

EveryONE

Bible Glossary: People & Places

Mark

Sermon Reference

Mark's gospel is cited in the sermon multiple times, particularly Mark 16, highlighting his snapshot view of the Great Commission given by the resurrected Jesus Christ to preach the gospel to all creatures.

Importance in the Bible

Mark's gospel, as the likely earliest account of Jesus' life and ministry, provides foundational insights into the identity and mission of Christ. His emphasis on Jesus' miraculous power and immediate action underlines the reality of divine authority. Mark's presentation of the Great Commission captures both the scope and the individual nature of the gospel mission, making it essential for understanding Christian evangelism and discipleship. His portrayal grounds the church's mission in the eyewitness testimony of Peter, lending historical credibility and practical urgency to the call to take the gospel to all nations and people.

Background Context

Mark, traditionally known as John Mark, is broadly accepted as the author of the Gospel of Mark, which is considered the earliest written gospel in the New Testament. He was likely a companion of the Apostle Peter, and his gospel is sometimes understood as Peter's eyewitness testimony arranged by Mark. Mark's narrative is characterized by its brisk pace and vivid accounts of Jesus' miraculous works, focusing notably on Jesus as the authoritative Son of God. The gospel demonstrates a keen awareness of the suffering Messiah motif, portraying Jesus' path toward the cross with urgency and immediacy that would resonate powerfully with the early Christian community.

Historically, Mark's context would be the mid-first century, approximately 65-70 AD, a tumultuous time when Christians faced persecution in Rome under Emperor Nero. Mark's gospel addresses this audience by emphasizing both the power and suffering of Jesus, encouraging believers to remain faithful despite trials. This gospel's straightforward, unembellished style presents Jesus' ministry with an immediacy akin to a journalistic report, and Mark's narrative strategy often employs the term "immediately" to move the story swiftly from one event to another.

Mark's gospel contributes distinctively to the biblical canon in that it highlights Jesus' authority and power via miraculous deeds more frequently than the other synoptic

gospels. It also gives a particularly vivid portrayal of Jesus as the Suffering Servant who commands his disciples to take up their cross, informing our understanding of Christian discipleship and mission. The Great Commission in Mark 16 complements this portrayal by underscoring the call to preach universally, empowered by the resurrection victory and divine authority that Jesus embodies.

In theological and missional terms, Mark's account of the Great Commission strikes a note of urgency and individual responsibility in evangelical outreach. His focus on 'every creature' exemplifies the inclusivity of the gospel's reach, emphasizing that the good news is meant for all humanity without exception. This framework connects directly to the sermon's emphasis on personalizing the Great Commission in our present era, viewing mission not only as a collective mandate but as a call to individual believers to impact one soul at a time.

Matthew

Sermon Reference

Matthew's rendition of the Great Commission is referenced in the sermon, highlighting Jesus' declaration of universal authority and the command to make disciples of all nations, baptizing and teaching them.

Importance in the Bible

Matthew's gospel is foundational for understanding Jesus as the authoritative Messiah and teacher who inaugurates the kingdom of heaven. Its Great Commission passage serves as the orthodox Christian formula for worldwide mission, baptismal practice, and discipleship. This gospel anchors Christian mission within the context of Jesus' sovereign authority and universal lordship, influencing the church's mandate to teach and baptize all nations. Matthew's enduring legacy lies in its Jewish-Christian synthesis and comprehensive presentation of Jesus' role as Savior for all peoples.

Background Context

Matthew, also known as Levi, was a tax collector and one of the twelve apostles of Jesus Christ, which lends his gospel the unique perspective of an eyewitness to Jesus' teachings and ministry. His gospel is widely recognized for structuring Jesus' life and teachings in a way that fulfills Old Testament prophecy, emphasizing Jesus as the promised Messiah and King who fulfills Jewish expectations. Matthew's narrative incorporates extensive teaching material, such as the Sermon on the Mount, presenting Jesus as the authoritative teacher and interpreter of the Law.

