

Mark 1:29-39 NIV

“Where Jesus’ message is valid”

“As soon as they left the synagogue, they went with James and John to the home of Simon and Andrew. ⁽³⁰⁾ Simon's (Peter's) mother-in-law was in bed with a fever, and they told Jesus about her. ⁽³¹⁾ So he went to her, took her hand and helped her up. The fever left her and she began to wait on them.

“⁽³²⁾ That evening after sunset the people brought to Jesus all the sick and demon-possessed. ⁽³³⁾ The whole town gathered at the door, ⁽³⁴⁾ and Jesus healed many who had various diseases. He also drove out many demons, but he would not let the demons speak because they knew who he was.

“⁽³⁵⁾ Very early in the morning, while it was still dark, Jesus got up, left the house and went off to a solitary place, where he prayed. ⁽³⁶⁾ Simon and his companions went to look for him, ⁽³⁷⁾ and when they found him, they exclaimed: ‘Everyone is looking for you!’ ⁽³⁸⁾ Jesus replied, ‘Let us go somewhere else--to the nearby villages--so I can preach there also. That is why I have come.’ ⁽³⁹⁾ So he traveled throughout Galilee, preaching in their synagogues and driving out demons.”

Regardless of what you might think or what people might say about you, God loves you.

God holds you so dear that he sent his son to help you and turn you away from failure and doing wrong.

Because Jesus reversed the death sentence that haunts us, every life has potential.

God wants no one discarded.

The Gospels bring that encouraging news.

Do you wonder: “Can a two-thousand-year-old book help me?”

“Life was different back then,” we assume.

“We have instant communications and complex problems now.”

That’s what people think, but is it true?

The book, *JESUS AND HIS TIMES* tells about everyday life in the first century.

Do the following sound like today’s news?

In prior years, pirates interrupted shipping and the Roman navy had to deal with them.

The people of Gaul (modern France) were great beer drinkers.

Italian grape growers and wine makers wanted to increase their markets in Gaul (France).

They set out to convert “Frenchmen” from guzzling beer to enjoying wine.



They carried out the equivalent of what Bud Lite brewers do in their Super Bowl ads.

Did they advertise at the 30 BC Olympics?

I don’t know, but they brilliantly marketed.

The Italians made one mistake, however.

After the French converted to wine they said,

“We don’t need to buy expensive Italian wine. Shipping costs are too high. We’re tired of paying Rome’s taxes. We can grow our own grapes and make our own wine.”

That’s why some of your neighbors drink French Chardonnay, Merlot, and Champagne today.

I’m positive none of you ever does.

Two thousand years ago, businesses vigorously sold products in competitive markets and nations worried about their economies.

In order to promote trade and quickly move their armies, the Romans carried out expensive infra-structure projects including roads and aqueducts.

At markets like LA’s Farmer’s Market, Marcus’s Jeff’s—also Cherokee’s Hy-Vee and Fareway, folks bought fancy foods: **“Artichokes and pickled fish from Spain; hams and pickled meats from Gaul; carrots from Germany; goat cheese and honey from Sicily; onions, cheese, shellfish, and tuna from**



Asia Minor; plums and figs from Palestine and Africa; truffles from Jerusalem; dates from Jericho. Flocks of Belgian geese were driven all the way to Rome; their livers were a delicacy.”¹

People in the Mediterranean region traded with China, India, Spain, the British Isles, and Egypt.

They faced environmental concerns.

E.g. merchants shipped wine in large two-handled clay jars called amphorae. One of those clay jugs held about seven gallons. But they usually used those containers only once.

What do you do with thousands of used fifty pound clay pots?

Some folks used them as scrap containers.

Poor people took large broken pieces and used them as grave markers.

Near the docks at Rome stands a hill 115 feet high and about a thousand yards in circumference called Monte Testaccio—literally “Mt. Potsherd,” consisting of broken pieces of amphorae.

First century folks dealt with many health issues.

As people now go to Mayo Clinics, ancients went to the Asclepius Sanctuary in Greece, or “Jonah’s Eye Clinic” at Laodicea (in Turkey) for treatment.

¹ *Jesus and His Times*, p 174.

Folks were also sports crazy.

Similar to the World Series, Super Bowls, and “March Madness,” folks loved sporting events. Folks packed the Olympics and other competitions.

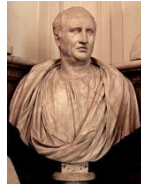
Wrestling, horse racing, chariot racing, and musical contests drew large crowds.

Clamoring souvenir sellers crammed tourist attractions.

People then complained of crooked politicians, greedy businessmen, high interest rates, and taxes.

In 55 BC, Cicero advised his fellow Romans:

“Public debt should be reduced . . . and the assistance to foreign lands should be curtailed, lest *we* become bankrupt.”



