

New Testament History Literature and Theology
Session 11 Mark Characteristics, Sin and Sickness
By Dr. Ted Hildebrandt

A. Introduction: The Brevity of Mark [00:00-4:19]

I hope you all are having a great spring vacation and just want to welcome you back to the book of Mark. Last time we were going over just introductory material to the book of Mark and we discussed the Son of Man and the various aspects of that, and even the term, Son of Man being used to Christ's humanity but also in terms of Daniel 7, 'the son of man coming on the clouds of heaven' and the deity aspects of the term Son of Man. So we dealt with the Son of Man term which is a big term in the book of Mark. Then the other term that we dealt with is not a term but what Jesus does with telling people not to tell who he was and it's been labeled as the Messianic Secret. We noted that the disciples were told not to tell and the demons were told not to tell and the demons were told not to tell and we noted that the suplicants, those that were healed, were told not to tell. We explained the possibility that those who were healed, the demons, and the disciples, for two different reasons, Jesus told them not to say anything. Obviously, then, after his resurrection he tells his disciples, "go out and tell everybody," but there was a certain point in which they apparently didn't understand and didn't have the understanding that he wanted them to have going out like that. So, that was the messianic secret and the Son of Man and some early things in the book of Mark.

Now today what I'd like to do is discuss some other things in the book of Mark, largely the characteristics of the book of Mark. One of the major characteristics of the book of Mark is brevity and you notice, when you guys read through this, that Matthew has 28 long chapters, whereas Mark only has 16 chapters which are kind of hard hitting and fast, whereas Luke has 24 chapters. Luke's chapters are very long. And so you get this thing that Matthew has about 1,068 verses, Luke has about 1,147 verses and Mark has only

661. So Mark has about half the size of the book of Luke, so, it is very brief. Matthew has those great five discourses, you remember, the Olivet Discourse, the Sermon on the Mount, the Sending of the twelve, the parables of the Kingdom, and Community guidelines, these five discourses, major teachings of Jesus in Matthew. Mark eliminates all of them except one, he's got a little bit on the Olivet Discourse, which is about the end times. This was in Mark 13, and parallels over in Matthew 24 and 25. So, Mark doesn't do a lot with the words of Jesus, and let me just give you some statistics on this, though I don't want you to know them, I just want you to put it in the back of your mind. About 60% of the verses in Matthew have the words of Jesus, those red-letters if you do the red-letter Bible, and Luke has about 51%. Now Mark, and again you have to think about this, Mark is half the size and Matthew has 60% with the words of Jesus speaking, Mark has only 42%. So you see the shrinkage, over 22% shrinkage in the words of Jesus. Mark focuses more on the acts of Jesus. Matthew focuses on the words of Jesus. So, we will see the miracles developed in the book of Mark, and Matthew condenses some of the miracles, whereas Mark elaborates on the miracles. Mark will shrink the words of Jesus and give you a synopsis, short summaries of them, whereas Matthew will develop them into long discourses. Matthew, on the other hand, will shrink down the miracles of Jesus and give you shorter displays of those. So, these are the basic characteristics of the book that separate Mark from the other gospels.

B. the Three Participants in Jesus Miracles: Suppliants [4:19-8:13]

What I'd like to do next is look at how Mark does some miracles. So here, we talked about the brevity, Mark focusing on actions, not so much on the words. Jesus is "too busy to eat" kind of short punchy things describing about Jesus, and the miracles in Mark. I'd like to look at how Mark develops them, and I'd like to use this kind of triangular way of understanding the miracles as you approach the miracles of Mark. What we're going to see is three basic groups interact. Jesus will do a miracle and, we'll talk of the healing here. You've got a person coming, we'll call them the suppliant, who asks Jesus for help, whether

it's the guy who had leprosy or Peter's mother-in-law, who had a high fever, or the guy who was crippled that had the four friends that lowered him down in front of Jesus. So, you have the suppliants, those coming to Jesus, and in the book of Mark what is interesting is--first, let's go over the three participant. So, there are the suppliants, those who come for healing; you have the disciples; and usually the disciples are hanging out with Jesus. So, you have the suppliant, who comes to Jesus for help. There are the disciples, who are usually to the side watching Jesus do the miracle. Then you have the opponents, usually these will be the Pharisees, and so they'll always be watching Jesus to make sure everything is going to be kosher. So basically you have these three groups; those asking for healing, the disciples, and the opponents. These three groups interact in different ways with Jesus, who will be involved in the midst of this triangle, and he'll interact with all three of them.

So, this is what happens in a lot of the miracles, and what's interesting is, let me just read this, concerning the suppliants who come to Jesus. In Mark, when the suppliants come asking for healing, they show faith already. So, it's interesting, Mark 2:5, "When Jesus saw their faith," when the guys were digging through the roof and they were going to drop that guy down in front of Jesus to heal the guy who was crippled, they couldn't get in past the crowd, so they went up to the roof and dug down, dropped him to Jesus. This man was crippled. It says, "When Jesus saw their faith." So he commends these suppliants, those coming to him for healing, as they come with faith to Jesus asking for healing. That was Mark 2:5, now over in Mark 5:34, Jesus says this: "Daughter, your faith has healed you. Go in peace and be freed from suffering." So here is this woman who is hemorrhaging blood, she has been to all these doctors, Jesus is going off to heal Jairus', the synagogue ruler's, daughter, and here, this woman in pushing through the crowd, thinking, "If only I can touch his garment," and she touches him and she's healed. Jesus knows she's healed, and Jesus turns around to the woman and finds her, and notices her and commends her for her faith. "Daughter, your faith has healed you." We said before, it's kind of a cleanness/uncleanness thing, the idea of a hemorrhaging woman who was unclean touching Jesus who is clean, she becomes clean instead of Jesus becoming unclean as you

would have had in the book of Leviticus in the Old Testament. But Jesus commends her for her faith.

In Mark 5:36, Jesus then turns to the synagogue ruler, Jairus, and basically says, "Don't be afraid. Just believe." And then he says, "*Talitha koum*", and the girl rises up. So, Jesus seems to be commending the suppliants for their faith, as they come to him.

C. Jesus' Miracles—Disciples and Opponents [8:13-10:34]

It is interesting, then, in contrast to that, how does Jesus portray the disciples when these miracles come down? When Jesus calms the sea, he says to his disciples, "Why are you so afraid?" The disciples seem to be, in the book of Mark, afraid or fearful. "Do you still have no faith?" So, here Jesus calms the sea and he rebukes the disciples for being fearful and for not having faith. That's in contrast to these suppliants who come and Jesus commends them for their faith. They were terrified, Jesus' disciples, were afraid and terrified and asked each other "Who is this, that even the winds and the waves obey him?" I think we showed in the book of Matthew how that probably, refers back to the book of Job, which talks about Yahweh/Jehovah, God walking on the billows of the sea. So, interesting concept there, the disciples, "Oh, [you] of little faith." The ones who were coming, the suppliants, were commended for their faith.

The opposition grows and we see things like this in chapter 2 verse 7 where the guy drops down, the four guys drop their friend who is crippled and here the opposition says this concerning Jesus. "Why does this fellow talk like this? He is blaspheming, who can forgive sins but God alone?" So here you have the opponents, Jesus is healing this guy saying your sins are forgiven you. He doesn't say "Get up and walk," first, he says "Your sins are forgiven you", and the opponents then basically freak out saying "Who is this fellow? Why does he talk like this? He's blaspheming. Who can forgive sins but God alone?" Well, that's the point. So, his opponents, you hear the words of the opponents. Mark 3:22 "By the prince of demons, he is driving out demons." So, you get the opponents then seeing what Jesus does but interpreting it as if he's doing this by the power of Satan.

So these opponents appear in a lot of these healing stories with no compassion but rather critiquing Jesus for not following their laws or condemning him of doing it by some other power.

D. Miracles in Mark and Miracles in John [10:34-14:37]

Now, one last thing that I want to do here with these miracles is I want to compare Mark's miracles with John. Now John does this thing that, basically, John has what are called "sign miracles." These are special miracles, very much of coming up to the miracle and setting up for the miracle, and then John has the miracle and then it comes down. Now, John sets up these, what they're called, and "sign miracles" in the book of John. But what's interesting in John is that--the faith in Mark, those who come to Jesus manifest faith. But in the book of John, the faith comes after the miracle. In other words, after the miracle happens, then the people are claimed to have faith. So, to give you an example, John 2:11, "This is the first of the miraculous signs Jesus performed in Cana of Galilee," and that's where he turned the water into wine. John chapter 2, he turns the water into wine, when at the feast, Jesus' mother comes to him, and he turns the water into wine for the people. Jesus says fill up these stone canisters, amounting to hundreds of gallons of wine, and so Jesus makes the wine, and they take it to the guy who is governing the wedding and they say, "Wow, look at this. This is the best we've had yet." Jesus then says in John 2:23 "Now, while he was in Jerusalem, during the Passover..." Well, let's go back first to John 2:11 and it says "Thus he revealed his glory and his disciples put their faith in him." So, in John 2:11 we have Jesus does the converting the water to wine, and then it says that the result of the miracle is that his disciples put their faith in him. There's no rebuke, there's no opponents there, but they just believe in him. Same thing in John 2:23: "Now while he was in Jerusalem, during the Passover feast, many people saw the miraculous signs he was doing," and what was the response? "As a result of the miracle (these sign miracles), they believed in his name." So, in John, there is a different set up for the miracles.

In Mark, the people come to Jesus, basically with faith, and Jesus commends them for their faith. John uses the miracle, and then after the miracle is over, there is a reflection.

