

# THE LEPER PROCLAIMED

CORE PASSAGE: MARK 1:35-45

## CONTEXT

Mark 1 quickly tells us a lot about Jesus's early ministry. Although some of the accounts are not as detailed, Mark's Gospel accurately aligns with the other Gospel accounts. Up to this point in Mark 1, Jesus had been teaching with authority, casting out demons, and miraculously healing the sick, which showed His authority over all things physical and spiritual. After this, Jesus continued His ministry by traveling throughout Galilee, preaching and healing as He went.

## KEY CONCEPT

**Jesus's commitment to His mission originated in His compassion for others.**

As you examine Mark 1:35-45:

- Note that Jesus's purpose was to preach the good news.
- Recognize that Jesus's compassion on the leper led the man to spread the good news of Jesus.



## TIMELINE

Jesus Demonstrates His Authority  
in Capernaum (Mark 1:21-34)

Jesus Forgives and Heals a  
Paralyzed Man (Mark 2:1-12)

Jesus Appoints His Twelve  
Disciples (Mark 3:7-19)

**SESSION STUDY:**  
Jesus Heals a Leprous Man  
(Mark 1:35-45)

Jesus Teaches About and Heals  
on the Sabbath (Mark 2:23-3:6)

### Daily Readings

- |  |   |
|--|---|
| <input type="checkbox"/> <b>Day 1:</b> Matthew 4:23-25 | <input type="checkbox"/> <b>Day 4:</b> Matthew 8:1-4  |
| <input type="checkbox"/> <b>Day 2:</b> Mark 1:35-38    | <input type="checkbox"/> <b>Day 5:</b> Matthew 8:5-13 |
| <input type="checkbox"/> <b>Day 3:</b> Mark 1:39-45    | <input type="checkbox"/> <b>Day 6:</b> Psalm 113      |



Scan this QR code to access  
this session's Scripture passages.

## JESUS'S COMMITMENT TO HIS MISSION IS SEEN IN HIS PRAYER LIFE AND HIS PURPOSE (MARK 1:35-39).

**Underline the phrase that points out Jesus's purpose in Galilee.**

**35** Very early in the morning, while it was still dark, he got up, went out, and made his way to a deserted place; and there he was praying. **36** Simon and his companions searched for him, **37** and when they found him they said, "Everyone is looking for you." **38** And he said to them, "Let's go on to the neighboring villages so that I may preach there too. This is why I have come." **39** He went into all of Galilee, preaching in their synagogues and driving out demons.

In this section of verses, Jesus displayed a wonderful example of where to place our focus. Early in the morning, Jesus got up and went to a deserted place to pray. When your relationship with God is the center of your life, communion with Him is prioritized because He is the source of your joy. Jesus displayed an action of joyful devotion to His Father and a priority to communicate with Him. As believers, we too should commit ourselves to prayer, not just to "check a box" but because we have a God whom we love enough to prioritize communication with Him. Jesus taught us by example that ministry begins with our own hearts in an act of prioritizing prayer and a closeness to the Lord.

### VOICES FROM CHURCH HISTORY

"Prayer plumes the wings of God's young eaglets, that they may learn to mount above the clouds. Prayer girds the loins of God's warriors, and sends them forth to combat with their sinews braced and their muscles firm."<sup>1</sup>

—Charles Spurgeon (1834–1892)

**LEADER NOTE:** Prayer must be a priority to cultivate an intimate relationship with God. God has graciously given us access to Him through Jesus Christ, and the Holy Spirit. As our Great High Priest, Jesus advocates for us based on His death on the cross (Heb. 9:11-12). Since God has given free access to Himself through prayer, we come before His throne of grace daily (Heb. 10:19-22). The apostle Paul stated simply, "Pray without ceasing" (1 Thess. 5:17). Prayer is not just a dedicated time when you bow your head and close your eyes. As you go, in everything you do, pray!

**Key Concept:** Jesus's commitment to His mission originated in His compassion for others.

### Why do you think Scripture mentions Jesus praying so often?

Notes

Jesus's purpose through His ministry was to preach the good news. He even told His disciples that the reason He came to earth was to proclaim the good news that salvation is available for sinners. Jesus, although He is currently not walking on earth today, still carries out this purpose through His people. We, as believers in Jesus Christ, have been indwelt and empowered with His Spirit to continue to preach the gospel to those who do not yet believe. That is why we still live on earth after we are justified by faith in Jesus. As we place our sole focus on God through prayer, He will equip us to be effective witnesses for Him.

