

Chapter Five of the Book of Mark

Comments are informed/from observations of Dr. Lamar Williamson Jr. from *Mark: Interpretation Commentary for Preaching and Teaching*, WJK

This chapter forms a cohesive vision of Jesus as sovereign lord, holding power to heal, deliver, and attend to the needs of those within and outside of the circle of believers. Coming just after Jesus calms the storm on the sea of Galilee, the first story has Jesus exorcising and healing a man with a multitude and chaos of demons. Then, we have two stories of Jesus miracles within the Jewish community. The chapter is a compact unit of narratives making the singular claim that faith in Jesus is the way to healing and wholeness, and that Jesus himself is ready and willing to be invited into that process in our lives. We must only invite him.

The Gerasene Demoniac (Mark 5:1-20)

Jesus is in Gentile country. Everything in the story highlights that he is outside of “kosher”. The area is occupied by majority Romans, the pigs are unclean, and so is the cemetery. This is a boundary land screaming DO NOT ENTER. Yet, Jesus’s power is still total.

Note the difference between Legion – who is one man full of many demons, and the wholeness that is brought to him through Jesus. In the end he is one. His demons asked Jesus to go away. And then the townspeople do the same.

What does that suggest? Do economic systems participate in evil?

Notice how Jesus is portrayed in the story. How would you characterize him?

Notice the potential economic impact of the death of all those pigs. Who benefits in this story? How might Jesus’ command to the healed man to “proclaim what God has done” to his friends and community be a kind of counter balance to their loss?

Jairus’ daughter and the woman with the hemorrhage (Mark 5:21-43)

Now we move back to a Jewish setting for the miracle stories. The typical pattern for a healing story in Mark is this: Problem, Solution, evidence of healing, all the people are in awe. *In what ways do these two stories differ from the pattern? Why might Mark have wanted to do that?*

Jesus is interrupted on his way to heal Jairus’ daughter. This is one of five stories in Mark’s gospel where Jesus is interrupted.

What does his reaction suggest about his character? How might our reactions to interruptions, changes, and surprises be better shaped to be like Jesus? What might that look like?

Jairus' little girl is raised from the dead. Jesus tells the witnesses in the room to give her something to eat. Why?

The two stories are about two women. One who is just reaching puberty/bat mitzvah age, and the other is experiencing a period that won't end. *How might the coincidence of menstruation in these two stories be meaningful?*

In both the miracles, the Greek word for saved/made whole is used. SOZO.

How does Mark use that word/concept to emphasize Jesus role in the world? How were these women saved? How are we?

How many desperate people did Jesus love and care for in this chapter? What does that suggest to you?