

Wonderful Miracle Worker



SABBATH—APRIL 2

READ FOR THIS WEEK'S STUDY: Mark 1:21–2:17.

MEMORY VERSE: “Jesus was filled with deep concern. He reached out his hand and touched the man. ‘I [Jesus] am willing to do it,’ he said. ‘Be clean!’ ” (Mark 1:41, NIV).

MAN OF ACTION. After his short introduction, Mark goes right into Jesus’ ministry (work) in Galilee. Mark presents a series of short, action-packed stories, like fast-paced television reports.

It is good to compare¹ Mark’s story with the stories of the other Gospel² writers. In Matthew’s Gospel, the first important event³ in Jesus’ ministry is the Sermon on the Mount (Matthew 5–7). But Mark does not write about this sermon. Luke focuses on Jesus’ sermon at Nazareth (Luke 4:14-30). But Mark does not talk about that sermon. For John, the miracle at the wedding in Cana begins Jesus’ ministry (John 2:1-11). But Mark does not comment on the wedding. The Holy Spirit led each Gospel writer so each writer put together his own story of the life and work of this wonderful Man, our Savior and Lord.

A LOOK AT THIS WEEK’S LESSON: What proof did Jesus start giving of His power? How did the healing of Peter’s mother-in-law show the principles⁴ of a Christian life? How did Jesus show the connection between the spiritual life and the physical life? How did Jesus break down some of the long-standing religious traditions⁵ of His day?

*Study this week’s lesson to prepare for Sabbath, April 9.

¹compare—show how things are the same.

²Gospel—the books of Matthew, Mark, Luke, and John are called the Gospels.

³event—thing that happens.

⁴principles—laws upon which other laws are based. For example, the Ten Commandments are based on two principles: (1) love for God and (2) love for other people.

⁵traditions—customs people have followed for a long time.

SUNDAY—APRIL 3

THE DEMON-POSSESSED MAN (Mark 1:21-28).

Jesus came at a time when evil was at its peak. Ellen White paints a clear picture of the times: “All the tools for tempting the souls of people had been put to work. Jesus looked upon the world and saw great suffering. With pity, He saw how people had become helpless against Satan’s cruelty. . . . The work of demons was clearly shown upon people’s faces. Their faces showed that they had been possessed by many demons.”—Adapted from *The Desire of Ages*, p. 36.

What is the first thing Jesus did that showed He was Someone special? Mark 1:21-28. Why was this not enough to prove who He really was?

Jesus came as the great Savior of humanity.⁶ He came to serve other people. He came to bring hope and healing. We find Him always battling with demons who fought hard to keep their hold over people. The demons were strong. Jesus was stronger.

How should Mark 1:21-28 help prove who Jesus really was?

Even though they had received powerful proof, many people would

⁶humanity—all the people of the world.

⁷authority—the skill to make someone obey; influence that creates respect and trust; power.

⁸atheist—a person who does not believe in God.

⁹historical—having to do with history.

not accept Jesus, because they refused to accept who He truly was. But the demons recognized Jesus, and bowed before (to) His authority.⁷

C. S. Lewis told about when he was an atheist.⁸ Another atheist said to him, “Well, you know, C. S., there is a lot of historical⁹ information supporting the Bible stories about Jesus’ life and death.” But this person still did not believe Jesus was the Savior. Lewis, however, thought about what his friend had said. Later, Lewis became a Christian! How might we be in danger of not accepting proof that Jesus is our Savior?

MONDAY—APRIL 4

PETER’S MOTHER-IN-LAW (MARK 1:29-39).

How does Jesus’ healing of Peter’s mother-in-law show His personal interest and care? Mark 1:29-34.



Quickly, Jesus went to her bedside. He did not put off the visit by eating Sabbath lunch. He did not waste time teaching the disciples. Peter's mother-in-law was more important. At her bedside, Jesus did not just speak. He took her hand and helped her up. What a gentle, thoughtful Healer He was! Notice also that He healed her completely. A fever often leaves a person too weak to get up. But Peter's mother-in-law got up and was able to do something for Jesus.

Jesus did something for Peter's mother-in-law that she could not do for herself. How do her actions after Jesus healed her show the whole idea of the Christian life? Matthew 10:8; John 15:12; 1 John 5:2, 3.

