

Mark 1:14-45

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Mark's gospel has been traditionally symbolised by a winged lion. The image conveyed in western thought of a regal "king of the beasts" is not apparent but in the middle east the lion was a quickly moving animal, surprising the unwary. In that context, Mark's Jesus moves rapidly through the story, one incident upon another. Mark's gospel is the all action gospel – but being the shortest of the accounts it only touches the highlights of the life of Christ. It is written in a less classical style (cf. Luke) with pauses to explain Jewish customs that would be unfamiliar to its Roman readers. A key phrase "*kai eutheos*" translated "at once" or "immediately" reinforces the rapid sequences of the account of this ultimate servant of God. This section deals with 3 main events.

1. Calling the four fishermen to follow Jesus v14-20

Jesus moves into Galilee to begin his preaching which is summarised as "The Kingdom of God is at hand. Repent and believe the good news." To assist in this task, brief mention is made of the call to 4 fishermen, Andrew and Peter, James and John while they were mending their nets. What is not apparent from Mark's account is the previous encounters of Jesus with these 4 men some 6-8 months previously when Jesus was baptised by John. They had stayed with Jesus while in Judea and accompanied him to a wedding in Cana. So while it may have seemed like a rash thing to do, leaving their fishing business was not the result of a single encounter. Undoubtedly, they had discussed their experiences and thoughts for at least 6 months before leaving all to follow Jesus.

2. The early miracles and response v21-39

Jesus moves to Capernaum which will be his base for the next 2 years. People noted that his method of teaching was different, described as "having authority". Contrasted with the scribes who taught by quoting other rabbis, Jesus spoke directly to the people with an intrinsic and palpable certainty. His use of parables is a later development, after he was officially rejected by the Jewish leaders as Messiah. His teaching was accompanied by many miracles. In the first public healing event recorded by Mark, an unclean spirit comes out of a man at the command of Jesus. News spreads rapidly. After a sick woman is cured of a fever, crowds gather at the door of his house to be healed. This becomes a very busy time as a popular following develops. But Jesus takes time to get away in the early morning to be with His Father. This seems to keep his mission focused on moving into other towns to preach the good news. At this stage, there is no obvious impact on the Jewish leaders.

3. The Cleansing of a leper v40-45

This event was to ignite a leadership response. To understand it's significance, we need to see how Jews saw this dreaded disease.

1. Leprosy was considered a special judgement of God, as demonstrated in Miriam, Elisha's servant Gehazi and King Uzziah. As such it was irreversible.
2. Two chapters of Leviticus (13, 14) are devoted to laws regarding the detection, quarantining, and cleansing of a leper. Priests kept meticulous records of all lepers and in over 1000 years since the giving of the law at Mt Sinai, no Jewish leper had ever been cleansed.
3. Special laws in the Talmud determined how close one could get to a leper. When

If you are new or visiting; *a special warm welcome to you.* We trust you enjoy your time with us.

Today we will be having communion. If it is your practice to participate in this we welcome you to join with us in celebrating the Lord's Supper. If this is not your custom or if you are unsure of what to do please just pass the emblems (bread and wine) to the person next to you.

THE PLAN

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|---------------------------|
| Singing |
| Worship |
| Quick Break |
| Singing |
| Children to Sunday school |
| Ross Pettigrew |

This Week

Today

- Ross Pettigrew - Mark 1:14 - 45
- Japanese Christian Fellowship - 5pm

Friday

- Youth Group - Meet at the corner chapel at 6:30pm

Next Week

Sunday

- Ross Pettigrew - MARK Chp 2-3:6

Coming Up

Sunday October 8th

- Pot luck lunch followed by AGM - Youth Hall, Wray St.

Prayer Requests

- Pray for next weeks service
- Pray for this who are unwell— there are a number
- Pray for those travelling
- Pray for David and Kerrin

one Rabbi said you had to be at least 4 feet from a leper and another said 100 feet the contradiction had to be explained. How? Downwind it had to be 100 feet, but upwind it could be 4 feet!

4. The Rabbis taught that the only person who could cleanse a leper would be their Messiah.

This leper approached Jesus because he believed that Jesus was the Messiah! So he begs Jesus to heal him. The most remarkable part of this story is what Jesus did – “He stretched out his hand and TOUCHED him” The shock and horror that would have filled all watching would have left them gasping but the effect was dramatic “*kai eutheos*”. Jesus instructions were to tell no one but show himself to the priests (in Jerusalem). How can he not tell as he heads south to be the first leper presenting to the temple as cleansed in over 1000 years? The resulting response from the Jewish leaders was to be dramatic.

Lessons for today.

1. In my encounters with people, am I expecting an immediate response to the call of the gospel or do I see a number of small events leading people to decide to follow Christ? Have I obeyed the call to follow him?
2. When I get more busy, do I find less time to pray? If Jesus needed that special time each day to pray, how much more must we take time to pray?
3. Am I willing to go beyond the boundaries determined by society to touch hurting people who are longing to be touched? Or do I keep at arms length?

Homework:

Based on the story of the leper, provide an outline that would explain the gospel to someone.

Notes

Small Groups

Tuesday

- Ladies Home Group - see Laura Hannah 473-7954
- Mornington Home Group - see Jonathan Gauntlett 453-4195
- Central Home Group - see Steve Clark 479-2070
- Brockville Home Group - see Geoffrey Stewart 476-7888

Wednesday

- Pine Hill Home Group - see John Hannah 473-7954

Friday

- Halfway Bush Home Group - see Gideon Chang 476-7101

NOTICES

- 1) If you would like to receive **copies of the information** that is sent to the church and often finds its way to the foyer please email Zibi John to advise him you would like to receive this. zbjohn@gmail.com
- 2) There will be **no women's prayer meeting** over the school holidays (September 29th and October 6th). It will commence again on **October 13th**. Please note the change of time: the prayer meeting will now start at midday.
- 3) A **pot luck lunch** will be held on **Sunday, October 8th** at the Youth Hall on Wray St, Brockville after morning services. Please bring finger food - some pizzas will be provided. We plan to hold the **AGM** after lunch (subject to the program being ready).
- 4) The **women's study group** has begun studying “The Excellent Wife - a Biblical Perspective”. All women warmly welcomed to join. See **Bethney** (476-7888) for details.
- 5) Could you please register your interest in a **Christmas Eve service**. If there is sufficient interest we would like to put together a Christmas Eve service in either the corner chapel or the Youth Hall in Brockville. Please register your interest with one of the elders. We need people to pray for this outreach endeavor, attend the service, contribute to the planning and running of the program.
- 6) A young **woman from Wellington** who will be taking 1st year medical school next year is looking for a Christian family to **board** with. Please contact **John or Laura Hannah** if you can help.

Any notices for the church newsletter should be sent to Nathan Pettigrew at shigakiwis@value.net.nz or call 473-9326 **before Thursday night!**