Authored likely between 70-90 AD, Matthew's gospel targets a predominantly Jewish Christian audience grappling with their identity in the wake of the destruction of the Jerusalem temple and increasing separation from mainstream Judaism. Therefore, Matthew emphasizes Jesus' role as the culmination of Jewish history and law, seeking to affirm that Jesus is the promised fulfillment for "all nations" beyond Israel, inaugurating a new inclusive covenant community.

Matthew's account of the Great Commission (Matthew 28:18-20) encapsulates the gospel's universal mandate with a strong ecclesiological and educational focus. Jesus commands his followers to make disciples, highlighting the processes of baptism and teaching obedience to Jesus' commands as central components of Christian community formation. This passage also asserts Christ's sovereign authority over "heaven and earth," framing disciple-making as the continuation of Jesus' sovereign mission through his followers.

This gospel's meticulous attention to both the Jewish roots of Christianity and its global future bridges the Old and New Testament worlds, reinforcing the legitimacy and compass of the church's mission. The Great Commission in Matthew represents not only a call to evangelize but an instruction to form lifelong apprentices of Jesus, thereby deeply influencing Christian doctrine about conversion, salvation, and Christian education.

Luke

Sermon Reference

Luke is referenced in the sermon via his gospel and the book of Acts, especially emphasizing repentance and forgiveness to all nations beginning at Jerusalem, and the commissioning of witnesses empowered by the Holy Spirit.

Importance in the Bible

Luke's writings offer a uniquely comprehensive and inclusive narrative of salvation history. His gospel and Acts form the backbone for understanding Christian mission as Spirit-empowered, universal outreach that starts at the local community and expands globally. Luke also provides vital theological reflection on repentance, forgiveness, and the Spirit's role in authentic witness. The Great Commission and Pentecost narratives in Luke-Acts influence how the church understands its call to be a Spirit-led missionary movement, shaping doctrines of evangelism, ecclesiology, and pneumatology.

Background Context

Luke, identified as a physician and companion of Apostle Paul, authored both the Gospel of Luke and the Acts of the Apostles, creating a two-volume historical and theological narrative that chronicles the life of Jesus and the early church. Writing in approximately 80-90 AD, Luke addresses Theophilus, aiming to present an orderly and comprehensive account to affirm the truth of the Christian faith and explain its expansion from Jerusalem to the wider Roman world.

Luke's gospel stresses Jesus' compassion and inclusion of marginalized groups — Gentiles, women, Samaritans, sinners — thus underscoring the universal reach of the gospel. His narrative emphasizes prayer, the work of the Holy Spirit, and the continuity between God's promises to Israel and God's mission through Jesus to all nations. This universalism undergirds the Great Commission themes and the mission outlined after Jesus' resurrection.

In Acts 1:8, Luke records Jesus' final charging of his followers to be witnesses empowered by the Holy Spirit in Jerusalem, Judea, Samaria, and to the ends of the earth. This geographical progression mirrors the gospel's expansion from local Jewish followers to a global Gentile church, illustrating God's plan for inclusive redemption. Luke's depiction of how the early church grew, faced persecution, and spread the gospel provides critical context for understanding the early missionary movement and the role of the Spirit in mission.

The historical and theological richness of Luke's writings makes him indispensable for biblical studies, detailing both the humanity and divinity of Jesus, as well as the empowered missionary activity of the early Christians. Luke's emphasis on Spirit-empowered witness reflects the core message of the sermon regarding personalized evangelism and spiritual empowerment.

Paul

Sermon Reference

Paul is mentioned in relation to Luke's writings and the missionary vision received through the Macedonian man's appeal, illustrating the personal nature of mission as one person's call leading to a global gospel spread.