**LEADER NOTE:** Many believe that salvation is a get-out-of-hell-free card. This is apparent in how they live. They claim to be Christ-followers but live like the rest of the world. Jesus modeled and commanded a purpose for every believer. We are called to live on mission. He has graciously given us the Holy Spirit to help us carry out His mission to make disciples. So, salvation is not a get-out-of-hell-free card but a call to live with purpose for the Lord.

### How can you follow the Holy Spirit's guidance as you tell others the good news of Jesus?

#### THEOLOGY CONNECTION

**THE GOSPEL:** The Bible teaches that the gospel is both an event and a story. First, it is an event that took place at a specific point in history, the life, death, and resurrection of Jesus Christ for the redemption of sinners (1 Cor. 15; 2 Cor. 5:21). Second, the gospel is also the story of redemption that God has planned since "before the foundation of the world" (Eph. 1:4), which runs through Scripture, and which culminates in a restored and redeemed creation—a new heaven and new earth where sin, death, and suffering will never again plague humanity, and God's people will live with Him forever (Isa. 25:8; 2 Pet. 3:13; Rev. 21). The event and story do not exist apart from or in conflict with one another, but together inspire us to a life of devotion and mission.

## JESUS HEALS OUT OF COMPASSION, LEADING TO A DESIRE TO SPREAD THE GOSPEL (MARK 1:40-45).

Circle the action words in the passage below. Underline Jesus's motivation for His actions.

**40** Then a man with leprosy came to him and, on his knees, begged him, "If you are willing, you can make me clean." **41** Moved with compassion, Jesus reached out his hand and touched him. "I am willing," he told him. "Be made clean." **42** Immediately the leprosy left him, and he was made clean. **43** Then he sternly warned him and sent him away at once, **44** telling him, "See that you say nothing to anyone; but go and show yourself to the priest, and offer what Moses commanded for your cleansing, as a testimony to them." **45** Yet he went out and began to proclaim it widely and to spread the news, with the result that Jesus could no longer enter a town openly. But he was out in deserted places, and they came to him from everywhere.

Jesus was approached by a man with leprosy who hoped Jesus would heal his disease. Leprosy was both physically contagious and ceremonially tainting, so the Jews would make the lepers announce their presence as they walked by so that no one would touch, bump, or brush against them. Yet this leper knelt before Jesus and begged Him for healing, for in faith he knew Jesus could make him clean if He were "willing."

### WORD STUDY

**LEPROSY:** A general term used to describe different skin diseases. Old Testament law gave the priests the responsibility of diagnosing leprosy. Lepers were required to stay outside the city to avoid spreading the disease. Once healed, the man needed to show himself to the priest as the law commanded to be returned to the community (Mark 1:44; cf. Lev. 13-14).

Jesus was moved with compassion, even reaching out and touching the leper, which was unheard of in those times because of fear of contagion. But Jesus did so and healed the man. With Jesus's command, the results were immediate—the man was made clean and whole. Jesus does the exact same thing with us. Out of compassion, He saves those who were once spiritually "unclean" and washes them with His blood, making them eternally clean and whole.

**Key Concept:** Jesus's commitment to His mission originated in His compassion for others.

**LEADER NOTE:** Compassion can be described as concern and a desire to effect positive change with a heart of love for someone else. Jesus's compassion produced the grace and salvation extended to us. His love for us is the reason He sacrificed Himself on the cross. He took the punishment we deserved out of compassion for us, and that love was why God sent the Son in the first place (John 3:16). This good news produces positive, eternal change for anyone who puts their faith in Jesus as Lord.

**What does Jesus's display of compassion tell us about His character?**

Jesus instructed the man to tell no one. Instead, he was to go present himself to the priest and do as the law required to show that God had healed him. But the man, in his excitement, went and told anyone who would hear that Jesus had made his body whole. The joy that the gospel brings should cause us to do the same—and this with Jesus's explicit permission and command.

The news of Jesus spread so much that He could not go into the towns openly. Even as He went to deserted places, the crowds followed. Why? Because what Jesus offered was miraculous. Some came merely for the physical miracles. But others were searching for the peace and salvation that the good news of Jesus Christ brings. Through all of it, His compassionate grace remained steadfast.

