

#InstagramJesus

Weekly Devotional

A ministry of Chapel Hill

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WEEK 6

This daily devotional pairs with Mark 1:21-28 and the sermon preached February 9-10



Written by Jena Meyerpeter

Jena Meyerpeter and her family moved to Gig Harbor in the fall of 2017. Although she considers herself a Midwest girl at heart, she and her husband Josh are loving raising their three daughters here in the Pacific Northwest. Jena's love for God's Word inspires her to write and speak on a variety of topics surrounding faith and family.

LifeGroup Guide

Welcome/Vision/Group Guidelines/Prayer

Review

How has Jesus been challenging you this week? Where have you experienced transformation?

Story

Mark 1:21-28

Head

What does this story reveal about who Jesus is? How does the authority of Christ help us know who he is?

What other stories of Jesus do you know where Jesus' commanding voice has an instant and powerful effect upon nature, evil, sickness, difficult situations?
Which of Jesus' teachings do you find most astonishing?

Heart

Who can you identify with in this story?

Jesus' combination of powerful teaching and practical action amazes those present in the synagogue at the time of this account, and all the surrounding region. What recent stories do you have to share of God speaking to you through reading and reflecting on his teaching and actions in the Bible?

When have you seen the light of Christ countering the darkness in a tangible, very real way in front of your eyes?

Hands

Jesus commands the unclean spirit to "be quiet!". More literally to shut up, or be muzzled. As a group, consider where you see evil in the context of the world. Spend time praying for Christ's light to shine in the darkness.

How does being a follower of Jesus define you? How will being a follower of the Holy One of God define your actions this week?

Prayer

DAY 1 – Monday
Daily devotional

Read

Mark 1:21-28, Mark 1:15

Ask

What does this story reveal about who Jesus is?

Have you been amazed or astonished by the way God reveals himself in your life?

Reflect

Back in Mark 1:15 Jesus declared, “the kingdom of God is at hand,” and now we see Jesus stepping into Capernaum with his freshly-called band of followers. He’s ready to begin demonstrating who he is and how he’ll live out one powerful word and soul-saving step at a time.

As readers of the New Testament, we already know Jesus’ motivations and how each step of his ministry takes him closer to the cross. Let’s keep in mind the people surrounding him in the synagogue that Sabbath morning didn’t have our perspective. His words and ways were astonishing and shocking. His disciples were expecting him to set up a new kingdom on earth right then. The people gathered in the synagogue expected him to be just another teaching scribe. The ‘unclean spirit’ in verse 23 expected Jesus to answer its questions instead of commanding silence and instant defeat. The good news for us is that Jesus is still shattering expectations in our lives today. We expect punishment and Jesus offers grace, we expect shame and Jesus offers mercy, we expect exhaustion and Jesus offers rest, we expect mourning and Jesus hands us joy in the midst of suffering, we expect death and Jesus offers everlasting life.

Jesus’ authority and power has always been and will always be about the business of salvation through grace. It was bewildering to the crowds in the synagogue on that day, and his power and presence is still astonishing us today.

DAY 2 – Tuesday
Daily devotional

Read

Mark 1: 21-23, Matthew 7: 28-29, Matthew 23: 1-12

Ask

Which of Jesus' teachings do you find most astonishing?

What were the scribes and Pharisees doing that Jesus warned against?

Reflect

Following Jewish laws and customs was serious business and scribes were assigned the task of performing public readings and teachings in places like synagogues. The scribes' authority came from their ability to point people's attention to higher authorities other than themselves. For the listeners, there were clear differences between Jesus' and the scribes' teachings. Where the scribes held a "they said" approach to authority, Jesus took an "I said" stance. It's similar to my own children when they retort to each other, "Mom said so!" but all I say is, "because I say so." The authority of Jesus is the ultimate, "because I say so" on every matter in life from the inner workings of our hearts and minds to the outward expressions of our beliefs and values.

In Matthew 23:1-12 we get the idea how far from God's heart the scribes' teachings were and the burden they placed on people. Outward facades of obedience replaced contrite and willing hearts before God, and manmade traditions were valued above God-given commandments; self-righteousness over God righteousness. Every law God commanded and prophecy given in the Old Testament pointed to and was fulfilled in the person of Jesus Christ standing right in front of them. Instead of relying on tradition, Jesus revealed his relationship with God, his Father, to assert his power and authority.

