

Get Angry More; Invest In People Less

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[0 : 00] Amen. If you have a Bible, I invite you to flip it open or turn it on on your phones or tablets and find your way to the gospel of Mark chapter 1.

This is our last sermon in Mark chapter 1. It only took us seven weeks. I love this kind of preaching, though, that forces us to slow down because I don't know about you, but sometimes when you've been encouraged to read the Bible and you get on a Bible reading app, it can seem like to just fly by to the point where you get discouraged and you just kind of quit because there's so much happening and you have so many questions and why even bother?

And so I appreciate this kind of verse by verse, word by word, paragraph by paragraph going through Scripture because it forces us to slow down. It forces us to kind of chew on it and to get answers to questions that we might have.

So Mark chapter 1, to give you a little bit of context, Jesus had snuck away early in the morning, got some alone time.

The disciples said, everybody is looking for you. And Jesus, like we talked about last week, is able to be self-differentiated enough. He's able to know the difference between himself and others, their emotional responses and his emotional responses, so that he can do what he feels like his father is calling him to do.

[1 : 22] So Jesus says, and this is a couple of verses before our part tonight, let's go somewhere else to nearby villages. That's why I came. So Jesus is traveling throughout Galilee and he's preaching in their synagogues and he's driving out demons.

So our verse for tonight, verse 40. A man with leprosy, I'm going to stop right there. Leprosy is a modern day skin condition. In the Bible, lots of things were called leprosy or translated into the English word leprosy, but it referred to a variety of skin conditions, all right?

A man with a skin condition came to him and begged Jesus on his knees, if you are willing, you can make me clean.

Who has their Bible open right now? Who has their Bible open? Okay, okay. Next verse, verse 41. Jesus was, what's the next word in your Bible? Indignant.

Anybody have something other than indignant? Moved. Yep. Anybody else? Some translations might say filled with compassion. So we've got indignant, moved, possibly filled with compassion.

[2 : 33] We'll get to this, okay? Jesus reaches out his hand and touched the man. Jesus says, I am willing. Be clean. And immediately, Mark's favorite word, the leprosy left him and he was cleansed.

Jesus sent him away at once with a strong warning. See that you don't tell this to anyone, but go, show yourself to the priest, and offer the sacrifices that Moses commanded for your cleansing as a testimony to them.

Instead, the man went out and began to talk freely, spreading the news. And as a result, Jesus could no longer enter a town open but stayed outside in lonely places.

Yet the people still came to him from everywhere. This is the word of the Lord. Tonight's sermon comes to you kind of like the Star Wars trilogy in three parts of varying quality.

All right? Part number one, let's do a little bit of seminary. So, like we said in verse 41, you might have different words in your scriptures. Some might say indignant.

[3 : 39] Some might say moved. Some might say filled with compassion. If you've got a decent modern Bible translation, it probably has a footnote, and it talks about manuscripts, okay?

So, some manuscripts say filled with compassion. Some manuscripts might say indignant. What is going on here? So, you have a Bible in your hands.

It is an English translation of Greek language. Now, how did we get the thing that we translate into English? Because it's not like, you know, hopefully you know enough.

Maybe you don't. Hopefully you know enough that the English Bible is not the version of the Bible. There's lots of English Bibles, just like there's Spanish Bibles and French Bibles and Mandarin Bibles.

And you should go to BibleGateway.com and look at the Hawaiian Pigeon Bible. It's beautiful. There's also an indigenous people's language Bible. There's lots of translations. But behind that translation, you have a Greek text in the New Testament, a Hebrew text in the Old Testament.

[4 : 39] We won't talk about the Old Testament tonight because that's even more confusing than what we're going to talk about now. So, you've got the Greek New Testament. Where does that come from? Well, we have currently today scholars in universities and libraries across the world have in their possession 5,800, give or take, Greek fragments or manuscripts of the New Testament.

So, a fragment would be just like a couple of verses, a couple of paragraphs, part of a book. Or a manuscript or a codex would be the entirety of the New Testament, 5,800 of them. And these are dug out from old libraries, from caves, from the back of people's like ancient homes, synagogues, temples, old churches, everything like that.

So, there are scholars who it's their job to gather all of these manuscripts and then start doing comparison. Now, this isn't just a Bible thing. This happens with any old document.

If you're trying to translate Homer, you've got a bunch of old documents. You try to compare them. If you're trying to translate like Roman Cicero kind of stuff, you're doing the same thing. You have to do the same thing with the Bible.

Now, as you gather these documents, you begin to notice differences. For instance, Mark chapter 1, verse 41, one Greek word says Jesus is indignant, which is connected to the Greek word orge.

[6 : 01] It has nothing to do with orgies. It has to do with wrath, anger, indignation. So, you've got one manuscript that says that. And you've got a different manuscript over here that says Jesus is moved or filled with compassion.

It's the Greek word splankthna, which is this really, really like kind of onomatopoeia sort of word about your guts, your splank, being moved. That was where the seat of emotion was for an ancient person.

So, okay, Jesus is indignant, one manuscript says. Jesus is moved, filled with compassion. What's going on here? Well, remember that in ancient times, there were no Xerox machines.