Importance in the Bible

Paul's contributions extend from theological articulation to pioneering missionary practice. His letters and missionary journeys establish the early church's doctrinal and missional contours. The vision of the Macedonian man symbolizes divine invitation individualized yet with far-reaching implications. Paul exemplifies how the Spirit empowers believers to transcend cultural and geographical boundaries in gospel proclamation, reinforcing the sermon's call for personal commitment to reach the 'one' for global transformation.

Background Context

Paul, originally Saul of Tarsus, was a Pharisee and Roman citizen who became the foremost apostle to the Gentiles after his dramatic conversion on the road to Damascus. His epistles form a significant portion of the New Testament, elaborating on Christian theology, ethics, and mission. Paul's missionary journeys, chronicled in Acts, profoundly shaped the spread of Christianity beyond Jewish cultural boundaries into the Greco-Roman world.

His calling came with a direct revelation of the risen Christ and a mandate to preach the gospel to the Gentile nations. Paul's ministry combined deep theological reflection with practical missionary strategy. The vision of the Macedonian man (Acts 16:9-10) represented a divine summons to enter Europe, highlighting the personal and divine initiation of mission work. Paul's response to this call exemplifies the sermon's theme of personalized evangelism, responding to individual opportunity in service of global mission.

Paul's letters reveal a complex theological framework emphasizing justification by faith, the work of the Holy Spirit, unity in the body of Christ, and ethical living, providing doctrinal clarity that has guided the church through centuries of interpretation. His missionary strategy—establishing house churches, mentoring leaders, and adapting to cultural contexts—models a relational and sustainable approach to gospel transmission.

Philip

Sermon Reference

Philip is highlighted as an evangelist who left a great revival in Samaria to go into the desert to minister to one Ethiopian eunuch, emphasizing the importance of pursuing the one.

Importance in the Bible

Philip exemplifies the power of individual evangelism that complements mass movements. His ministry is critical in demonstrating the Spirit's guidance in mission and the importance of obedience to God's call even when it means leaving apparent success to pursue individual souls. In the larger biblical narrative, Philip bridges the early church's Jewish roots with the worldwide, multiethnic church. His story validates the sermon's emphasis on reaching the one as a means to reach all.

Background Context

Philip, often called Philip the Evangelist, was one of the seven deacons appointed in Acts 6 to minister to the early church's needs, particularly overseeing distribution to widows. However, he quickly gained recognition for his evangelistic zeal and power, performing signs and preaching the gospel effectively. His ministry in Samaria, as recorded in Acts 8, marks the first major spread of the gospel outside Jerusalem, notably crossing traditional ethnic and religious boundaries.

Philip's encounter with the Ethiopian eunuch symbolizes the extension of the gospel to the Gentile world and exemplifies personalized evangelism. The eunuch, a high official in Candace's court, represented an important connection point between Judea and Ethiopia, highlighting the global scope of the gospel mission. Philip's obedience to the Spirit's prompting to leave a large revival to focus on one man underscores the sermon's core theme of valuing the individual in divine mission.

Philip's narrative also illustrates how the early church's mission moved from collective efforts to the Spirit-led, individualized witness that catalyzed broader outreach. His baptism of the Ethiopian eunuch is significant as the earliest recorded baptism of an African believer and initiates the spread of Christianity into Africa.

Ethiopian Eunuch

Sermon Reference

The Ethiopian eunuch is mentioned as the one individual Philip was sent to evangelize in the desert, illustrating the heart of God for the one.

Importance in the Bible

The Ethiopian eunuch is emblematic of the gospel's universal invitation and the early church's movement toward global inclusivity. His narrative emphasizes that salvation is for all individuals, regardless of race, status, or geography. His baptism marks a critical milestone in the expansion of Christian faith into Africa, making him a figure of foundational importance for understanding Christianity's reach. The story profoundly supports the sermon's theme of valuing and pursuing the one, demonstrating how such individual encounters mediate larger redemptive movements.

Background Context

The Ethiopian eunuch is a notable biblical figure appearing in Acts 8:26-40. He was a high official under Candace, queen of the Ethiopians, responsible for her treasury. This description places him as a person of considerable influence and suggests the early spread of the gospel reached African royalty's inner circles at an early date.

