

Jesus' Sabbath Ministry, part 2

Every individual born on this planet has been uniquely designed because God is infinite, loving, and a master of variety. We see this every day of our life as we look at the world around us. For example, some people are short and others are taller. Some have dark hair and others have lighter hair. Some men are bald and others have a lot of hair even in their senior years. There are women who are great communicators and others who are quiet. There are people who are more interested in getting tasks accomplished and others who are more people-focused. That is, some of us are task oriented and some are people oriented. Those who are task oriented are more likely to ignore people in order to get a task completed. Those who are people oriented may not care if the task is completed at all. We see this every day. What type of person are you? Do you care more for people or more about getting the task done? What was Jesus like? Did He care more for people or more about tasks? This study will explore this question as we take a peek at Jesus' heart and life.

BACKGROUND. Two studies ago, Jesus had told Peter, Andrew, James, and John that if they would follow Him, He would make them fishers for the souls of men and women. We watched them respond and follow Him. Our last study started on the morning of a Jewish Sabbath day (Mark 1:21-28 and Luke 4:31-37). Peter, Andrew, James, and John continued following Jesus and went to the synagogue in Capernaum with Him. Most likely they thought that they had come to worship, but they did not realize what else was going to happen.

On that Sabbath morning, Jesus taught in the synagogue and at the conclusion of His message a demon-possessed man shouted, "Leave us alone . . . Holy One of God!" Jesus responded by rescuing the man from the demon. The people in the synagogue were astonished because they had never heard anyone speak with such great authority or display such tremendous power. Jesus not only was dynamic and spoke

with authority, but He was also in control of the demons. The people had seen the power of God displayed, but they did not realize it. Just like most people who attend a sensational church service, they talked about their Sabbath morning experience with others whom they met as they walked home. As a result, the news about Jesus' authority and power spread like a wild fire into all the surrounding district of Galilee.

PETER'S HOUSE. When we come to this study (Mark 1:29-39; Luke 4:38-44), we are going to see what occurred during the rest of the Sabbath day. Our first verse tells us the service at the synagogue is over. The people along with Jesus and the four disciples have left the synagogue.

And immediately after they came out of the synagogue, they came into the house of Simon and Andrew, with James and John. (NASB) Mark 1:29



Ancient Homes - Summer House (Israel), Mubrick House (Derbe), and the Ephesus House (Ephesus)

After having taught and experienced the encounter with the demon possessed man that morning, Jesus must have been very tired. Most preachers and Sunday School teachers need some rest or at least some time alone after Sunday morning in order to recover their energy, but Jesus did not get this opportunity. After leaving the synagogue, Jesus and the four disciples walked to Peter's home. We do not know what type of home Peter had, but it must have been large enough for a group of men and Peter's family.

Now Simon's mother-in-law was lying sick with a fever; and immediately they spoke to Jesus about her. (NASB) Mark 1:30

When Jesus arrived at Peter's home, He discovered that Peter's mother-in-law was very sick. Have you ever wondered if the disciples had wives and children, since nothing has been said about them in the gospels so far? The answer is found in this passage, because we are told here that Peter had a mother-in-law, and if he had a mother-in-law then he had a wife. 1 Corinthians 9:5 confirms that this was true. So the house was filled with at least seven adults and probably a group of children.

Next, we are told that Jesus was asked by all four disciples to help her, not just by Peter. I wonder if Jesus wanted a break for at least a few minutes? How could He refuse the requests of all four disciples? Or, did He willingly want to help her? How would you have responded? Was Jesus task or people oriented?

The gospel of Luke records the same event and adds an additional detail about the mother-in-law's health. Since Luke was a medical doctor, he uses precise medical terms on occasions. On this occasion he uses a Greek word that reveals she was suffering from a chronic, high fever. That is, she had had this fever for a long time. Peter's mother-in-law was very sick and in great need.

THE HEALING. What did Jesus do? He responded to her need and healed her. For the first time in our series through the Life and Heart of Jesus, Matthew, Mark, and Luke each provide a number of additional details that the others do not include. These authors either obtained their information from someone who was there or the Holy Spirit miracu-

lously provided it. Since God supernaturally wrote scripture through men and since He does not lie, we know that all of the accounts are accurate.

He touched her hand, and the fever left her; and she got up and waited on Him. (NASB) Matt. 8:15

And He came to her and raised her up, taking her by the hand, and the fever left her, and she waited on them. (NASB) Mark 1:31

And standing over her, He rebuked the fever, and it left her; and she immediately got up and waited on them. (NASB) Luke 4:39

If we take all of these accounts and put them together, this is what happened. Jesus walked over to her and stopped. He reached down, touched her hand, and held it. Then He rebuked the fever and it left her. Immediately, she got up and waited on them. Now that is a miracle healing, just like the demon-possessed man earlier in the synagogue. She was instantly healed. She did not need to claim her healing, wait for her healing, or exercise faith to be healed. Jesus touched her and she was healed. Who had great faith? Not that mother-in-law and not anyone else. Notice that nothing is stated in this passage about the mother-in-law needing faith nor was anything said about the man who was rescued from the demon needing faith. Faith was not an issue in either miracle. Jesus' power was not limited by her faith and He is not limited today by faith, either. Praise the Lord!

