

LANGUAGE NOTES & TEXTUAL CONNECTIONS

The Gospel of Mark: *Author, Date, & Recipients*

The apostle Peter passed on reports of the words and deeds of Jesus to his attendant, John Mark, who wrote this Gospel for the wider church as the record of Peter's apostolic testimony. The book was likely written from Rome during the mid- to late-50s A.D. Mark's audience, largely unfamiliar with Jewish customs, needed to become familiar with such customs in order to understand the coming of Jesus as the culmination of God's work with Israel and the entire world, so Mark explains them.

evening, at sunset:: after the end of the sabbath day.

lifted her up:: ἐγείρω pronounced /egeiró/ meaning to waken, to raise up, to arouse from the sleep of death, to recall the dead to life: [to resurrect in Mark 6:14, 16; 14:28 and 16:6]

"⁶ [The young man dressed in white said to the women], "Do not be alarmed; you are looking for Jesus of Nazareth, who was crucified. He has been raised [ἐγείρω]; he is not here. Look, there is the place they laid him." – Mark 16:6

to serve them. : at first glance this might look to be sexist, or traditionalist story. The woman is returned to health and does what she's supposed to: serve the men. But if we look closer, we see that this woman is the first deacon. She serves or ministers to Jesus and the others in response to her transformative encounter with Jesus.

διακονέω or diakoneō meaning to serve, minister (to wait at table), *caring for the needs of others as the Lord guides in an active, practical way.*

Such service is the heart of Jesus' gospel and life-style as he teaches in Mark 10:42-45/

Cured:: θεραπεύω pronounced therapeuó meaning to serve, cure, care for, attend, treat, especially of a physician; hence: to heal. It means properly, to heal, reversing a physical condition to restore a person having an illness (disease, infirmity). It is the root of "therapy" and "therapeutic," usually involves natural elements in the process of healing.

Mark 1:29-39

NEW REVISED STANDARD VERSION

²⁹ As soon as , [Jesus and the disciples] left the synagogue they entered the house of Simon and Andrew, with James and John. ³⁰ Now Simon's mother-in-law was in bed with a fever, and they told him about her at once. ³¹ He came and took her by the hand and **lifted her up**. Then the fever left her, and she began to serve them.

³² That evening, at sunset, they brought to him all who were sick or possessed by demons. ³³ And the whole city was gathered around the door. ³⁴ And he cured many who were sick with various diseases and cast out many demons, and he would not permit the demons to speak, because they knew him.

³⁵ In the morning, while it was still very dark, he got up and went out to a deserted place, and there he prayed. ³⁶ And Simon and his companions hunted for him. ³⁷ When they found him, they said to him, "Everyone is searching for you." ³⁸ He answered, "Let us go on to the neighboring towns, so that I may proclaim the message there also, for that is what I came out to do." ³⁹ And he went throughout all Galilee, proclaiming the message in their synagogues and casting out demons.

QUESTIONS FOR REFLECTION & EXAMEN:

- What engaged, enraged, or surprised you in the text?
- Jesus becomes widely known as a healer (therapist in Greek). How does he treat, care for; minister to the ill? Curiously to serve/minister and to cure/heal seem to be synonyms. How do we care for those who are ill or sick? How is it different, or similar?
- Peter's mother-in-law is healed and then gets right to work ministering to others. What does that say about what it means to be fully human (made in the image of God)?
- What invitation do you hear the Spirit of God speaking to you – or to us, as a church – to act, speak, be, or change, through this word of scripture?

³⁵ James and John, the sons of Zebedee, came forward to Jesus and said to him, “Teacher, we want you to do for us whatever we ask of you.” ³⁶ And he said to them, “What is it you want me to do for you?” ³⁷ And they said to him, “Appoint us to sit, one at your right hand and one at your left, in your glory.” ³⁸ But Jesus said to them, “You do not know what you are asking. Are you able to drink the cup that I drink or be baptized with the baptism that I am baptized with?” ³⁹ They replied, “We are able.” Then Jesus said to them, “The cup that I drink you will drink, and with the baptism with which I am baptized you will be baptized, ⁴⁰ but to sit at my right hand or at my left is not mine to appoint, but it is for those for whom it has been prepared.”

⁴¹ When the ten heard this, they began to be angry with James and John. ⁴² So Jesus called the disciples and said to them, “You know that among the gentiles those whom they recognize as their rulers lord it over them, and their great ones are tyrants over them. ⁴³ But it is not so among you; instead, whoever wishes to become great among you must be your servant [*diakonos*], ⁴⁴ and whoever wishes to be first among you must be slave [*diakonos*] of all. ⁴⁵ For the Son of Man came not to be served [*diakoneō*] but to serve [*diakoneō*] and to give his life a ransom for many.”

proclaiming the message | “What is this? A new teaching—with authority!” – curiously Mark doesn’t include the contents of his teaching. All that we know about the message he had been preaching before comes from Mark 1:14-15 “Jesus came to Galilee proclaiming the good news of God and saying, “The time is fulfilled, and the kingdom of God has come near; repent, and believe in the good news.” Notice that the exorcism and healing comes after his speaking.

he would not permit the demons to speak, because they knew him:: this is a consistent theme in Mark’s telling of the work and life of Jesus. Scholars refer to it as the Messianic Secret of Mark. We’ve already seen almost this exact phrasing in the healing of the demon-possessed man in Mark 1:21-26 <<²¹ They went to Capernaum, and when the Sabbath came, he entered the synagogue and taught. ²² They were astounded at his teaching, for he taught them as one having authority and not as the scribes. ²³ Just then there was in their synagogue a man with an unclean spirit, ²⁴ and he cried out, “What have you to do with us, Jesus of Nazareth? Have you come to destroy us? I know who you are, the Holy One of God.” ²⁵ But Jesus rebuked him, saying, “Be quiet and come out of him!” ²⁶ And the unclean spirit, convulsing him and crying with a loud voice, came out of him. >>

Why would Jesus want his identity to be kept secret, or not spoken aloud? We know that he’s not always so “private” or “confidential” about it, for he commends Peter who recognizes him as the Messiah (or Christ) in Mark 8:27-30. Curiously, according to Mark’s telling of the story, immediately Jesus then tells the disciples to not tell what they’ve just had confirmed. << ²⁷ Jesus went on with his disciples to the villages of Caesarea Philippi, and on the way he asked his disciples, “Who do people say that I am?” ²⁸ And they answered him, “John the Baptist; and others, Elijah; and still others, one of the prophets.” ²⁹ He asked them, “But who do you say that I am?” Peter answered him, “You are the Messiah.” ³⁰ And he sternly ordered them not to tell anyone about him. >>

Galilee: this is the region where Jesus spends most of his time. It’s used 12 times in the gospel of Mark. 5 of these uses are in chapter 1. It harkens back to the exhortation of the angel to the women searching for Jesus in Mark 16:6-8 “Do not be alarmed; you are looking for Jesus of Nazareth, who was crucified. He has been raised; he is not here... he is going ahead of you to *Galilee*; there you will see him, just as he told you.”