

Jesus, I Know Who You Are!



Mark 2:6-12

If you have your bibles, let's open to Mark's gospel. Last Sunday afternoon, I had the privilege of going with Katie and Kory to take the grandboys to see the new Lego movie, Lego 2. I did not get to see Lego 1, so I had no idea what I was in for. I thought I was going to a movie that was just basically going to be about Legos. I know about Legos because I've bought tons and tons of Legos for Crider, Finn, and Garnett, so I thought this was going to be a movie about Legos. Now, if you haven't seen the Lego movie, I strongly recommend every parent and grandparent go see that movie, Lego 2. That movie is absolutely amazing. That movie was so amazing that Crider told Memish that Papaw amen'ed in the movie. Just a preview...I hadn't seen Lego 1, but I trust my kid's judgment. I knew this was going to be a kid movie about Legos. I knew they were going to talk, I knew there was going to be a plot, and when that movie opened up, it was so dark that as a papaw I'm sitting there thinking...*how can my son or my daughter let my kids see this movie*, but I trusted them because they had seen Lego 1. All of a sudden, the creators of that movie began to drop little things, they were quick, but they let me know there was something else going on besides what I was seeing, but I couldn't figure out what it was. I watched my boys enjoy this movie. I enjoyed this movie, and then they

showed you at the end what the movie was really about. It wasn't about what you thought you were seeing at all in the movie. When I saw the end of the movie, I couldn't help it, just like I was in church, I said, "Amen!" loudly! I turned over to my oldest grandson, who was sitting two chairs down, and I said, "Did you get that?" I turned to my youngest, who was sitting beside me, and I said, "G, did you get what this movie was about?" The Lego 2 movie was so good that I have a date with my wife this week, without grandkids, hopefully, to see that movie. I don't even need an excuse of children with me to see that movie. It is absolutely amazing. I left knowing this...I left knowing there was a group of people there called children who saw the surface meaning of that movie, and they enjoyed it tremendously. But I knew there was another group that saw that movie and they saw the surface story, but they knew beneath it was the real story. That real story is so good that I want to go see it again on the big screen. I pray that when the message is over this morning and we see the surface story Mark is telling, each one of us sees the underlying story behind the surface story.

Celisa and I have a routine every Sunday morning. She asks me at some point, "How's the sermon?" I say, "I don't know." Then I give her a preview of the sermon. When I said I don't know this morning, she said, "What's wrong?" I said, "It's the gospels." She said, "What do you mean it's the gospels?" I said, "Honey, in my opinion, the prophets and Paul and the book of Revelation is easy compared to the gospels." The reason most of us don't hear many stories on the gospel, or when we do hear the gospels, we only hear the surface story of the gospel is because most of us don't ever get the gospels, but once you get it, it absolutely blows you away. You'll just want to keep coming back more and more and more. I pray when this message is over that some of you will go back in Mark chapter 1, verse 1 and read up to where we are this morning in the story. This sermon stands alone without you hearing the first or second sermon that's already been preached in this sermon series. If you have your bibles let's stand and open to the second chapter but we're actually going to begin the message in the 21st verse of chapter 1. For time's sake, we're only going to read the last verses of our section. Our Scripture range is

chapter 1:21-2:12, but our Scripture text, our reading publicly will begin in chapter 2:6 of Mark's gospel.

Scripture

"Now some of the scribes were sitting there, questioning in their hearts, "Why does this man speak like that? He is blaspheming! Who can forgive sins but God alone?" And immediately Jesus, perceiving in his spirit that they thus questioned within themselves, said to them, "Why do you question these things in your hearts? Which is easier, to say to the paralytic, 'Your sins are forgiven,' or to say, 'Rise, take up your bed and walk'? But that you may know that the Son of Man has authority on earth to forgive sins"—he said to the paralytic— "I say to you, rise, pick up your bed, and go home." And he rose and immediately picked up his bed and went out before them all, so that they were all amazed and glorified God, saying, "We never saw anything like this!"

