

In this fast-moving account of Jesus' life and ministry, there is much to learn and talk about. In the excitement, it is sometimes a little overwhelming to know where to focus. Here are a few thoughts about what to keep in the forefront of application:

- 1) Who is Jesus and why did He come? This is the theme of all of the gospel accounts
- 2) What does it look like to be His disciple? How do disciples know, love and follow Jesus together? How can we become like Christ?
- 3) How can we follow Jesus' example to make disciples together? What are His ways of being intentional in relationships? How are we, at Trinity Church, endeavoring to follow His example of "intentional, relational discipleship?"

### IMAGINE THIS

You are living in Capernaum in 31 A.D. You are committed to your family, working in the wheat fields, and attending the local synagogue every sabbath. You are trying to survive the Roman oppression by keeping your head down and paying their exorbitant taxes.

Now, word on the street is rolling through the neighborhoods about a man from your own county who has been teaching about the nearness of the Kingdom of God, has cast out demons, has healed people, and said that he can forgive sin.

How might you respond to what you are hearing? What might you think, do, or feel?

### READ AND DISCUSS THE PASSAGE

The author, Mark, has been revealing the responses of various people and groups to Jesus' actions. The crowds are flocking to him, amazed at His teaching and His miracles. The religious authorities are growing in opposition and are already planning to discredit and destroy Him. The disciples (Jesus' main audience), are following Him and observing all that He is doing and teaching.

The focus of these early chapters is on the identity and authority of Jesus the Christ (the Messiah). Read our passage (4:35-5:43) and consider the following questions.

What happens in this passage? What might this demonstrate to people?

Four amazing examples of Jesus' power, authority, and love. (You might discuss each of them together.)

They reveal Jesus' identity = Son of God, Messiah, etc.

How do these actions compare to the previous chapters? (Consider each story)

Each of these is even larger in scope and power than the previous. For example, Jesus had previously cast out a demon. Here, he casts out a "legion" of demons. He had previously healed. Here he raises a girl from the dead. Previously, he declared forgiveness, so important but invisible. In this passage, He overpowered the wind and the sea that many witnessed.

Who is the audience in each story? How did they respond?

- 1) Many disciples witnessed his authority over the wind and sea (multiple boats, especially the 12)
- 2) The disciples witnessed Jesus casting out the legion of demons, the herders and towns people also heard of his works. The healed man became a believer and follower and then took the good news to his family
- 3) A large crowd was surrounding Jesus when he healed the suffering woman but it was primarily the disciples as witness.
- 4) Only the parents and three disciples saw Jesus raise the little girl
- 5) Each of them responded with awe, fear, amazement, and some in faith

What instruction does Jesus give to each audience? What might each of them learn and feel about Jesus?

- 1) Jesus called the disciples to “faith.” The disciples needed to learn to trust Jesus in every circumstance since He has authority over all things.
- 2) Jesus told the healed man to “Go home to your own people and tell them how much the Lord has done for you, and how he has had mercy on you.” This man learned that this was the mission of God for all of us, for we have all received mercy.
- 3) While crowd wouldn’t understand, the woman learned that it is Jesus who heals and declares us “clean” before God.
- 4) Jesus instructed the parents and the three disciples to not “let anyone know about this.” Jesus was on a mission that required some information shared later – after His own resurrection.

What was Jesus’ aim for the people in these stories?

Jesus’ aim was for people to put their full faith in Him. His mission was / is to bring salvation (mercy) and healing (restoration) to people and bring them into the kingdom of God.

What is the author (Mark) revealing to us today about Jesus?

This is a sharing question.

### **WHAT IS OUR RESPONSE TODAY?**

Who, in these four stories, can you relate to? What do you think or feel as you consider Jesus’ actions and words?

This is a sharing question.

What was Jesus addressing or aiming at in His disciples at that time? What does He want us to address in our lives as His disciples today? How might this happen?

This is a sharing question.

How does Jesus respond differently to each audience? What do we learn about Jesus’ ways of making disciples from these four stories?

This is a sharing question.

We see that Jesus’ knows us and what we need. Faith / trust in Him is a process. Each person was learning of Jesus, who He is and how we can know and trust in Him.

## **RESPONDING TO JESUS MIRACLES**

As you read these stories, it is obvious that the author (Mark) chose four stories where Jesus is demonstrating His authority and identity. What might He want you / us to learn from each story? Jesus asked the disciples two powerful questions: "Why are you so afraid? Have you still no faith?" What is His instruction to you today?

I pray that we will all see the magnificent Jesus.

Love and grace to you,

Steve for the Home Group Core Team