

Unit 21

Jesus Among the People

Gospels

Memory Verses

“For God so loved the world, that he gave his only Son, that whoever believes in him should not perish but have eternal life. For God did not send his Son into the world to condemn the world, but in order that the world might be saved through him.”

—JOHN 3:16-17

Jesus Reveals His Power

SESSION IN A SENTENCE: Jesus taught with authority and performed miracles to reveal that He is the Son of God.

BACKGROUND PASSAGE: Mark 1:21–2:12

A display of power often exhibits not only authority but also identity. In the movie *The Incredibles*, a family of superheroes has been forced into hiding, living as civilians in the suburbs because of a change in the public's perception of superheroes. Bob Parr, the father of this family, must hide his powers so that his identity as Mr. Incredible will not be revealed.

Everybody knows who Mr. Incredible is by his powers of superhuman strength. On a number of occasions, Bob has lost control of himself and displayed his extraordinary strength in front of other civilians, resulting in multiple relocations of his family. But when he lifts a car up above his head with the ease of lifting a baby and slams someone through multiple walls as if they were made of paper, his secret identity becomes apparent to all around him once again.



What are some other stories of people hiding their power in order to hide their identity?

Group Time

Point 1: Jesus reveals His power (Mark 1:21-28).

²¹ And they went into Capernaum, and immediately on the Sabbath he entered the synagogue and was teaching. ²² And they were astonished at his teaching, for he taught them as one who had authority, and not as the scribes. ²³ And immediately there was in their synagogue a man with an unclean spirit. And he cried out, ²⁴ “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 silent, and come out of him!” ²⁶ And the unclean spirit, convulsing him and crying out with a loud voice, came out of him. ²⁷ And they were all amazed, so that they questioned among themselves, saying, “What is this? A new teaching with authority! He commands even the unclean spirits, and they obey him.” ²⁸ And at once his fame spread everywhere throughout all the surrounding region of Galilee.

Jesus effortlessly revealed His authority through His teaching. He did not need to convince anyone of His authority with eloquent speeches because His words spoke for themselves. Jesus was able to teach in such a manner because His words came entirely from His own authority. Jesus’ speaking with such authority revealed who He is—the Son of God—though the people did not recognize it at the time.



What makes someone recognizable and believable as an authority on a subject?

Jesus also revealed His power through His miracles, such as casting a demon out of a man. His power supersedes that of demons and every other creature. The typical technique for exorcisms in Jesus’ day was to urge the demon out of someone by referring to the power of one or multiple gods while using magical words and rituals.¹ Jesus, however, commanded the demon out of the man without reference to anyone else’s power because He is the Son of God, the Holy One of God, the One with all power.

Jesus’ Deity: The New Testament points to the deity of Christ by showing how He possesses attributes that _____ alone possesses, how He performs _____ that only God performs, and how He Himself claims to be the _____ of God.

Point 2: Jesus proclaims His purpose (Mark 1:35-38).

³⁵ And rising very early in the morning, while it was still dark, he departed and went out to a desolate place, and there he prayed. ³⁶ And Simon and those who were with him searched for him, ³⁷ and they found him and said to him, “Everyone is looking for you.” ³⁸ And he said to them, “Let us go on to the next towns, that I may preach there also, for that is why I came out.”

Jesus knew the purpose of His ministry, but the people around Him often misunderstood it. Both the people of Capernaum and Jesus’ own disciples got caught up in Jesus’ rising fame and miraculous healings and were unable to see Jesus’ purpose behind it all (Mark 1:21-34). But before we judge the disciples for missing the point, let us pause to consider our own lives. How often does our purpose of sharing Christ’s love through the gospel get lost in our longings and distractions?



What are some things that may distract us from our purpose in life?

Jesus did not leave the world wondering what His purpose on earth was. He declared with clarity why He came—so we might know and follow Him. Therefore, He gathered His disciples to move on—out of Capernaum, away from the fame and the crowds that sought after only His miracles—in order that He might preach elsewhere. The Son of God came to preach the gospel to the world.

Voices from the Church

“Jesus must be our model as we seek to balance the needs and aspirations of the people with the purposeful perspective of our broader mission.”²

—Dexter Maben

Point 3: Jesus displays His compassion (Mark 1:39-42).

