sin. Incurable by human standards, destroys by rotting process, is progressive in its nature, and thus, a type of sin and the destroying effects of sin. The progressive aspects of sin. Jesus was moved with compassion. To look at a leprous person, to smell the stench that comes from the rotting flesh, is generally, extremely repulsive. One of the greatest problems that Father Damien had when he went to the leper colony there on Molokai was the horrible stench. And he would actually get sick, physically sick and throw up because of the stench going into their houses. It's extremely difficult, the smell is so repulsive that it just turns your stomach. And we would probably, seeing a leprous person and seeing the development of the leprosy, perhaps missing their hand or part of their arm and all, we would be repulsed by it. But Jesus, seeing him, was moved with compassion, and reached out and touched him. To touch a leper was contrary to the law. It would cause you to be unclean from a ceremonial standpoint. When I read this, Jesus was moved with compassion, He reached out and touched him,

and said, I will; be thou clean (1:41).

I think of the words of Jesus to Phillip, the night that Jesus was betrayed, the day before He was crucified. How when Phillip said, Lord, if You'll just show us the Father, it will suffice us. And Jesus answered and said, Have I been so long a time with you, Phillip, haven't you seen Me? He that hath seen Me hath seen the Father. Let's look at Jesus as He deals with this man in this repulsive state. He's moved with compassion. He reaches out and He touches him. And He declares, "I will, be clean." You see, they are the Father, moved with compassion over our conditions, willing to reach out and touch us. And yes, willing to heal. If You are willing, Lord, You can. Jesus said, I am willing. "I will." It's good to know that He is willing, as well as able, to help us today.

Now, in looking at this from a spiritual sense, looking at leprosy as the type of sin, we know that God is willing to forgive every man, no matter what sin they may have committed. "For God is not willing that any should perish, but that all should come to repentance." So there is one thing you never need to question. And that is the willingness of God to save you and to forgive you your sins. That's never an issue, that's never a question. You know that God is willing. Ready to reach out and touch you, ready to destroy that which is destroying you, basically your sin. Sin, like leprosy, is destructive. It destroys the victim. Sin is destroying you. But Jesus is willing to reach out and touch you because He's moved with compassion for your condition.

I love this story. I love it wherever in the New Testament I read, And Jesus was moved with compassion. When He saw the needs of men, it always moved Him with compassion. And conscious as I am of my own needs, it's comforting to me to know that when Jesus sees me in my needs, He's moved with compassion. There are cases where I am moved with compassion, but unfortunately, I don't have any power to do anything about it. When I go through Children's Hospital, and I see these little children in their beds and I see the deformed bodies and I see the physical conditions, I'm moved with compassion for these children. My heart just is moved with compassion towards them, but unfortunately, I don't have the power to do anything. And I often thought, O Lord, how I would love to have the power to just go in and take this little child by the hand and say, Be healed in the name of Jesus. But I don't have that power. Now I'm not blaming God for the lack of power, it's probably something within me. But the glorious thing is that when He is moved with compassion, He has the power to do something about it, the ability to do something about it. And so, He said, Be clean.

And immediately the leprosy departed from him, and he was cleansed (1:42).

It wasn't, well, he progressively got better. And the doctor said, we must have misdiagnosed this. And he said, I thought I had leprosy but it was just a mistake in the diagnosing of the situation and I'm fine. But no, it was immediate. That white, rotten flesh turned pink, healthy, strong. "Immediately the leprosy departed and he was cleansed."

And Jesus very strictly charged him, Saying, Don't say anything about this to anybody: but just go, and show yourself to the priest, and offer for your cleansing those things which Moses commanded, as a testimony unto them (1:43,44).