THINGS TO CONSIDER. What happened after that? What did they say to Jesus? Were they thankful? Did they eat a meal? What did they do? It is amazing that the gospels give us just bare facts. There is no embellishment. There is nothing fanciful in the accounts. None of the gospels add anything else. The gospel records move quickly from one significant event to another, leaving out vast quantities of details in Jesus' life. The gospels are recording only key historical events.

What did the disciples think about their Sabbath day? Jesus had called them to follow Him, and so they did. They were in the spiritual training camp of Jesus Christ that day. They were His disciples. He was their master teacher. What

did Jesus want them to learn from this experience? What do you think they learned from hearing and watching Jesus?

What did they talk about that afternoon? Did they ask Jesus about His morning message, or the demon-possessed man? What was the lesson Jesus wanted them to learn, or was it just an afternoon focused on people? What have you learned?

THE EVENING. Our next verse indicates that Jesus had spent the entire day with these four men. When evening came, people started coming to Peter's house.

When evening came, after the sun had set, they began bringing to Him all who were ill and those who were demon-possessed.

(NASB) Mark 1:32

Luke 4:40 says that people were coming while the sun was setting.

ground of Jesus' time. A hint at the solution is even found in some English dictionaries where we find multiple definitions for "sunset." So it should not be surprising that the Jews had multiple definitions for a sunset too!

In fact, the Jewish rabbis held to two different definitions for a sunset. The first Jewish definition says that sunset occurs when the orb of the sun completely disappears below the horizon and the sky is mostly dark. The second definition says that the sunset has occurred when the whole sky is totally dark (Talmud Shabbat 34b-35a and Talmud in Pesachim 94a). Therefore, it appears that Mark used the first definition and Luke used the second definition. That is, the people start coming when the orb of the sun was below the horizon and continued coming before the sky became completely dark.

HEALING MINISTRY. But why did the people wait until



While the sun was setting, all those who had any who were sick with various diseases brought them to Him; and laying His hands on each one of them, He was healing them. (NASB) Luke 4:40

Do Mark and Luke disagree? Were people coming when the evening came or were they coming while the sun was setting? At first, the two passages seem to be a contradiction. But, as usual, the problem is solved either by a careful review of the original language or by investigating the cultural back-

the sunset? They waited because the Jewish leaders taught that the Sabbath day ended when the sun has set. The Jews were not allowed to help anyone on the Sabbath until sunset, including those who were sick. However, the religious leaders allowed an exception for someone who was near death. Their man-made rules were more focused on laws than on loving people. The Jewish leaders were not people focused.

Since the evening had come, a great number of people were coming from the city to Peter's house.

And the whole city had gathered at the door. (NASB) Mark 1:33

The demon-possessed and those who were sick with various diseases were brought by friends. Some probably came on their own. We do not know the population of the city, but there could have been hundreds of sick and demon-possessed people at Peter's door, including the sightseers. The passage says that the entire city had gathered at Peter's home.

Jesus responded by healing each one.

And He healed many who were ill with various diseases, and cast out many demons; and He was not permitting the demons to speak, because they knew who He was. (NASB) Mark 1:34

Demons also were coming out of many, shouting, "You are the Son of God!" But rebuking them, He would not allow them to speak, because they knew Him to be the Christ. (NASB) Luke 4:41

The gospel of Luke uses an imperfect tense combined with an active tense in Luke 4:40 to tell us that sick people were coming to be healed. Recently, I asked some nurses what that means. What does it mean if a person has been sick and is continuing to be sick? The answer was, "They have a chronic illness." Did you know that Jesus was not performing fake healings? Jesus was not healing runny noses, or imaginary pains. No, He was healing people with real illnesses - real diseases. He

was healing people with chronic conditions. The people who came and the people who brought them knew that their conditions were real because the conditions had been present for a long time. Peter also knew that his mother-in-law's healing was real because she had a chronic condition, too! We should not be surprised that the disciples believed in Him, and we should not be surprised that the people were stunned with Jesus. We should not be surprised that Pontius Pilate wrote a report, which was archived in Rome, which stated that Jesus had performed miracles. The truth is, Jesus performed real healings - not fake ones. Jesus was not limited by any type

of illness. He healed them all. He healed them instantly and healed them completely.

PREDICTED. The healing ministry of Jesus was predicted by the prophet Isaiah (Isa. 53:4), and the gospel of Matthew reminds us of this.

This was to fulfill what was spoken through Isaiah the prophet: "HE HIMSELF TOOK OUR INFIRMITIES AND CARRIED AWAY OUR DISEASES." (NASB) Matt. 8:17



What Jesus had been doing and was doing should not have been a surprise to anyone. The testimony of the disciples, the response of the people to the healing of chronic diseases, the report of Pontius Pilate, and the prophecy in Isaiah 53 are all witnesses to the fact that Jesus' healing ministry was real.