³⁹ And he went throughout all Galilee, preaching in their synagogues and casting out demons. ⁴⁰ And a leper came to him, imploring him, and kneeling said to him, “If you will, you can make me clean.” ⁴¹ Moved with pity, he stretched out his hand and touched him and said to him, “I will; be clean.” ⁴² And immediately the leprosy left him, and he was made clean.

Jesus, being fully divine and fully human, experienced the full range of human emotions as the incarnate Son of God in His ministry here on earth; so His heart was moved by the suffering of our world. His heart of love for the Father and people moved Him to action. Jesus carried the concerns of His Father and experienced them completely as a human. Jesus hates evil and the ways it causes destruction in the world, so He reached out and healed the leper who had come to Him in faith—a perfectly just and compassionate response.



What are some situations in your community that should move you to act with the compassion of Christ?

When Jesus healed the man of leprosy, He embodied a drastic kind of compassion. He entered directly into the man’s uncleanness to display His care. Touching this sick man likely would have been revolting, unsettling, and made any person ceremonially unclean. But Jesus, being the fulfillment of the law and the source of all holiness (Matt. 5:17), valued compassionate action over the perceptions of people. He was unafraid and unashamed to enter into this man’s uncleanness to bring him out of it.



What kinds of fears or prejudices might hinder us from being moved with the same compassionate action as that of Christ?

In the same way that Jesus’ compassionate heart for the man with leprosy caused Him to move toward, not away from, the leper, so too Jesus’ compassion causes Him to move toward us even in our sinfulness. It is God’s nature to be merciful, and being fully God, Jesus extends merciful compassion to those in need. Jesus did not leave us alone in our diseased condition of sin; instead, He entered straight into it to heal us of it by the gospel—by His death on the cross and resurrection from the dead for us.

Daily Study

Day 1: Read Mark 1:21-28

Consider how people respond to authority figures in their lives. Sure, sometimes we hold them in high esteem, but there are plenty of times when people resent and reject authority figures as well. We have a built-in tendency to struggle with authority because it comes from outside of us and commands us to obey the will of another.


But the Jews in Capernaum marveled at the authority inherent in Jesus' teaching and miracles. He was so unlike anything they had ever encountered. He presented Himself as the reason to be heard, believed, and obeyed. With a mere statement, He commanded a demon and it obeyed Him. So the question comes to us: "When you read God's Word and observe the authority of Jesus throughout its pages, do you resist and reject Him or do you marvel, believe, and obey Him?"

 How have you marveled at the Scriptures' testimony regarding Jesus, the Son of God?

Day 2: Read Mark 1:29-34

The miracle stories in the Bible are fascinating as they reveal the power of God to override the natural order of things for His glory. Most often these miracles also work for the benefit and blessing of God's people. On this night in Capernaum, the Lord Jesus healed numerous people, all those who were sick and demon-possessed in the town. But He began with a more personal encounter as He healed Peter's mother-in-law; Jesus healed her of a fever and raised her up from her bed.

Word then spread of Jesus' exorcisms and healings. When God does the miraculous, it draws attention. If we aren't careful, we may pull that attention toward ourselves and away from God, seeking our own glory instead of His. To this temptation, we should learn from the mother-in-law. Miraculous healing, whether physical or spiritual—such as salvation from sin—is not cause for sitting back to relish in the attention but to serve our Savior and direct attention to Him.

 How are you serving your Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ, because of His saving work in your life?

Day 3: Read Mark 1:35-38

Miracles, healings, exorcisms. Jesus was a busy man in His ministry to the town of Capernaum. He displayed power beyond human comprehension and human ability, so naturally, people wanted to see more. Everyone wanted to find Jesus so He could do more to bless them and impress them.

But while the people sought Jesus, He was not seeking their attention. He sought to do the will of His Father who sent Him into the world to save it. So, though He had been healing people well into the night, He got up early to be alone with His Father and pray, and then He got up to continue on His mission. The miracles were important, but the message was paramount. He could have stayed to perform more miracles, but He left to preach the message of the gospel in other villages. Miracles could heal the body, but the message heals both body and soul for eternity.



What are some ways you need to prioritize the message of God's Word in your life?