That is, unto the priest. Turn to Leviticus chapter fourteen, and there you find an interesting passage of

scripture concerning the law of the leper in the day of his cleansing. Chapter fourteen, verse one, “And the LORD spake unto Moses, saying, This shall be the law of the leper in the day of his cleansing: He shall be brought unto the priest: And the priest shall go forth out of the camp; and the priest shall look, and, behold, if the plague of leprosy be healed in the leper; Then shall the priest command him to take for him that is to be cleansed two birds alive and clean, cedar wood, and scarlet, and hyssop: And the priest shall command that one of the birds be killed in an earthen vessel [that is a clay pot] over running water: As for the living bird, he shall take it, and the cedar wood, and the scarlet, and the hyssop, and shall dip them and the living bird in the blood of the bird that was killed over the running water: And he shall sprinkle upon him that is to be cleansed from the leprosy seven times, and shall pronounce him clean, and shall let the living bird loose in the open field. And he that is to be cleansed shall wash his clothes, and shave off all of his hair, wash himself in water, that he may be clean: and after that he shall come into the camp, and shall tarry abroad out of his tent for seven days. But it shall be on the seventh day, that he shall shave all his hair off his head and his beard and his eyebrows, even all the hair he shall shave it off: and shall wash his clothes, also he shall wash his flesh in water, and shall be clean. And on the eighth day he shall take two he lambs without blemish, and one ewe lamb of the first year” (Leviticus 14:1-10). And he goes on with the law of the leper in the day of his cleansing. But the interesting thing is that leprosy was incurable. There was no cure for leprosy even as there is no cure even to the present day, just an arresting. But in those days, they couldn’t even arrest the development. How is it that God would make a law for the restoring of a leper into the community when there was no cure for leprosy? The only way a leper could be cured was by God’s divine action of healing him. And so God made the allowances in the law for him to work His divine work of grace when He so desired. And for that person upon which the divine work of grace was brought, could be brought back into society and into the community of man. So to me, that is a blessed thing that even in the law, God made provision for grace to operate. His grace unto the leper.

So Jesus commanded him, just go and follow the Mosaic law, present yourself to the priest, offer those things that Moses commanded for your cleansing. And don’t tell anybody. Just between you and me.

But he went out, and began to publish it everywhere, and to blaze abroad the matter (1:45),

Of course, you can’t really blame him, can you? I mean, here your life is a mess, your life is down the tubes, your life is being destroyed by this horrible, loathsome leprosy, you’re outcast, you have no hope, and suddenly, you’re well. Now people are going to say, what happened to you? And you’re bound to tell them. And you want to tell them. Hey, man, Jesus cleansed me. He just said the word and immediately, that white, rotten flesh changed and I was healed by the word of Jesus. You’d want to tell everybody. That’s the result of experiencing the work of the Lord in your life. And thus, witnessing for Christ is the same thing. Because of what the Lord has done for you, as David said, “He took me out of the horrible pit, out of the miry clay, and He set my feet upon the rock, and He established my goings.” And when you’re sinking, you’re going down, you’re sinking in the mire, and suddenly Jesus lifts you out, suddenly you have this new life, those things that were dragging you down and destroying you are gone. And you have fellowship with the Lord and the joy of fellowshiping with Him. You’ll want to share it with everybody, you don’t have to go to a class and learn how to witness. It’s just the natural desire of the heart that has been set free by the power of Jesus Christ. I want to share with others what the Lord has done for me. And that’s basically what witnessing is. Sharing with others what the Lord has done for you. This fellow went out and published it, blazed abroad, he’s telling everybody he met, so much so that Jesus couldn’t go any longer openly into a village, he had to stay out in the deserted areas where the people started coming out to Him from all of the villages, from all of the quarters (1:45).

And He spent His time really out in deserted areas allowing the people to come to Him, rather than try to go into the villages because of the fame that was spread abroad concerning the miracles, the healings, the power over the evil spirits, over leprosy, over diseases. As He was manifesting to man the Father, the heart of the Father, the desire of the Father. He that hath seen Me hath seen the Father.

And so what interesting glimpses we get of the Father tonight, who looks upon us with compassion, who reaches out and touches us, and who delivers us from those things that destroy. What a wonderful God we serve!

Father, we thank You tonight for Your Son Jesus Christ, who came into this world to destroy the works of the devil, to bring life, to bring hope, to bring healing. Thank You, Lord, for what You have done for us because of Your compassion, Your love, Your sympathetic understanding of our weaknesses and of our needs. Lord, You see us tonight. You see everything about us, there is nothing hid from You. You see what others cannot see, You see our hearts, the motives and the issues of our hearts. And knowing us, Lord, fully, knowing us completely, You look upon us with compassion, sympathetic understanding, and You offer to us Your help. Thank You, Father, we need Your help and we receive tonight Your help and Your strength. In Jesus' name, Amen.