

THE REVIEWS:

1. How is the "hidden" Kingdom of God revealing itself in each of these passages?
2. The Mark 6 passage reveals insight into how our attitudes and beliefs render the Kingdom of God powerless. What limits the power of God on earth?
3. What fears might you have that inhibit Jesus' activity (*the work of the Kingdom*) in your life?
4. How Jesus can lessen the fear and anxiety in our lives?

References:

^[1] Emerson Powery, Commentary on Mark 5:21-43, WorkingPreacher.org
<https://www.workingpreacher.org/commentaries/revised-common-lectionary/ordinary-13-2/commentary-on-mark-521-43-3>

For further insights: The same stories from the other Gospels

Mathew 8:18-32; 9:18-25

Luke 8:22-55

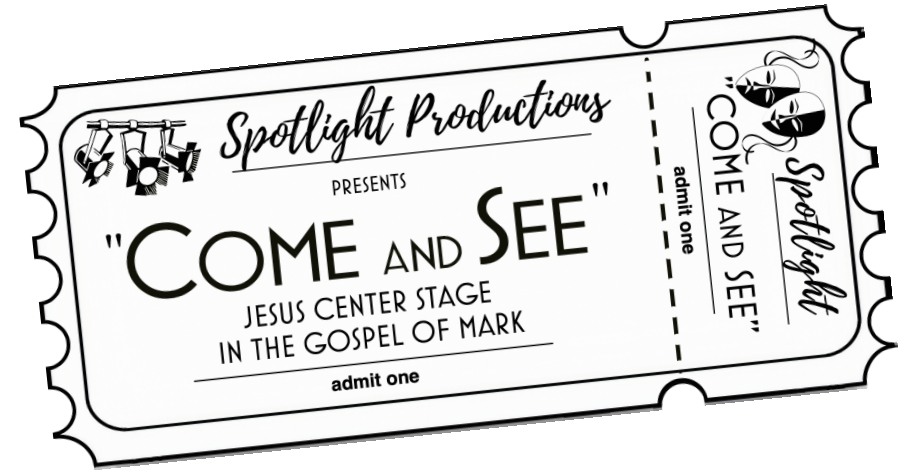
Next Week:

"You Can't Always Get What You Want"

Lesson Scriptures: Mark 6, Luke 4: 14-30

Focus Scripture: Mark 6:31

You won't want to miss it!



LESSON 5

"Be Not Afraid"

Mark 4:35 - 6:6

Mark 5:36b (NLT)

"Don't be afraid. Just trust me."

Food for thought: What keeps you awake at night?

What does fear do to your body, brain, psyche?

What does fear do to your faith?

Brief Historical and/or Cultural Context:

Jesus' three years of ministry are spent trying to teach people about God, and God's kingdom (hidden power within our world). Jesus' message (the gospel) is the Kingdom of God is here (hidden since creation), think differently (have ears that hear) and experience abundant life and joy by living a life of love and faith in God's Kingdom. He does this through word, and demonstration.

In this week's lesson, Jesus continues his ministry demonstrating the power of the Kingdom of God to deliver humanity from bondage to all things that are not of God. Mark uses these stories of healings to reveal another layer the abundant life of the Kingdom of God.

One story from today's lesson takes place in the "Decapolis" (see map). The Decapolis was a territory on the East side of the Jordan, from Damascus in Syria (way North) to nearly as far South as Nabatea. These cities were Hellenist (Greek) in nature, but founded and supported by Rome, as a league for mutual protection and security for Rome. Jews, Greeks, and Romans lived together in these communities.

In our lesson the issue of swine opens a Pandora's box of questions, as eating pork is anathema to Jews (and Muslims). It is not a violation of Hebrew Law to raise, slaughter, and sell pork for to Gentiles, and for livestock food, and apparently, they were (are) natural garbage disposals. The herd of swine in the story would have been worth well over a million dollars in today's market, so the loss of income for the owners and community would have been substantial. Consider the plight of a (demon possessed) man controlled by powers whose intention is to destroy God's creation. 1st century Middle East culture has banished such a one to a place where most people avoid, the cemetery.

Consider also the tenuous autonomy of women in the 1st century. A woman with 12 year issue of blood, and a 12 year old girl are two subjects in our lesson. The woman with unstoppable blood flow is unclean and unwanted. She is shunned and excluded from community. "Culturally, the girl is approaching the age of puberty, ready for marriage. She is born the same year the woman becomes ill, and resurrected from death the same year the woman is healed. One stopped bleeding, which restored her life. The other had her life restored so she would continue to "bleed" and produce life."^[1] No longer carefree, the girl is poised to begin her own menstrual journey into womanhood and the woman is healed of her 12 year menstrual nightmare...

Vocabulary:

Demons: spiritual beings whose goal is to destroy those created in God's image. Angels are real, demons are real.

The Number 12: the number 12 is found 187 times in our scriptures. 12 signifies a perfect government (kingdom) —God's government (the Kingdom of God), divine order. "Twelve" is used in two healing stories of this lesson.

Offense: (σκανδαλίζ) skandalizó: to put a snare, to cause to stumble (*Mark 6:3*)

Unbelief: (ἄπιστος) ap'-is-tos: not to be trusted, not believing or trusting (*Mark 6:6*)

THE STAGE: Read each of three scenes

Mark 4:35-41 (Prologue),

Mark 5:1-43 (3 Miracles)

Mark 6:1-6 (Epilogue)

1. Take some time to imagine you are there. Think about the crowds of people, and animals and noise and smells and activity. If you were there, what would your 5 senses be experiencing?
2. If you are there, what are you witnessing:
 - a. of the crowds?
 - b. of the people whom Jesus heals?
 - c. of Jesus' reactions and behavior?

THE SCRIPT:

Use the "Be Not Afraid" chart to jot down thoughts:

1. Who, in each example, is fearful and why?
2. What is Jesus' response to those in fear?
3. What is Jesus' response to those who reveal faith?
4. What are the results of the fear and faith in these passages?
5. How does Jesus power go beyond physical healing for the demon-possessed man, and the bleeding woman, and perhaps Jairus' daughter?

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