(Prayer)

Father, we bow before You right now, just asking for Your anointing. When we think from last week's sermon of how Jesus, when He began His ministry, was anointed with Your Spirit, yet He was the eternal Son of God who became flesh, how much more do we need Your anointing as a speaker this morning and as a congregation to hear the truth of Mark's gospel, the first gospel written, the gospel that literally set the structure for Matthew and Luke in their gospel writing. Father, don't let us see the surface story only; let us see what's going on and why Mark puts these quick, fast-paced events together the way he does. Yes, each one of them could stand on their own and each one be a sermon, but when you see them altogether, you really understand what's going on in this gospel presentation. We praise You and thank You. It's in the precious name of Your Son we pray, amen.

Previously, we have seen Jesus baptized by John the baptizer in the Jordan River. We saw the Spirit of the Lord descend upon Him. We heard God the Father pronounce this is My beloved Son in whom I'm well pleased. And then, we saw the Spirit immediately drive Jesus into the wilderness to be tempted for forty days by Satan in the midst of wild beasts to the point that the angels had to come and minister to Him. Fully recognizing who He is, the beloved Son of God, fully tested, fully anointed, fully identified as the Messiah, we see Him begin His ministry in Galilee. When He begins His ministry, He comes preaching the gospel of God, the good news of God. What is the good news of God? It is the Kingdom of God has come. God has invaded human history and it's now possible for God to rule and reign the hearts of His followers. So, each one of us is called to repent and to believe this message. Then we, recognizing Jesus as the King of the Kingdom, see Him begin to assemble His army, so to speak. It's kind of unusual what He does. He goes down to the Sea of Galilee, and He sees some guys fishing, and He calls them to follow Him and He will make them fishers of men. Whoa! We already realize that there's going to be something dynamic about this Kingdom, but there's something that's going to be radically different about this Kingdom. The participants in the Kingdom are actually going to be fishers of men. Then with His army, if I can say that, (Jesus, Simon, Andrew, James, and John) they go into Capernaum. Capernaum was a large city in the northern kingdom of Galilee. It was on the edge of the Sea of Galilee on the main trade route through the region, so it was a prosperous city. If you remember, the temple where the people worshipped God was in Jerusalem, but most of the cities that had ten males or more had to have a synagogue, according to the rabbis. Mark tells us it's the Sabbath, it's Saturday, and immediately, Jesus with His four Kingdom followers go into the synagogue.

I know you've heard that church today and our services are somewhat patterned after the synagogue services of the Jewish people. That's partly true, but it's not true. We're used to coming to Hardin Baptist Church and most people who are participants in a church will go to a church service this morning, and there will be a person, perhaps one of the pastors, who regularly proclaims the Word of God to the people. When you come to Hardin, you fully expect one of our pastors to normally be here. When you

went to the synagogue, there was the ruler of the synagogue, the minister of the synagogue, but they were the men who make sure everything was ready. When it came to the reading of the Word and the explaining of the Word of God, it was not done by ministers; it was done by the laity. So when the Word was read, one of the men would stand up and would expound the Word. So when Jesus went in the synagogue, it was not unusual for whenever the Word was read for Jesus to stand up and teach. He began to teach for the first time in the synagogue after beginning His ministry. All of a sudden, everybody in that synagogue who had heard the scribes teach all their lives realized there's something different about this teacher. Mark says they said He taught with authority, not like the scribes. There are two Greek words, authority, and power, which many times are used for kings and rulers. When the Bible uses the word, power, it is usually talking about might. When the Bible is talking about authority, it's talking about right. Let me say it this way. We see this in our country, we see this in our world, sometimes there are people who have the might to rule, but they don't have the right to rule. There are sometimes people who have the right to rule, but they don't have the might to rule. It really causes chaos in a land when the person who has the right to rule doesn't have the might to rule. For the first time in Israel, the people in the synagogue were hearing the King, who had both the might and the right to teach, teach and it blew them away. Remember, they're hearing the King of the Kingdom.

