

Mark

Lesson 7

Chapter 5:21-6:5

Leader Guide

Leader Guide Bible Studies

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Desperate Faith

Mark 5:21-6:5, Lesson 7

Opening Prayer

Introduction

Mark 4 and 5 portray Jesus' divinity, the God-Man with power over creation in the physical realm, over the spirit realm, and over disease and death. The chapters are a continuous account of two days in the life of Jesus. He is at the height of popularity. People came to Capernaum from all over the region to be healed and in hopes of finding the Messiah. In the evening, Jesus called his disciples to cross the sea of Galilee, where they met a storm that Jesus calmed by the power of his word. Once they arrived on the other side of the lake, two demon-possessed men met them, and Jesus healed them. The account is told through one of the men called Legion because many demons possessed him. After the healing, Jesus was feared and told to leave the region, so he returned to Capernaum. Awaiting him are the crowds of people he left the day before.

In this lesson, we connect with people who are in desperate need of a miracle and drawn to Jesus as their only hope. They are held up in scriptures as people with a profound faith.

A Dead Girl and a Sick Woman [Additional comments from Luke 8]

Mk 5:21 When Jesus had again crossed over by boat to the other side of the lake, a large crowd gathered around him while he was by the lake.

Mk 5:22 Then one of the synagogue rulers, named Jairus, came there. Seeing Jesus, he fell at his feet²³ and pleaded earnestly with him, "My little daughter is dying. Please come and put your hands on her so that she will be healed and live."

Mk 5:24 So Jesus went with him. A large crowd followed and pressed around him. [Lk 8:42 As Jesus was on his way, the crowds almost crushed him.]

Mk 5:25 And a woman was there who had been subject to bleeding for twelve years.

Mk 5:26 She had suffered a great deal under the care of many doctors and had spent all she had, yet instead of getting better, she grew worse.

Mk 5:27 When she heard about Jesus, she came up behind him in the crowd and touched his cloak,^{Mk 5:28} because she thought, "If I just touch his clothes, I will be healed."

Mk 5:29 Immediately her bleeding stopped and she felt in her body that she was freed from her suffering.

Mk 5:30 At once Jesus realized that power had gone out from him. He turned around in the crowd and asked, "Who touched my clothes?"

[When they all denied it, Peter said,]^{Mk 5:31} "You see the people crowding against you," his disciples answered, "and yet you can ask, 'Who touched me?'"

Mk 5:32 But Jesus kept looking around to see who had done it. [Lk 8:46 But Jesus said, “Someone touched me; I know that power has gone out from me.”]

Mk 5:33 Then the woman, [seeing that she could not go unnoticed], knowing what had happened to her, came and fell at his feet and, trembling with fear, told him the whole truth. [Lk 8:47 In the presence of all the people, she told why she had touched him and how she had been instantly healed.]

Mk 5:34 He said to her, “Daughter, your faith has healed you. Go in peace and be freed from your suffering.”

Mk 5:35 While Jesus was still speaking, some men came from the house of Jairus, the synagogue ruler. “Your daughter is dead,” they said. “Why bother the teacher anymore?”

Mk 5:36 Ignoring what they said, Jesus told the synagogue ruler, “Don’t be afraid; just believe [Lk 8:50 and she will be healed.”]

Mk 5:37 He did not let anyone follow him except Peter, James and John the brother of James.

Mk 5:38 When they came to the home of the synagogue ruler, Jesus saw a commotion, with people crying and wailing loudly.

Mk 5:39 He went in and said to them, “Why all this commotion and wailing? The child is not dead but asleep.”¹

Mk 5:40 But they laughed at him [knowing that she was dead]. After he put them all out, he took the child’s father and mother and the disciples who were with him [Lk 8:51 Peter, John and James], and went in where the child was.

Mk 5:41 He took her by the hand and said to her, “*Talitha koum!*” (which means, “Little girl, I say to you, get up!”).

Mk 5:42 Immediately the girl stood up and walked around (she was twelve years old). At this they were completely astonished.

Mk 5:43 He gave strict orders not to let anyone know about this, and told them to give her something to eat.

