

The Harvester



Preparing Souls

To Serve The Lord



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How Excited Are We About Jesus?

By Brian R. Kenyon

Have you ever heard really good news and could not wait to tell someone? Perhaps it was a friend who was baptized or a family member who found out she was expecting a baby. Perhaps it was even an unbelievable sale or deal purchased at a yard sale. Whatever it was, we just could not wait to tell others! How excited do we get about the good news of the Gospel? Mark records an incident in the life of Jesus that shows the excitement that should naturally follow the realization of who Jesus is and what He has done for us. How excited are we about Jesus?

The Miracle

Mark records the following miracle that is not found in the other Gospels.

Again, departing from the region of Tyre and Sidon, He came through the midst of the region of Decapolis to the Sea of Galilee. ³²Then they brought to Him one who was deaf and had an impediment in his speech, and they begged Him to put His hand on him. ³³And He took him aside from the multitude, and put His fingers in his ears, and He spat and touched his tongue. ³⁴Then, looking up to heaven, He sighed, and said to him, “Ephphatha,” that is, “Be opened.” ³⁵Immediately his ears were opened, and the impediment of his tongue was loosed, and he spoke plainly. ³⁶Then He commanded them that they should tell no one; but the more He commanded them, the more widely they proclaimed it. ³⁷And they were astonished beyond measure, saying, “He has done all things well. He makes both the deaf to hear and the mute to

speak.” (Mk. 7:31-37)

There are three things to note in this miracle. First, Jesus came. As Jesus traveled from the coastal cities of Tyre and Sidon toward the Sea of Galilee, He came to Decapolis, a territory of ten Greek cities. This was a largely Gentile area. A number of people from this area came to hear Jesus preach (Mk. 3:8). This was also a place where Jesus cast out demons (Mk. 5:20). Whether or not the man Jesus healed was a Gentile, a healing in a predominately Gentile region would be an encouragement to Mark’s mostly Gentile readers. This man, who was deaf and had a speech impediment, was brought to Jesus (Mk. 7:32). This shows the faith in Jesus those who brought him had (cf. Mk. 2:3-4). The word translated “impediment in his speech [spoke with difficulty, NAS]” indicates one who had difficulty in speaking, or even a complete mute. The Greek word occurs nowhere else in the New Testament, but is found again in Isaiah 35:6 (LXX), where, in the Messianic kingdom, the prophet says that “the lame shall leap like a deer, And the tongue of the dumb [mute, ESV] sing.” Those who brought the man, begged Jesus to “put his hand upon” their friend, which is another way of saying they wanted Jesus to heal him (cf. Mk. 5:23; 6:5).

Second, Jesus cleared. Jesus took the man aside to give him personal attention (Mk. 7:33-34). Both Jesus and the Father were involved in this man’s healing. Jesus put His fingers in the deaf and mute man’s ear, and Jesus spat (presumably in His other finger)

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and touched the man's tongue. Though the Father is not explicitly mentioned, His involvement is seen in the fact that Jesus was "looking up to heaven" when He said "Ephphatha," which is Aramaic for "Be opened." There were other occasions that Jesus looked up to heaven when invoking the Father's help (cf. Jn. 11:41; 17:1). Immediately, the man was healed (Mk. 7:35)!

Third, Jesus commanded them that "they should tell no one" (Mk. 7:36a). Exactly why Jesus would command such is open for further discussion, but involved somewhere in the discussion is likely that Jesus did not want others to have the false concept that His mission was only about doing miracles (cf. Mk. 1:44; 5:43; Mt. 17:9), as was the thinking of those who sought to make Him king after He miraculously filled their bellies (Jn. 6:26-27). The more Jesus told them not to tell any one, the more they told it (Mk. 7:36b-37). They could not hold back their excitement about Jesus!

Hindrances To Excitement

At one point in our Christianity, all of us were excited about Jesus! It is obvious through observation at some church assemblies—by those present and not present—that some have lost that excitement. There are several reasons for this, but only three will be considered here. First, some people lose excitement for Jesus due to a lack of faith. Jesus said,

Therefore I say to you, do not worry about your life, what you will eat or

what you will drink; nor about your body, what you will put on. Is not life more than food and the body more than clothing? (Mt. 6:25)

The KJV translates "do not worry" as "take no thought." J. W. McGarvey sheds light on this by stating that "*thought* was often used for *melancholy*," and that "the expression *take thought*, meant to go into a state of melancholy or despondency" (67). He continued, "It expresses, not the mental act of *thinking*, but the state of feeling which results from a despondent view of the future" (67). Being overly concerned about the necessities of life can reach the point where it is a sinful lack of faith in God. May we trust in the Lord and not allow a lack of faith to take away our excitement for Jesus!

Second, some people lose excitement for Jesus due to a feeling of self-sufficiency. They are more puffed up and excited about themselves than Jesus. The Kingdom of Judah illustrates this in the Old Testament. God rescued her, as it were, as a baby left for dead in a field, and He brought her up securely, giving her great beauty (Ezk. 16:1-14), but she turned against God and acted as if she were the reason why she was so blessed (Ezk. 16:1-50)! Let us not be so lifted up with pride that we lose our excitement for Jesus!

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"Do You Understand Truth?"