Immediately, Mark says. There's that word again...immediately a man appears, who has a demon and is oppressed by this demon. This demon immediately says, what have you to do with us? Did you come to destroy us? I know who you are; you are the Holy One of God. Immediately, Jesus raps him across the knuckles. King James and ESV, says Jesus rebuked the man. The word, rebuke, literally was a word that meant to take a piece of wood and rap, hit, someone across the knuckles. You young folks don't know what this would be like, but when I was young in school starting out, if you misbehaved in class, a teacher would not think a thing about calling you in front of the class. You would stand in front of the class, the teacher would open a drawer, pull out a ruler, you would turn your palm up, and she would pop you on the palm. She was a little bitty tiny one hundred and

ten pound lady popping a big old boy. The big old boy got rebuked. With his head down, he walked back to his seat. That's what Jesus does. He rebukes the demon. Then He muzzles the demon like a dog, and then He casts the demon out of the man.

I want to be clear here because being raised where we were raised, we've not seen anything like this probably ever happen. Therefore, there is a lot of people who read these stories kind of think they're myths. They kind of think they're exaggerated, that we're giving credit for the devil for something that was happening in that man, so we blame it on Satan. I want to tell you guys that with my own eyes, I have been in countries where I have seen people possessed by demons. I read this passage with the most reverence. I was a young man, barely twenty-two, when I went to Trinidad on my first mission trip. When it was just about over, we all gathered together for this big worship service dedicating a camp for kids. While the camp was being dedicated, all of a sudden, there was a lady who just began to disrupt the service. Unbeknownst to me, but everyone else in the community knew that lady was considered possessed by demons. She got so disruptive that two men politely went over to her to escort her out of the services, one got on one side of her and one on the other while she was still sitting in the chair. When they started to pick her up, I promise you, she threw both of those men about thirty feet in the air. I started to run. We American pastors didn't know what to do. All of a sudden, a Trinidadian pastor went over to that woman, put his hand on her forehead, and said, "In the name of Jesus Christ, I command you to stop." That lady went limp in her chair, and she never moved again. Several years later, Hardin Baptist Church started going to Barreirinha in Brazil. When we pulled up to the city, while the Walkers, who were leading the trip, were trying to get everything arranged, Shannon Imes said, "Hey Bro. Ricky, why don't we just gather some kids here in the park in front of the Catholic Church and have a Bible study with them?" So we pulled out our Vacation Bible School stuff and started teaching the kids while we waited. All of a sudden, the kids start leaving the Bible study. Shannon came up to me and said, "Bro. Ricky, see that boy coming?" There was a teenager, probably eighteen or nineteen, came up and she said the kids say he is possessed by a demon, and they aren't going to stay here. We hadn't been there an

hour. Then Shannon says this to me, "Bro. Ricky, why don't you pray for God to stop that demon from disrupting our Bible study?" I don't do that kind of stuff! I teach God's Word. I wanted to say if you want somebody to pray, why don't you pray? Everybody is looking at Bro. Ricky! The guy is getting closer, the kids are running, so do you know what I do? On their faith, not my faith, I gather about six of us together from Hardin, and we put our hands together and we pray. As that guy got about thirty feet from our group of kids and we prayed in the name of Jesus, he fell down in the street and never moved again until the Bible study was over! When it was over, he got up, walked away, and never bothered us again; we never saw him the rest of the week.

