

Summary Handout

“[He] Took Our Infirmities, and Bare Our Sickness”

Lesson

7

Summary

Mark 1; Jesus is baptized by John—He preaches the gospel, calls disciples, casts out devils, heals the sick, and cleanses a leper.

Mark 2; Jesus forgives sins, heals a paralytic, eats with publicans and sinners, and announces that he is Lord of the Sabbath.

Mark 4; Jesus gives the parables of the sower, the candle under a bushel, the seed growing secretly, and of the mustard seed—He stills the tempest.

Mark 5; Jesus casts out a legion of devils, who then enter the swine—A woman is healed by touching his clothes—He raises Jairus' daughter from the dead.

Luke 7:11-17; He raises from death the son of the widow of Nain.

Supplemental Holy Land and Jewish insights:

Do You Believe in Miracles? The late Israeli General and statesman, Moshe Dyan, was asked if he believed in miracles. He said, “No, we just count on them!” Ancient Jewish commentary about miracles usually refers to them as God given. However, “Later thinkers, for whom “the natural order” had an existence independent of God, were troubled by the question whether biblical miracles were “natural” or “supernatural,” but the Bible makes no such distinction and never questions God's ability to do anything, by any means.” “It is this thought which is vocalized in the thanksgiving prayer which is part of the daily *Amidah*: “We thank You for Your miracles which are daily with us, and for Your wonders and benefits, which are wrought at all times, evening, morning and night.” (*Encyclopedia Judaica Jr.*)

Miracles, Personal or for the Public? Making the miracles a metaphor or a lesson for everyone might detract from the practical, personal and mostly intimate precept or blessing as they were intended. Jesus showed his personal compassion and individual love in his miracles. They were used to confirm the private, personal faith of those involved. Does it seem out of His nature to use miracles to prove His divinity and power? Was it those observing who interpreted his miracles as such?

Jesus Was a “Whole-istic” Healer: For example, a palsied man was told that his sins were forgiven. Consider the man with his withered hand. What happened to the rest of his soul? Consider the blood issue of the woman, unclean for twelve years (untouchable under Mosaic law). She was told that she was whole, to go in peace and then, be healed of her “plague.” Is it possible that Jesus knew that her distress of bleeding was, in fact, the lesser of her challenges in life? She may not have had a hug, a touch or caress in twelve years!

Too Sacred to be Told to Everyone: Sometimes we are sick one way so that the Lord can bless us another way. Often, the Lord sent the multitude away and asked that the miracle be kept private. It was his nature to ask that “no one know;” it was his way of showing the personal nature of His salvation. Viewing miracles in their private context will give us a greater insight to His mission--of saving each and every one of us, individually.

A Centurion's Servant: To sense the personal gracious nature of Jesus' relationships, let's consider the account of a Roman centurion whose servant was gravely ill. “And when he heard of Jesus, he sent . . . beseeching him that he would come and heal his servant . . . and when he was now not far from the house, the centurion sent friends . . . saying unto him, Lord, trouble not thyself: for I am not worthy that thou shouldst enter under my roof . . . but say in a word, and my servant shall be healed . . . When Jesus heard these things, he . . . said unto the people that followed him . . . I have not found so great faith, no, not in Israel.” (*Luke 7:1-10*) According to Jewish practices in those days, it was not proper for a Jew to come into the house of a foreigner. (Peter reiterated that custom when he spoke to another centurion in Caesarea.) “Ye know how that it is an unlawful thing for a man that is a Jew to keep company, or come unto one of another nation.” (*Acts 10:28*)

Allow the Children: Upon a closer look, we can also see the familiar nature of Jesus' personality. He must have made many friends here; after all, thousands followed him. It is conceivable that the very first ones to gather around him when he came out or arrived to speak were the little children. He might have had special names or nicknames for them, after all, he called Simon Bar Jonah, *Peter*, “Rocky.” (Maybe Simon's physique was like a rock. Later that rock would sink, and Jesus, the Rock of Salvation, would save him.) Many parents also brought their children for blessings. The disciples attempted to turn them away, Jesus responded, “. . . forbid them not . . . for of such is the kingdom of heaven.” (*Matthew 19:14*)

Touching His Garment: Of the children at Capernaum, I recall the account of a twelve-year-old girl who was ill. Her father, the leader of the synagogue, begged Jesus to come and heal her. On the way to bless her, Jesus noted that a woman had touched his garment.

The Talith: Religious Jews today wear a garment of wool called a *talith*. The name seems to be derived from the Hebrew word for lamb, *taleb*. The hem or the strings of the *talith* are customarily touched during Jewish religious services. (The four sets of strings are knotted so that the sum of knots and strings equals 613—the number of laws and covenants including the Ten Commandments given to Moses on Mount Sinai.) Modern Jews touch the strings and knots of the *talith* garment to remind and commit themselves to keeping the laws **and, thereby**, being blessed of God.

Talitha Cumi—A Child Back to Life: By the time Jesus arrived to bless the daughter of the leader of the synagogue, she had died. The people laughed at Jesus when He said the girl was only asleep. He sent all the mourners away, then with Peter, James and John, “. . . he taketh the father and the mother of the damsel . . . took the damsel by the hand, and said unto her, Talitha cumi . . .” (*Mark 5:40-41*) The endearing term *Talitha* may have been Jesus’ way of saying “my little lamb,” or “curly locks” (a nickname)—and *cumi* in Hebrew means “get up.” In discussing this event with my own curly-locked daughter, we mused on the tender feelings, personal nature, and poetry of Jesus. We wrote a poem together. Jesus’ teaching methods are reflected in the following verses that a young curly locked girl might have also thought two thousand years ago:

TALITHA—THE REFLECTIONS OF A LITTLE GIRL

They said he was a stranger man,
but, I liked him right away.
 The crowds lingered and followed him
 but, I always heard him say:
Hello, my precious little one,
 will you sit with me today?
He called me Talitha, curly locks,
 . . . and he taught me how to pray.
When I was sick, he came to me;
 but, my life had slipped away.
He told my father not to fear,
Have faith, he was heard to say.
Then, took my little hand and said:
Talitha, rise up and stay.

Family Brought Together: Jesus was teaching a bereaved family, torn apart by the untimely death of their daughter. His lesson probably included the personal comforting thought, “Your family is together again.” Yet what He was really teaching was that “Families can be together, forever.”

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