

Lake Cities Community Church
Pastor Craig Schill
November 23, 2008
Series: On Your Mark

Who is the Man Behind the Curtain?

Mark 1:29-45

It is hard to be thankful when you are *disappointed*. Do you know what I mean?

It is hard to be thankful when you are disappointed - *by a person or a thing*. In other words, if you are let down, have unmet expectations, or in some way are disappointed – thanksgiving will be very difficult – it will be elusive. It is hard to be thankful when you are disappointed. If, for Christmas, you are hoping for a Wii but you receive a package of socks – you may find it hard to be thankful for the footwear. If you order your favorite coffee from Starbucks and the new girl does not make it right - your disappointment will rob you of your thankfulness for the beverage. If you order for your family at the McDonalds drive through and discover (once you ½ way home) that the cheeseburger has onions, there are no straws or ketchup, and the Big Mac is missing – your thanksgiving is set aside –because it is hard to be thankful when you are disappointed.

There were once four travelers in great danger – but were told the Wizard was all mighty and powerful. He was the only one in the land who could help them. He promised, “Kill the wicked witch of the west, and I will grant you your requests.” So they went and killed her and returned expecting him to keep his promises. When they return, he does not keep his promise, and the dog Toto, pulls back to curtain to reveal a simple man. Dorothy says, “You’re very bad man.” The Wizard says: “I’m not a bad man – I’m a good man, but a very bad wizard.” Disappointment leads to anger and frustration.

The title of my sermon today is “Who is the Man Behind the Curtain?” When we pull the curtain back on Jesus Christ, what will we find? Will we be disappointed and angry – or in awe? What evidence do we have that (unlike the Wizard of Oz) Jesus will actually keep the promises He has made to us? We continue this morning in our study in the book of Mark in chapter 1 verses 29-45.

Miracles – in Three Movements:

This passage is full of miracles. In verses 29-31 Jesus heals Simon Peter’s mother-in-law – she was lying sick with a fever (v30). Jesus “**came to her and raised her up, taking her by the hand and the fever left her, and she waited on them.**” (31). A miracle. She was sick – and immediately through the touch of Jesus – she is healed.

The leads to an entire healing service after the Sabbath is over – “**(v32) After the sun had set, they began bringing to Him all who were ill and those were demon possessed. (v33) And the whole city had gathered at the door. (v34) 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.**” **Many miracles**, performed by Jesus for the people in the crowds. A mother’s child is healed. A husband is restored to his family. A woman returns to her right mind. Lives are completely changed by the miracles of Jesus.

And after a time, **Jesus got up, left the house, and went away to a secluded place, and was praying there. (1:35).** But the crowds have not left – they press for more, and the disciples **found him and said to Him, ‘Everyone is looking for you.’ (1:37).** That is a good thing, right? The ministry is really taking off - get back out there Jesus – and do your thing. But Jesus says, **(38) “Let us go somewhere else to town nearby, so that I may preach there**

also – for that is what I came for.” He leaves the crowds and their need to continue his preaching ministry.

Then, verse 40, a “leper came to Jesus...If you are willing, you can make me clean.” Jesus is moved with compassion on this individual and says, “I am willing” and the leper left him and was cleansed. (41-42)” And he tells the man “See that you say nothing to anyone; but go, show yourself to the priest But he went out and began to proclaim it freely and to spread the news around to such an extent that....” - Mark 1:44. “Jesus could no longer publicly enter a city, but stayed out in unpopulated areas; and they were coming to Him from everywhere.” - Mark 1:45

Our passage today introduces us to the miracles of Jesus. Simon’s mother in law - healed. The leper – cleansed. And many people in the crowds are healed. These miracles raise the question: “What is the purposes of the miraculous ministry of Jesus Christ?”

Purpose of Jesus’ Miracles?

I love Rick Warren, but I think he missed the mark when he said: “One of the impressive characteristics of Jesus’ ministry is that it attracted crowds. Large Crowds! A Christlike ministry still attracts crowds...you have to minister to people the way Jesus did.” - Rick Warren, *Purpose Drive Church*, p.207. I don’t agree with this statement, because one major reason for the large crowds was that Jesus performed miracles – a feat not easily duplicated today! Also, we see from our text that the purpose of the miracles is *not* to attract large crowds. In fact just the opposite – Did you noticed that Jesus tells the demon and the leper to keep it quiet. Why? Because the swelling crowds actually are a barrier to

the purpose of Jesus' ministry – which is to preach the good news – but because of the crowds, he can't even enter a town. Jesus is not seeking larger and larger crowds.