The disciples then put their faith in him, and the people also put their faith in him as a result of the miracles. So the sign miracles they're kind of setting that up. In Mark, the signs and miracles in Mark are used to see the advent of the kingdom of God and the intrusion of the kingdom of God breaking into this world. Jesus doing this miracles shows he has authority then to do this. He's not as the scribes and Pharisees; Jesus can even command demons. Jesus has power over diseases, Jesus can walk on water, and Jesus can tell the wind to still down and the waves to go still. So, Jesus is breaking into the kingdom and this thing you get in the book of Mark with Jesus having authority, and the advent of the kingdom of God. Well, Mark calls it the kingdom of God. Now, so that's just setting up the miracles, I want to come back to one particular miracle later, we'll talk about the guy who is crippled, we'll come back to that in a couple minutes.

E. Vivid Details in Mark [14:37- 16:13]

There is vividness and with graphic details is how Mark records things. He picks up these little details that really make his story come alive and, so, for example, in Matthew 4, you have Jesus going out and he's tempted of Satan, so you have Satan saying "turn these stones to bread," and Jesus quoting Deuteronomy 4-8, "a man does not live by bread alone." He takes him up into the pinnacle of the temple and he says "Throw yourself down," because Scripture says "His angels will bear you up." Jesus says, "You don't tempt the Lord your God." Then he takes him up the mountain, shows him all the kingdoms of the world, "Bow down and worship me and I'll give you all these kingdoms." And Jesus again responds from Deuteronomy, and so there is this Old Testament, amidst Satan attacking Jesus. Jesus responds from the book of Deuteronomy. In Mark, it's very different because Mark has these punchy little things. So, in Mark, he says, "Jesus went out into the desert, and he was among the wild animals." So, you think, where did these wild animals come from? Mark picks up this fact that Jesus is out in the desert with the wild animals. That's in chapter 1:13. Now, in Mark 1:36, Jesus casts the demons out, and normally Jesus just, casts the demon out and the demon goes out. Mark picks up the fact, "and the spirit came out with a shriek," and so you get this extra little "shriek." So Mark has

these graphic, enlivening details that are found there.

F. Jesus' Anger and Mark's Literary Tense [16:13-20:57]

Now, one other thing I should point out, Mark 3:5 Jesus is portrayed there in an interesting way, and it describes what's going on inside of Jesus. "Jesus asked them, 'which is lawful on the Sabbath?' remember, they were getting on Jesus about the Sabbath, 'to do good or to do evil? To save life or kill?' But they remained silent and would not answer him." This was the man with the shriveled hand.

So this guy comes up to Jesus, he has a shriveled hand and these Pharisees want to see, will he heal this guy with a shriveled hand on the Sabbath? Jesus says, "Which is lawful on the Sabbath, to do good or to do evil? To save life or to kill?" They do not respond, they remain silent," and then it says this concerning Jesus, "He looked around at them in anger." Mark picks up the fact that they are silent. Jesus asks "Is it right to do good on the Sabbath?" And then they won't answer his question. So then it says, "Jesus looked around at them in anger." I think a lot of times in our culture; we really have a problem with this anger thing. So, somebody jumps in and says, "wait a minute. Back in the Sermon on the Mount, doesn't Jesus say that a person who is angry with his brother causes him to commit murder in his heart?" Here, we see Jesus angry. Mark says explicitly, "Jesus was angry." So, you have to be very careful. And a lot of you have had me for Old Testament class, you know in the Old Testament. God is angry several times, even the ground opens up and swallows all these people, and God's anger comes out and the fiery serpents come out on the people. So, in the Old Testament, you see God's anger a lot and a lot of people blow that off and say that basically that's just the Old Testament. Jesus is lovey-dovey, the kind, compassionate Jesus. But here you have "and he looked around at them in anger, and deeply distressed at their stubborn hearts and he said to the man, 'stretch out your hand,' and he stretched it out and his hand was completely restored. Then the Pharisees," the opponents, "went out and began to plot with the Herodians how they might kill Jesus." That's Mark 3, very early. That's after he heals the guy with the shriveled hand.

So, Mark picks up these inner details of Jesus, that Jesus was angry with them. And

I just want to say that I think there's a point for anger. In our culture, I think we've gone so flat line on anything that is angry, we label it as extreme or some sort of derogatory term, but I think there's a point in which someone should be angry, and when you don't get angry, something's wrong. So, even Jesus gets angry, and you have to be very careful when trying to eliminate all anger. Now, there's a time for anger and a time not, and Jesus was angry here. So, here is Jesus, and we are Christians, and even Jesus was angry at their stubborn hearts, and it seems to me that it's a model for us as well. So, graphic details, Mark picks up that kind of thing.

Here is his favorite word, a Greek word, kind of brought over into English, *euthus*, where my Greek students will recognize the word, and it means "immediately." Mark uses this term, *euthus*, 42 times in this book. I'll give you a couple of references, chapter 1:12, 5:42, etc., and so Mark uses this word a lot, immediately. Now, what happens then when you use this word over and over again? The word "immediately" has a sense of the narrative is moving on quickly, so this immediately happened, and that immediately happened and things are moving along quickly. That's one of Mark's favorite words, he uses it 42 times. So, Mark is an action book.

He also uses the present tense a lot, while Matthew will use more the past tense, and you have a big debate on Greek tenses and I don't want to get into all of that but Mark does use the present tense a lot and that really fronts things to you, and so basically the present tense brings things to the front, and Mark is doing this immediately, immediately, present tense, present tense, which makes things more vivid, more full of action. So, that's just some of Mark's characteristic details.

G. Mark's Realism—Disciples' lack of understanding and Jesus as carpenter

[20:57-25:50]

Now, Mark's realism is seen in the dullness of the disciples, and the disciples not really understanding. So, Mark really picks up on this, how they didn't really understand the parables. At the death of Jesus, Jesus describes his death, and Peter doesn't understand and so Peter rebukes Jesus, and then he said to them in 9:32, "the Son of Man is going to be

betrayed in the hands of men. They will kill him and after three days, he will rise." This is Jesus describing his own death. But then it says "but they did not understand what he meant. And they were afraid." Do you get that notion of fear coming again? "to ask him about it." So, he says, "Well, I'm going to die," and they are all just listening and thinking "Whoa, this is off limits, you don't go to a fun party and tell everyone 'I'm going to die, yeah, and then I'm going to rise again from the dead.'" Well, when you talk about death at a party like that with people, everything goes quiet. The disciples did not understand and they were afraid to ask him about it. And, at other points, the disciples even criticized him for it. The disciples are repeatedly criticized by Jesus when they play the role of gatekeeper, and when they decide who can go and who cannot go to Jesus, and especially with the little children, when they are coming to Jesus, and the disciples are kind of pushing the little kids back and Jesus says "the little children, the kingdom is such as these." And so, Jesus has some rebuke for his disciples. They didn't really understand him, and Mark picks up on this fact. It's interesting that, here are the leaders of the Christian church, and Jesus is the son of God coming down, dies, resurrects, and these are the twelve apostles that he chose, and then Judas perishing for his betrayal, and then in Acts, apostle Paul being chosen to be an apostle, and they send out then, the twelve, and it's interesting, when they're the gatekeepers, Jesus rebukes them and basically says, let the little children come unto me. So, the disciples did not understand Jesus very well.

Not only do Jesus' disciples not understand, but even his own family comes at him, and Mark sets this up. Mark 3:21, and his own family members--we're talking about Mary and James and Joseph, and it lists some of the names of the people we know from other passages, they came to take control of him, because they said he's out of his mind. These are Jesus' family members, and even they didn't understand him, and they think he's out of his mind. Mark 3:21 "When his family heard about this, they went to take charge of him, for they said 'he is out of his mind.'" The teachers of the law said he is of Beelzebub, the prince of demons and that is how he is driving out demons. So, his own family didn't understand him, his disciples didn't understand him, and Mark picks this up, and apparently

there is this fear of asking him, there's that fear idea coming up again as well. It's only in the book of Mark.

In the other gospels they would say Jesus was the son of a carpenter, so usually it lists Joseph as the carpenter, so Jesus is the son of Joseph, who is a carpenter. In the book of Mark 6:3, it says only here Jesus himself was called “the carpenter.” So in Mark, he picks up the fact that Jesus himself was labeled as a carpenter. They were father and son, and in our days, you say, “Well, carpenters make really good money.” But back in those days, we know that Jesus was from a very poor family, and apparently there were no union wages, but Jesus was a carpenter.

Another theme that Mark picks up here, that we've talked about before is this emphasis on suffering. Mark picks up on the notion of Christ as the suffering servant, so in Matthew Christ was King, but in Mark Jesus will be the suffering servant. 8:31, 9:31, 10:31. These are where Mark describes the suffering of Jesus, so Mark is going to pick up on that.

H. Jesus Stills the Storm [25:50-28:08]

Now, we want to go over the minor characters. There is a really interesting article that you have read by Joel Williams, a great guy, I taught with him for a little bit and have a tremendous amount of respect for him. But he wrote an article that you have read on the minor characters in the book of Mark. It's a brilliant article and one that's worthy of consideration. It's up online, free audio and full text, and feel free to download it. Of course for the class you have to read it, but it's a great discussion on the minor characters. Now, what I want to do is, I want to look at three boat scenes at the book of Mark. Mark has three times that Jesus is at a boat scene with his disciples. You remember Mark is writing Peter's gospel--we mentioned that from Papias' comment earlier--Mark is writing Peter's gospel. So I want to look at these three boat scenes. What you will see in the boat scene is there is usually a rebuke to the disciples, so Jesus is in the boat or some crisis happens, and then he will rebuke the disciples and then there will be a miracle.

So, in the first storm, you get Jesus stilling the storm. They're afraid, and then the

disciples are rebuked for their fear and for their lack of faith, so he says to the disciples. "Why are you so afraid?" Again, notice that the fear notion coming up in the book of Mark. "Why are you so afraid? Do you still have no faith?" And so Jesus rebukes them in this first story, where he will still the storm, when waves are coming over the boat, and the disciples are terrified. These guys are men of the sea by the way; James and John were fishermen, so were Peter and Andrew. So, they know the waters well, that's what they've done for their livelihood. They're still terrified because of the winds coming through there. The winds do funnel through, the winds coming from the west side of the sea of Galilee and swoops down in the sea of Galilee and then the winds coming off the Mediterranean get kind of funneled, almost like a jet engine, they get funneled into this pass and shoot down, and so you can get these storms, even until this day on the sea of Galilee.

