

29 As soon as they left the synagogue, they went with James and John to the home of Simon and Andrew. **30** Simon's mother-in-law was in bed with a fever, and they told Jesus about her. **31** So he went to her, took her hand and helped her up. The fever left her and she began to wait on them. **32** That evening after sunset the people brought to Jesus all the sick and demon-possessed. **33** The whole town gathered at the door, **34** and Jesus healed many who had various diseases. He also drove out many demons, but he would not let the demons speak because they knew who he was. **35** Very early in the morning, while it was still dark, Jesus got up, left the house and went off to a solitary place, where he prayed. **36** Simon and his companions went to look for him, **37** and when they found him, they exclaimed: "Everyone is looking for you!" **38** Jesus replied, "Let us go somewhere else--to the nearby villages--so I can preach there also. That is why I have come." **39** So he traveled throughout Galilee, preaching in their synagogues and driving out demons.

Someone will say: "I see miracles." Someone else: "I see pain."

Someone will joyfully burst out: "Look at all the people he healed." Someone else will quaver: "Think of all the people still sick – still suffering."

Let's recognize the tension of this. As we do, we get to the depth of what this section of Scripture addresses. Yes, Jesus shows he is all-powerful. Look at the miracles he performs! He backed up what Mark stated about him from the outset: Jesus is the Son of God. That's a major point in itself. But there is a deeper truth to find here. And it also relates to his trait of being all-powerful.

If this is true that he is all-powerful, why didn't he heal everyone in the city? Why doesn't he heal everyone right now?

There were more individuals looking for him – more undoubtedly whom he could have healed. But he walked on, the next day, without healing them. Notice: I didn't say without helping them.

Maybe you see what I'm getting at with that distinction. If all who were sick in the world were to line up to wait and to get help from him, there'd be a waiting line as long as the number of people in the world. I asked in the survey this past week: So we see Jesus versus disease and sickness, and the greatest disease or sickness is?

All the responses I received said: Sin.

Jesus said (this is vs.38): *"Let's go somewhere else ... so I can preach – herald God's good news – there also. That is why I have come."*

Think about the names Jesus' followers used when addressing him. Do you hear the name "Miracle-worker" thrown around? He worked miracles – a plenty. But I don't recall one time his followers calling out to him by that title. When you do see them calling to him, what do they say? Often: "Teacher." That fits perfectly with what Jesus says here and elsewhere: *"I have come to seek the lost and to*

Jesus was identified as "Teacher" by those who walked & talked with him:

Teacher – 42 times

- 10 in Mt
- 12 in Mk
- 13 in Lk
- 7 in Jn

Rabbi – 13 times

- Mt 2 times
- Mk 4 times
- Jn 7 times

Rabboni –

- 1 time, Aramaic John 20:16
- Actually, one other "Rabbi" is literally "Rabboni" - Mk 10:51

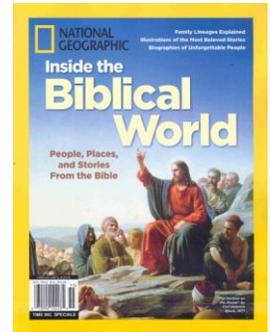
save the lost.”

Jesus’ disciples also called him “*Lord*.” That title and his given name “*Jesus*” both really carry the same message: he saves – he fulfills the Great Promise of God – he came to rescue people from sin and hell.

Contrast that with what I found here. National Geographic “Inside the Biblical World” edition states:

“...the principle themes that run through the biblical stories [are]: the role of God as the source of moral good and social justice...” (p.9)

And it mentions a couple other things, but... the magazine actually leaves out everywhere the real principle theme of the Bible. For example, at the birth of Jesus, the page reads: the shepherds were “summoned by an angel to go see ‘the Messiah, the Lord’ (Luke 2:11)” (p.86). Sound true enough? Yeah. But if the principle theme of the Bible is as they claim - God as the source of morals and justice -, all you’re left with in Jesus is a Lord who is law-giver, example and judge. They have missed the principle theme of the Bible. And it shows in what they left out of the angel’s words to the shepherds: “*Today a Savior has been born to you!*”



Savior from what? We see Jesus versus disease and sickness, and the greatest disease or sickness is? Sin.

When people miss this answer, they inevitably miss the whole reason Jesus came. I want you to really absorb that last statement.

Take this example from the news this last week. It involves the challenging question many people ask when they see all the sickness and disease in the world. Remember that question from earlier: “Why doesn’t he heal everyone right now?” One can easily miss every truth about God, if they don’t recognize the greatest disease/sickness.

Stephen Fry (a British comedian), in reply to an interview question, had some pretty unkind words to offer God:

“How dare you, how dare you create a world that has such misery that is not our fault [bone cancer in children]. It is not right. It is utterly, utterly evil. Why should I respect a capricious (erratic), mean-minded, stupid God who creates a world that is full of injustice and pain?” “The God who created this universe is a maniac, an utter maniac, utterly selfish. ... Yes the world is very splendid but it also has in it insects whose life cycle is to burrow into the eyes of children to make them blind. ... [God] could easily have made a creation in which that didn’t exist. It is simply not acceptable.”

