

Jesus Our Saviour: Pain Evangelism

Introduction:

We are reading through the gospels as a congregation along with many other Foursquare churches around the world. As we read through the Gospel we are discovering Jesus as our Saviour, Baptizer in the Holy Spirit, Healer and great burden bearer and the Soon Coming King. It is my prayer with the Word of God penetrating our hearts and the Spirit of God touching our inner man that we will renew our relationship with Jesus Christ; that our first love for Jesus will abound more and more in the days and weeks ahead.

In the **Matthew 24:12** it says, **“the love of many will grow cold”** referring to the state of many in the last days. This morning as I begin my talk, let’s commit to renew our hearts to God and allow him to rekindle a love for God in our hearts. It is my hope that as we look through the beginning of the Gospel of Mark, keeping in line with our daily readings for the week (**Mark 1-7**), we can discover Jesus as our Saviour and as God who touches our hearts with his love and salvation.

Mark 1 – 7

As I mentioned a few weeks ago, the Gospel of Mark plays out like an action movie. Just like in an action movie, less is heard and more is seen. The average action movie is around 1 ½ hours in length in comparison to dramatic movies pushing 2 hours. In this light the Gospel of Mark, the shortest of the Gospels, is a simple and succinct account of the life of Jesus Christ, emphasizing more of God’s power in comparison to phrases of Jesus our Saviour.

Traditionally, Mark was seen as an evangelist extraordinaire. His gospel begins with **“The beginning of the gospel about Jesus Christ, the Son of God.”** The Gospel or Good News confronted the Roman Empire of his day in this way. There were heralds or proclaimers that went out on behalf of the Emperors’ of Rome saying “the gospel of Emperor so and so...” announcing before the people of Rome the ‘good news’ of their Emperor. Mark boldly states that the good news is now found in King Jesus.

Keeping in the theme with the past pace of an action movie, the word “immediately” occurs in 36 verses in the 16 chapters of Mark, and can be generally associated with Jesus the Savior. In the first chapter alone we can sense the urgency and immediacy of Jesus’ work and mission. Mark uses the word “immediately” and its variations no less than eight times. For example, he says the **“Spirit immediately drove him out into the wilderness” (Mark 1:12)**. **“Immediately they left their nets and followed him” (Mark 1:18)**. **“And immediately he called them” (Mark 1:20)**; **“and immediately on the Sabbath he entered the synagogue and taught” (Mark 1:21)**; **“and immediately the leprosy left him” (Mark 1:42)**.

The primary point I want us to discover this morning is this; Mark was a great evangelist who describes Jesus our Saviour touching people in their deepest and darkest places of need. Jesus is portrayed as bringing salvation to many people right where they needed it.

There are many words used to describe salvation. When you think of salvation what words come to your mind? Here are a few I think of – deliverance, rescue, recovery, escape, and help. For many of us we see salvation as being “born-again” at a moment in time. This is an aspect of salvation but not the full picture. Another way to look at salvation is this; what are people to be saved from? The answer is ‘whatever oppresses them’ whether spiritual or physical, sin or sickness. This last aspect of salvation has to do with Jesus being present in our lives every day setting us free from whatever oppresses us...

Pain Evangelism:

A few weeks ago I heard the phrase “pain evangelism” with regards to bringing salvation to people. The basic idea is simple; where ever people hurt or experience pain is the entrance point of salvation. With this thought in mind let’s look through the first few chapters of the Gospel of Mark and discover how Jesus ministered salvation to people.

In his first few chapters, Mark clearly teaches that Jesus our Savior provides salvation on various levels.

1. The first point of salvation I want to look at is found in **Mark 1:21-28**. Jesus confronts an unclean spirit in a man within the synagogue bringing deliverance to the man and setting him free.

What is the point of pain this man would experience with an unclean spirit? Unclean spirits produce all kinds of dirty and immoral acts through those they control. They struggle with foul language and speech or lewd and foul acts. The point of pain for the person is such that they lose control at the most inappropriate times, they suffer from embarrassment and shame, and they are unpredictable and unable to hold down a job etc etc etc. There are many points of pain for Jesus to deliver those who struggle in this way.

Our Saviour can deliver his people from the influence of demons. Our Saviour can restore a person to wholeness after suffering from all kinds of painful circumstances due to demons.