I. Faith and Fear in the Minor Characters [28:08-30:53]

Now, what's very interesting is, while he rebukes the disciples for their fear and lack of faith, right in that same context of the story of chapter 4, in chapter 5 is the story of the Gerasene demoniac, and then the story of the Gerasene demoniac, they are healed, and then the people come to the town and they too are fearful of Jesus, who healed this guy that nobody could contain. So, you get people frightened, and ask Jesus, because of their fear, to leave their territory. So, they apparently can't get over their fear. So, there is this connection between the stilling of the storm and the Gerasene demoniac in terms of this fear. In that story, the people ask Jesus to leave; they can't overcome their fear but the fellow himself apparently does.

Jairus' daughter, the synagogue leader's daughter, so he comes to Jesus and basically says, my daughter is going to die, then they come and tell him his daughter is dead, "don't bother the master anymore, let Jesus go, your daughter is dead." Jesus says, "don't be afraid, just believe." Those same two themes coming up in the story of Jairus' daughter: "don't be afraid, just believe." Then Jesus goes and takes Peter, James, and John, with her father and goes in and raises the girl from the dead. But he says, "don't be afraid, only believe," those same themes then coming from the stilling of the storm, fear and believe,

you can see it echoed through the Gerasene demoniac and Jairus' daughter, and then also the hemorrhaging woman.

As he is going to Jairus', the synagogue ruler's, house with his daughter that's died, the hemorrhaging woman comes in and touches his clothes and what happens there? He looks at her and commends her for your faith, and she's terrified. She comes to Jesus with fear and she's afraid and she touches Jesus and then shrinks back into the crowd. Then Jesus turns around and says "who touched me?" The disciples say, "Yeah right, Jesus, who touched you? Everybody's pushing around, everybody wants to touch you." And Jesus says "No, something happened," and he sees this woman who's afraid to come to him because basically, she's fearful. She knows she has been healed. So, in these three stories, what I'm suggesting here is this storm thing happening and Jesus rebuking his disciples for their fear and lack of faith. That fear and lack of faith is echoed then, in the story of the Gerasene demoniac, Jairus' daughter and the hemorrhaging woman, which then comes right after this story. So, you have the first boat story here, and this fear and belief being echoed then in the next three stories.

J. Understanding and Minor Characters [30:53-33:04]

Now, here is one where Jesus walks on the water, and gets into the boat and again, this is in Mark 6:45, he says, "'Take courage and don't be afraid,' for they had not understood the loaves and their hearts were hardened." They had not understood the loaves and remember that is one of the things Jesus rebukes the disciples, well, not necessarily rebukes but remember, it's in the text, "the disciples did not understand." So, this lack of understanding comes up, Jesus walks on the water, "'take courage, and don't be afraid.' For they did not understand about the loaves, their hearts were hardened."

Then, right after that, who comes up? This Canaanite woman comes up. So they are not understanding the loaves, there's an obstacle to their belief, they had not been able to make the connection between these two things. But then a Syro-Phoenician woman from Lebanon, north of Israel, she comes to Jesus and she overcomes obstacles where the disciples have obstacles there and are pushed back, this woman overcomes obstacles. She

comes, her daughter has a demon, and Jesus is impressed by the understanding revealed in her response. So, remember, Jesus said "'It's not right to take the food for the children,' or the Jews, 'and give it to the dogs,' and she as a Gentile says 'Yes, Lord, but even the dogs eat the food dropped from the table,' and Jesus says, "Whoa, this woman has faith." So, she's really used as a model or it's really used as a contrast. Again, you have the suppliant coming to Jesus, and she is commended for her faith. This is the same time that with the disciples it's, "Where's your faith? Why is there a lack of faith?" and that tension between the suppliants, those who have been healed, and the disciples. This really comes out in this story here, and then her daughter is healed because she overcomes the obstacle, which is something the disciples apparently are unable to do.

K. Hearing and Seeing and Minor Characters [33:04-37:07]

Then, the third boat story is the "no bread" story. Jesus asks them if they brought bread, and he actually starts telling them and warning them of the yeast of the Pharisees, this is in Mark 8:18. Jesus then tells them to beware of the leaven or the yeast of the Pharisees, and the disciples don't get it. They wonder, "Why is he talking about the yeast of the Pharisees? He must be hungry; we didn't bring any bread. Oh no! He's probably just hungry and he is scolding us for not bringing food." By the way, this is Jesus who feeds the 4,000, the 5,000, and they're worried about food. So, Jesus says, "Do you still not see or understand?" Again, Jesus is rebuking them because they still don't get it. He fed 5,000, he fed 4,000, and here they are thinking he's concerned about food. Then he says "You still don't see or understand? Are your hearts hardened?" Then he says, "Do you have eyes but fail to see? And ears but fail to hear?" Now, anyone that knows the Old Testament, your head is just going off--"Bing"--with the prophecy of Isaiah in chapter 1 says something similar to that where God tells Isaiah to go out and prophesy, that they are going to see and hear these things but they're not going to understand, their hearts are hardened. So, the entire message that goes out from God, Isaiah is told kind of the same thing. You hear this echo from Isaiah. So, what's interesting is, the disciples are rebuked for basically seeing but not seeing and hearing but not hearing and guess what happens in the stories? Just prior to

Mark 8:18 Jesus healed the deaf man. Jesus says "You have ears but don't hear," so Jesus just healed a deaf man, and remember he said, "be opened," and the guy's ears are opened. And so here you have Jesus healing a guy, and then rebuking his disciples when they're out asking about the yeast of the Pharisees, and think they didn't bring any bread, and he says, "You still don't hear, you don't hear what I'm saying." And he just healed a hearing problem.

Then right after chapter 8:18, with that boat scene, guess what? Jesus heals a blind man at Bethsaida. So, at Bethsaida, the town just on the north part of the sea of Galilee, Jesus heals this blind man. So, he heals a guy's ears, "opens" his ears, and also "opens" the eyes so the blind man can see, and then the disciples go on the boat with Jesus and he rebukes them for not seeing and hearing. Jesus on both sides of that is going to heal someone of their hearing and seeing. So all of this is to say that Mark sets up these miracles beautifully, and there's a great irony there. Here is a guy who can't hear, and Jesus opens his ears, but his own disciples' ears are closed. Here is a guy who can't see at Bethsaida, and Jesus is going to heal him and give him sight, but his own disciples can't see what he's doing, so they think he's talking about food.

So, Mark sets up these three boat scenes in beautiful ways. Mark focuses on the acts of Jesus, but it's not just telling the acts of Jesus in terms of "Jesus did some special miracle," Mark sets up the story to drive these points home, about fear and faith, about hearing and seeing. So, it's a really neat aspect to the book of Mark.

L. The Roman Centurion in Mark 15:39 [37:07-

Another thing, also, at the end of the book of Mark, Mark is written to the Romans, probably a Roman church, probably 65 AD or so, pretty early. Mark is an early gospel, Matthew and Luke probably later gospels, though there are debates on this. Some people put Mark first, but a lot of people put Matthew first. But, what's interesting is Mark does seem to have a Roman flavor, we notice this from some of the vocabulary, some of the themes, and Peter being in Rome with Mark, that's during that time. What's interesting is the centurion in 15:39, that Mark picks up at the crucifixion of Jesus. The disciples are

going off. Peter's saying he doesn't know that man, denying him, Judas betrays him. But who comes through in the book of Mark? Well, if you're writing to the Romans, who do you want to come through? So, the centurion in 15:39, "When the centurion who stood there in front of Jesus..." So, here's Jesus dying on the cross, and this centurion, so there are probably 100 soldiers. The officer has crucified how many people, do you think? This guy has seen crucifixion after crucifixion. He crucified two guys on either side of Jesus. This guy has been around the block, he's seen crucifixions before, and Jesus then cries out, and it says, "the centurion who stood there in front of Jesus, heard his cry, and saw how he died." So, the centurion probably saw hundreds and hundreds of people die, so he knew this but when he saw Jesus and he saw how he died, here's the conclusion of the centurion: "Surely this man was the son of God." So, here you have a Roman centurion who gets it. He understands. So, you see how that would go over well when you're writing to a Roman community because even the disciples didn't get it. They're out in the boat with Jesus, and they still don't get it. Even after they've eaten the food, the fish and the bread, and they still don't get it. The disciples are fearful and they don't understand and they don't have faith. Here's a centurion, he sees Jesus, doesn't see his miracles or hear his elaborate teachings, and when he saw how he died, he knew this man was the son of God. It's the Roman centurion who gets it in the book of Mark. So, that again shows you a bit of the Roman flavor of the book, or, in other words, that the Roman centurion is the one that gets it more than the other people.

M. The End of Mark—Fear and Faith and the Author [39:45-43:25]

So, the end of the book is interesting too, and we'll come back to this later but, the fear and the flight of the women in the end of the book of Mark. Mark ends really abruptly in 16:8. We will show that there's a textual variant, and when you've got an NIV, or any modern translation, ESV, NRSV, you'll notice that there's a break line right after 16:8, and it ends really abruptly and that's why some people think the last page just fell off from the book of Mark. Some people think that the book actually ended there. But it was such an

abrupt ending, that the women were fearful and terrified, but we see that the theme of fear and terror and lack of faith coming up so many times in the book of Mark, it's interesting. You wonder if these themes are being tied together.