1. What caused the woman to approach Jesus in secret?

The nature of her illness made her untouchable and an outcast from the community under the Law (Leviticus 15:25). No Pharisee would touch her. So, in her mind, she needed to approach Jesus secretly. She must have also had a profound sense of guilt and shame under the prevailing view that sickness was due to sin and she could not be healed – in fact she had spent all she had on doctors only to receive more suffering. She must have thought, ‘what have I done to be punished by this suffering?’.

2. In what ways did Jesus care for her after the healing (Mark 5:34)?

It might seem humiliating to call the woman out and force a public confession but it was an important step in restoring her to the community where she had been ostracized and untouchable. Jesus wanted to release her from her fear, guilt, and shame to publicly recognize her healing and call her into a life of joy.

3. How do you explain that a crowd was crushing Jesus, yet only the woman was healed by touching him?

Everyone was touching Jesus, the crowds were crushing in on him, yet only the woman was healed. There was nothing magical about touching Jesus, the healing power was in faith. So, what were the motives of the crowd? Certainly, there were plenty of people who needed healing and were brought to Jesus to be healed. The scriptures record just a few. But the crowd would also abandon Jesus in a short while because he did not live up to their expectation of who the Messiah should be. They liked the miraculous healings and feedings but they did not like that the kingdom he spoke of was spiritual and not temporal. They wanted him to throw out the Romans and restore the glory of Israel! Many would stop following him when they did not understand his teaching about being the bread of heaven and they would need to eat his body to have eternal life.

4. What did the synagogue ruler risk in coming to Jesus?

The synagogue ruler was a respected member of the community. His peers were Pharisees who believed that Jesus was a blasphemer and healed by the power of Satan. To bow down at Jesus' feet and plead with him to heal his daughter would surely mean the Pharisees would ostracize him from the synagogue. Jairus must have been able to see the lie in their judgments and sought out the one he knew who could heal with a touch.

5. Restoration to the community is a common theme in Jesus' healing. What care did Jesus take to restore Jairus' daughter to the community?

Jesus did not want the girl to be stigmatized as the girl who was raised from the dead – the Pharisees would forever exclude her from the community and accuse her of being demon possessed since they believed Jesus healed by the power of demons. Consequently, Jesus sowed the seed of doubt that she was dead by saying she was sleeping. Next, he limited the number of witnesses to the healing despite the large crowd gathering. Finally, he gave the parents strict orders not to tell anyone and told them to give her something to eat so they knew she was real flesh and blood and not a spirit.

Jesus Heals the Blind and Mute (This account occurs only in Matthew where it follows the healing of dead girl and sick woman)

Mt 9:27 As Jesus went on from there, two blind men followed him, calling out, "Have mercy on us, Son of David!"

Mt 9:28 When he had gone indoors, the blind men came to him, and he asked them, "Do you believe that I am able to do this?" "Yes, Lord," they replied.

Mt 9:29 Then he touched their eyes and said, "According to your faith will it be done to you";³⁰ and their sight was restored. Jesus warned them sternly, "See that no one knows about this."

Mt 9:31 But they went out and spread the news about him all over that region.

Mt 9:32 While they were going out, a man who was demon-possessed and could not talk was brought to Jesus.

Mt 9:33 And when the demon was driven out, the man who had been mute spoke. The crowd was amazed and said, "Nothing like this has ever been seen in Israel."

Mt 9:34 But the Pharisees said, "It is by the prince of demons that he drives out demons."

6. The miraculous healing of the blind and mute were prophetic signs found in Isaiah 35:4 and 42:6 that God himself would perform when he came to establish his kingdom.

"Be strong, do not fear; your God will come, he will come with vengeance; with divine retribution he will come to save you." Isa 35:5 Then will the eyes of the blind be opened and the ears of the deaf unstopped. Isa 35:6 Then will the lame leap like a deer, and the mute tongue shout for joy.

Isa 42:6 "I, the LORD, have called you in righteousness; I will take hold of your hand. I will keep you and will make you to be a covenant for the people and a light for the Gentiles, ⁷ to open eyes that are blind, to free captives from prison and to release from the dungeon those who sit in darkness.

