

**Why Didn't You Come to Me?**  
*It's Somewhere: Looking for Answers*  
Mark 1:21-34  
June 11, 2017

Well, I've got good news and bad news today. Which one do you want first?

**APPOINTMENT NEWS**

For the last several weeks, we've been looking through boxes, searching for the answers to some of life's difficult questions. We've addressed the questions "Why Do Bad Things Happen", "What about Our Future", and "How Can I Have Better Relationships." We've faced the issues of doubt, fear, low self-esteem, and the need for belonging.

Next week, we start a series called "Mission Possible 2017" as we focus on missions. We will also consecrate our Youth Mission Team, so you want to be sure to be here.

But today, we are going to get to the essential box in all of our collection – THE box you must have, know where it's at, can access it at any time, because your life depends upon it.

Christian humorist and minister Dennis Swanberg tells the story of an Easter Sunday in Saginaw, Texas. The church was packed for Easter services. The high school basketball coach was in the middle of giving his testimony when water started dripping through the ceiling onto the choir. The air conditioning units were in the attic and the condensation pans were overflowing, causing water to drip down through the ceiling. Two men got up and went out the side door. Swanberg says, "They could have just turned off the air conditioning units, but no. They got to go up there and fix that thing, try to be heroes!" Soon you could hear them walking across the ceiling joists in the attic. Swanberg said, "And then it happened. Whoosh!" One of them came through the ceiling. He grabbed the joists and held on for dear life. The crowd gasped. The man's mother recognized her son's chubby legs and hollered out his name.

Swanberg looked at the coach, whose microphone was still on. Swanberg recalls. "I prayed, 'Lord, don't let him say something he'd say on the basketball court!' After all, we are all human."

The coach looked at Swanberg and said, "Brother Dennis, are we having a healing service? Someone is coming through the roof to get in?" The crowd roared with laughter.

The man's friend helped him back up onto the joists and everything turned out fine. The service went on, although Swanberg said nobody listened much to the sermon. They were all just staring at that hole in the roof.

At the end of the service, Swanberg stood at the back of the church to shake hands. The first guy to shake his hand was a rancher who only came at Easter. He said, "Brother Dennis, I told my wife there's no need for me to go to church. Told her if I did, the roof would cave in. Sure enough it did!"<sup>1</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> <https://www.sermoncentral.com/illustrations/sermon-illustration-sermoncentral-staff-humor-miraclesofjesus-16759?ref=TextIllustrationSerps>, downloaded 06/09/17

We know some people like that rancher, C&E people we call them. They come to church on C&E: Christmas and Easter. They only need church, only need God twice a year.

Sometimes, that's the way we are as well. We come to a place in our lives where we decided that we are independent, self-sufficient, we can stand on our own two feet. We really don't need God. Oh, sure, we'll come to church more than a C&E-er, but it's so easy to walk out of the sanctuary and leave God and go on managing and running our own lives. Occasionally, we throw up a prayer, a hail-mary pass, a "please God help me" kind of plea, but go on afterwards on our own merits, own power, own reasoning, on our own.

But when you look at the New Testament, you see something different. When people heard about Jesus of Nazareth, they came to Him with their needs. Lepers, the blind, the lame, came to Jesus. And today, I want to look at the first time this happened.

Turn to page 5 in your bulletin as we take a look at Mark 1:21-34.

**READ MARK 1:21-34**

Wow, Jesus had just emerged from 40 days in the wilderness. He has just started calling disciples to Him: Peter and his brother Andrew, and the brothers James and John. Here we find Him at possibly His first sermon in His ministry. And in this passage, we see 4 things happen when we come to Jesus.

**First, Jesus can heal my faith.**

**READ MARK 1:21-22**

Jesus often went to the local synagogue to teach, and when He taught on the Scriptures, people were of course astonished. The rest of the teachers would give opinions and conjecture about the meaning of the passage, but not Jesus. It was as if He knew exactly what it meant.

Later, the Gospel writer John would put it this way:

*In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. He was with God in the beginning. Through him all things were made; without him nothing was made that has been made... The Word became flesh and made his dwelling among us. We have seen his glory, the glory of the One and Only, who came from the Father, full of grace and truth.<sup>2</sup>*

Jesus is this Word, and He continues to reach into the human heart with the truth of His word.

Tony Campolo recalls a deeply moving incident that happened in a Christian junior high camp where he served. One of the campers, a boy with spastic paralysis, was the object of heartless ridicule. When he would ask a question, the boys would deliberately answer in a halting, mimicking way. One night, his cabin group chose him to lead the devotions before the entire camp. It was one more effort to have some "fun" at his expense. Unashamedly, the spastic boy stood up, and in his strained, slurred manner each word coming with enormous effort, he said simply, "Jesus loves me and I love Jesus!" That was all. Conviction fell upon those junior-highers. Many began to cry. Revival gripped the camp. Years afterward, Campolo still meets people in the ministry who came to Christ because of that testimony.<sup>3</sup>

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<sup>2</sup> John 1:1-3, 14 (NIV)

<sup>3</sup> Our Daily Bread, April 1, 1993

When you finally understand the truth that Jesus loves you, and when Jesus touches you with the Word of God, your faith is healed.