Day 4: Read Mark 1:39-45

So much can be communicated by the human touch: love, friendship, sadness, and much more. God created us with the capacity and need for human touch. Science shows that human touch has great health benefits for the newborn and throughout life. One psychologist even states that “everyday, incidental gestures [of touch] that we usually take for granted ... are our primary language of compassion, and a primary means for spreading compassion.”⁴

So it should come as no surprise to us that Jesus would reach out in compassion and touch a leper as He healed him of his skin disease. But this would have surprised the Jewish audience looking on. Not only was the leper unclean from a skin disease, he was unclean in a religious sense, and both were contagious. To touch someone or something unclean was to become unclean yourself. But Jesus touched the leper so that His cleanness would wash over the leper. Disease, sin, guilt, and shame—these stand no chance before the compassionate touch of our Savior.



How have you experienced compassion, even the compassion of Christ, through the physical touch of another person?

Day 5: Read Mark 2:1-12

You could focus on the paralytic, helpless yet cared for by others. You could focus on the friends, who exhibited faith and brought their friend to Jesus to be healed. You could focus on the scribes with their questions and assumptions. But to focus on them to the exclusion of Jesus' words and works would be missing the point.

This isn't a story ultimately about the grace of friends; it is a story about the great grace of God communicated through the Son of Man, God in the flesh. Previously in Capernaum, Jesus had taught with authority and healed numerous people, and the people loved Him for it. But now the scribes objected to His proclamation—only God can forgive sins! Of course, that was the point. Jesus came into the world to forgive sins, to save sinners, and His healing of the paralytic proved His ability to forgive sins. All glory to God!



How will your forgiveness in Christ lead you to glorify God in your words and actions?

Encourage One Another

Join together with 2-4 people from your group, or with your family, sometime during the week to reflect on the session and to share how God is working and you are responding.

Share your thoughts and reflections on the truths from Scripture in this session:

- Jesus reveals His power (Mark 1:21-28).
- Jesus proclaims His purpose (Mark 1:35-38).
- Jesus displays His compassion (Mark 1:39-42).



How have you responded to these truths from Scripture?



What measures can we take to help one another make sure our life goals align with Jesus' purpose in coming to earth?



What does a lack of compassion toward others indicate about our perception of Jesus?

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Content Editor

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Send questions/comments to:
Content Editor by email to
daniel.davis@lifeway.com or mail to
Content Editor, *The Gospel Project: Adult*
Daily Discipleship Guide, One LifeWay Plaza,
Nashville, TN 37234-0175; or make comments
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Trevin Wax

General Editor—*The Gospel Project*
AUTHOR OF MULTIPLE BOOKS, INCLUDING
This Is Our Time: Everyday Myths in
Light of the Gospel

With this volume of *The Gospel Project*, the storyline of the Bible shifts from the Old Testament to the New, and we enter the era in which God begins to fulfill His promise of salvation through the person and work of Jesus Christ. In the sessions that follow, you'll take a closer look at the context surrounding the birth of Jesus, the theological parallels between Adam and Jesus (the last Adam), as well as the early ministry of Jesus.

Some of these stories will be familiar to you and the rest of your group—the Christmas story, for example, or the story of Jesus' temptation. In the familiar stories, we want to help you see aspects of the Gospel accounts that you may have overlooked. In the less familiar stories, we want to help you see the beauty of Jesus' interaction with all kinds of people with all kinds of needs and all kinds of backgrounds.

Our hope as you study the Scriptures is that you will be drawn to worship Jesus as the Savior and Lord who fulfills God's original intention for us as His people. Here we see a Jesus withstanding temptation, calling disciples, loving the unlovable, and battling the evil one. May your worship of this Savior lead you to faithful obedience to His call in extending grace and mercy and the message of salvation to those around you.

UNIT 19

SESSION 1

1. "Sin," in *Dictionary of Biblical Imagery*, gen. eds. Leland Ryken, James C. Wilhoit, and Tremper Longman III (IVP, 1998) [Wordsearch].
2. Warren W. Wiersbe, *Wiersbe's Expository Outlines on the New Testament* (Colorado Springs, CO: Victor Books, 1992), 376.
3. Chrysostom, Homilies on Romans 10, quoted in *Romans*, ed. Gerald Bray, vol. VI in *Ancient Christian Commentary on Scripture: New Testament* (Downers Grove, IL: IVP, 2001) [Wordsearch].

SESSION 2

1. Thabiti Anyabwile, *Christ-Centered Exposition: Exalting Jesus in Luke* (Nashville, TN: B&H, 2018), 40-41.
2. Jen Wilkin, *In His Image* (Wheaton, IL: Crossway, 2018), 107.