So, let me just tell you my theory, but remember, I'm making this up, this is just how I think about it. So, the end of the book ends, and we have seen the disciples fearful in the boat and Jesus rebuking them, and then the end of the book, you get--Jesus rises from the dead and women show up and are fearful and freaking out wondering what's going on, and then basically the book ends, right at verse 8, and then the longer ending kind of smooth's it out. But, if you take our best manuscripts, they end at verse 8, the women are fearful and terrified. I wonder if Mark is making an apologetic for himself. Do you remember we were talking about in the end of the First Missionary Journey (1MJ), there was this big thing between Mark and Paul? Basically, John Mark went with Barnabas and Paul on the 1MJ, but when they got to Turkey, Mark takes off. It was such a big deal, that Paul said he would not go again with John Mark. Paul actually breaks his relationship with Barnabas, and he and Barnabas have a sort of Band of Brothers relationship there. He and Paul had seen death together, when Paul had been stoned almost to the point of death in some of the town in Turkey or Asia Minor, and Barnabas had been with him through all of it. Their relationship broke up because of this John Mark situation I wonder whether, if one of the things that John Mark had faced was this idea of fear and terror, and this may be why he mentions the wild animals, when Jesus was out in the wilderness "with the wild animals," but there was this kind of fearful aspect to him, so he portrays that theme then throughout the book, from the disciples being afraid to various other people. Then, he concludes with these women being afraid, so I wonder if this is a sort of apologetic for Mark for why he quit in the 1MJ, that he himself was afraid, but that's not so atypical because the disciples themselves were afraid. The twelve disciples were afraid many times, and Jesus rebukes them for being afraid and for not having faith. Mark himself could have possibly been terrified and that's why he comes back to Jerusalem. So, that's just a theory or hypothesis. It's way out there, so possibly not, but I wonder. So that's from Mark's perspective, the

author telling his perspectives and the way he looked at things.

N. The End of Mark—Fears and Faith and the Audience [43:25-45:48]

But I wonder if the community he's writing to also, the Romans, (we're talking Nero who is coming up, possible persecutions in Rome) and Mark is seeing this stuff, and realizing that many of the Roman Christians themselves were terrified at this point in their existence. So, they were under Judaism, they were under the Nazarene sect under Judaism, and as they came to be distinguished, to be away from Judaism, to become Christians, under a separate religion not under Judaism, that some of these people were terrified, they were afraid. So, Mark reflects that in the community, sort of like "hey, you people in Rome are terrified; you don't know what will happen," and this is possibly before Nero burned the city down and blamed it on the Christians. The Christians were killed as a result of Neronian persecution. This is possibly well before that, and the people are fearful of Rome, and so Mark picks up these themes because of the audience to whom he's writing.

So, see what I'm doing, these are conjectures on my part, what I'm trying to show you is how the author plays into this inspired text, and how the audience plays into this inspired text. So, for both the author and the audience to whom he's writing, this notion of fear and trembling in following Jesus and not having enough faith are big themes for both Mark and for the community he's writing to. I think whenever you read literature, you have to ask, though I know a lot of people in our culture now don't really ask much about the author, so the author is kind of dismissed. They kind of say, "Well, we don't know who the author is," and they give up too easily on that. I think there is rich insights to come from knowing the author, and it's kind of like books today, the better you know the author, you can understand there are all kinds of things going on in those books because of the author and who he is. The author and the audience, both of those are really critical, and I think with both of those, if you understand the author and the audience, then it enriches your reading, and how you understand what the text means. So, that's the centurion.

O. The Crippled Man—Mark 2 [45:48-49:03]

Now, I want to jump over to a very special passage here, and this is Jesus healing the man who is crippled, and I want to raise the issue here because Mark is an action book, and I want to raise the issue of Jesus healing this cripple in Mark 2. So, what I want to do is narrate the story for you and then we can walk through the particular things as far as understanding the theological point of it. So, Jesus is in the house, he's teaching. Outside, there's a crowd, everyone is trying to get in. These guys come, it's four of this guy's buddies, and the guy is crippled. We don't know why he's crippled, all we know is he's crippled and he's on a mat. The four guys bring him to Jesus but they can't get in because of the crowd, and, of course, it's not handicap accessible in those days, and so what these guys do is, they are not to be easily dissuaded. So, remember we said they overcome obstacles? So, here we have, the suppliant comes, and the suppliant overcomes the obstacle. What's the obstacle? The obstacle is he can't walk and there are people all over so he can't get in to get to Jesus. So, he is going to overcome an obstacle. Actually, that's a really great thing even for people today, like, do you take "No" for an answer, or do you overcome obstacles? Do you go for it? So, if someone puts up an obstacle, do you go over it, under it, or through it? Do you make it happen whether there is an obstacle or not? So, these guys see this obstacle and they know they can't get in but they think, "We won't be dissuaded," and they will get their buddy to Jesus because they believe that Jesus can heal this guy.

So, they go up on the roof, and they dig through the roof. Now, these roofs are mud houses, possibly made out of stone and mud over the roof, and perhaps branches mudded over the top, not our 25-year shingles. So, they dig through this, and you can imagine Jesus seeing all this mud and plaster falling down, and they bring this guy through right down to Jesus. Jesus sees their faith, and everyone in there, who do you have? You have the disciples, you have the opponents, and you have this guy just dropped down.

Jesus looks at the guy, and everyone is expecting Jesus to say--though Jesus never does what everyone expects, Jesus always kind of is the spontaneous, serendipitous Jesus who always does the unexpected. So, everyone is expecting Jesus to say, "Oh, I see your

faith! Take your mat and rise up, walk and leave!" That's how everyone is expecting Jesus to heal this person. Jesus heals people. That's why they're coming to him, to be healed. But instead of saying that, Jesus says, "Your sins are forgiven you." All of a sudden, that takes this whole healing to another dimension. "Your sins are forgiven you." The opponents all react, "Who can forgive sins but God alone?" This is the point, Jesus is God, he can forgive sins. So, this is talking about authority, Mark using this to show Jesus was one who spoke with authority. Jesus says, "Son, your sins are forgiven you."

P. Sickness and Sin 1 Corinthians and Acts [49:03-52:59]

I want to back up and ask the question, then, what is the relationship between sin and sickness? Now, you could have a whole course on this thing, but I just want to kind of bounce through Scripture and think about the connection between sin and sickness and I want to ask questions like this: Is there ever a connection between sin and sickness in the Bible? Do you have an example of a person you can think of when sickness or death was a result of their sin? Is there a connection between sin and sickness? Well, some people say, "No," I'm not necessarily suggesting there is a connection, I'm just asking if there sometimes is a connection between sin and sickness?

1 Corinthians 11:27-30. As soon as I say 1 Corinthians 11, what comes to your mind? That's talking about the Lord's Supper, 1 Corinthians 11, and here, at the Lord's Supper, it warns people not to eat the Lord's Supper in an unworthy manner. Now, there is a huge discussion to be had on that, if you're really interested in some interesting discussions, check out Dave Mathewson's teaching on the book of 1 Corinthians, it's absolutely right on target, and absolutely brilliant. Paul says that some of them had eaten the Lord's Supper in an unworthy manner. Then he said, "That's why many among you are weak and sick, and a number among you have fallen asleep." 1 Corinthians 11:30, "fallen asleep," what's fallen asleep? Well, "fallen asleep" is a euphemism for being dead. In other words, some of them had died because they had eaten the Lord's Supper in an unworthy manner. Was there a connection between sin and their sickness? Paul says, "that is why, because you have eaten in an unworthy manner, some of you are weak, some of you are

sick, and some of you have fallen asleep.” There is a connection between their sin and sickness. Let me just do a kind of rapid fire at some of these things. Ananias and Sapphira, in Acts 5 (notice both these examples are in the New Testament). Ananias and Sapphira came in, everyone was sharing and having everything in common during the early church, people selling their goods and giving to the poor and that sort of thing. Ananias and Sapphira sell their place and turn the money over to the apostles and they ask if he gave them all his money. He said that was it, he gave it all. Then all of a sudden, he's lying to God and he drops dead. His wife comes in, and they ask her too, if she gave all her money to the church. Now, by the way, she didn't have to give any of it, but when she came in saying that she had done that, she's lying. They didn't have to do it. So, she says, “Yes,” and the disciples say, “the feet that carried out your husband will carry you out.” Sapphira's down, she's dead too. Connection between sin and sickness? They lied, they're dead. Ananias lied, he's dead. Sapphira lies, she's dead.

Q. Sickness and Sin—Aaron’s Sons and Miriam [52:59-58:50]

Some of you remember in the Old Testament, in the book of Leviticus--not our most famous book--but in the book of Leviticus, Leviticus 10, they offer an unauthorized fire for the Lord, and what happens? Fire comes out from the Lord and consumes Aaron's two sons. They're dead, smitten down by fire by God. Is there a connection? Yes, they violated the holiness of God, and defiled what God said should not be. They're dead. Miriam in Number 12. She's getting on Moses's case. Now you have to remember that Miriam is Moses's older sister; Moses is Miriam's baby brother. She was probably 15 or 16 years older than Moses. So, she's the older sister, that when Moses was in a basket floating down the Nile River, she's the one that took care of him. So, she's upset that Moses is getting all these things and he's married a Cushite woman, and she objects to that. In Numbers 12, and basically God comes down and says, “Wait a minute, Miriam, do you know who you're talking to?” Aaron and Miriam go at Moses, and Moses is the most beat down person on the face of the earth, even his brother and sister don't have his back. He has all these Jewish folk on his back all the time and he has trouble with that in the preceding

chapter, and now his own brother and sister on him. Moses is feeling totally beat down and afflicted more than anyone else on the face of the earth. So, God comes down and says, “Miriam, when I talk to you and to prophets, I speak through dreams and visions. But when I speak to Moses, I speak face to face, so how is it that you said a word against Moses? Moses is my man, Miriam. “And, when the cloud left, guess what? Miriam is leprous, white as snow. I think there is a play on words here, Moses' black Cushite wife, and Miriam is turned white. Oh, Miriam, do you like white? I'll give you white, snow white, leprous white, and she turns totally white. Why? Because she spoke against Moses, the man of God, the servant of the Lord. So, what you have there is she sinned, then there's a judgment, and then she's healed after a bit. So, that's Miriam.