Are you hearing me? The King of the Kingdom is in the synagogue teaching the Word of God with authority for the first time, not like a scribe, and immediately the opposition shows up, the kingdom of Satan shows up, and Jesus casts the demon out of the man. When He cast him out, He tells them to be muzzled like a dog and not to say anything because He knows they know who He is. What do you expect those people to do, who have just seen a man be set free of a demon, who is proclaiming Jesus as the Holy One of God? You expect them to fall down and worship, right. No, they just marvel. They don't even ask who is this? They say what kind of teaching is this with authority? Instead of making it about the person of Jesus, they make it about a doctrine. Jesus slips out and everybody now realizes there is something special about Him, He cast out a demon. When He leaves the synagogue and goes for dinner, He goes into the house of Simon and Andrew, and Simon's mother-in-law is sick with a fever. Immediately, they take Jesus to her. I'm using my sanctified imagination, but I'm thinking Simon and Andrew invite Jesus over for dinner, and mother-in-law is going to cook. Can I just say this? My mother-in-law is sitting here this morning, and man, she can cook. When she cooks, everybody in my family tries to show up for the meal. It's good! Get this picture...mother-in-law is cooking and they get to the house after the services are over, it's Saturday dinner, which is like Sunday dinner, and she is sick. This means there's no dinner. Do you know what Jesus does? He just takes her by the hand, and her fever leaves. Immediately, she does what every mother-in-law does in that situation. She didn't worship Jesus;

she served Him. She went to do what she really wanted to do that she couldn't do because she was sick. She went and fixed a meal for him, and they sat down to this big dinner and they ate, probably took a nap, probably talked, and word is spreading throughout the whole city. But it's Saturday, and in that day and age on Saturday you could only walk so far a day, you can only go so far, so everybody had to wait until the sun went down. Because it was Saturday, the rabbi said you won't know when Saturday ends until three stars come out. When you look up in the sky and see three stars, then you know the Sabbath has ended and when the Sabbath ended, the whole city came to Jesus. The whole city! He shows up at Peter and Andrew's house. There were so many people there they couldn't get them all in the house, they were at the door. The whole city was outside the door! They brought their sick and the demon oppressed, and Jesus healed many of them.

The next thing Mark says is the next morning very early while it's still dark. Now, you expect a man to at least sleep in the next morning, but no, while it's dark He slips away to pray. While He's praying, Simon, Andrew, James, and John find Him and say, Lord, what are You doing praying? Everybody is looking for you! See, everybody wants to be healed by Jesus. Jesus says I didn't come to do this; I came to preach. I came to preach the good news of the Kingdom of God. Here's what Mark is wanting us to see. The Kingdom of God has invaded human history. The King is here and with the authority the King has, He actually sets free those who are oppressed by the enemy, Satan, and He sets free those who are oppressed by sickness, so everybody is coming to Jesus, but they're coming to Jesus for the wrong reason. They're coming to Jesus for what He can do for them; they're not coming to Jesus for who He is. I think it breaks God's heart when church after church now present Jesus only for what He can do for people, and they do not call people to Him for who He really is. Please tell me you see that.

So Jesus goes to preach, but everywhere He goes when He goes into the synagogue, He casts out demons and heals the sick. He's traveling all over Galilee, then a leper approaches. The leper says Lord, if You are willing, I can be clean. Hear this. This leper says, Lord, I recognize that if it's Your will and You are willing, I could be cleaned. You know about lepers. Mark

didn't have to say anything about lepers because he knew his congregation knew about lepers. Lepers had a form of sickness that was so contagious that once you got leprosy, you were put outside your family, the community, and the synagogue. You literally lived alone; you lived as an outcast. If you were a leper and you met somebody, you had to warn them that you were leprous by saying, "Unclean, unclean!" People would turn and walk away from you. They would walk around you as far as they could walk. Here is this man saying the only thing that separates me from being in and not out is Your will, and Jesus says I'm willing. He reaches down and touches the man, and immediately his leprosy is gone. Again, Jesus tells him now to go to the priests and do everything he tells you to do, and then Mark says Jesus says, sternly, do not tell anyone it was Me who healed you. You know what he did...he went and spoke freely about what happened to him. Can we be honest? Imagine you had a condition that caused you not to be with your children, not to be with your grandchildren, not to ever get to hold your great grandchild. You've not been in a synagogue service in years. You've been outside the city for years, and for the first time, you're whole and you're in again. Do you not agree that you would want everyone to know who set you free? So, let's not be too hard on him. Here is what Mark is trying to show. Mark is trying to show this isn't the reason Jesus came. By the time this man tells what he tells, Jesus can't even go into Galilean towns anymore for people flocking to Him. Even when He hangs out in the back woods, so to speak, they hunt Him down and find Him. We're talking about within a few days this Man's fame has spread throughout the northern part of Israel.