Everyday life changes little over the centuries.

You’ve probably noticed Mark’s use of the word “immediately.” As we like same day service, Mark’s readers wanted things to happen fast.

Jesus stayed on the go and dealt with the same issues that grab our attention.

Jesus healed Peter’s mother-in-law, who suffered from a high fever.

Just like any woman, she got up and immediately waited on everyone.

Needy people sick people, injured people, troubled people, kept coming to Jesus.

Jesus could have spent fulltime feeding the poor, healing the sick, and helping needy souls.

Did you notice where Jesus kept his focus?

“Very early in the morning, while it was still dark, Jesus got up, left the house and went off to a solitary place, where he prayed.”

Jesus’ prayer life with God took precedence.

No wonder we fret and make bad decisions.

We don’t ask our creator’s guidance.

Few folks begin their days asking God for wisdom, direction, and patience.

Most eagerly search for the latest bad news.

By staying close to God, Jesus lived powerfully.

If you are not already doing this, I challenge you to get up fifteen minutes earlier this week.

Spend the first eight minutes reading the *New Testament*.

Devote the next seven minutes praising God, asking for wisdom and his Spirit to guide you.

I’m confident God will lead you to a more powerful, productive, and less anxious life.

Mark shows us the contrasts between Jesus’ and his disciples’ priorities that morning:

While Jesus was alone praying,

"Simon and his companions went to look for him, and when they found him, they exclaimed:

'Everyone is looking for you!'"

The disciples have been watching the "Today Show," CNN, or "Good Morning America."

They're anxious and worked up because everyone looked for someone to solve his/her problems.

"Jesus, we've got a near crisis, maybe a catastrophe, on our hands. There are so many problems to solve—hungry people, sick people, and needy people—**'Everyone is looking for you!'"**

Is it important to help the sick, feed the poor, and assist the needy?



In Matthew 25, Jesus warned us about neglecting people, who can't help themselves.

The apostles fretted about how they were going to deal with all of those needs.

Distressed people came from everywhere.

Can you imagine the telephone calls and urgent emails Jesus would receive today?

The pressure of those pleas got to the disciples.

Jesus should be responding, but he's not around.

The exasperated disciples find him praying.

Their iPads are ringing; emails flood their

laptops. At 7AM, people banged on their doors.

"Everyone is looking for you!"

Jesus' amazed them with his reply.

"Let us go somewhere else--to the nearby villages--so I can preach there also. That is why I have come."

Jesus meant:

- "There's no way to satisfy every human need."
- "We could spend fulltime in this neighborhood.

To preach God's good news,

"is why I have come."

- "I want people to know that by my death, I'll fully pay the cost of their guilt.
- If they believe I'm the Son of God, I'll give them resurrection as I will rise from the dead.
- If they will love everyone and believe in me, their lives will have great meaning.

The greatest work is to tell Jesus' good news; how he conquered sin and death. Praise God!

That task doesn't require seminary training.

We simply share with our friends and loved ones:

- **Why we believe in Jesus;**
 - **What made us want to live for Christ;**
- **Why we've changed our lives and live for him.**

That's what the Apostle Paul did.

Paul's conversion story appears three times in the Book of Acts (chapters 9, 22, & 26).

Two of those are Paul's accounts.

- Paul rarely failed to tell other people why he believed in Jesus.



I pray that all of us will share that boldly.

- We don't need to be preachers or theologians.
- Just thankful people who love God.

Honoring God is the greatest way to spend life.

- It's rewarding and gives your life purpose.
- You will always be forward-looking.

All believers in Jesus qualify to become fisherpersons for him.

The quality that persuades most people is love.

J. Hamilton said:

Decades ago, Christians from all over the world gathered to discuss,

"What was it that appealed to them most and won them to Christ?"

One respondent: It wasn't the miracles.

Not the Sermon on the Mount.

In a faltering, choking voice he said,

"It was Jesus' washing his disciples' feet and then humbling himself even to the death on the cross."

A Hindu manufacturer from India,

"Do you know why I have come?"

Years ago when I was a boy, we heckled a missionary preacher in a bazaar (public market

place). We threw tomatoes at him. He wiped tomato juice from his face and later took us to a sweet shop and bought us candy."

Want to experience the joy of seeing your life and others' lives change for the better?

Read the Scriptures each day and pray for God's mercy, guidance, wisdom, and forgiveness.

1. Take a small step this week by inviting someone to attend church with you next Sunday.
 - a) You may have to invite a few before you get someone to say yes.
 - b) Invite in a loving way, and you'll find yourself becoming bolder and more confident.
2. Love every one; focus on God's loving power.
3. The difference you make in another person's life could last through eternity.
4. I think it was Frank Buchman who said,
"If Jesus is your best friend, it's a shame not to introduce him to others."

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