

The Gospel of Mark

Faith and Fear
Chapter 5



Chapter 5

Off to the Gentiles 5:1-20

While beginning his ministry among the Jews Jesus takes an unusual step, one that is definitely not in the Jewish idea of Messiahship. He goes to the Gentiles.

The real importance of this whole development, in the ministry of Jesus and in Mark's account of it, is that it probably is a deliberate step into Gentile territory.¹

The idea of the Messiah being of importance to other nations is way outside the normal Jewish view of what the Messiah came to do. He came to rescue Israel from her enemies, those cursed Gentiles.

However the original covenant with Abraham made it clear that the promise of the Messiah was to benefit the whole world, all the nations.

The Power in a Name 5:7-10

The demons know Jesus name and think to have control over him by using it. Jesus is unaffected. He then uses their name to control them. Not only does he control their going but he controls where they go to.

Verse 20 sets the connection for the scene we will see in Chapter 6.

A Markean Sandwich 5:21- 43

One of the techniques that the gospel writers use is to place a story within a story. This is the case here. The story of Jairus daughter and the calming of the sea, are the bookends for the story of the healing of the woman. Both the sea and Jairus occur with Jews, the disciples fear and Jairus has faith.

Another surprise awaits Jesus when He crosses back over the sea to the Galilean side. Jairus, ruler of the synagogue, comes out to meet

¹ Donald English, *The Message of Mark : The Mystery of Faith*, The Bible speaks today (Leicester, England; Downers Grove, Ill., U.S.A.: Inter-Varsity Press, 1992), 109.

Him with the surprising act of falling at His feet. How un-Jewish is this. It is almost worship!!

The request to lay on hands introduces a practice familiar in Mark's gospel (6:5; 7:32; 8:23, 25). It occurs in the contemporary Jewish contexts of blessings and sacrifices and authorization, but not for healing. The word translated *be healed* in verse 23 (*sozo*) could also mean 'be saved'. See Exodus 29:10, 15, 19

The interwoven stories of Jairus' daughter and the woman with the blood disease end with a testimony of peace and awe. As proof of her return to a full and normal life, Jesus asks that the little girl be given something to eat. For the woman made whole, He sends her away with a benediction of peace, forever cured of her illness. Peace is the common element they share, along with the victims of the storm and demon-possession.

Homework:

Consider the two stories of feeding that occur in chapters 6 and 8. What similarities and differences do you see?

Why might Mark have included these stories when considering Mark's original audience?