SESSION 3

1. John Piper, "God Is Always Doing 10,000 Things in Your Life," *Desiring God*, January 1, 2013, www.desiringgod.org/articles/god-is-always-doing-10000-things-in-your-life.
2. Martin Luther, *The Magnificat*, quoted in *Luke*, ed. Beth Kreitzer, vol. 3 in *Reformation Commentary on Scripture: New Testament* (Downers Grove, IL: IVP, 2015) [Wordsearch].
3. Millard J. Erickson, *Christian Theology*, 3rd ed. (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker, 2013), 690.

SESSION 4

1. C. S. Lewis, *God in the Dock*, ed. Walter Hooper (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1970), 168.
2. Thomas Becon, *The Sermon of Simeon in the Temple*, quoted in *Luke*, ed. Beth Kreitzer, vol. 3 in *Reformation Commentary on Scripture: New Testament* (Downers Grove, IL: IVP, 2015) [Wordsearch].

SESSION 5

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2. Gloria Furman, *Missional Motherhood* (Wheaton, IL: Crossway, 2016), 200.

UNIT 20

SESSION 1

1. Eric Mason, *Manhood Restored* (Nashville, TN: B&H, 2013), 1.
2. Dietrich Bonhoeffer, *Life Together*, trans. John W. Doberstein (SCM Press, 2015), 91.

EASTER SESSION

1. Basil, *On Humility* 20, quoted in 1-2 *Corinthians*, ed. Gerald Bray, vol. VII in *Ancient Christian Commentary on Scripture: New Testament* (Downers Grove, IL: IVP, 2001) [Wordsearch].
2. Russell D. Moore, *Tempted and Tried: Temptation and the Triumph of Christ* (Wheaton, IL: Crossway, 2011), 75.

SESSION 2

1. Jackie Hill Perry, *Gay Girl, Good God* (Nashville, TN: B&H, 2018), 171.
2. Martin Luther, *The Large Catechism*, trans. Robert H. Fischer (Philadelphia, PA: Fortress Press, 1959), 9.

SESSION 3

1. Trip Lee, *Rise: Get Up and Live in God's Great Story* (Nashville, TN: Nelson Books, 2015), 47.
2. Ambrose, *Concerning Repentance* 1.12.53, quoted in *John 1-10*, ed. Joel C. Elowsky, vol. IVa in *Ancient Christian Commentary on Scripture: New Testament* (Downers Grove, IL: IVP, 2001) [Wordsearch].

SESSION 4

1. Chrysostom, *Homilies on Romans* 14.44, quoted in *Romans*, ed. Gerald Bray, vol. VI in *Ancient Christian Commentary on Scripture: New Testament* (Downers Grove, IL: IVP, 2001) [Wordsearch].
2. Jerry Bridges, *31 Days Toward Trusting God* (Colorado Springs, CO: NavPress, 2013) [eBook].

UNIT 21

SESSION 1

1. Fred L. Horton Jr., "Exorcism," in *Holman Illustrated Bible Dictionary* (Nashville, TN: B&H, 2003), 533.
2. Dexter Maben, "Mark," in *South Asia Bible Commentary*, gen. ed. Brian Wintle (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 2015), 1290.
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SESSION 2

1. See *The Lion, the Witch, and the Wardrobe*, by C. S. Lewis (New York: HarperCollins, 1978), 89.
2. St. Athanasius, *On the Incarnation*, trans. and ed. A. Religious of C.S.M.V. (Crestwood, NY: St. Vladimir's Seminary Press, 1996), 35.
3. Kim Cash Tate, "Rejected by Friends, Loved by Jesus," *Desiring God*, December 29, 2015, www.desiringgod.org/articles/rejected-by-friends-loved-by-jesus.

SESSION 3

1. "Kawasaki Disease and Heart Transplant: Kendall's Story," Children's Hospital of Philadelphia, April 2012, www.chop.edu/stories/kawasaki-disease-and-heart-transplant-kendalls-story.
2. Andrew Murray, *Humility, in Humility and Absolute Surrender* (Peabody, MA: Hendrickson, 2005), 42.
3. "John," in *Africa Study Bible* (Oasis International LTD, 2016), 1534.

SESSION 4

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2. Samuel Ngewa, "John," in *Africa Bible Commentary*, gen. ed. Tokunboh Adeyemo (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 2006), 1286.