

The Gospel of Mark

Part 6

Jesus' Power Over Disease & Demons

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TALKINGPOINTS WALKINGPOINTS



A publication of **THE DISCIPLE**, the adult discipleship ministry of Triangle Community Church.

Talk together about the glory of God's kingdom. —Psalm 145:11
Love the Lord your God and **walk** in all his ways. —Joshua 22:5

Triangle Community Church aims to be a "transforming church". We exist to be used by God as He transforms ordinary people into extraordinary followers of Jesus Christ. TCC believes not only that life-change is possible—but that it is to be expected. Growth is God's will for his people. But transformation does not happen by accident. It requires intentional, intelligent action. 1 Timothy 4:7 instructs you to "discipline yourself for the purpose of godliness." Since "Talking Points, Walking Points" is intended both for individual reflection and for group discussion, questions vary in degree of vulnerability required. Generally it is best to begin group discussions with questions which involve less personal disclosure—but don't linger there. Be sure to "dive deep" too! The questions which require the greatest openness and honesty, as well as those in the section entitled "Digging Deeper in your Daily Quiet Time", are perfect for private reflection.

Questions for Reflection or Discussion

- What from Sunday's message interested you? ...made sense to you? ...confused you? ...intrigued you? ...upset you? ...encouraged you? ...and **why**?

- Have you ever watched a "faith healer" on TV? What is your impression of them?

Read Mark 1:29-34. In what ways was Jesus like, and unlike, today's "faith healers"?

Who do you know who has sought—or wanted to—the ministry of a "faith healer"? Tell us about it.

Today, when the sought-for healing doesn't happen, the sick person is blamed for not having sufficient faith. How much faith did Peter's mother-in-law display?

- Read 1 Peter 5:8–9. Does the New Testament teach that Satan currently is active in our world?

Does modern science believe that Satan currently is active in our world? Why or why not?

Do you believe that Satan currently is active in our world? What has shaped your views?

- What have you read or heard about the topic of "spiritual warfare" in the Christian life?

Review the **Sermon Summary** paragraph that begins "*The New Testament Epistles give very little space to...*" How does this teaching compare and contrast with what you've heard about "spiritual warfare"?

In what ways does our craving for immediate, miraculous victories reveal laziness on our part?

Sermon Summary Key Text: Mark 1:29-34

We've seen in Mark 1 that Jesus, Peter, Andrew, James and John went to Capernaum, Peter's home town. There Jesus taught in the synagogue and cast a demon out of a man (v. 24). Everyone was amazed and news of Jesus spread everywhere (v. 27-28). Jesus established a reputation as a powerful teacher with authority over demons—he was the talk of the town! When they arrived at the house, Peter's mother-in-law lay sick with a fever. Jesus healed her instantaneously (v. 31). (Notice that Peter was married, so the Roman Catholic view can't be traced back to him!)

Jesus' very busy day continued: when evening came people began bringing to Him all who were ill and those who were demon-possessed. The whole city had gathered at the door (v. 32-33)! They desperately hoped Jesus would solve their problems. In response, Jesus healed many who were ill with various diseases, and cast out many demons (v. 34). Please note two things: [1] there is a distinction between mere physical illnesses and demonic activity, and [2] it does not say that he healed everyone who was sick or demon-possessed.

God still supernaturally heals people today (remember, God cannot change), but it is not God's will for everyone to be healed in this life. (If that were the case, no one would ever die!) The Apostle Paul is himself a great example of this truth (2 Corinthians 12:7–10). To keep Paul humble, Jesus denied Paul's request for relief. God sometimes says “No” because he is up to something greater in our lives (James 1:2–4). God can heal anyone that he chooses to; he is omnipotent. But sometimes God chooses not to heal us precisely because He is just up to something better, even if we can't understand it right now. There will be no tears in heaven—only wholeness and health and joy. The healings Jesus provided for some in his earthly ministry, in eternity, He will do for all who call upon Him in faith.