**LEADER NOTE:** Many accounts in Scripture describe the gospel changing an individual, and they immediately told everyone they could about Jesus. The gospel truly is "good news." Jesus's compassionate grace ought to bring forth overflowing joy and a desire to proclaim Christ's salvation. This joy is the power of the Holy Spirit within a transformed believer in Christ. Jesus's love for us is not something to be kept to ourselves; it is meant to be shared and spread.

**How does Jesus's compassion drive you to share His goodness with others?**

#### GOSPEL CONNECTION

Jesus's mission was to preach the good news of salvation that would bring healing to a world in need. He accomplished this ultimately through His death and resurrection.

Notes

## ARRIVAL

**INTERACT:** As people arrive for the group experience, ask: “When in your life has someone showed you immense compassion? How did that impact you in that moment? How has that experience changed the way you approach other people in similar situations?”

## CONTEXT

**TRANSITION:** Over the past few sessions, we have observed Jesus’s divine authority over sickness, sin, and shame that plague the world. He alone holds the authority over both the physical and spiritual realms. In today’s session, we will see that His divine mission was grounded in immense compassion and His purpose to preach the good news.

**SAY:** Jesus went to a solitary place to commune with the Father in prayer. He and His disciples then moved on to neighboring villages, where He preached. In Capernaum, a leper fell to his knees before Jesus and asked to be healed, moving Jesus to compassion. Lepers in Jesus’s day were outcasts of society, having to live outside the city, away from family and community. Yet the King of kings was moved with compassion, even by outcasts with faith in Him.

## RECAP

**ASK:** Recalling your personal preparation this week, why do you think it’s important to note that Jesus’s earthly ministry and divine work was fueled by compassion? What else stood out to you through the session?

**SAY:** Though Jesus healed the sick many times, His ultimate goal was to meet our spiritual needs. He came to seek and save the lost so that sinners may be reconciled to God the Father.

**TRANSITION:** Leprosy was a contagious and contaminating disease in Jesus’s day. As a result, lepers were untouchable. Their lives were marked by stigma, loneliness, and fear. The leper in our passage for today believed that Jesus held the power to heal Him—if He was willing. Jesus responded with love and compassion, “I am willing” (v. 41). Spiritually, as unsaved sinners, we are lepers, cut off from communion with our Creator. Yet Jesus, in His compassion, has willingly met us in our brokenness and shame, healed us of our sin, and restored us to be children of the Most High God.



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**Key Concept:** Jesus's commitment to His mission originated in His compassion for others.

**GROUP ACTIVITY**

**CHART:** Direct your group to page 46 in their Personal Study Guide (PSG), where they will find a chart for the activity “Unexpected Compassion.” Recreate this chart on a board so you can record the group’s responses.

Notes

Unexpected Compassion		
Read the passages below. Write down what the people who encountered Jesus may have expected, and then write down what He did instead.		
	EXPECTATION	WHAT JESUS DID
<b>THE LEPER</b> (Mark 1:40-45)		
<b>THE CROWDS</b> (Matthew 9:35-38)		
<b>THE WOMAN</b> (Mark 5:25-34)		
<b>MARY</b> (John 11:28-44)		

**INSTRUCT:** Divide the large group into four smaller groups. Assign each of the passages from the chart to a group: Mark 1:40-45; Matthew 9:35-38; Mark 5:25-34; and John 11:28-44. Instruct the four smaller groups to read their passage as a group and discuss their findings regarding Jesus’s encounter with the people and how He showed His compassion to them.

**REGROUP:** Lead groups to report their findings. Pass out copies of **Pacl’ Item 6: Jesus’s Compassion** and highlight our call to act with Jesus’s compassion.

**SAY:** Jesus saw people and ministered to them with compassion. For the leper, Jesus recognized his need for healing touch and restoration to the community. For the crowds, He saw their need for a shepherd. For the woman, Jesus recognized her desperation and great faith, and He healed her. With Mary, Jesus wept, and then He raised Lazarus from the dead. The God who holds the power over sin, sickness, shame, and the grave is the same God who sees us in our suffering, hears our cries of desperation, and shows us compassion.



**CONSIDER:** Jesus showed compassion to all types of people, but He especially singled out misfits and outcasts, the lowly and humble. Who are the misfits and outcasts, lowly and humble, in your current community?