39th Annual Lectureship **Jan. 20-23, 2014** Brian R. Kenyon, Director

MONDAY

9:00 What Is Truth and Can We Know It? Jackie M. Stearsman
 9:40 Suppressing the Truth (Rom. 1:18-20) Charles Broyles
 10:20 BREAK
 10:50 Is Atheism Credible? Eric Lyons

11:30 LUNCH

Forum: Challenges to Truth

1:30 Postmodernism Daniel Stearsman
 2:00 Other Philosophical Challenges Rick Kenyon
 2:30 Modern Media Cloyd "Ben" Frock, Jr.
 3:00 BREAK
 3:30 Questions And Answers On Forum Topic

4:30 DINNER

6:30 Congregational Singing
 7:00 Eve: Tricked About Truth Mike Elledge
 7:45 Jesus' View of Truth Tom Holland

TUESDAY

9:00 "Thy Word Is Truth" George F. Beals
 9:40 True Religious Authority Michael Shepherd
 10:20 BREAK
 10:50 Denominational Baptism and Truth Cameron Freeman

11:30 LUNCH

Forum: Truth and Religion

1:30 Roman Catholicism's View of Truth Earl Edwards
 2:00 Islam's View of Truth Trent Wheeler
 2:30 Mormonism's View of Truth Nathan Franson
 3:00 BREAK
 3:30 Questions And Answers On Forum Topic

4:30 DINNER

6:30 Congregational Singing
 7:00 The Young Prophet: Believing a Lie Vernon Sirmons
 7:45 Jesus: Bearing Witness to the Truth Jimmy Clark

WEDNESDAY

9:00 Mercy and Truth J. Brooks Boyd, Jr.
 9:40 Righteousness and Truth Sam Willcut
 10:20 BREAK
 10:50 Worship in Spirit and Truth Jimmy Clark

11:30 LUNCH

Forum: Truth and Worship

1:30 Truth Concerning Music in Worship Stan Mitchell
 2:00 Truth Concerning the Lord's Supper Alfred Woodard
 2:30 Truth Concerning "Tongue Speaking" Brian R. Kenyon
 3:00 BREAK
 3:30 Questions And Answers On Forum Topic

4:30 DINNER

6:30 Congregational Singing
 7:00 Micahiah: Some Do Not Want Truth Brian Howard
 7:45 Jesus: Grace and Truth Cameron Freeman

THURSDAY

9:00 Truth and the Consequences of Sin David Stearsman
 9:40 Truth and "Same Sex Marriage" Mark McWhorter
 10:20 BREAK
 10:50 The Spirit of Truth and the Spirit of Error Melvin Otey

11:30 LUNCH

Forum: Truth and Preaching

1:30 Preaching the Truth in Love Bruce Daugherty
 2:00 They "Went Out from Us" Jackie M. Stearsman
 2:30 Persecution and Preaching the Truth Rico Brown
 3:00 BREAK
 3:30 Questions And Answers On Forum Topic

4:30 DINNER

6:30 Congregational Singing
 7:00 Ananias and Sapphira: Lying to God Christian Torres
 7:45 Jesus: The Way, the Truth, and the Life Melvin Otey

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Third, some people lose excitement for Jesus due to worldliness. Worldliness can choke out our entire spiritual life (Mt. 13:22 cf. 2 Tim. 4:10). Jesus' question is still penetrating, "For what profit is it to a man if he gains the whole world, and loses his own soul? Or what will a man give in exchange for his soul?" (Mt. 16:26). Gaining the value of all the world's resources will not ultimately benefit us one bit! In fact, it would result in the greatest loss—our soul! John wrote, "Do not love the world or the things in the world," because the "world is passing away, and the lust of it; but he who does the will of God abides forever" (1 Jn. 2:15)! Are we more excited about worldly things or about spiritual things? May we never allow worldliness to keep us from enthusiasm for Jesus!

Manifestations of Excitement

When we speak of excitement about Jesus, we are not referring to a "cheerleading" show. Here are some ways to show our excitement about Jesus. First, spend time with God. There are three main ways we spend time with God. We spend time with God in meditating on His word. We must know God's word to have a real relationship with Jesus. Our faith can never outrun our knowledge of God and His word (Rom. 10:17). We also spend time with God

in prayer (Mt. 6:9-15 cf. Lk. 18:1; 1 Thes. 5:17). When we speak to God the Father through the mediatorship of Jesus (1 Tim. 2:5), we enter and abide in a spiritually intimate relationship with God made possible by the Holy Spirit (Rom. 8:15; Gal. 4:6 cf. Mk. 14:36). Finally, we spend time with God by attending assemblies of the local church (Heb. 10:24-25). Why would we not want to fellowship with God and one another (cf. 1 Jn. 1:3-7)? The more we know God, spend time praying, and assemble with the local church, the more excited about Jesus we become!

Second, evangelize our sphere of influence. Note the excitement displayed by Andrew and Philip when they learned about Jesus (Jn. 1:41, 45-46). Note that the woman at the well was so excited about Jesus that she left her water pot—the very reason she came to the well—and went to tell her villagers the good news about Christ (Jn. 4:28-29). How much closer can we be to Jesus than when we fulfill the Great Commission (Mt. 28:19-20; Mk. 16:15-16)? Our excitement about Jesus can lead to others being excited about Jesus (cf. Acts 8:39)! Let us forever be excited about Jesus and show it!

Endnotes

J. W. McGarvey, *The New Testament Commentary: Volume 1—Matthew and Mark* (1875; Delight, AR: Gospel Light, n.d.).