**Second, Jesus can heal my demons.**

**READ MARK 1:23-26**

Jesus has authority over demons. That's the good news for the day. No demon can stand up to Jesus.

You may have heard about the preacher who asked one elderly lady how it was with her soul. "Oh," she replied, "the old devil has been giving me a rough time." Immediately her husband protested. "Now hold on," he said, "she's not too easy to live with herself."

Now obviously, few of us are conscious of being demon possessed. Others deny their influence. But what if I told you that demons are any evil that desires to restrict or destroy the beauty and the life of one of God's creation; if this is a plausible definition, then we see plenty of examples of this.

- What would you attribute the pure evil of a terrorist attack to? I think that a demon has convinced someone to destroy not only their life but the innocent lives of others.
- What would you attribute the pure evil of the teen mom who purposefully left her 1 and 2 year old children in a hot car in Texas for 15 hours, left to die? I would call that evil demon possession.
- I believe demons are part of this heroin epidemic. I mean, does it make sense for business to mix the heroin in such a way that it can kill? Do you think cell phone companies or car companies purposefully design their product to kill? I believe demons are in the drug problem, trying to restrict or destroy the beauty and the life of one of God's creation.
- I believe demons are at work in pornography, prostitution, in racial hatred and in the sex trade.

Ok, those are extreme examples. But I believe demons are attempting to influence even Christians to turn from God and His promises for us, to question God's faithfulness, truth, and calling. Those small voices in our heads who cause us confusion, doubt, questions, and that brings back old wounds and things God has already forgiven, those are demons.

But in every case where demons confronted Jesus, they lost their power. And that same power is still present today. Jesus can heal my demons.

**Third, Jesus can heal my illnesses.**

**READ MARK 1:29-31**

Jesus restored Peter's household from concern and worry to peace and productivity. And I believe Jesus still heals.

Jesus heals through the physician and the surgeon. They do not heal; they merely clear away the obstructions to allow nature or God to heal. A doctor once said, "I attended the person; God healed them." A surgeon confessed, "I can cut, but I can't heal." When a surgeon cuts out a tumor and sews everything back up and sends the patient out, that surgeon is depending upon the healing power of the body – of God who created that body – to start healing the damaged caused by the operation.

Jesus also heals the body by healing the mind. The mind can and does create a climate of disease or healing. If you are negative and anxious, that will become manifested into the body.

Jesus heals through surrendering of fears, resentments, self-preoccupation and guilt that produces disease. I know a person who is a sour-puss and a whiner, and it shows up on her face as negativity and ugliness and in her body as ailments. The phrase goes you can worry yourself sick, and that is true.

Jesus heals through the direct touch upon our bodies. How many times have we heard stories of someone with a tumor that vanishes? How many times have we known about people being set free of cigarettes, of fear, of doubt, of disease, without anything else but the hand of Jesus healing them?

We believe that Jesus still heals. We've seen it occur in the prayers we have prayed.

**Finally, Jesus can heal my life.**

**READ MARK 1:32-34a**

We've talked about healing, but what is Jesus really doing here? He is changing peoples' lives. The people who were demon possessed – Jesus changed their lives. That's what He does. Remember the woman with the 12 year issue of blood. Her life was changed when she was healed. When Jesus raised the 12 year old girl, He changed her and her parents' lives. Jesus can heal my life.

As we close this message and series, I want you to realize a few things. First, there was a reason that I made you write Jesus 4 times in your outline today, and that is that we must always remember that Jesus is the center of our faith and should be the center of our lives. The song we sang is true: Jesus, there's just something about that name. All of creation and all of history and all of the future points to Jesus, and until you place Jesus at the center of your life, you will still be looking for answers.

Second, I wanted us to realize that there's something that Jesus cannot do, so I put this truth in your bulletin:

Jesus wields authority over demons, illnesses (when people have faith), and natural forces (seas, deserts, trees) – nonhuman forces that oppress people. Jesus wields no authority, however, over people. He cannot heal people without faith, make them keep quiet if they wish to speak, or force his disciples to understand his teachings.

Therefore, **I must submit**. I must let go of the control I believe I wield in my life and give it to Jesus. I must let go of my future, my past, my fears, my doubts, my life to Jesus. I must give Jesus my job, my children, my finances, my attitudes. I must submit.

I've been reading E. Stanley Jones autobiography. In the chapter where he talks about the Ashram movement, he tells the story of a high-up Hindu government official and his wife and their little 8 year old girl who went to the Ashram in India. While there, he and his wife had a personal interview with Stanley. Later, this Hindu government official told him what their little girl asked them when they returned to their rooms: "Why did you do to Brother Stanley?" His reply: "We went to talk about our spiritual problems." The little girl replied: "Why didn't you come to me? I know the answer: Bring everything to Jesus." A little Hindu girl, in touch with the Ashram fellowship for only a week, said she knew the answer: "Bring everything to Jesus."<sup>4</sup>

My friends, bring everything to Jesus. Don't struggle with your problems, don't push them into the subconscious mind, don't go from person to person for the solution, but bring everything, especially yourself and your problems to Jesus. He has the solution, for He is the solution.

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<sup>4</sup> E. Stanley Jones. "A Song of Ascents." P. 234-235

VIDEO: THIRD DAY "CRY OUT TO JESUS"