There's also Elisha, and Naaman, he comes from Syria and he has leprosy, and Elisha says, go down and wash in the Jordan river. The guys says, “Well, hey, the Jordan River is a dirty creek. I'm not going down there, we have good rivers up in Syria. Why would I go down to the Jordan River? But, he eventually goes down, dips seven times, comes up, he's healed. And so he comes back and Elisha won't take any money from this Syrian, he won't take a penny from him. Elisha's servant [Gehazi] says, that man was a Syrian, we should have hit him up for some money. So, he goes running after him after he's gone and he says to Naaman, “Hey, we've had some visitors at our house, we need some garments and some money.” Naaman gives it to him without thinking twice, since he's happy to do it because he has been healed of his leprosy. He gives him the plunder and he comes back to Elisha and he plans to hide it from Elisha. Elisha, the man of God, says, “I saw you go,” and so he says, the leprosy that was on Naaman is now on you, and so he now is thinking he got some plunder from a Syrian ends up getting the leprosy that was on Naaman. So, again, there is a sin and sickness connection. He was greedy and went after the money when he shouldn't have, and now he has leprosy.

John the Baptist's dad, just one example from the New Testament that is rather humorous as we will see in the book of Luke. John the Baptist's dad has trouble believing that his wife, Elizabeth, is going to have a child when they're old. He has trouble

believing, so the angel says, "O really? You have trouble believing this? Watch this, you won't be able to talk until the child is born." So Zacharias goes mute and he can't speak until the child is born. So, again, there is sin and sickness there.

Herod in Acts 12:22, gets up, I think this was down in Caesarea, on the coastline there, and so the sun comes in and he stands up, and he has this metallic garment--maybe like a Michael Jackson sort of thing--and he's up there and all of a sudden, he starts shining out, and all the people see he is shining and he has all this metal stuff on him and he's shining. They look and think, well, he must be a god, and Herod doesn't say anything even while they say, "he must be a god." Then it says because of his arrogance, God smote him with worms and he died. Not a good way to go. So, he had sin in his arrogance then. God takes him down in Acts 12.

Now, James says, this is more theoretical, but James says, "call the elders, and they'll pray for someone and the sickness of sin," in James 5:24. Also, 1 Peter 2:24, "by his stripes, we are healed". That goes back to the Isaiah 53. All I'm trying to say is, in Scripture, is there a connection between sin and sickness? Now, you should be bristling a little bit, and that's ok, that's exactly what I was hoping. There are four levels of which sin hits. The question of Jesus's authority and growing opposition, healing, forgiving sin, and then the opponents will react to Jesus here, and in doing that, the context of the story of why Jesus switched from healing to forgiveness.

S. The Four Aspects of Sin [58:50-64:15]

So, I want to just go down a little bit. Why did Jesus switch from healing to forgiveness? How is it true that forgiving sins is easier than healing? And then down to this question that we are on now: sin and sickness, is there a connection? The answer to that is going to be, yes; and it's also going to be, no. Now, I want to look at four different aspects of sin and how this plays into the connection between sin and sickness. So, there's 4 different aspects. Now, first of all, you have Adam's sin. "We are all sinners," Romans 5, "in Adam." Adam sinned and thus we are all a result of that, the apple doesn't fall far from the tree. We are the descendants of Adam and Eve, and are sinners. So generically, we live

in a sinful world, people get sick as a result of Adam's sin. The whole cosmos here was changed, and so as a result of Adam's sin, we get sick.

But there's also a community aspect of this sin and sickness connection. Does anyone remember when the Philistines captured the ark? This is in 1 Samuel 4 and 5, also in 2 Chronicles 7:13 and following, the judgment on nations. So, the ark of God is captured, so the Philistines capture the ark of God, they send it from city to city. Wherever the ark goes, people get sick. A lot of people think it was the bubonic plague, it's associated with rats and people dying. So basically, wherever the ark went, the people got sick and died. So, there was a judgment on the Philistine nation. That's what I'm trying to suggest here. It wasn't just individuals, it was the whole nation that suffered for that.

Another one that comes to mind, did you remember when we were in 2 Samuel 24, I believe, that David numbered the people. When David numbered the people, the whole nation was judged. So, David was given the three options there, what was he going to do? So, there was three years, three months, or the three days of a plague, and David said, "I'd rather fall into the hands of God than man," so he takes the plague. So the plague goes down on the nation of Israel. So, the nation was judged. By the way, there are hundreds of examples. Just think of the book of Numbers, when the people are out there complaining there's nothing to eat, and the whole nation is judged by the fiery serpents. So, God judges not just individuals. Adam's sin, it doesn't make any difference who you are, we live in a fallen world. Adam's sin affects everything. Nations themselves are judged. Babylon will be judged, Jonah goes to Nineveh and tells Nineveh to repent, so they repent and God spares them. So, whole nations are judged by God. So, Adam's sin covers everybody. Nations themselves are judged. I think sometimes when we think about sin and sickness, we only think about individuals. What I'm suggesting is: no, the whole cosmos has been affected, and all the nations also. Also individuals are judged on the basis on how they conform or do not conform, and how they violate sinfully. Sinful nations go down; Sodom and Gomorrah, they get consumed. Connection between sin and sickness in the community, is not just one individual. Then, individuals, we notice people like Ananias

and Sapphira, are Miriam. Specific individuals that were judged with sickness as their judgment or punishment, that God put on them individually.

Then, one last aspect of sin, not just Adam's over all the cosmos, not just nations being judged for the virtue or lack of virtue, and not just individuals like Miriam, Ananias and Sapphira, but now, Jesus. Jesus, you have the sin and sickness connection, only now it's vicarious. What I mean by vicarious is that Jesus suffers sin and sickness. He is a man of sorrows and acquainted with grief. By his stripes, we are healed. "By his stripes," Isaiah 53, "we are healed." So Jesus, then, suffers at all points like we are, yet without sin. So, Jesus takes our sicknesses upon him. He takes our sicknesses upon him. Jesus heals the sick, and by his stripes we are healed. So, Jesus has this sin and sickness connection. There is still the sin and sickness connection there, only vicarious, he has taken the sickness upon himself and our sins in a vicarious substitution. So, there is a connection between sin and sickness.

T. Really be Careful about Forcing Sin and Sickness Connection [64:15-69:35]

Let me come back the other way, since I think this is really important. I think you have to be really careful with this. Once upon a time, I had a friend named Randy. Randy was a big guy, about 6'4", kind of thin. He was about 35 or 38 at the time. We went to Israel together and he was a really good friend, I have really fond memories with him. As we got to know him better, he indicated that he had a terminal disease in his liver. What's the problem with the liver? Basically, you only get one liver, and you have two kidneys and people can always swap things around or that kind of thing, but not with your liver. Your liver goes, you're dead. So, he had a liver disease which, apparently, 4 in every 100,000,000 people have. This disease is so rare that even a place like Mayo Clinic in Minnesota, they said, "we know what this disease is, we know it's fatal, we know you're dead, but we don't know how to cure this disease. There's only four people in the country that have this, it's so rare, that we aren't studying it that much, we know when it comes up, what it can do, but we don't know how to solve it." So, Randy is told that he has this stuff going down. It was really tough on him and his family. He had a young daughter, I think

she was 16 at the time, I don't know exactly, but I know she was a teenage girl. You can imagine, seeing your father, this big, strong, strapping guy, and he's told that he's got this disease and you know that it's eating away at his insides, and you know that your dad, who you love and honor, is going to die. He's taking all these high power medicines that are doing crazy things to his head, so he acts crazy sometimes. I mean, he's really crazy, he's a great guy but he's crazy half the times anyway, in a good sense, in the sense of playfulness. He was very creative and fun individual to be around, just an absolute joy. But then these medicines start doing stuff to him. So, when Randy and I were over in Israel, we went over to the pool of Bethesda, just inside Lion's gate. If you go 50 or 60 yards in and take a right, there are the pools of Bethesda. Do you remember Jesus, in John 5, it talks about the waters, and there was a guy who was crippled and Jesus comes up to the guy, and the guy says, "I don't have anyone to put me in the water, and when the waters move and the healing power of the waters come, the first one in gets healed but I don't have anyone to put me in the water." Jesus then says, "that's okay, you're good, get up." Jesus heals this crippled fellow in the pools of Bethesda. They've actually found the pools of Bethesda in Jerusalem, at Saint Anne's church. Saint Anne, I believe, was the mother of Mary. So, anyways, we go in there in Saint Anne's church, and we prayed, and I prayed for his healing, that God would heal him. He was only supposed to live for a few years after that, and it was really kind of interesting, I'm at Gordon College now, I'm a million miles away from where I used to teach at Grace College in Indiana, and it was interesting, in 2005 I looked up, probably eight or ten years after we were in Israel together and he was still alive. I haven't kept up with him, I'm not a Facebook person, but I know in 2005 and I think 2008, that Randy was still alive, and I praise God for that, because I view that as a miracle.

So, the point I want to get to is that Randy had some friends and they were going to a church and somebody came up and knew that he had this terminal disease, so they came up to Randy and his wife and asked them, "Do you have any unconfessed sin in your life?" So, is this sickness a result of sin? Now, notice we've been stressing this several times. "Is there sin in your life, is there unconfessed sin in your life?" So, Randy, why is God putting

this on you? I remember that that really hurt him and his wife, that somebody would come up and ask that and try to make the connection between sin and sickness and say that the reason Randy has got this sickness is because he's a sinner. There was no basis to say that! That's really ugly and really out of line, especially when you don't know these people. I personally look up to Randy, not just because he's 6'4", but because of his character and who he was. He's a great guy, I wish I could be like him in many ways. There are many of his attributes that I wish for myself. So, all I'm saying is be careful about making this connection.