7. What does the salutation, Son of David, reveal about how the blind men regarded Jesus?

Son of David is a title referring to Jesus as the Messiah. Second to John the Baptist, it is the earliest public profession that Jesus was the Messiah. These men knew that only God could restore their eyesight, and that was Jesus.

8. Jesus usually took steps to restore a healed person to the community but he sternly warned the blind men not to tell anyone about this. What do you think was the purpose of the warning?

I think verse 9:34 indicates the issue – Jesus' aim was to protect them from the Pharisees. The Pharisees were already planning to murder Jesus and would later plan to murder Lazarus after Jesus raised him (John 12:10).

9. What was the role of faith in the healing of the blind men and mute man?

The blind men recognized Jesus as the Messiah. Jesus told them they would be healed according to their faith – and they were healed. We know less about the faith of the demon possessed man but can assume Jesus healed him out of compassion rather than by his faith and understanding.

A Prophet Without Honor (Parallel reference Mt 13:54-58)

Mk 6:1 Jesus left there and went to his hometown, accompanied by his disciples.

Mk 6:2 When the Sabbath came, he began to teach in the synagogue, and many who heard him were amazed. “Where did this man get these things?” they asked. “What’s this wisdom that has been given him, that he even does miracles!

Mk 6:3 Isn’t this the carpenter? Isn’t this Mary’s son and the brother of James, Joseph, Judas and Simon? Aren’t his sisters here with us?” And they took offense at him.

Mk 6:4 Jesus said to them, **“Only in his hometown, among his relatives and in his own house is a prophet without honor.”**

Mk 6:5 He could not do any miracles there, except lay his hands on a few sick people and heal them. Mk 6:6 And he was amazed at their lack of faith.

10. The familiarity of the people indicated that Jesus returned to Nazareth, where the people tried to throw him off a cliff for blasphemy after he read Isaiah 61:1-2 (Luke 14:14-30).

The Spirit of the Sovereign LORD is on me, because the LORD has anointed me to preach good news to the poor. He has sent me to bind up the brokenhearted, to proclaim freedom for the captives and release from darkness for the prisoners, to proclaim the year of the LORD'S favor.

a. What was their reason for rejecting him during this visit?

The people from his hometown could not get past Jesus’ humanity – they know his family and knew him as the carpenter. They could see his wisdom and could not deny the miracles but instead of praising him they took offense at him – but they didn’t try to throw him off the cliff this time!

b. What are some other reasons people reject Jesus?

The Pharisees rejected Jesus because they regarded him as a blasphemer who made himself equal with God but scriptures also point out they were jealous of Jesus’ popularity, influence, and power (Matthew 27:18, Acts 5:17).

The people in Gadarenes rejected Jesus because his power and actions threatened their livelihood after the death of their 2,000 pigs.

My unbeliever friends simply do not believe in God and think that faith is for the naive and superstitious. They believe people make up the idea of God to fill the gaps between what is known in science and what is yet to be discovered.

Others have suffered a great loss and find it difficult to believe in a God who is both loving and all powerful but did not prevent suffering in their life or the life of a loved one.

11. What do healings of a demoniac, a bleeding woman, a and a dead girl teach you about Jesus’ love?

These people were considered unclean by the law and by practices of the day. Jesus' action showed that God's love was not limited by the Levitical law. He came so that mankind would enter a new covenant of grace and compassion.

12. Discuss the relationship between God's power, Jesus' power, and people's faith in healing.

God's power is infinite and does not depend on man.

Jesus did the will of the Father and the Father's power flowed through his Son.

People's faith in healing ran the spectrum. Those bound by demons from were probably unaware of what was happening in contrast to Jairus, the bleeding woman, and the blind men who possessed extraordinary faith. Perhaps they found their extraordinary faith in the desperation that Jesus was their only hope. In other examples of healing, faith works on behalf of someone else. The faith of the dead girl's parents worked on her behalf. The men who brought their paralytic friend through the roof to be healed by Jesus is another example. I probably most closely identify with the man whose son was tormented by a demon and exclaimed to Jesus, "I do believe; help me overcome my unbelief!" (Mark 9:24). The scriptures also provide examples that a lack of faith could also prevent Jesus from healing. Ultimately, we do not look to the power of our own faith for healing, all healing comes from the power of God. Look to Jesus.

Closing Prayer