

BIBLE READING DAY 8, SUNDAY: MARCH 6

A Day of Miracles in Capernaum

Mark 1:21–34

They went into Capernaum, and on the Sabbath, Jesus entered the synagogue and began to teach. And they were astonished at his teaching, for he taught them as one having authority, and not as the scribes.

Suddenly, a man with an evil spirit entered the synagogue shouting, “What have you to do with us, Jesus of Nazareth? Have you come to destroy us? I know who you are, you’re the Holy One of God!”

But Jesus rebuked him, saying, “Hold your peace, and come out of him!”

After throwing the man into convulsions and loud screaming, the evil spirit departed from him. And the people were so astonished that they all began to exclaim, “What is this? Here is a new teaching with real authority! He even commands the evil spirits, and they obey him.”

And his fame quickly spread throughout all Galilee.

Jesus left the synagogue and entered the house of Simon and Andrew, with James and John. Now Simon’s mother-in-law lay sick with a fever, and they told Jesus about her at once. He came and took her by the hand and lifted her up; and the fever left her, and she began to attend to their comfort.

Now in the evening, when the sun had set, they began bringing to him all who were sick or demon possessed, until it seemed that the whole city was crowded about the door of Simon’s house. And he healed many who were sick with various diseases and cast out many demons. But he would not permit the demons to speak, because they knew who he was.

Jesus Preaches in Galilee

Mark 1:35–45; Matthew 4:25; Mark 2:1–12

In the early morning hours, long before daybreak, Jesus rose and went out to a solitary place, and there he prayed. And Simon and his companions began searching for him; and when they found him, they said, “Everyone is looking for you.”

But Jesus replied, “Let us go on to the neighboring towns, that I may preach there, too; for that is why I have come.”

And he went throughout all Galilee, preaching in their synagogues and casting out demons. And great crowds followed him from Galilee and the Decapolis, and from Jerusalem and Judea and beyond the Jordan.

A leper came to Jesus begging help and, kneeling before him, said, “If you will, you can make me clean.” Jesus, moved with compassion, reached out his hand and touched him, saying, “I will; be clean.” Immediately the leprosy left him, and he was clean.

“See that you do not speak to anyone about this,” said Jesus, “but go show yourself to the priest and offer for your cleansing the things which Moses commanded, as evidence to the people.”

Having sternly admonished him, Jesus sent him away at once. But he went out and began to tell it everywhere, so that Jesus was no longer able to enter the town openly but was obliged to remain out in the countryside. But the people continued to come to him from every quarter.

*“Prayer is the way you defeat the devil,
reach the lost, restore a backslider,
strengthen the saints, send missionaries
out, cure the sick, accomplish the impossi-
ble, and know the will of God.”*

David Jeremiah

Some days later, Jesus returned to Capernaum, and it was reported that he was at home. A crowd gathered—so many that there was no more room, not even about the door—and Jesus began to preach the word to them. And they brought a paralytic, carried by four men; and when they could not get near Jesus because of the crowd, they removed a section of the roof above him and let down the pallet on which the paralytic was lying. When Jesus saw their faith, he said to the paralytic, “Son, your sins are forgiven.”

Now some of the scribes were sitting there, reasoning in their hearts, “Why does this man say such things? He is blaspheming! Who can forgive sins but God alone?”

Then Jesus, knowing what they were thinking, said to them, “Why are you thinking such things in your hearts? Which is easier, to say to the paralytic, ‘Your sins are forgiven,’ or to say, ‘Rise, pick up your pallet and walk’? But that you may know that the Son of Man has authority on earth to forgive sins, I say to you, (he was speaking to the paralytic) Rise, pick up your pallet and go home.”

And the man immediately rose, picked up his pallet, and walked away before them all. And they were all amazed and praised God, saying, “We never saw anything like it!”

The Call of Matthew; Answers on Fasting

Mark 2:13–22

Jesus went out by the sea again, and all the crowd gathered about him, and he continued teaching them. Now as he passed by, he saw Levi, the son of Alphaeus, sitting at the tax office, and he said to him, “Follow me.” And he rose and followed him.

And it came to pass that, as Jesus sat at dinner in Levi’s house, many tax collectors and sinners sat down with Jesus and his disciples, for there were many who were following him. Now when the scribes and Pharisees saw him eating with sinners and tax collectors, they said to his disciples, “Why does he eat with tax collectors and sinners?”

When Jesus heard it, he said to them, “Those who are well have no need of a physician, but those who are sick. I did not come to call the ‘righteous,’ but sinners.”