DO NOT SPEAK. Jesus also rescued those who were demon-possessed. Both Mark and Luke tell us that Jesus

Jesus' Ministry Fulfilled The Prophecy of Isaiah 53:2-5

Childhood-to-Adult	Is. 53:2 He grew up before him like a tender shoot, and like a root out of dry ground.
Not handsome	He had no beauty or majesty to attract us to him, nothing in his appearance that we should desire him.
Despised and ignored	Is. 53:3 He was despised and rejected by men, a man of sorrows, and familiar with suffering. Like one from whom men hide their faces he was despised, and we esteemed him not.
Healed & cared for us	<i>Is. 53:4 Surely he took up our sicknesses¹ and carried our pains²,</i>
Rejected & suffered	yet we considered him stricken by God, smitten by him, and afflicted.
Nailed to a cross and died for our sins	Is. 53:5 But he was pierced for our transgressions, he was crushed for our iniquities; the punishment that brought us peace was upon him, and by his wounds we are healed.

¹ NIV says "infirmities"

² NIV says sorrows

would not allow the demons to reveal that he was God. Why did He do that? While we are not told, it appears that Jesus did not want the truth to come from demons. If Jesus had agreed that they were speaking the truth, then Jesus would have endorsed them as a source of truth. One of the early church fathers summarizes the issue very nicely with this comment,

[Jesus] has taught us never to believe the demons, even when they say what is ostensibly true. For since they love falsehood, and are most hostile to us, they never speak the truth except to deceive. They make use of the truth as a kind of bait. (Euthymius. Fragments. Ancient Christian Commentary. IVP. 1998. Vol. II, p. 22).

It appears that if Jesus had confirmed their statements as true, others would have sought out the demons as a source of truth. Jesus would not have wanted that to occur.

EARLY MORNING. We are not told when Jesus went to

sleep that night. It was probably a late evening given all of the people who came, but we are told that He awoke early in the morning, found a secluded place, and prayed.

In the early morning, while it was still dark, Jesus got up, left the house, and went away to a secluded place, and was praying there. (NASB) Mark 1:35

Jesus had finally escaped everyone and had some peace. He had time to talk with God the Father, but eventually even this wonderful experience came to an end, when Peter and the other three disciples came looking for Him. When they found Him they said, "Everyone is looking for you!"

Simon and his companions searched for Him; they found Him, and said to Him, "Everyone is looking for You." (NASB) Mark 1:36-37

How did Jesus respond? How would a task-oriented person respond? Or, how about a people oriented person? How would you react after a busy Sabbath day and now having your prayer time interrupted? How did Jesus respond? The answer is found in the next verse.

He said to them, “Let us go somewhere else to the towns nearby, so that I may preach there also; for that is what I came for.”

(NASB) Mark 1:38

As a result, Jesus and the four men left Capernaum and went throughout all of Galilee.

And He went into their synagogues throughout all Galilee, preaching and casting out the demons. (NASB) Mark 1:39

way, but not Jesus. Are you surprised?

Most of us are out of balance when it comes to being task focused or people focused. We are either too task focused or too people focused. I know some people who are so people focused that they are unwilling to deal with a person’s sin because they believe that everything is about relationships. If that is true, then why did Jesus leave the people who were clinging to Him in Capernaum?

Jesus’ reason for leaving them was that He had been sent for another purpose. He had to go to other cities throughout Galilee. He also had a task to accomplish that was also people focused.

Some of us are too task focused, and our goal in life is to accomplish great things for God. Some of us do not know how to stop and as my wife says, “Smell the roses!” We need to love people more. Jesus did this too! He taught and healed



Every task He performed was focused on people, and every person He loved motivated His tasks.

And Matthew adds,

Jesus was going throughout all Galilee, teaching in their synagogues and proclaiming the gospel of the kingdom, and healing every kind of disease and every kind of sickness among the people. The news about Him spread throughout all Syria; and they brought to Him all who were ill, those suffering with various diseases and pains, demoniacs, epileptics, paralytics; and He healed them. Large crowds followed Him from Galilee and the Decapolis and Jerusalem and Judea and from beyond the Jordan.

(NASB) Matt. 4:23-25

CONCLUSION. Are you surprised at Jesus’ answer and what He did? Luke tells us that after the four disciples found Jesus, the people also found Him and were holding on to Him. They did not want Him to leave. Most of us would have probably stayed and tried to minister to them in some

people. He went out of His way to meet the woman at the well in Samaria. Jesus was like a waterfall, only instead of water, His love cascaded or fell down upon the people.

Jesus was both task and people oriented in perfect balance. Every task He performed was focused on people, and every person He loved motivated His tasks. He came to reach all of us, even us today. He came to preach the kingdom of God (Luke 4:43), that is, to give us the good news about Himself, and He came to die for our sins (John 12:27). Each of those tasks was “people focused” and each “task” was motivated by His love for us.

Please stop and ask God to help you love those around you. May every task you perform be focused on people, and may every person you love motivate what you do.

By this all men will know that you are My disciples, if you have love for one another. (NASB) John 13:35

Jesus replied: “Love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind.” (NASB) Matt. 22:37