When we get to chapter 2, He starts home. I think some of us have had the thought that Jesus didn't have a home. According to chapter 2, Jesus returns again to Capernaum, and then He goes home to His house. As soon as He gets home, everyone finds out He is there and everyone comes to Jesus' house. Then Mark said there were so many people on the inside and so many on the outside, because it's not just the people of Capernaum now who are at the door, people from the whole region are at the door. There's not even room at the door. Catch this; there's no room on the inside, and no more room on the outside. Wow! You do know that when we have our big service at the end of the year, we have it down in the

bottoms because we know we can't get everybody in here. Can you imagine if this church was so known that even when we moved services outside, there wouldn't even be enough outside for people? Tell me you see this. Tell me you see how many people are here. Catch this. Four men have a friend who is a paralytic and Jesus is at home. They want Him to heal their friend, so they show up with their friend. They have packed him on his pallet all the way to Jesus' house. You get the idea that he's not just paralyzed, he hurts, he aches, he's in pain, and they bring him to Jesus' house. When they get there, there's not even room outside the door. Here's what they decide to do; you know the story. They go up on the roof. Rooves in the biblical world had beams of wood about three to four feet apart. They would take sticks and cover those beams, thatch, mud, and dirt, and mix it all together with some stone to form a layer about so thick. You didn't have a stairway up to your roof in the biblical world; you had a stairway on the outside. At the door in the opening where everybody is trying to get in, they go to the opposite side of the house, go up the stairway on top of the roof, and they can hear Jesus teaching. They are trying to figure out about where He is and when they figure it out, they start digging through the roof. Imagine Jesus teaching, looking up and the roof starts falling in. All of a sudden, there is this hole, about three or four foot by six, that's opened in the roof. This paralytic starts being lowered down by ropes. Jesus looks up and sees those four guys and He sees the faith they have that this crowd didn't cause them not to bring their friend to Jesus. So Jesus looks at the friends, and everybody is expecting Him to say, son, get up and walk; you're healed, but He just looks at him and says, your sins are forgiven. Not the sin of tearing up His ceiling...some of us would be mad. If somebody took a chainsaw, got up on the roof, and cut a hole to get their friend into our building, and when it rained all afternoon and got our carpet wet and our seats got ruined, we would want to sue the family. Jesus looks at him and doesn't say your sin of tearing up my roof is forgiven; He said your sins are forgiven. Now, remember in the introduction, I told you one of the devices of Mark is called Markan Sandwiches where Mark starts a story, interrupts it with a story, and then finishes a story. Here is the first sandwich in Mark's gospel. He starts telling us about this family, these friends who bring their friend to be healed, but

Jesus doesn't heal him physically; He deals with his real problem and that's sin and He forgives him of sin.