Jesus authority is a direct result of his relationship with his Father. His claim to Sonship sent shockwaves through people's hearts and minds. Mark doesn't tell us exactly what Jesus was teaching, but we get an idea of the types of teachings Jesus astonished crowds with from Matthew 6 and 7 (see Matthew 7:28-29). Jesus didn't just teach, he revealed truth. He opened eyes and ears of listeners to believe in the God of the patriarchs and prophets as Abba, God the Father.

DAY 3 – Wednesday
Daily devotional

Read

Mark 1:23-24, John 6:68-69

Ask

Who's someone you're proud to be associated with?

How would you respond to the question, 'Do you know who Jesus is?'

How does being a follower of Jesus define you?

Reflect

I entered high school two years behind my big brother. He was smart, kind, popular, and a good athlete. I spent most of my freshman year known as "Sean's little sister" to upperclassmen. Some might've been bothered by that, but I was proud to hold the title and strived to uphold his good reputation.

Jesus walked into a synagogue in Capernaum and had a moment where he was recognized by a relationship, "I know who you are- the Holy One of God." It was an unclean spirit who first called out Jesus' divine and holy identity. His declaration, "the Holy one of God," spoke to what everyone else in the room was sensing but couldn't quite pinpoint; Jesus was different. Just how different? The unclean spirit knew right away; Jesus was God in the flesh and he'd arrived to carry out his father's business of destroying sin once and for all.

Jesus' disciples eventually believed it too. In John 6 Jesus delivers challenging news about sacrifice and eternity. After many followers chose to leave, Jesus looked at his remaining twelve disciples and asked, "Do you want to go away as well?" Peter's answer, like the unclean spirit's declaration, confessed that they'd come to believe and recognize Jesus' true identity as well- God's perfect, righteous, sinless, and holy Son (c.f. John 6:68-69).

Throughout the Old Testament in places like Isaiah 5:19; and in Psalm 71:22 and 89:18 God is referred to as the Holy One and here in Mark we see Jesus identified with the title as well. It's an accurate connection made between Israel's one true God and Jesus of Nazareth. How will your connection as a follower of the Holy One define your actions today?

DAY 4 – Thursday
Daily devotional

Read

Mark 1:21-27, Mark 1:20, Ephesians 6:10-13

Ask

What did the disciples learn about who Jesus is in the synagogue that day?

What do Jesus' actions and reactions teach you about his authority over unseen, dark parts of our world? What does that mean for your life today?

Reflect

Imagine you're James or John and you recently dropped your fishing nets and bid your father Zebedee farewell to join this new crew heading out to fish for men. Do you think this is the beginning of a great military unit? Do you imagine achieving a high rank of honor in a new kingdom? The disciples' motives are hard to ascertain, but what we do know is they followed Jesus' lead into Capernaum where he was about to astonish them all.

In our house we talk a lot about being people of substance over style. Today's culture often esteems exterior or visible performance over internal, unseen depth of character. Substance over style says that who we are and what we do supersedes how we look doing it. Jesus is our ultimate example of someone who lived a substance over style life. The Son of God had no need to posture himself to *appear* all-knowing even when he was simply Jesus of Nazareth to unknowing crowds. The King of Kings didn't need to entertain negotiations with an accuser in order to validate his worth. When the unclean spirit in verse 24 attempted to undermine Jesus' mission by questioning his approach to evil Jesus demonstrated his intentions with swift action. Had Jesus come to destroy evil? Absolutely! With seven recorded words in verse 25 Jesus showed his unwavering authority over the unseen, supernatural world. These unseen battles are still being waged in our world today, and Jesus' authority over them is as true now as it was in the synagogue that day. Where does the substance of our strength come from? Ephesians 6:10-13 spells it out for us, and like the disciples we can follow Jesus into any situation trusting his God-given, faithful authority over every aspect of our lives.

DAY 5 – Friday
Daily devotional

Read

Mark 1:25-27, Mark 4:39-41, Psalm 46:10

Ask

When was the last time you grew still before God?

What happens after Jesus commands silence or stillness in each story?

How did the people witnessing the events respond?