Now John’s disciples and the Pharisees were observing a fast, and people came to Jesus and said, “Why is it that John’s disciples and the disciples of the Pharisees are observing a fast, but your disciples are not?”

“Should the wedding guests fast while the bridegroom is with them?” replied Jesus. “As long as they have the bridegroom with them, they cannot fast. But the time will come when the bridegroom will be taken away from them, and then they will fast in that day.

“No one sews a patch of unshrunk cloth on an old garment; for if he does, the new cloth which covers the hole shrinks from the old cloth, and a worse tear is made. No one puts new wine into old wineskins; for if he does, the wine will burst the skins, and the wine is lost, and the skins are ruined. New wine must be put into new skins.”

Approximate Timeline of Jesus’s Public Ministry

BEFORE BAPTISM	BEFORE BAPTISM	FIRST PASSOVER	SUMMER	FIRST BOOTHS	WINTER	SECOND PASSOVER	SUMMER	FIRST BOOTHS	WINTER	SECOND PASSOVER	SUMMER	THIRD BOOTHS	WINTER	FINAL PASSOVER
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DEVOTIONAL DAY 8 (SUNDAY, MARCH 6)

And By the Way, There Will Be Demons

Based on Mark 1-2

Dear Son,

We've got a busy month planned. There will be some travel and I recommend you pack light. When you teach and preach, don't expect everyone to understand what You are saying. And don't expect anyone to stand up and cheer. Those close to You may take advantage of You. Don't be surprised if Peter asks for a special favor regarding his mother-in-law. If You feel like you are being stalked, You are! Their hygiene may be deplorable. and they do not have health insurance, but they will clean up well enough. Don't be shocked if the healthy folks want you to stop. There will be meal breaks, but You will have some working lunches (and dinners). Just watch out for those you are eating with because they will be watching You! And, oh, BTW, there will be demons!

The Father

Today's passages describe Jesus's life as being filled with unceasing tension. He was the Emergency Room for bruised and sickened souls as well as broken and crippled bodies. Jesus was 100 percent God and therefore knew what His days would hold. He was also 100 percent man, so He suffered through it all, depending on His Father. Hebrews 4:16 tells us to "come boldly to the throne of grace, to find help in time of need," because Jesus understands it all.

We know the Bible is the eyewitness account of the actions of Jesus in vivid, living color, and only hints at the times of prayer and peaceful fellowship with His Father. Our lives, too, consist of times of quietness and then sometimes, like a soldier engaged in warfare, we are confronted with moments of sheer terror. We may not encounter people demonstratively possessed by demonic spirits, shouting at us at church. But our battle, perhaps more subtle than that of Jesus, is still just as real and just as dangerous.

Our struggles are no less intense than the saints of old, found in Hebrews 11. They "shut the mouth of lions" and our "roaring lion" is that old dragon, the devil, who seeks to devour and destroy us and our loved ones (1 Peter 5:8). Yet, we can shut that mouth and its evil voice that tempts us to doubt that the Heavenly Father holds us in the palm of His hand. Other times, that lying lion roars at us to go it alone without the aid of God and no need to go to Him in prayer.

Jesus went out early because He not only *knew* the truth, He *was* the Truth. Our weapons are mighty through God (2 Corinthians 10:4). The key to navigating this uncertain life is to spend the "vanilla", early morning moments with God, banking our time in His unseen presence. Then, when those inevitable battle moments come and visible securities are stripped away, our hearts will be trained by repetition to follow a well-beaten path into the shelter of the Shadow of the Almighty (Psalm 91).

People will take advantage of us, and some will criticize our motives. We may feel that the roof is caving in around us. That's when we need to surround ourselves with our faithful friends, just like the paralytic man did. Jesus saw "their" faith! Our battle buddies may be the faith to bring us to Jesus's feet. Jesus will see "our" faith is strong enough to tear the roof off. And BTW, there will be demons.

Father, I believe You care for and love me. I believe You know everything in my heart and soul and still invite me into Your presence. Not only do You direct everything in my life, but You hold me and my loved ones close, and safe, and reassured, even as You allow the bad and hard things come. Amen

--By Connie Horn

WRITE DOWN YOUR THOUGHTS IN RESPONSE TO WHAT YOU HAVE READ:

WHAT DID GOD SAY TO ME?

PRAYER: WHAT DID I SAY TO GOD?

ACTS OF PRAYER: ADORATION, CONFESSION, THANKSGIVING, SUPPLICATION (How God Can Supply Needs)

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