There were no movable type printing presses in Europe. They had to do all of this by hand. So, somebody in the 5th century has a copy of a document that was copied in the 4th century, has a copy of a document that was copied in the 3rd century, in the 2nd and the 1st, all the way back to the original autograph from Mark, Mark Self, who is actually writing this down.

So, you get scribes who are making these copies, and they don't have the same sort of legal requirements that you might have today if you were reporting on someone's testimony.

[7 : 16] You've got this manuscript in front of you, and you come across, Jesus was indignant. Well, that doesn't sound very Jesus-y. You might think to yourself as a scribe, maybe I need to fix this.

So, you change it to, Jesus was filled with compassion. Because that sounds like a more Jesus-y sort of thing, right? And so, what scholars have to do is they have to look at these 5,800 manuscripts, compare, contrast, see how old they are, see what school of scribes they came from, and they also have certain rules to decide what is probably closest to the original.

There are some rules like the shorter reading is typically preferred to the longer one. In other words, it's more likely that a scribe added things for clarification than removed them.

And another rule is that the harder reading is to be preferred or is more likely to be the original than the easier reading. Because it's more likely that a scribe, somebody copying the scriptures, is going to massage or fix the Bible to be more palatable, not make it harder to understand or less palatable.

Are you with me? Okay? Hopefully, I'm not sending anybody for a theological tailspin right now. A guy named F.F. Bruce, he was a manuscript scholar, Bible translator.

[8 : 39] And when you look at all of these documents and you start comparing them, 99% of them match up together. The amount of matching up that happens with these 5,800 Greek manuscripts is, I would say, miraculous.

An amazing amount of things that don't change over the course of centuries of hand copying. But there is this 1% to 2% that does get changed, words get added, dropped, all of that.

And so that's, you know, people get paid to figure this out. And they put together with something called a critical text. Critical meaning that it takes a scholarly, critical eye to decide, okay, which one is the more likely reading.

And then a good Bible translation will take the critical Greek or Hebrew text, make translation choices from it, and then put in the footnotes. We chose the critical translation with Jesus was indignant, but it is also possible that there's a manuscript that says, filled with compassion, this was the choice that we made.

Are you with me? All right, so there's your seminary lesson for tonight. It is most likely, most scholars think that Mark's original writing is that Jesus was indignant.

[9 : 57] No doubt, in my mind, that he probably also was filled with compassion. But what Mark, the point that Mark was trying to make is that Jesus was wrathful.

That's the Greek word behind it. Jesus is angry when this man with a skin condition comes and begs to be healed. Which gets us to point number two. Why is Jesus angry?

So let's take a look. A man with leprosy or skin condition comes to Jesus and falls on his knees and begs to Jesus, if you are willing, you can make me clean.

Now there's a lot going on behind the scenes here. If you have a skin condition, there's a whole list and book of regulations about what you can and can't do in community life with your people.

Because a skin condition was not only had to do with your external cleanliness, but this is going to come up again and again in the book of Mark, also has to do with your internal purity. Are you capable of being part of the community of faith?

[11 : 03] Well, your external skin condition tells me that there's something internally wrong with you, so please stay over there. So this man has probably gone to religious authorities before.

Because look at the question. If you are willing, this man's default assumption is that no one's been willing before. No one's been capable before.

This man assumes that Jesus might not be willing. I think this tells us a little bit about why Jesus is indignant.

Now this word, *orgei azami*, to be wrathful, to be filled with indignation, this word is used entirely three times in the book of Mark.

It's used again in Mark chapter 3, when someone with a withered hand, another external ailment that gets them kicked out of the community, kept on the margins, goes to Jesus.

[12 : 06] And all of the religious authorities in the synagogue are looking to Jesus to see what Jesus is going to do, because it's Sabbath, and someone is not allowed to heal or do like medical procedures on the Sabbath.

And Jesus gets wrathful, indignant, upset at the religious authorities who are looking at him and assuming that he will not heal, he must not heal because of these laws put in place.

It's also used again in Mark chapter 10, when Jesus gets wrathful, indignant, filled with anger, because there are children trying to come see Jesus, and the disciples send them away.

And Jesus gets indignant. I think that when Mark uses this word, when Jesus gets indignant, it is always a prelude to healing and inclusion.

God's wrath is this topic that we don't like to talk about a lot, because we often assume that God's wrath is like my wrath. I will confess that I am a little hoarse tonight, because I've spent too much of my weekend yelling at my children.

[13 : 19] It's Halloween weekend, they've had parties at school, they're, you know, hopped up with candy, they're very excited about trick-or-treating, and this, like, comes out in bouncing off the wall kind of energy, that me and my wife Emily are like, please just settle down.

But I don't say it as kindly as I just said it to you. It's, please! kind of shouting that makes my voice hoarse. And so I get wrathful. I then assume that my wrath, my anger that wants to throw my children in the room so I don't have to see them again, or the kind of wrath or anger that I told you about last week with the whole driving and yelling at people thing, I assume that my wrath is like God's wrath.