U. Two Extreme Ideas of Healing—The Glory Barn and Cessationists [69:35-74:17]

Now you say, "wait a minute." I thought you just established this connection between sin and sickness. I think this raises several questions. So, I want to discuss the purposes of sickness, and it seems to me that you have to be careful to not be too simplistic about this. Let me just back off and tell another story, this comes again from Northern Indiana. Northern Indiana, there was a place called the Glory Barn, and there was a guy called Hobart Freedman, and actually, I came to Grace College hoping to study under this fellow. He was an Old Testament scholar, and he actually wrote a book on the prophets published by Moody Press, one of the best books on the prophets to this day. We're talking thirty years later, this book by Hobart Freedman is excellent. He had got off and went off to do his own thing and started the Glory Barn. This was back when the charismatic movement was going strong, and they believed in miraculous healings and, I'm not sure if there was being slain in the spirit or not, but they were doing these miraculous healings. So, what happened was that they didn't believe in doctors. When they didn't believe in doctors then, this kind of stuff came up. So, when people got sick, they would get together and pray, and after they prayed people would be healed. So, they were really into the healing thing and weren't really into the doctor thing because they said the "Jesus, by his stripes, we are healed."

So, what happened then, actually, was that in the church, in this Glory Barn, there were people who died in the church, babies who died who could have been saved had they

gone to the hospital, but they didn't. Hobart Freedman himself, apparently, since I didn't witness the story myself, I was told that he got a scratch on his leg and it got infected. What happens when something gets infected? Well, you know, you get an infection, you go to take some antibiotics, no problem, antibiotics kill the infection, and you'll have 14 days that you have to take it and after about two or three days, you are pretty much rid of the infection. What's the problem if you don't take antibiotics? You say, "I'll just pray to God that he heals my leg." But if you don't take care of it when it's infected, what happens? All of a sudden, you get gangrene. Now, when you have gangrene, what happens? Are we up a couple notches now? You get gangrene, and the gangrene starts going up your leg and all of a sudden, you're going to lose your leg. Now, you still don't go to a doctor, even with gangrene, can it kill you? The answer is, yes, it will. So here is the leader of this Glory Barn, he dies himself. So, he's consistent and praying for healing and dies because he won't go to a doctor. I have problems with that; I think that's the wrong approach.

So, you're trying to say sin and sickness, that's kind of a one to one kind of thing and what I'm wanting to suggest is to take a step back and look at theological schools. There are some that argue that God jumps to my tune. So, therefore, I'm going to pray for this person and I'm going to demand that God heals this person and then God heals them. It's almost like magic! I pray and God heals, so it's like I have a lever or a vending machine. I pull the lever and the candy drops out. So, God is the divine vending machine. This person is sick, I pray, and God heals people. I pull the vending machine and the person is healed. Do you see what that does? That makes it almost like magic, that God is a divine vending machine. Life is not that simple. Sin and sickness are not always connected that directly and to make demands from God, you're testing God. It's like Jesus jumps from the pinnacle of the temple and the angels were to bear him up because the Devil said in the Psalms that the angels would bear him up. Well, that was the temptation of Satan. So, what I'm saying is you can't do those kind of things. On one hand, you have those people believing in healing and so God heals everyone like magic, and we are going to demand from God that he heals, but we can't do that. On the other hand, you have what are called, cessationists.

What are cessationists? They say that God did all these miracle back when the book of Acts was starting up. Now, God doesn't act like that or do that anymore. There was an ending of God's miracles. That's why they are called cessationists. God has "ceased" doing these miracles.

V. Miracles and the Movement of Redemptive History [74:17-78:07]

I have to admit, I like what Dr. Robert Vannoy taught back years ago when I was in seminary, that basically, it's interesting to trace back the miracles of scripture. So, when did the miracles of scripture happen? Whenever the book of revelation is going forward, the great redemptive process of God is making steps forward. So, God is going to take a redemptive step forward in a big way. So, for example, when they are in Egypt, God is going to take them out into the desert. He will set the slaves free and take them to the promised land. So, in order to get them out of the slavery that they've been in for 400 years in Egypt and to bring them out, you have all these miracles. You have the ten plagues where Moses turns the water into blood, where the locusts come, where the sun is darkened, and where the firstborn of Pharaoh and his people are all killed while the firstborn of Israel are all spared during the Passover. So, what you have is, Moses is going to lead them out. There is a great step forward in this redemptive process, and so there are all these miracles that happen with Moses. Then, what happens? You get into the time of Elisha and Elijah and there's great evil in Israel. God is working with Israel and trying to get them back, and so there are great miracles with these men, Elijah and Elisha, these prophets. Then what happens in the time of Jesus? Jesus is another huge step forward in the redemptive plan, and what happens with Jesus? Jesus comes and what does Jesus do? Jesus walks on water and multiples loaves of bread and fish, he heals people, and raises a girl from the dead, raises Lazarus from the dead, and he himself rises from the dead.

Great step forward in terms of the church and breaking the bonds and fulfilling the Abrahamic covenant, God says to Abraham, you get the land, the seed, and the blessing, and now you will be a blessing to all nations. All of a sudden in the New Testament, you see Abraham's descendants being a blessing to all nations and Jesus Christ, the son of

David, and he's going out like that. So, all of a sudden, you get these miracles in the book of Acts, and so you get a lame man healed and Peter and Paul doing these miracles in the book of Acts. Redemption is going forward. So, as redemptive history takes a great step forward, there are all these miracles that are attending.

What about the book of Revelation? In the end times, you see from the Olivet Discourse of Matthew 24-25, and Mark 13, these great statements of what will happen in the end times, of the sun and moon being darkened and there are all these miracles that are going to happen. Actually, they are warnings that some miracles are going to happen via Satan, that it says that even the elect might be deceived by these miracles that are going to happen. So, as we approach the end times, you expect all these miracles to come up again because God's redemptive plan is moving forward.

So, I'm not a cessationist in thinking that God can't heal today, I think that's a little too extreme, but I do say that you have to be careful of overemphasizing healing or underemphasizing the healing. This is from Jesus: "They that are whole need not a doctor, but they that are sick need a doctor." So, you have to be careful about saying we don't need doctors because Jesus will just heal everybody because that's not really true. That's a really presumptuous way of thinking about it, and you have to be careful. On the one hand, God does heal, and on the other hand, you can't just say God jumps to your tune.

W. Purposes of Sickness—Punishment and Repentance [78:07-81:07]

Now, I want to go to different reasons, which I think is important in terms of--well, let me back up here and talk a little about the term "Son of Man." I think it's very interesting that this term "son of man" and the reference to it is used in the passage with the crippled guy that Jesus will heal and the "Son of Man" has power on earth to forgive sins. What I think is happening here is that as Witherington notes, this is not a reflection of the early church written back in to refer to Jesus, to an original saying of Jesus. R. T. France notes that the reference to the "son of man" rather than the Messiah--why does Jesus say "son of man" rather than the Messiah? He's going to heal these people, and it may be possible that he doesn't want the nationalistic Messiah thing, then he'll get all these political

things coming on him, and he's supposed to be the son of David. Then he has to do all these things the Jews were expecting, to go against Rome and throw off the Roman yoke. So, Jesus uses this term "Son of Man" in a healing context.

But, let's get down now to the purposes of sickness, and I just want to broaden our thinking just a little bit. Does God ever use sickness as a punishment? The answer is yes, Ananias and Sapphira, Acts 5, they lied to the Holy Spirit, they're smitten dead. Herod, his arrogance, "I'm a god" kind of thing, he's smitten dead. So, yes, there is a connection between sickness and punishment as a result of sin. Is it possible that the sin is for not so much punishment but to lead a person to repentance? So, just to think about an example of that, that a person, because of a sickness, was pushed to repentance. Miriam in Numbers 12 would be an example of that. Miriam gets leprosy. The point is God is trying to teach her that she needs to respect his man Moses, his servant. So, what I'll try to say in several ways, is that there are many reasons and many connections between sin and sickness. You have to be very careful, God may be doing something else, the sickness might be a punishment, but it also might not be so much of a punishment but more of leading one to repentance, a goad to get a person to repentance. So, punishment and repentance. Two things that sickness may cause are punishment, yes, and as a means to repentance, yes. But then there are some others here that may be much more positive.

Y. Purposes of Sickness—Job [81:07-84:06]

What about Job? Suppose you're in Job and Job is your good friend, and you come to the book of Job, chapters 1, 2, and 3 and Job is chosen and Satan comes to God and says that if he takes everything Job has, he will curse God to his face. So, God says, "Job is my man, of anybody on the earth, Job is the best." Satan says, "Yeah right, he's the best because you give him all these good things. If you take away the good things and take away the things that you've blessed him with, and Job will curse you." So, Satan pulls away all his good things, Job loses his wealth, he loses his family and his children, who are killed. Then Satan comes back before God and Job still hasn't cursed God, and Satan says, "Yes, but if you strike his body, even though he's willing to let all his wealth go, he's willing to let

his children go, but you haven't struck the man himself. If you take and strike him personally through sickness, he will curse you to your face." So, God says, "Okay, go and strike his body, but don't kill him. Don't kill him, that's the limit, but you can strike his body." So, then you have Job, I think it's chapter 3, he's sitting in ash scraping himself, because of the pain. Now his body is struck and you ask, "did Job get sick?" Did he get these diseases on his body, because he was so sinful? No, Job got those sicknesses because he was so good. God tells us that Job is the best in the world, so you have to be careful. Is the sickness of Job a test of Job to show that Job is gold? So, the sicknesses actually showed and manifested his character, and it let's his light shine. When I look at somebody like Randy, I say the same thing. He has this sickness that he's going to die from and he knows he is going to die shortly, and he's worried about his kids and he's worried about his wife, whom he loves. So, Randy is worried about these things, but what happens? The sickness allows his character to come out. So, when you see this person who has this deathly sickness, who is facing death, when a person faces death, their character comes out. So, you can see, there's no hiding of things at that point, their character comes out. So, with Randy, you see him shine, because he has this sickness and he knows he's going to die. It's incredible. Job is sick but it's the wisdom of Job, his characters and virtues come out. So, all I want to say is, Job is sick, not as a punishment, not as a means to repentance, but to show his character. It declares his character and allows his character to shine more fully.