When was the last time someone did something really special for you? Were you thankful? What did you do then? Why? How did your behavior show what the Christian life should really be like?

Jesus had many followers, because He did such wonderful things. The disciples said, "All men look for You." But it is possible that some of these same people turned away from Him in the end. Seeking (looking) for Jesus is not always enough. There needs to be something else. How does what Peter's mother-in-law did after Jesus

healed her help you understand what that something else is? How can we use this in our own life? Read James 2:22.

TUESDAY—APRIL 5

THE LEPER (Mark 1:40-45).

How does Jesus show mercy¹⁰ in Mark 1:40-45? Why did He give the healed man a strong warning? What was the result of this miracle?



The English word *leprosy* comes from the Greek *lepra*. The Greek word is used in the New Testament. The word *lepra* was used for different diseases of the skin. In explaining leprosy in Leviticus 13, the *Seventh-day Adventist Bible Dictionary* says: "A study of the different symptoms

¹⁰mercy—kindness we do not deserve.

. . . shows that the word *leprosy* was used in a broader sense than it is used today. Some people have suggested that Leviticus 13 lists seven different diseases under the general word *leprosy*. Some of the symptoms describe psoriasis¹¹ . . . rather than leprosy. It is also called Hansen's disease. But leprosy is certainly included."—Page 667; adapted.

The Old Testament gave clear instructions for people who had leprosy. People with leprosy were sent away from home and society (Numbers 5:1-4; Numbers 12:9-15; 2 Kings 15:5). They were not allowed to enter any city (2 Kings 7:3). People with leprosy were to wear torn clothes, let their hair hang loose, and cry out "Unclean, unclean!" if anyone walked toward them (Leviticus 13:45, 46). These rules were the same at the time of Jesus. The ten men with leprosy who met Jesus outside a village stood far away from Him. They shouted out to Him (Luke 17:12, 13). But the leper in Mark 1:40 came right up to Jesus, knelt before (in front of) Him, and begged Him for cleansing.

We all have a disease worse than leprosy. That disease is sin. How does a holy, sinless God treat us for sin?

Jesus broke the rules when He let the leper come to Him. Jesus broke the rules when He touched the leper. This clearly shows Jesus' mercy. We too must not think that the healing power of touch is not important. The right touch of love can often do much more than what words can do.

We do not have the power to heal someone by touching them. But with Jesus living in our hearts, we can all have the power of love, mercy, and unselfish care for other people. What is your attitude¹² toward modern-day lepers?¹³ What do you need to change about yourself so you can show them mercy? Why is it often so hard to show people mercy?

WEDNESDAY—APRIL 6

THE PARALYTIC¹⁴ (Mark 2:1-12).

The story of the paralytic lowered through the roof interests people everywhere and of all ages. We admire the four men who climbed to the roof and made a hole in the roof to lower their friend into the house. The story even has humor in it. The teachers of religious law did not feel comfortable in the crowded, sweaty room full of common people. They

¹¹psoriasis—a skin disease that is rather common with some people. It looks the same as a rash that does not heal quickly.

¹²attitude—how you think and feel about something; the thoughts, feelings, and opinions of a person or group of people.

¹³modern-day lepers—people most of us would not want to touch or be with. Some modern-day lepers are homeless people and people with AIDS.

¹⁴paralytic—a person who has paralysis and cannot move his or her body, arms, or legs.

could not believe it when bits of ceiling began to fall upon them and when someone started coming down through the roof!



Read Mark 2:1-12. Imagine you are sitting on the floor in the crowded room. You have come to see Jesus of Nazareth, who has done many miracles. People have been talking throughout Galilee about these miracles. But what happens this day is perhaps more wonderful than anything you have heard about Jesus. Imagine how the following people felt about Jesus' words and actions:

The men who lowered the paralytic into the house _____

The paralytic _____

The scribes¹⁵ _____

The other people in the house _____

Jesus honored the faith of the men who brought the paralytic. But He did not honor their faith in the way they were expecting. He knew they did not know the paralytic's most serious problem was a spiritual problem. The paralytic wanted to be physically healed. But what he really wanted more was peace with God and forgiveness of his sins.

“Like the leper, this paralytic had lost all hope of healing. His disease had come from a life of sin. And his sufferings were made worse by his being sorry for his sins. He had long asked the Pharisees¹⁶ and doctors for healing from mental suffering and physical pain. But they coldly declared he could not be healed. And

¹⁵scribes—men who made copies of the Jewish religious laws and other books of the Old Testament; men who taught the law and the Old Testament.