My wrath is about getting my way, about my annoyances being taken care of, about removing the people from my life who make me upset. But God's wrath tends to be the emotion that God has before God acts in healing, in making the world renewed.

You see this in the book of Revelation as well, where there are these bowls of wrath that get poured out on creation. And these bowls of wrath are the things that count down to the new heavens and the new earth.

We see this in the life of Jesus. Jesus could get angry. And then what Jesus does with his anger is he makes people better.

[14 : 40] I am willing, touches the man, and immediately the man cleansed. If you've hung out in Christian or religious circles much at all, you may have been told to stuff down your anger, to set your anger aside, but that's not what scripture tells us to do.

It says, in your anger, do not sin. Anger is often a trigger for us to sin, to hurt, or to harm others. But Jesus shows us a model where wrath, indignation, this annoyance at how people have been left out, excluded, hurt, and harmed, wrath can be the impetus or the fuel for healing and changing the world for the better.

And so I think, probably the work that I need to do within myself, the work I might invite you into, is not to stuff the anger down, or to set it aside, or to ignore it, but to learn the ways in which our anger can be a method for peace.

Our wrath can be a method for making sure that injustices are taken care of and removed from the world. There are lots of things that we ought to be angry at.

Amen? If you look at the world at all, and you see the amount of harm and hurt and heartache within it, if you're not getting angry, you're probably not paying attention.

[16 : 05] And so, I believe that God calls us to use this emotion that Jesus shows us what to do with, to use it to heal the world. Now, don't just assume that when you act in anger, you're acting like Jesus.

This takes some self-reflection, right? But, I invite you to learn how to pay attention to that anger, and how that anger points us towards the idea that there is something not right.

How can God use me to bring renewal? So, we've done our seminary lesson. We've talked about anger. Our third and final point is to invite you to not invest in people.

Now, what do I mean? So, Jesus heals the man and sends him away at once with a strong or stern warning. See that you don't tell this to anyone, but go show yourself to the priest and offer the sacrifices that Moses commanded.

We have had the question come up before when Jesus was silencing demons. Why is Jesus keeping people quiet about Jesus' acts in the world?

[17 : 15] Acts of healing, acts of removing demons, acts of preaching, and about Jesus' very identity? And we get the answer in this passage. This man ignores Jesus' command, tells everybody that he can, and as a result, Jesus could no longer enter a town openly, but had to stay outside in the wilderness, in lonely places.

Because Jesus' fame is growing, it limits Jesus' ability to move freely. Talk to any celebrity, and they will tell you a similar thing.

Celebrity, sure, sounds great, but then it has its downsides. Go watch a free Britney documentary. Okay? Jesus is dealing with a similar problem.

The more people find out about his acts of healing, his acts of exorcism, about his preaching, about the good news of the gospel, or that he is the Messiah, the one to come to bring about the kingdom of God, then Jesus is able to do less than he would have wanted.

Now, Jesus heals this person, gives them an instruction, and the man disobeys. He ignores the instruction, and this makes Jesus' life harder.

[18 : 29] And again, if you've been in the church or Christian circles, or even in corporate life at all, you'll often hear about people investing in others. Pastors will talk about it in terms of like mentoring or mentees.

My wife and I, we have been discipling people in our home for a dozen years now, and I've used this language about investing in people, investing in you.

I want to do life with you, all those kinds of cliches. Investment language is really interesting language to use because it comes from the world of capitalism.

It comes from the world of the stock market. It comes from the world of, I will take this resource, invest it, with the hope that I get something back in return. Now maybe we don't mean that when I say I'm going to invest in you, but there can be this sense of disappointment if I don't get back something in return.

Emily and I, we have done lots of small groups, discipleship groups, mentors, mentees, all of that. And there have been a fair many of relationships that have ended in heartache because someone basically turned away.

[19 : 43] They turned away from the faith entirely or they messed up their life in some tragic way. And Emily and I, I'll speak for myself and not my wife, I have felt this sense of like betrayal.

We gave you all this time. We gave you all this resources. We gave you all these things and you went and you squandered it. But the thing you notice about Jesus is that Jesus keeps making the same mistake over and over again in the book of Mark.

He'll heal someone and say, don't go tell anybody and then that person runs off and tells everybody. And Jesus doesn't have like a strategy meeting with the 12 disciples and say like, okay, how are we going to stop people from telling others about me?

Should I stop just like healing? Should I just keep it to you 12 and nobody else? No, Jesus continues to heal and to not have any strings attached to that healing.

Jesus continues to invite and to ask people to not tell and they keep doing it anyway and Jesus keeps on doing it. Jesus isn't investing in anybody because Jesus doesn't expect anything in return.

[20 : 55] And I think that perhaps we ought to take stock of our own relationships, our friendships, our families, those that we've been put in charge in at work. As a pastor, preaching to myself here, those who I invest in and who are part of our directors or our staff or our elders or our trustees, am I doing it because I expect to get something in return?

I hope to make a connection that will help me in the future that I can call in a favor? Or am I following the way of Jesus and not investing with some hope of promise return, an ROI, but rather giving of my own resources and my own life freely, trusting that you will do what you will and that God will make something beautiful out of it regardless.

of us.