Reflect

When my oldest daughter was a baby I learned to appreciate silence. I appreciated it when she'd finally fall asleep after an evening of colicky cries. I feel the peace of silence when my three daughters are tucked in bed and the house grows quiet at the end of a long day.

Jesus used silence to reveal his power and authority over both the seen and the unseen world. In Mark 1:25 Jesus rebukes the unclean spirit by silencing him into defeat. It wasn't a recommended silence like when I ask my kids to be quiet when I'm on the phone. It was a command requiring immediate results. Jesus' sword-like words were swift and he stood before the crowd a victor. The people were astonished. Can you just see the gaping mouths and wide eyes of witnesses in the synagogue?

In Mark 4:35-41 we see Jesus revealing his power over the natural world using a similar command, but this time he used two words tightly associated with silence: peace and stillness. Where the unclean spirit was silenced into defeat, the stormy sea and waves in Mark 4 were commanded into a calm stillness. Can you imagine the sound of the wind and waves battering the boat? The silence following Jesus' command must have been deafening.

In Psalm 46:10 we see God command stillness in our lives in order for us to recognize his holiness. Sometimes it's our environments that need silencing and other times it's the thoughts in our own heads needing to grow still before God. Exodus 14:14 says, "The Lord will fight for you, and you have only to be silent." God uses stillness and silence to reveal his holiness and authority. When was the last time you grew still before God?

DAY 6 – Saturday
Daily devotional

Read

Mark 1:28, Mark 1:36-39, Mark 1:45

Ask

What was the last piece of good news you received?

Do you remember the first time you heard about Jesus?

When did his free gift of salvation become irresistible to you?

Reflect

YouTube, Facebook, Instagram, Twitter—fame can spread overnight with the click of a button. Going viral means you've got the attention of a lot of people quickly. After this day in Capernaum, Jesus went viral. Seemingly overnight his name was on everyone's lips in areas surrounding Capernaum known as Galilee. Why? People love to tell and hear a good story and this story was great: a Sabbath day turned exciting when Jesus of Nazareth walked into a Capernaum with his seafaring band of followers and mic dropped on the crowds in a synagogue with God-like authoritative teachings, and as if that wasn't enough he verbally drop-kicked an unclean spirit out the door. Now that's a story worth spreading!

Later in Mark 1:36-39 when Simon told Jesus, "Everyone is looking for you" he meant it. Word was out that Jesus was a healer and people wanted to see what the commotion was all about, and who knows- maybe Jesus could fix their pain too? Wherever Jesus went he brought what no one else in the history of the world could- complete and perfect healing. Jesus started in Capernaum and "he went throughout all Galilee, preaching in their synagogues and casting out demons." Down in verse 45 we see Jesus' fame had outgrown the towns, and people were coming to him from every corner of the region.

Today's cyber-fame and viral superstars will eventually be small mentions in history. Jesus' fame and viral status has been continuing on for over 2,000 years now. His continued popularity can be attributed to two main factors: Jesus is exactly who he says he is and he does exactly what he says he can do. Jesus and his free gift of salvation are irresistible to the believing heart.

DAY 7 – Sunday
Daily devotional

Read

Mark 1: 21-28

Ask

Who do you say Jesus is after this week's study?

How does this impact your everyday life this week?

Reflect

If you know anything about Instagram then you know how important the photos are in each profile. Unlike Twitter, Instagram is a visually based media and relies on people sharing meaningful photographs with their followers in order to share snippets of their lives with others. Then followers can choose to double tap and "like" or click to "comment" on the posted picture.

Since this series is titled "Instagram Jesus" I thought it might be fun and helpful to step back into our verses and look at what we've learned this week to see what "likes" or "comments" we have surrounding Jesus' time in the synagogue in Capernaum. In the following "snapshots" what do you like about what Jesus is doing or saying? What comments or thoughts do you have in regards to this story and the past week's study?

For starters:

- How did you feel when Jesus and his small group of disciples first showed up in Capernaum?
 - Did you see the faces on the crowd in the synagogue when Jesus taught like he not only knows God, but that he *is* God?
 - What comments were people making who witnessed the unclean spirit leave that man? Where did Jesus and his disciples go when they left the synagogue?
 - Who do you say Jesus is after this working through week's study?
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