Z. Purposes of Sickness—Humility and the Glory of God [84:06-86:52]

Another aspect is humility--I skipped obedience. But ok, Paul was given a thorn in the flesh, and this is from 2 Corinthians. Paul talks about his "thorn in the flesh." So, why does Paul have this thorn in the flesh? A lot of people try to figure it out, including myself, and some think it was his eyes or something like that, and again, when you get stoned to the point of death, you are going to get busted up, and when you're busted up, you are never fully alright after that. So, Paul has this thorn in the flesh, and he says he was given the thorn in the flesh to keep him humble. So, sometimes, God gives someone a malady in order for a certain aspect of their character to develop. Have you known people who have

suffered with diseases? I can think of some friends here at Gordon College that the wife has all sorts of diseases and what's happened is, it allows for certain aspects of our character to come out, humility and compassion, the glory of God.

Is it possible that a sickness could be, not as a judgment, not as a punishment, not to bring them to repentance, but the sickness is to declare the glory of God? This one actually comes from John, and sorry to be jumping around, but John 9, this guy is blind from birth. So, the question is, whose sin is this from, his or his parents? So, if he's born blind, how could he sin? In other words, what's the connection between sin and sickness? So, they want to make this one to one connection between sin and sickness. So, who sinned, this man or his parents? Jesus says that neither this man nor his parents sinned. So, in other words, this guy's blindness has nothing to do with particular sins. So, Jesus is saying that neither he nor his parents sinned. Now, Jesus is not saying that they are sinless, but he's saying that his blindness has nothing to do with sin, whether it's his parents or his. Now, Jesus puts mud pies on his eyes, the guy goes down to wash. Now he can see. Jesus gives him his sight. Jesus said this man was born blind to declare the glory of God, to show the glory of God. Jesus is going to heal him and declare his glory, the glory of God. So, the sickness comes as a result of the glory of God as the big picture. So, what I'm saying is, there are very positive things that can come out of sickness.

AA. Purposes of Sickness—Compassion and Knowledge [86:52-91:16]

One of the things that comes out of sickness, and just referring down to Hebrews 4:15, "Therefore, since we have a great high priest, who has gone through the heavens, Jesus the son of God, let us hold firmly to the faith we possess. For, we do not have a high priest who is unable to sympathize with our weaknesses. But we have one that has been tempted in every way just as we are, and yet without sin." Hebrews 4:15, the point is Jesus can sympathize with our weaknesses because he himself has become weak, "By his stripes, we are healed." He has known strife, he has known death. He has overcome death, and therefore he can understand us because he has suffered. This is the point I want to make, a person who has known suffering can have compassion on another person. A person who

has known suffering deeply can deeply touch another person because of compassion. They feel compassion for another person. Compassion is a really, really important aspect between human beings. How does a person develop a feeling of compassion? Because they themselves have felt the sickness, a cancer patient, or a person that has been through a heart attack, or a heart operation, that person can have deep compassion for another person. Examples of this are those people that have suffered from the Holocaust. We used to have a person, Sonya Weitz, she was a person who used to come into Gordon College, and describe her Holocaust experience. She's a survivor of the Holocaust, and she would describe the horrors of that. This woman was very compassionate of other people because she realizes the suffering. So, those who have suffered, a lot of times will have this tremendous ability to have compassion on others. So, it's possible that God uses suffering to help a person in their compassion, their loving of other people in this compassionate way. All I'm trying to say, to go back to the question: is sin connected with sickness? No! Sometimes, it may be the glory of God, sometimes it may be the featuring of a humility or some other aspect, a thorn in the flesh that keeps them humble, other aspects of sin and sickness may be that they will have compassion, that this person gets sick at this point in their life because God knows that twenty years down the road in their life, they will come across a person who will have a terrible sickness and they will be able to minister to that person in a wonderful way. So, there's compassion and yes, there could be an element of judgment, or to push this person towards repentance, but all I'm saying is, you don't know. We don't know. When a person gets sick, they get the flu, they get pneumonia, why did they get this? You just don't know that. We're not God, we don't know. So, all I'm saying is when you get into these kind of positions, God uses, and this is one of my most hated verses of the Bible [irony]. Ecclesiastes 1:18. A lot of people don't like the book of Ecclesiastes anyways, I think it's one of the best books in the Bible, but anyways, it basically says, "Through suffering comes knowledge," and we know this, this is said by many people in the ancient world, that suffering brings knowledge. So, therefore, I don't want to write suffering off as if suffering is only connected with sin. No, sometimes suffering can have

all sorts of other purposes besides just judgment on sin through sickness. So, let's go back then and just be aware of multiplicity of reasons that God could be using sickness in a person's life and use this to think about life more deeply. I need to think about Christ more deeply, I need to think about my character more deeply when sickness hits and you face those type of things. So, sickness exposes one's core.

AB. Healing Today—Doctors, medicine, and the Purpose of Sickness [91:16-94:18]

We said that Jesus acknowledged the need for a doctor. Mark 2:17, "They that are whole need not a doctor but those that are sick need a doctor," Jesus explicitly says. Paul acknowledges the need for medicine. This one comes up, I think it's pretty interesting. Timothy is kind of like Paul's son, like a spiritual son, not physically. Timothy is kind of mentored by Paul. So, Paul tells Timothy to stop drinking water. If he drinks the water, he'll get sick. In the ancient world, and I know some of you have traveled over to the Middle East, so you'll know, in a lot of places you don't drink the water because you can get really sick. So, what happens is, Paul tells him to stop drinking water, and drink wine instead for his stomach. So, in other words, the wine kills bacteria and you are less likely to get sick on the wine. So, there are certain medical things, like washing your hands. Just like the Old Testament with the Jews, you have to wash all the time to clean up. It's just a smart thing to do to get rid of the germs. So, you have to play smart, and Paul acknowledges the need for medicine, in this case it was wine for Timothy's stomach. Not all sickness is from sin, and we said that Jesus said explicitly that the man who was born blind, it wasn't his or his parent's fault. The man was born blind for the glory of God.

Another great passage that I like and I develop another context is Luke 13:4 and following. There's a tower that falls down and kills, I think, about 13 people. And Jesus then says, "were those people worse sinners than anyone else? The tower fell on them and killed them. Are they worse sinners than anybody else?" Jesus says, "No, it had nothing to do with their sin that it fell down." So, we don't know why God does certain things. When you start saying that God did this for this reason, do you think you're God to know his reasons? I can't even read my wife's mind to know what she's thinking, how do we read

God's mind and tell what he's thinking when you have an infinite, omniscient God who knows all things. Can you tell why God did something? Unless he tells me why he did something, I'm only guessing. Sometimes, I can't even guess the reason why my wife does some of the things she does, so you have to be very careful about this. Jesus said those guys were not worse sinners. He tells us explicitly, they were not worse sinners. The tower fell on them, though they were not worse sinners. So, you can't make that connection.

Paul himself was sick, there in 2 Corinthians 12:7, "a thorn in the flesh." Paul talks about his own thorn in the flesh that God gave him apparently to keep him humble. But this thorn in the flesh was not a good thing. Ecclesiastes said sickness is a means of obtaining knowledge. And also the shining forth of one's character, we mentioned that earlier with Job.

AC. Jesus Healing—Forgiving Sins is Easier than Healing [94:18-98:58]

Now, we see Jesus healing folk. Let me relate this healing and Jesus to the kingdom. One of the beautiful things about Jesus is, I think, with Jesus you get an intrusion of the kingdom of God onto earth. So, Jesus walks up to a guy who cannot walk, he's crippled. Jesus says, "Your sins are forgiven you." Let me back up on that because I skipped over something. Why did Jesus say that? Is it easier for me to say "your sins are forgiven you" or "get up and walk"? Jesus says, if I tell you to get up and walk and you walk, then you know the sins are forgiven. Apparently, in this case, there was some sort of connection between sin and sickness. So, Jesus tells the guy to get up and walk. Perhaps Jesus is just relieving this guy's own conception, maybe this guy thought that he had committed a sin and that's why he's crippled and Jesus needs to tell the guy, to reaffirm to him that his sins are forgiven. Then that guy would know forgiveness himself. But then Jesus--is it easier to say your sins are forgiven or get up and walk? Well, it's kind of like this: I had a friend, Mike, when I used to teach in a maximum security prison in Indiana, and Mike was a big guy, about 6'5", about 250 lbs, and he held the record in the prison, where these guys lift weights for like eight hours a day, he held the record in the prison for bench-press, I think it was 440 or 480 lbs, I forget what it was. But Mike was a big guy, bench-pressing 480 lbs.

So, sin and sickness, are they connected? So, I want to say, no. If Mike can bench-press 480 lbs, how will he react when he lifts 150 lbs? If he can press such a great amount, is the smaller amount like nothing? If he can pick up 480 lbs, he can do 100 lbs, probably with one hand. So, what I'm saying is, if you can do the greater, of course you can do the smaller. This is called argument *a fortiori*. If you can do the stronger, then certainly you can do the lesser. Now, going back to the argument, Jesus said, if I tell him to get up and walk, then he'll know his sins have been forgiven. Which one is harder to do? Say get up and walk or forgive sins? Jesus said get up and walk is harder to do, if you know that, then you know your sins are forgiven. Now, maybe just as external, internal things, you can see this guy get up and walk, you can't see his forgiveness of sins. But it may be saying it's harder--if I can just put this kind of spin on it--he may be saying that to deal with the consequences of sins sometimes is harder than the forgiveness of the sin itself. Let me say that again, to deal with the consequences of sins sometimes is harder than the forgiveness of the sin itself. In other words, a person may be forgiven of their sins, but the consequences still follow.