But what are some things that we do know about spiritual warfare? We know that Satan uses lies (John 8:44), deception (Revelation 12:9), murder (Psalm 106:37; John 8:44), and many other kinds of destructive activities to influence people to turn away from God and destroy themselves. Satan blinds non-believers to the truth of the gospel (2 Corinthians 4:4), keeping them in bondage to things that hinder them from coming to faith in God (Galatians 4:8). He uses temptation, doubt, guilt, fear, confusion, sickness, envy, pride, and slander to hinder a Christian's witness and usefulness. But Satan can only do what God gives him permission to do—and nothing more (Job 1:12; 2:6). Christians can successfully resist demonic activity through the authority Christ gives us (James 4:7; 1 John 4:4; 1 Corinthians 10:13).

The New Testament Epistles give very little space to discussing demonic activity in the lives of believers or methods to resist and oppose such activity. For example, in 1 Corinthians Paul doesn't tell the church to “rebuke a spirit of dissension” but rather urges them to “to be united in the same mind and the same judgment” (1 Corinthians 1:10). Paul didn't tell the Corinthians to “rebuke a spirit of incest”, but rather to be outraged and exercise church discipline (1 Corinthians 5:1–5). Paul doesn't command them to “cast out a spirit of litigation”, but instead to settle cases within the church and to give up their own self-interest (1 Corinthians 6:1–8). Paul didn't command them to “cast out a spirit of disorder or gluttony or selfishness” when celebrating the Lord's Supper, but rather to “wait for one another” and to examine their own hearts (1 Corinthians 11:28, 33). With regard to sharing the gospel with unbelievers, we see a similar pattern in the New Testament: the emphasis is on boldly sharing the good news (Matthew 9:35; Romans 1:18–19; 1 Corinthians 1:17–2:5).

So while the New Testament recognizes the influence of demonic activity, its primary focus is on our personal choices (Galatians 5:16–26; Ephesians 4:1–6:9; Colossians 3:1–4:6). Primary responsibility for sin rests with the individual Christian and his choices (Romans 6:12–16; Galatians 5:16–26), but through prayer we have access to God's throne of grace.

Digging Deeper in Your Daily Quiet Time

*Jesus clearly displayed his authority over demons in his day.
How should we understand demonic activity in our day?*

Monday—Among *non*-believers, Satan...

- blinds their minds (2 Corinthians 4:4)
- snatches the Word from their hearts (Luke 8:12)
- uses men to oppose God's work (Revelation 2:13)

Tuesday—Among believers, Satan...

- deceives in regard to God's Word (Genesis 3:1-6; Matthew 4:6)
- bribes with material things (Luke 4:5-7)
- sows tares (unbelievers) in the church (Matthew 13:38)
- accuses and slanders the believer (Revelation 12:10)
- incites persecutions (Revelation 2:10)

Wednesday—Among believers, Satan (*continued*)...

- tempts us to lie, to be immoral (Acts 5:3; John 8:44; 1 Corinthians 7:5)
- works lying wonders (2 Thessalonians 2:9)
- promotes anger (Ephesians 4:25-27)
- takes advantage of our sins and failures (2 Corinthians 2:11)
- sometimes comes as an angel of light (2 Corinthians 11:13-15)

Thursday—Among believers and non-believers alike, Satan...

- can inflict with muteness, blindness, or seizures (Matthew 9:33; 12:22; 17:15-18)
- can cause mind disorders (Mark 5:4-5; 9:22; Luke 8:27-29; 9:37-42)
- can be involved in bringing death (Revelation 9:14-19)

Friday—What is the believer's defense against Satan?

- Jesus prays for us. (Romans 8:34; Hebrews 7:25; John 17:15)
- Realize that God may use Satan to teach us a particular lesson. (2 Corinthians 12:7-10)
- Never assume that victory is automatic. Do not speak contemptuously of Satan's limits but rather to depend on the Lord for victory. (Jude 8-9)
- Be aware of, and thereby alert to, Satan's attacks. (1 Peter 5:8)
- Take a decisive stand, waging war continually. (James 4:7)
- Take up and use God's full armor. (Ephesians 6:11-18)

Saturday—Know that Satan has been judged—and he will be judged again.

- He was barred from his original privileged position in heaven. (Ezekiel 28:16)
- Judgment was pronounced in the Garden of Eden. (Genesis 3:14-15)
- He was judged at the cross. (John 12:31; Colossians 2:15)
- He will be barred from all access to heaven during the tribulation period. (Revelation 12:13)
- At the beginning of the millennium he will be confined in the abyss. (Revelation 20:2)
- At the conclusion of history he will be cast into the lake of fire for all eternity. (Revelation 20:10)