¹⁶Pharisees—religious leaders of Jesus' day who believed a person must keep God's law to be saved.

they had left him to suffer from God's punishment. . . .

"The paralytic wanted to be physically healed. But what he wanted more was to be relieved from the burden of sin. If he could see Jesus, and receive forgiveness and peace from Him, he would be satisfied to live or die according to God's will."—Adapted from Ellen G. White, *The Desire of Ages*, p. 267.

Stress, guilt, fear, loneliness, anger, hate, and jealousy can make a person physically sick. What promises do we have through faith in Jesus that could help bring healing both to body and soul? How have you experienced the power of these promises in your own life?

THURSDAY—APRIL 7

LEVI-MATTHEW (Mark 2:13-21).

Levi is also known as Matthew (Matthew 10:3). As a tax collector, he was a member of a hated group. People hated tax collectors for two reasons: (1) Tax collectors worked for Rome, which controlled Israel. (2) Tax collectors were often dishonest. The Romans followed a system of tax farming. They did not tax each person directly. Instead, they depended on tax collectors who were responsible for bringing a required amount of money into the treasury. If the tax collector paid the required amount, he could take as much money as he was able to and keep the rest for himself. In this way, tax collectors became

wealthy by taking advantage of their fellow citizens.

So Jesus' call to Levi-Matthew must have shocked many people, including His followers. Jesus even went to the dinner that Matthew gave in His honor. Matthew invited his friends (other tax collectors and sinners). The Pharisees looked down on these friends, also. Their attitude toward them was: " 'But this mob knows nothing about the law. There is a curse on them' " (John 7:49, NIV).

Jesus sees that every person has a chance for the kingdom of heaven. He says, " 'Those [people] who are healthy don't [do not] need a doctor. Sick people do [need a doctor]. I have not come to get those who think they are right with God to follow me. I have come to get sinners to follow me' " (Mark 2:17, NIV).



Every person has a chance for the kingdom of heaven.

Explain Jesus' parable of the new cloth and new wine based on today's lesson. Mark 2:21, 22.

Jesus was a prophet. But He was much more than a prophet. He was God in human form. He brought the kingdom of heaven to earth. This “newness” would break apart old patterns of religious traditions and the rules of people who looked down upon lower and poorer groups of people. This “newness” even broke the basic principles of true faith. It would later break the outside of the “wine-skins” of traditional religious rules, as the gospel would go to the Gentiles.¹⁷

Some long-time church rules can become such an important part of faith that it seems sinful to break them. Are there any rules in the Seventh-day Adventist Church that have been honored as very “holy and sacred”? What is the danger when this happens? How can we help people see the difference between what is really sacred and holy and what are human ideas? Read also Mark 7:7.

FRIDAY—APRIL 8

Additional Study: Luke covers all the stories from Mark that we studied this week. Matthew covers some of the stories. Compare Matthew and Luke’s stories with Mark’s: Matthew 8:14-17; Luke 4:31-44; Luke 5:12-38. Read Ellen G. White’s “At Capernaum,” “Thou Canst [You Can] Make Me Clean,” and “Levi-Matthew,” in *The Desire of Ages*, pp. 252–280.

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS:

1. Are miracles the best way to test religion or religious leaders? What part will miracles have in the closing events of this world’s history? Revelation 16:14.
2. In your class, explain more about the danger of accepting what are only human rules and changing them into religious requirements.
3. All the stories we have studied this week are about “second-class” people: the demon-possessed man, Peter’s mother-in-law (women were treated as unimportant), the leper, the paralytic, and Levi-Matthew. The first four stories show physical healing, and the last story shows spiritual healing. The teachers of religion thought they were the righteous (holy) people and had no need of a doctor. They missed the point of Jesus’ healing. It may be easy for us to look down upon these teachers. But how are we often the same as these teachers?

SUMMARY: This week’s lesson gives us a great picture of Jesus as the Son of God. By using words such as “immediately” (quickly) and “as soon as” (right away), Mark creates a fast-moving story of a powerful Savior who brings hope and salvation to all people. Jesus, the Son of God, casts (throws) out devils and heals both body and soul.

¹⁷Gentiles—people who are not Jews.