Matt 1:27 - Then they were all amazed, so that they questioned among themselves, saying, “What is this? What new doctrine is this? For with authority He commands even the unclean spirits, and they obey Him.”

Mark 1-7 has six direct references to Jesus touching the pain caused by the demonic; **Mark 1:21-28, 1:32-34; Mark 3:7-12, 15; Mark 3:20-30** (Jesus is thought to have a demon by the Scribes); **Mark 5:1-20; Mark 6:6b-13; Mark 7:24-30.**

2. The second point of pain evangelism is seen in Jesus healing the sick. Sickness causes pain in several ways; physically, emotionally, mentally, socially, financially. The list could go on and on depending on the individual and the circumstances. We see Jesus literally reaching out and touching people’s point of pain and setting them free.

One of the most amazing references in Mark is found in Chapter **1:40-45** where Jesus literally touches a leper and then heals him. What was the leper's motivation? Set me free from my physical, emotional, financial and social pain. What was Jesus' motivation? Compassion!!!

Sickness is so much more than a physical ailment like broken bones and disease. People suffer from the pain of various kinds of abuse resulting in depression and emotional disorders. People suffer from the pain of divorce and relational breakdowns. People suffer from various forms of injustice. All these cause pain and therefore require the need of healing.

Once again we see several more references of Jesus healing the sick at their point of pain and bringing salvation to bear upon their lives; **Mark 1:29-34, 40-45; Mark 2:1-12; Mark 3:1-6, 10; Mark 5:21-43** (Jesus even heals the pain of grief caused to death by raising a dead girl); **Mark 6:13; Mark 7:31-37**. These are the references to healing in just the first seven chapters of Mark.

3. The last point to mention this morning has to do with Jesus having the ability to touch us in our times of danger. How many of you have ever being in a situation where danger was confronting you life? Maybe you were afraid of being harmed physically or anxious for your family or even fearful of dying.

These circumstances have ways of causing pain to bear upon our lives. One of the greatest fears people are confronted with in life is the fear and pain associated with death. Mark records two instances, **Mark 4:35-41** and **6:45-52**, where the disciples were literally scared to death.

These moments of danger that we have experienced cause a variety of negative effects on our lives. Just think of those who are in life and death situations on a regular basis; like the police or soldiers who then struggle with Post Traumatic Stress Syndrome. The person of Jesus Christ can come along side and bring the peace and comfort we need, just by being in his Presence.

In Conclusion:

In my own life there have been times of great pain physically, emotionally, mentally, socially and I am sure many of you can relate. The times of pain as difficult as they are take place in order for us to experience the deliverance, healing and salvation we need. Pain often produces fear and we must remember that **“God has not given us a spirit of fear, but of power and of love and of a sound mind” (2Tim 1:7).**

King David wrote **Psalm 27:1** - **“The Lord is my light and my salvation; whom shall I fear? The Lord is the strength of my life; of whom shall I be afraid?”** In the midst of life we will all face times when we need deliverance of some sort from the powers of darkness that assail us as God's people. We will all suffer from the pain of sickness at some point. We will all face some sort of danger and the fears that follow. In light of this is it essential that we let Jesus into these areas of pain and discomfort in order to receive his Saving Power.

Today Jesus the Savior still seeks to save those who are lost in the painful and sinful circumstances. Jesus Christ is **“the same yesterday, today and forever” (Hebr 13:8)** and is still able, ready and willing to meet the needs of all who come to Him. As we have seen in **Mark 1-7** – Jesus is our Saviour and able to deliver us from the enemy, heal the sick and give us peace in the midst of dangers of life.

In application:

There are two aspects I would like us to apply this morning.

Firstly, let's take some quiet time to reflect and allow the Holy Spirit to reveal to us areas of hurt and pain and discomfort in our lives. These are the very areas that Jesus longs to touch and heal with his love. Let's pray and wait in the Lord's Presence and give him permission to begin the saving process.

Secondly, I would like us to think about those we know believer or unbeliever and consider how we can be effect evangelists by inviting Jesus to touch them at their points of pain.

- We can consciously look for those family members or friends or even perfect strangers who are hurt or in pain.
- We can begin by praying for them.
- We can ask God for opportunities to share of God's love and comfort – i.e. how Jesus healed our lives from painful situations.
- We can lead them to Jesus who delivers, heals and saves those who come to him in their time of need.

Let's pray.