### DEBRIEF

**How do Jesus's compassion as well as His power give us hope as we face difficulties in our lives?**

**What are some ways we can display compassion to those who are in need?**

### SUMMARIZE

Jesus's compassion and kindness were on display when He healed the sick, raised the dead, and fed the hungry. However, the greatest show of compassion and power was when the King of Glory, looking upon humankind in our brokenness, bore our sin on the cross so that we might know salvation and forgiveness through faith in Him.

### HEAD, HEART, HANDS

Walk the group through the Head, Heart, Hands section in the PSG (p. 47). If running short on time, specifically highlight the **Head** section in this week's study, inviting volunteers to share their responses to the question in this section.



**HEAD:** Prayer is something that can easily be forgotten in the Christian life. Many have a ritual of praying before a meal or using prayer as a personal wish list, yet our conversations with God need to be deeper than that. God desires intimate and consistent communication with His children.

**How can you prioritize prayer this week to deepen your relationship with God?**



**HEART:** Jesus's compassion is why we can have the opportunity for a transformed heart. Left to our own desires, our hearts only produce hostility toward God and disobedience to His perfect standard of righteousness. Jesus compassionately extended grace through His sacrifice on the cross so that we could have forgiveness, purpose, and eternal life.

**What are some ways you can reflect often on the grace Jesus has extended to you?**



**HANDS:** The power of the Holy Spirit upon believers should cultivate a joyful desire to share the compassion and grace of Jesus with others. Too many people to count have not been transformed personally by the gospel of Jesus Christ. As believers in Christ, we should have a joyful desire to proclaim God's gospel to the lost because He has commanded it and His grace is far too great not to be shared.

**Who do you know who needs to hear the gospel? How can you be a joyful witness to them this week?**

**Key Concept:** Jesus's commitment to His mission originated in His compassion for others.

Notes

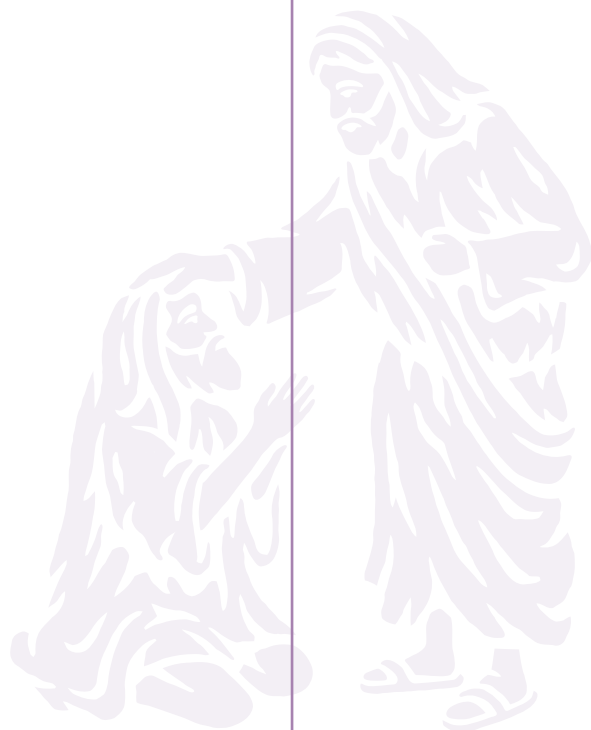
## NEXT STEPS

Challenge the group to consider these actions as responses to this week's session.

- Read Isaiah 43:1-21. Meditate on how Jesus's compassion leads you into a deeper worship of Him. Play some worship songs and praise the Lord.
- Read Hebrews 4:14-16. Let the fact that Jesus sympathizes with our weaknesses guide you to a greater faith in Him as you face difficulties.
- Jesus sat with the outcast and welcomed the sinner. He comforted the mourning and rejoiced with those who celebrated. As you go through this week, ask the Lord to show you opportunities to become more intentional in loving the way Jesus loved.

Invite volunteers to share prayer needs for this week. Encourage them to record these in the space on page 47 in their PSG so they can pray for others throughout the week.

## PRAYER REQUESTS AND PRAISES



## PRAYING SCRIPTURE

**CLOSE:** Pray through Psalm 113:5-7 with your group. Praise God that there is no one like Him. Thank Him that He lifts up the poor and needy, and ask Him how you can partner in this work in the world.

### References

1. C. H. Spurgeon, "The Power of Prayer and the Pleasure of Praise," in *The Metropolitan Tabernacle Pulpit Sermons*, vol. 9 (London: Passmore & Alabaster, 1863), 243.