<http://www.christiantoday.com/article/stephen.fry.says.god.is.capricious.mean.minded.stupid.but.lets.not.get.angry/47174.htm>

He speaks freely about an issue with which many other people have struggled. We wouldn’t want to ignore the issue. But you don’t find an answer to the suffering in our world by jettisoning God. Nor is the answer to blame God.

There is something Stephen Fry left out. He brings up examples of disease, but he leaves out ... well, let me ask you: What did he leave out? Sin.

God did not create disease. God made a world where no misery or evil or injustice or pain existed. Quite simply, he made the world “good.” In the beginning everything was without sin. To blame God for the sickness and disease we experience would be like blaming a landlord after renters have trashed a house

(ibid: article cited above). Sin came into the world through mankind's fall, and every evil we experience (came) as a result.

And so we experience life in a world where...

Infectious diseases, like leprosy and Ebola, separate a person from family, friends, society in general. Blindness separates individuals from seeing the colors of a sunset, the artistry of mosaic, or joy lighting up a loved one's face.

Paralysis separates people from joining friends in their spontaneous run out the door and across the freshly snow-covered lawn or from answering the urge to jump up to dance with the one they love.

But infinitely worse: sin separates from God. Infinitely more important than remedying any physical problem is that our God would remove the sin that would separate us from him forever if left unresolved / un-removed.



Wisconsin Lutheran Seminary
January 9 ·

On bus 77A on our way to the Spanish Institute of Puebla. Behind the crucifix it says "El Todo Poderoso."

[← image] This made an impression on a group of Wisconsin Lutheran Seminary students studying abroad. They weren't just looking at the portrayal of Jesus on the cross. The image is paired with the message behind it on the bus windshield: "El Todo Poderoso." The All-powerful.

We might quickly associate "all-powerful" with Jesus doing miracles. Or further back, way further back, you may think of his role in creation: "All things were created through him. Without him nothing was made that has been made." All-powerful, indeed!

One woman, whom I asked the survey questions as we sat watching our boys play basketball, added another answer that displays Jesus is all-

powerful: his crucifixion.

Ultimately, here is the answer to the pain in our world. God the Son says, "I'll take the sin of the world. Mine are the only shoulders that can take the load off your shoulders."

It's not just Stephen Fry who has said outlandish things to God.

- Have you ever said, "If you love me, God, then you'll do (this) for me"?
- Have you ever thought, "If you'll do (this) for me, God, then I'll (express my love, thanks or service to you)"?

Do you see what kind of implications such statements send God's direction? So if we don't get what we want, we'll leave a question mark hanging over God's love for us. How offensive! Or, we'll approach God like we should be able to barter for his blessings, as if getting what we want is based on a simple transaction: I'll put in my praise or do some good stuff, so that, God, you'll kick in a "yes" to my request. How wrong!

Ultimately, here [Jesus, the All-powerful, on the cross] is the answer to all the times we've questioned God's love or attempted to manipulate / constrain his power to our liking. Here is the answer to every time something God has said or something God has done has registered as "unacceptable to us."

The only way to an ending where all our sin is removed, and evil is ultimately undone and we can enjoy life the way God created it in the beginning is...He came into the world he made – he came into the world, broken as we (humans) have made it. He came to solve our sin problem. Along the way ...

Compassion moved him. He reached out his hand to heal Simon's mother-in-law, and help her to her feet. And going on from here (vs.40f)... Jesus' empathy welled up, and his hand reached out, to the leprous man who came to him, and at his bidding, the man's leprosy fled. And a few days later (ch.2)... the paralyzed man, who was brought to him on a mat, he sent home walking – carrying his mat as he went, but assured that no weight of sin remained for him to carry home with him.

You see, the healings Jesus provided from physical sickness or diseases would only last a short time. Eventually, each one he touched along the way with healing would die. Jesus' primary mission was to bring people to know the eternal health, eternal joy, eternal peace that comes to all who trust in him as Savior from sin.

He had the power to send away the fever of Peter's mother-in-law. And He has the power to send away sin for you and me:

Psalm 103:10-12 (read earlier in our service): "The LORD is compassionate and gracious, slow to anger, abounding in love. He does not treat us as our sins deserve or repay us according to our iniquities. ... As far as the east is from the west, so far has he removed our transgressions from us."

He told the leper: I am willing – be clean. He tells us: his blood cleanses us from all sin; purifies us from all unrighteousness (1 John 1).

He said the sweetest words a cripple could ever hear. The words are: "Son, your sins are forgiven." Jesus sends us from the baptismal font with the gift: your sins are washed away. We may walk home carrying a worship folder today, but we leave here with the Word that no weight of sin remains for us to carry home with us. Jesus, the all-powerful, has made it so.

There is deep truth and deep comfort for us to walk away with today from our look at Mark ch.1. Jesus does not promise us a life without trouble, or sickness, or pain. But he does promise us to be with us through it all. And he does promise to be for us the one way to life with him forever, where there will be no more crying, sickness or pain.

Let's pray: When we look at your power, Lord Jesus, that eventually led you to your dying breath for us on the cross and ultimately out your tomb Easter morning, we can only conclude that there is nothing you won't do to keep us safe and, one day, welcome us through the doors of heaven. Forgive us for times of doubting you. Strengthen and move us to hear your Word, through which your Holy Spirit will continue to strengthen our conviction of your unfailing love and carry us through the difficulties of life. Thank you for your unshakeable love! Amen.