So, for example, let's say, because we've had this happen in Boston, Granny is in her car, she's 85 years old, and she's having trouble driving her car. There's a kid standing in front of a wall. Granny comes up to the wall and goes to put her foot on the brake to stop the car, so she doesn't push the kid against the wall. But instead of putting her foot on the brake, she hits the gas pedal instead, because her foot is kind of spastic. So, she pushes the gas pedal instead of the brake and she crushes the kid and kills the kid against the wall. Now, question: Can you forgive Granny for killing this kid? Did she do it intentionally? Was there malice or forethought? No, she's 85 years old, she probably shouldn't be driving a car. So yes, there are some issues there. But it is possible to forgive Granny. Question: Can you reverse the consequences? The kid is dead, can you reverse those consequences? No, you can't. The consequences of sin are often harder to deal with than the sin itself. She can be forgiven, but the kid is still dead. So, what I'm saying is that a person can do some sinful behavior and get forgiven, but often times, the consequences of what they did can't

be reversed. The consequences stand.

AD. Healing and the Kingdom—Already but Not Yet [98:58-101:47]

Now, Jesus says, I can handle the consequences, as well as the forgiveness of sins. Jesus says, I can reverse the consequences. Get up and walk. So, Jesus says, I can do the greater, therefore, I can do the lesser. So, with Jesus you have a kingdom concept that Jesus is breaking in and Jesus walks up to people and he heals people. A blind man who can't see for all his life and boom, Jesus heals his eyes. A guy who has a crippled hand and he can't function very well in that society when he has a crippled hand, and Jesus says, "you're healed." A guy whose servant, in the case of the centurion's servant, he's having a rough time, he's diseased or whatever and with demons and Jesus, speaks the word and heals him. This is Jesus's compassion. With Peter's mother-in-law, also, Jesus touched her and the fever left her. So, you get the in breaking of the kingdom of God. And by the way, this also occurs when Jesus goes up to the fig tree and he curses the fig tree, and he says, "Fig tree, you didn't produce figs," and he curses the fig tree and the tree withered from the roots up. In other words, Jesus comes and you have the in breaking of the kingdom of God. You get to see the alreadiness of the kingdom that Jesus gives you. The kingdom is already here, and Jesus is here, and you get the intrusion of Jesus, the kingdom coming in.

Yet, there is a "not yet" side of it. We don't live in a perfect state, not everything is perfect, not all people are healed. All of us are going to die sooner or later. So, there is death, there's sickness, there are all these things. So, the kingdom is already here in a certain sense, but it's also not yet. It's a great theme developed by Dave Mathewson, George Ladd and others, it's an already but not yet. So, with Jesus, you see, you get a glimpse of the kingdom of God in Jesus' healing and Jesus' miracles. In the book of Mark, these "wham, bam" kind of miracles, and yet, not everybody is healed. Sin, sickness, and death still reign. But there is coming a day, Revelation 21 and following, when there will be no more sickness, and sickness and dying will flee away, and all tears will be wiped away. There's coming a day when the kingdom of God, as we've seen it foreshadowed, we've seen, as Dr. Elaine Phillips likes to call, the "adumbration," so we've seen this

adumbration, the foreshadowing of the kingdom. Jesus has given us a glimpse of the kingdom breaking in and we see it, and it's wonderful. That kingdom is going to come, Revelation 21 and 22, and someday, sin and sickness--done. And that's going to be a great day, and we look forward to that.

AE. Two Geographical “Contradictions”—Tyre and Sidon [101:47-105:29]

Now, we're going to finish the book of Mark, this will take just a couple more minutes here. I just want to deal with what are basically considered as contradictions in the book of Mark, and this has to do with some of these geographical issues. There are two geographic issues that critics say make errors in the Bible, and I just want to run with these "contradictions" in the Bible that are found. And again, a lot of people today are not interested in the geographical locations but if you've told someone that Boston was in Maine or Boston was in New York, obviously you just made a geographic mistake there, unless you're referring to some little hamlet that's called Boston. So, here we are in Mark 7:31, and it talks about Tyre and it says, "Then Jesus left the vicinity of Tyre and went to Sidon and went through Sidon down to the Sea of Galilee into the region of Decapolis." Deca- ten, polis- city. But the question is this: there seems to be a contradiction here in terms of the ordering. He was at Tyre, and he was going down to the Sea of Galilee, which is down, and he goes north to go south. Now let me just bounce over to this map because I think this map will illustrate it exactly. So, here you've got the city of Tyre, and it says Jesus is going to the Sea of Galilee. So, Jesus going from Tyre, he goes up to Sidon to get down to the Sea of Galilee. Critics say, "Wait a minute, can you see how stupid that is? That's not right. If you're going from Tyre to the Sea of Galilee, you'll cut through here and go down, south-east, not north." Jesus goes up to Sidon and then comes down, and people say that it's an error in the Bible, it's a contradiction. Well, it's very interesting that in 2 Samuel, this is kind of strange actually. 2 Samuel 24:6, David's men are taking the census. David took a census and it was a bad thing that he did. So, 2 Samuel 24:6, "David's men that were taking the census went from Tyre to Sidon, and then they came back down." So, you have basically the same path Jesus took, recorded in 2 Samuel 24. So, what I'm saying

is that these people walked places; they know where these things took place. And so, they knew, and it was said back in 2 Samuel 24, as well as Jesus going from Tyre to Sidon, down into the Sea of Galilee, that's not a big deal for them. That's as if I said I want to take Route 90 to go to Albany, NY and I'm north of Boston. And you tell me that I have to go south to take Route 90, but, no, I go north. Why do I go north? I go north to get to Route 495 because if I go north about 5 miles and catch Route 495, I can avoid all of Boston traffic, at least most times of the day. In other words, I'm supposed to be going west and south, but instead I go north so I can catch Route 495 and get down there better. So, there are certain paths that people take and this connection between going from Tyre up to Sidon and then down, is a common path. So, it's not a contradiction in Scripture, it's not a big deal, and they need to chill out a little bit.

AF. Two Geographical “Contradictions”—Gerasa and the Sea of Galilee

[105:29-108:56]

Now, Gerasa, in Mark 5, there's a demoniac that has a demon in him called Legion. Jesus casts out the demons into the pigs and the pigs run down into the Sea of Galilee and drown, that's the Gerasene demoniac. What's interesting is that the people say, wait a minute, this Gerasene demoniac was from Gerasa, the problem was that Gerasa was not on the Sea of Galilee, and so they say, here is another little flaw in the Bible, that geographically. Gerasa is not on the Sea of Galilee. So, they say, that's a contradiction in the Bible. In a certain aspect, they're right. If you look at the map then, and you come over to the Sea of Galilee, and you find Gerasa and you see that it's about 25, 30 miles off the Sea of Galilee. So, therefore, Gerasa is not on the Sea of Galilee. Now, people have noticed this. First of all, it's possible that there's a connection here, that the people are going back and forth all the time to the sea of Galilee, why are the people of Gerasa going to go down to the sea of Galilee? There's water down there! So, they'll be going back and forth all the time here, so the locations are fairly close, even though they're not right on top of each other. I have a brother-in-law who lives on a famous lake in Pennsylvania. Now, he doesn't live right on the lake, he lives off the lake, but he's got a house that is across the street from

the lake. He has what is called an easement that he can put his boat on the lake and he can go down and get to the lake. So, the easement says, basically he doesn't live right on the lake, but he can have an opportunity to connect to the lake. So, it's very possible that these people at Gerasa had an easement down to the lake, since they were a major city, and they were given an easement to have access to the lake. Now, these people knew this territory, they walked this territory, and so these people in Gerasa had these easements and there were the Gerasene people down by the lake.

One of the students this year brought up what I thought was an interesting point too. They said that maybe Gerasa was the major town down here, and what they said was if someone asked you where you're from and you say Warsaw, Indiana. Now, why would I say, "Warsaw," if I'm not really from Warsaw? I'm actually from Winona Lake. But if I say Winona Lake, it's such a small town that no one really cares about Winona Lake; it's a very small and rural town. Everybody knows Warsaw, it has 25,000 or 35,000 people. So, if you know that area, you'll know Warsaw, though it's not a huge town, people would have a chance at knowing Warsaw, whereas Winona Lake, no one would know it unless you know Billy Sunday. So, all I'm saying is they may have named Gerasa as the major town in that area.

AG. The Ending of Mark (Mk 16:9ff)—Major Textual Variant [108:56-111:55]

Now, one other thing, then we'll quit this discussion on the book of Mark. The ending of the book of Mark, ends in chapter 16:8, most of your versions draw a line there and we see a major textual variant. We talked about textual variants, if you remember, in the beginning of the course. This is one of the big ones. In Mark 16:8, it tells the post-resurrection things that happened to Jesus. If you ended at chapter 16:8, there are these terrified women; these women are scared to death. Jesus rose from the dead and these women are trying to figure out what happened and they're scared to death. I'm trying to suggest to you that the women ending with the fear and trembling, is also possibly reflective of Mark as the author, and also the audience of the Romans as well. So, actually, that short ending is a very good ending for the book of Mark. But book of Mark does go on

from there and describes in this long ending in the book of Mark, which some Christians will pick up snakes and they won't harm them. So, this becomes a basis for the snake handlers and these people handling snakes. The Bible says that snakes won't bother you so, let a rattlesnake bite you and see God do a miracle or something like that. All I'm saying is you have to be very careful, especially when something is a major textual variant. Does the Bible tell us to be picking up snakes? No other place in Scripture tells us that. If it only says that in a textual variant, don't base any major theological points on a textual variant. So, I think you have to be very weary about picking up snakes and letting them bite you and thinking you're going to get away. That's a textual variant thing, that's the only place in Scripture where that occurs.

Now, by the way, when it talks about Jesus dying for our sins, does the Bible talk all over about that? You have that said repeatedly in a hundred places; all of our major doctrines are based on solid texts, without these textual variants. So, what I'm saying is focus on major points in Scripture that we've done over and over again, and do not involve textual variants. Don't base your philosophy on unique textual variants. It's a wonderful passage, the long ending, it's good to read, but don't put too much weight on something that is totally different and strange.

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