Mark pauses the story. We know how the story is going to end, by Jesus healing the boy, but Mark stops and tells us there were some scribes there. Catch this. By the end of Jesus' ministry, the scribes are going to be part of His enemies. But in the beginning of His ministry, there were some scribes who were in the synagogue that heard Jesus teach and He had authority they didn't have. So when Jesus comes back home, they are one of the first ones at His door. These scribes are not on the outside; they're inside the house. They're right around Jesus in that inner room. Homes weren't very big back then. Here is *the* teacher with the other teachers around Him. If you're a teacher, you understand this. If you're a teacher, you love to go sit under teachers who have more authority than you have because you just want to learn from the best. So here, these scribes are, they're sitting in the house of Jesus listening, and then Jesus says to this friend, you are forgiven of all your sin. Just to themselves, they thought, whoa, who does He think He is? He just blasphemed! Only God can forgive sin. The first part of this story is the bun, now is the meat. We've got a question about if Jesus can forgive sin. You can't forgive sin unless you're God. Only God can forgive sin. Up until this point, we know He is the identified Messiah, we know He's anointed of the Lord, we know He's the Son of God, and we know He's the King of the Kingdom. Now, we're getting ready to find out that the Son of God is God Himself. He says, so that you know the Son of Man has the authority on the earth to forgive sins, would it be easier for Me to say your sins are forgiven, or take up your bed and walk? Alright, we get it! Anybody can say hey, your sins are forgiven, but it would be kind of hard for me to say if I said to someone who is paralyzed, take up your bed, and walk. That would be a lot harder to say. What will people expect to happen if I say take up your bed and walk? If I'm really who I say I am, they will take up their bed and walk. Do you get this? Jesus is only working miracles in His ministry to prove who He is, the Son of God, God Himself, who has the ability not to heal people physically, but to heal people spiritually and deal with the greatest problem we have and that's a problem with sin. Jesus said to the paralytic, that's the toothpick in the sandwich that holds this story together; He first said

your sins are forgiven, now He says take up your bed and walk. The paralytic got up, took up his bed, and went home. This guy couldn't even get in the house there were so many people on the outside, and now, the people part like the Red Sea! This kid who couldn't walk now walks out of the house. Don't see him walking out of the house, physically; see him for how Mark is presenting this story. See this story for what it really teaches, and that's why the Kingdom of God is here, and that's why Jesus reigns over His Kingdom; He knows we have a problem that doesn't just cause us to be oppressed by a demon and do things that we don't want to do. It's not even about not being about to do what we're really supposed to do, and that's serve. It's not even about being in instead of out. All of those stories set us up for this story. Do you know what sin really does? It disables you from being able to come to God even on your own. You can't even bring yourself to Jesus, but once you come in the presence of Jesus and He forgives you, do you know what He says to you? Take up your bed and walk. Go home. When you come to Jesus in salvation, the guy who gets saved and goes home is not the same guy who came in the house. You go home completely healed of sin because the Kingdom of God has invaded your life, and now the King doesn't reign from Heaven; the King reigns from your heart and your lives. The Kingdom of Heaven has invaded the kingdom of darkness, and we who were dead are now alive! They said we've never seen anything like this. We're just starting this journey through Mark.

Let me pause here just for a moment because I want to ask you a couple of questions. Do you see what sin does? It causes you to be oppressed. It causes you not to be able to serve. It causes you to be an outsider, not an insider. But ultimately, sin disables you. You can't live the life you want to live. I just want to ask you a question. Do any of you that have been healed spiritually have friends who aren't? Are you like the friend in the story that no matter what the cost, you're going to make sure that friend comes into the very presence of the only one who can heal him, even if it means not letting whatever is happening cause you to be impatient and start doing something else, even to find a way to dig through the roof to get your friend in the presence of Jesus. I don't want to be negative here, but I don't think some of us are willing to pay the cost. Our life is so about

us, we're not going to be bothered by our friends who don't know Jesus. For some of us, we would have to change the way we live. We would have to quit doing some of the things we do because we're just not that concerned about getting our friends who don't know Jesus to Jesus. God chooses to use us in this redemptive story to bring others, not to a Bible study or to a church, but to Jesus. I hope someone sees what's behind the scenes in this story. It's not Jesus as a miracle worker who heals people of sickness, disease, or demon oppression. It's about a King who invaded the enemy territory to ultimately set us free from what really captivates us, and that's sin. Ultimately, we know for Him to have authority on earth to forgive sins, He has to go to a cross and die. Ultimately, Mark is going to call us who are going to be followers of Him, not just to be fishers of men, but to be men and women who take up our cross, deny ourselves, and follow Him. God did not call us to a life where we would be served, but He called us to a life where we would serve. He called us to a life where it's not about us, but it's about others.