Scripturally, the eunuch's journey illustrates a receptive heart towards God's Word and an openness to salvation beyond ethnic and religious boundaries. Reading Isaiah 53 on the road and seeking understanding through Philip positions him as a seeker responsive to divine revelation. His immediate profession of faith and baptism underscore the biblical precedent for a clear response to the gospel and the importance of water baptism as a public declaration of faith.

Historically and theologically, the Ethiopian eunuch represents the gospel's expansion beyond traditional Jewish and Gentile divisions and the fulfillment of Isaiah's prophecy about including eunuchs among God's people (Isaiah 56:3-5). His story anticipates the future multicultural and multiethnic church, emphasizing that God's salvation is accessible to all regardless of nationality or social status. Thus, the Ethiopian eunuch not only embodies the personal dimension of the gospel but also stands as a historical beacon pointing to the worldwide church's diversity.

Desmond Doss

Sermon Reference

Desmond Doss is referenced as a real-life example of dedication to 'one more' in the story of Hacksaw Ridge, where he saved over 75 lives under battlefield conditions.

Background Context

Desmond Doss was a United States Army corporal who served as a combat medic during World War II, famously refusing to carry a weapon due to his Christian convictions as a Seventh-day Adventist. His remarkable bravery during the Battle of Okinawa, particularly

the rescue of over 75 wounded soldiers from the precarious Hacksaw Ridge, earned him the Medal of Honor — the highest U.S. military decoration. His story became widely known through the 2016 film 'Hacksaw Ridge,' which dramatizes his faithful service under fire, his reliance on prayer, and his commitment to saving one life at a time.

Though a historical figure rather than a biblical character, Doss' story resonates deeply with Christian values of sacrificial service, courage, and the sanctity of each human life. His motivation, as highlighted in the sermon, was a continual prayer to 'get one more,' reflecting a ministry of personal commitment and perseverance in the face of enormous opposition. His example mirrors the biblical principle of valuing each individual soul, validating the sermon's call for a personal and persistent evangelistic effort.

Doss' life and service exemplify an intersection between faith and action, demonstrating how one's convictions born of scriptural principles can profoundly impact the world in practical and tangible ways. His steadfast faith under duress serves as an inspiration within Christian circles, encouraging believers to embody gospel values in everyday life, including extreme contexts.

Billy Graham

Sermon Reference

Billy Graham is cited as a pivotal evangelist whose salvation was part of a chain reaction beginning with winning one individual, emphasizing the great impact reaching the one can have.

Background Context

Billy Graham (1918-2018) was one of the most influential Christian evangelists of the 20th century, known worldwide for preaching the gospel to millions through large-scale crusades, media broadcasts, and personal evangelism initiatives. His ministry began in earnest in the 1940s, and by the mid-century, he had established himself as a leading figure in American and global Christianity, advocating a simple, clear message of salvation through faith in Jesus Christ.

Graham's conversion came through the influence of the revival preacher Mordecai Ham during a tent meeting in Charlotte, North Carolina—a chain of spiritual influence famously traced back to D.L. Moody and others. This lineage underscores the sermon's theme that spiritual legacies are often formed one soul at a time, revealing how personal evangelism creates rippling effects through generations and across nations.

Throughout his ministry, Graham emphasized the accessibility of the gospel, famously offering an altar call inviting individuals to respond to Christ in personal faith—a practice that significantly increased evangelical participation worldwide. He actively worked to bridge denominational divides across cultural and national boundaries, advocating for global evangelization consistent with the Great Commission's call.

Billy Graham's leadership also extended into advising U.S. presidents and speaking to international audiences, allowing him to influence not only individual believers but also societal structures. His commitment to evangelism and unity among Christians has left an enduring legacy, shaping contemporary understandings of mission and public Christian witness in both evangelical and broader Christian contexts.

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