The miracles are not to attract a crowd, and second they are not to give us the expectation that we should have a miracle – *like them*. The phrase “Expect a miracle” is all over the Christian bookstores – posters and jewelry. But that is not the point of our text. Think about all those people who were left waiting in line who never got to see Jesus – they took home their sick child. Some may have even died along the way. They were expecting a miracle but didn't get one – and Jesus was in their town!! There is no theology that would allow us to say that because Jesus healed a person back then – therefore – Jesus should heal me now. Can Jesus heal? Yes – but that is not the purpose, of his miracles.

Miracles and the Identity of Jesus

Why did Jesus perform these miracles? He performed them to show the world the man behind the curtain. The man for whom we have a picture in HD from the prophet Isaiah: Is. 35:5 Then will the eyes of the blind be opened and the ears of the deaf unstopped. Is. 35:6 Then will the lame leap like a deer, and the mute tongue shout for joy. Why did Jesus perform miracles? To prove He is the Christ – the Son of God. The crowd knew the Messiah would perform miracles. John said: Many of the multitude believed in Him; and they were saying, “When the Christ shall come, He will not perform more signs than those which this man has, will He?”- John 7:31. This must be the right one because of the miracles. John the Baptist sent messengers to Jesus asking, “Are You the Expected One, or do we look for someone else?” And Jesus said to them, “Report to John what you have seen and heard: the blind receive sight

the lame walk, the lepers are cleansed and the deaf hear.” (Luke 7:22. Do you begin to see the purpose of the miracles of Jesus Christ?

R.C. Sproul said: “We often wonder what the significance of these miracles may be. The function of the miracle in terms of redemption is to demonstrate God’s authentication. The signs and wonders and miracles being performed by Christ are God’s stamp of approval to prove the person of Christ - That He was the One sent by God and enabled and empowered by God to do the things that He did. We say they are just acts of compassion – but they are far more important, the purpose is to magnify the glory of Christ and to show that the Father had sent him into the world. You can’t have the biblical Christ without the miraculous Christ.

In other words – the miracles of Jesus prove that He is God the Son – the Promised One – So (unlike the wizard of Oz) you can count on Him to keep His promises. Nicodemus was thinking just that when he found Jesus as night as said: [John 3:2](#) “Rabbi, we know that You have come from God as a teacher; for no one can do these signs that You do unless God is with him.” Peter was compelling people to trust in Jesus: [Acts 2:22](#) “Men of Israel, listen to these words: Jesus the Nazarene, a man attested to you by God with miracles and wonders and signs which God performed through Him in your midst, just as you yourselves know.

Conclusion / Application

Are you ready for the main point – the Big idea. Here it is – *You can always be thankful as a Christian, because Jesus is who He said He is – as authenticated by his miracles.* When we pull back the curtain on Jesus – we see that He is the Son of God! And trust in Him will never be disappointed. And therefore, even our earthly disappointments are folded into the sovereignty of His will and we find reason to rejoice in them and to give thanks.

Do you remember a few weeks ago, I said I was reading a book - The world's best loved poems? Here is a very appropriate ending to our sermon – a Poem entitled “Disappointment.” As you listen – I pray that in your thanksgiving this year you might discover that though it might be hard to be thankful in times of disappointment – it is not impossible – because of our confidence in Jesus Christ.

Disappointment (Anonymous)

Disappointment – His appointment
Change one letter, then I see
That the thwarting of my purpose
Is God's better choice for me.
His appointment must be blessing,
Though it may come in disguise,
For the end from the beginning
Open to His wisdom lies.

Disappointment – His appointment
No good things will He withhold,
From denials oft we gather
Treasures of His love untold.
Well He know each broken purpose
Leads to fuller deeper trust,
And the end of all His dealings
Proves our God is wise and just.

Disappointment – His appointment
Lord, I take it, then as such,
Like the clay in hands of potter
Yielding wholly to Thy touch,
All my life's plan is Thy molding,
Not one single choice be mine;
Let me answer, unrepining –
Father not my will but Thine.