

Mark 1:29-39 Jesus is a guide for the lost! Epiphany 5 February 8, 2015

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Our Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ has reunited us with the heavenly Father to give us peace. Amen.

God's Word to guide us and all who are lost to find the way to heaven is written in Mark 1:29-39

These are Your Words heavenly Father. Guide us, enlighten us, and keep us in the faith by Your truth.

Dear Christians, found in Christ,

It is a terrible feeling to be lost. If a person gets separated from family or friends or from safe surroundings life can be very troubling. The lost will most likely be in danger of freezing or getting hungry or sick without proper care. If people remain lost for a long time, they could become lonely or depressed. They would eventually die separated from those that they love.

Many of us have grown up as Christians so we don't know what it means to be spiritually lost. But, we know it can't be good. Spiritually lost people have a nagging fear that something is missing in their lives. They may question what is their purpose in life and worry about their future. They may be afraid of death as it draws near. Thankfully we, who have been found by Christ, have good news for them:

Jesus Is a Guide for the Lost!

First, Jesus was guided by His heavenly Father. He had finished a long day of performing miracles in Capernaum casting out demons, healing the blind, the deaf, and those who were ill. He extended His loving care to them all. But, He must have been exhausted. Yet, rather than sleep in the next morning, He was up before dawn to pray in a solitary place. Why would Jesus need to pray? He is God's Son, yet also a man living humbly. Whatever powerful things He did, He did in union with the Father and the Holy Spirit. So, Jesus, our perfect Guide, continually prayed for His own guidance by the Holy Spirit. It would have been very tempting for Jesus to stay in Capernaum. He was popular. The disciples said, "*Everyone is looking for you!*" (v.37) They wanted Jesus as their home-town hero. Anyone would have offered Him a meal or a place stay. It also would have been tempting for Jesus to become sinfully proud because of the people's praise, and to begin to do things from a human perspective rather than be guided by His Father.

But, Jesus knew that He hadn't been come just for the praise of the people. No doubt, He prayed that morning that God would keep Him focused on His full work as the Savior. He prayed for strength, not just to do miracles, but to complete all that God sent Him to do to accomplish His plan of salvation for all!

Second, we are guided by Jesus. We began life as people who were spiritually lost. We were separated from God and had no idea how to find Him. God didn't send out a missing person's alert, He sent His Son to find us. The Bible states He "*came to seek and to save the lost.*" (Luke 19:10) God sent the Holy Spirit to us, perhaps at our baptism or later in life through the Gospel. That Word of Christ changed us from being enemies of God to being His children. It changed us from being separated from God by our sins to being united with Christ as part of His body. Like the people of Capernaum, we are happy to welcome Jesus as our Savior and Lord! We may not have experienced a miraculous healing like the people then, but Jesus has given us something better. He has forgiven our sins. He made us heirs of heaven.

When Jesus prayed, it wasn't just for Himself. As with all the things He did, He included us in His prayer. He did everything perfectly to earn a perfect place for us in heaven. Through faith in Christ, we are no longer alone. God has claimed us as His own people. He has promised to never forsake us. Despite our sinful nature that wants to get lost, God won't forget us. We may be tempted to forget the value of being saved, but God is faithful. He has given us a time of grace so we can hear His Word, repent, and be found in Christ. As we daily are guided by Christ, we ask Him to forgive our sins that seek to destroy our faith. We ask Him to keep us from sinful neglect of His Word. We ask that God help us to give us a growing trust in Him for our physical and spiritual needs. We ask that through our Lord, Jesus Christ God give us the victory over the devil, the sinful world, and our sinful nature. Our spiritual enemies, who consider us lost to them, won't give up just because we are with Christ. We are constantly attacked by physical and spiritual temptations. Yet, God reminds us *"By grace you have been saved, through faith—and this not from yourselves, it is the gift of God—not by works, so that no one can boast. We are God's workmanship...."* (Ephesians 2:8-10) We thank God for Jesus' daily blessing and guidance to keep us from being lost!

Third, many more people need Jesus. I can see when the people of Capernaum arrived early at Peter's door waking him up to so more people could see Jesus. How surprised Peter must have been to find Jesus gone. When he found Jesus, he asked Him to return to his home to help more people. But, Jesus said, *"Let us go somewhere else, to the nearby villages, so I can preach there also. That is why I have come. So he traveled throughout Galilee, preaching in their synagogues...."* (v.38, 39)

When it came to helping the lost, Jesus had a much bigger picture than Peter. He saw lost people in every village. So, He kept preaching: *"The kingdom of God is near. Repent and believe the Good News!"* (Mark 1:15) Jesus knew that His days were numbered. He said, *"As long as it is day, we must do the work of Him who sent Me."* (John 9:4) He not only preached and did miracles. He used His time to complete the work God sent Him to do. He fulfilled the whole law of God. He also said, *"The Son of Man did not come to be served, but to serve, and to give his life as a ransom for many."* (Matthew 20:28)

Some people would think that Jesus' dying on a cross would stop Him from helping more people. But, they are wrong. Jesus said, *"When I am lifted up from the earth, I will draw all men to myself."* (John 12:32) The Gospel that Jesus paid for all sins in full by His death is what drew us to Jesus. He rose from death and has promised to be with us always, including an eternity in heaven. This is our confidence in Christ! We want more people to have the same confidence in Him. We pray for those who are lost without knowledge of Christ or faith in Him. Too many people today are troubled and only Jesus can help them!

I'm sure that many of those in Capernaum who had been sick or demon possessed were grateful to the people who brought them to Jesus for healing. (v.33-34) We can be thankful that God gave us parents, a spouse, friends, a pastor, Sunday School or Day School teacher to bring the saving work of Christ to us through His Word. We pray that God would give us a chance to bring others to Jesus to receive His help!

We want to be like the disciple Andrew, who invited his brother Peter to meet Jesus. I once met a man who began in his church what he called, "Operation Andrew." He asked his unchurched friends to join an instruction class at his church. He sat in class with them. If they later visited church, he would sit with them and answer their questions. Other members began to do the same, and soon many lost people were found for Christ. How many people that we meet are without Christ and need to hear the saving news? Our time on this earth is limited. Let us take the opportunities to tell them of the joy we have in Jesus' forgiveness and in the gift of eternal life. Tell them of the confidence we have in our loving Savior, who watches over us and continues to be with us until we see His face in our heavenly home. Amen.