

# **BIB203 NT1 Life of Christ**

## **Unit 4c Synoptic Example 3**

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In this segment, we're going to be looking at three passages: Mark 1:40-45, Mark 2:1-12, Mark 2:13-17. Again, it's in sequence, which is working through the text. And already at this point, some of you may have been laying these Scriptures side by side. Maybe you've got three Bibles. Or maybe more easily, you pull it up on the internet, on your database, and you're looking at these Scriptures side by side. And it's kind of interesting to look at the different emphases of the writer. In all of this, the temptation would be to begin questioning whether these guys knew what they were talking about. And I want to just state that categorically and emphatically, yes, they did. You have a multiplicity of perspectives, but that does not render their testimony untrue. If anything, it gives credence to the story of Jesus, with Jesus of Nazareth, on a human level. On the standpoint of faith and the inward witness of the Holy Spirit, the story is true. Jesus of Nazareth was a real man who happened to be God, and he was incarnate. He was born of the Virgin Mary, suffered under Pontius Pilate, died on a Roman cross, and was resurrected the third day, and now sits at the right hand of the Father after having ascended to heaven bodily. I believe that.

But when you look at these texts, there are variances or emphases in terms of how the story is told. Not only that. Not only do you have slight variances. You have different placements of these various stories, these various traditional materials. So here we are. I just wanted to put that out there and clarify it because it's possible to get lost in the weeds. And I just want you to take a step back, figuratively speaking at least, and take a deep breath. Scholars have been going at this for over 200 years and their best assessment of all of this is that this is what eyewitnesses do. Even in our day and age, even with the video clip, with the time stamp, there are different perspectives that are always to be had, even in our day and age where we dot every I and cross every T with respect to details and facts.

With all of that said then, let's look at Mark 1:40-45. "And a leper came to him, imploring him, and kneeling said to him, 'If you will, you can make me clean.' Moved with pity, he stretched out his hand and touched him and said to him, 'I will; be clean.' And immediately the leprosy left him, and he was made clean. And Jesus sternly charged him and sent him away at once, and said to him, 'See that you say nothing to anyone, but go, show yourself to the priest and offer for your cleansing what Moses commanded, for a proof to them.' But he went out and began to talk freely about it, and to spread the news, so that Jesus could no longer openly enter a town, but was out in desolate places, and people were coming to him from every quarter." So that's Mark.

So now we want to look at what Matthew does with that. And so for that, we have to turn to Matthew 8:1-4 while holding our place in Mark. So in Matthew 8, Jesus comes down from the mountain. "When he came down from the mountain, great crowds followed him. A leper comes to him and kneels before him (verse 2) and says, 'Lord, you can make me clean, if you will.' Jesus stretched out his hand and touched him, saying, 'I will; be clean. Immediately his leprosy was cleansed. Jesus said to him, 'Don't say anything to anyone. Show yourself to the priest and offer the gift that Moses commanded, for a proof to them.'"

So there are similarities. Let's do a quick comparison. And of course, it's important to note that I'm not going to note every single level of dissimilarity or similarity. This is a general flyover. Please feel free to explore the similarities and the differences yourself to see what you come up with. So anyway, in Mark 1:40, a leper comes to him, imploring him. Matthew says a leper came to him and knelt before him. But so does Mark. Mark says "imploring him and kneeling. 'If you will, you can make me clean.'" Matthew adds, "Lord," and then he says, "If you will, you can make me clean." In Mark, Jesus is moved with pity.

Mark includes that. Jesus is “moved with pity, stretched out his hand and touched him and said, ‘I will; be clean.’” In Matthew, Jesus simply “stretched out his hand and touched him, saying, ‘I will; be clean.’ And immediately his leprosy was cleansed.” Mark says the leprosy left him immediately. He was made clean. Matthew languages that a bit differently, but it’s the same content. Jesus told him in Mark, “See that you say nothing to anyone. Show yourself to the priest.” Matthew has the same material. In Mark, he is told to “offer for your cleansing what Moses commanded, for a proof to them.” Matthew says, “Show yourself to the priest and offer the gift that Moses commanded, for a proof to them.” So there’s a difference. Mark emphasizes the need for cleansing. In Matthew, the emphasis is on the gift that Moses commanded. So that’s Matthew, his use of Mark.

Now, what does Luke do? Well, we look at Luke 5:12-16. So leave Mark behind. Hold your place in Mark and let’s go and look at Luke. So in Luke 5:12, “While he was in one of the cities...” So notice. Matthew places the story immediately after the Sermon of the Mount, when he was come down from the mountain or the hill. Mark, well, what he does is he situates the story after Jesus leaves Capernaum to preach in other cities throughout Galilee. That’s when the leper comes to him. But in Luke, we have “While he was in one of the cities, there came a man full of leprosy. And when he saw Jesus,” I’m in Luke 5:12 now, “he fell on his face and begged him, ‘Lord, if you will, you can make me clean.’” So in Luke’s rendition of the events, the leper is not just imploring and kneeling. The leper falls on his face and implores him. “Lord, if you will, you can make me clean.” Jesus stretched out his hand and touched him. Again, remember, Mark says Jesus was moved with pity. “Immediately the leprosy left him. He charged him to tell no one, but ‘go and show yourself to the priest, and make an offering for your cleansing.’” So Luke follows Mark, but Matthew does not. “For a proof to them.” And then we’re told, “But now even more the report about him went abroad, and great crowds gathered to hear him and to be healed of their infirmities. But he would withdraw to desolate places and pray.” So those are the comparisons that we’re looking at. Mark 1:40-45 correlated with Matthew 8:1-4, then Luke 5:12-16.

So now we want to look at Mark 2:1-12. That’s our next section. So this is the one where Jesus heals a paralytic. He returns to Capernaum. We read in Mark. It’s reported that he is at home. That would probably be Peter’s home. Many are gathered together. There’s no more room, not even at the door. He’s preaching the word to them. And so they came, bringing to him a paralytic carried by four men. These four men cannot get near him, so they climb up to the roof above him and they made an opening and “let down the bed on which the paralytic lay” (verse 4). Verse 5, “Jesus saw their faith. He said to the paralytic, ‘Son, your sins are forgiven.’” And there’s some scribes sitting there questioning why Jesus would speak that way. Wasn’t it blasphemy? Wasn’t it God alone who could forgive sins? And Jesus perceived in his spirit that they questioned, and so he said to them, verse 8, “Why do you question these things in your hearts? Which is easier, to say to the paralytic, ‘Your sins are forgiven,’ or to say, ‘Rise, take up your bed and walk’? But that you may know that the Son of Man has authority on earth to forgive sins.” He does both. He has forgiven him. He’s not going to say it again. And then he tells him to take up his bed and walk. And the paralytic gets up, immediately picks up his bed, goes out before all of them. And they’re amazed and they glorified God because they’ve never seen anything like this. That’s the Marcan tradition.

Well, Matthew now, in 9:1-8, we’re told that Jesus gets into a boat, crosses over, and comes to his own city. In context, that would also be Capernaum because we have a prior context in which Jesus enters Capernaum. And that’s kind of where he begins his base of operations. “Behold, some people brought to him a paralytic. Jesus saw their faith. He said to the paralytic, ‘Take heart, my son; your sins are

forgiven,” as opposed to the ordinary statement, “Your sins are forgiven.” Some of the scribes said to themselves, “This man is blaspheming.” Jesus knows their thoughts. He doesn’t perceive in his spirit. He knows their thoughts and he said, “Why do you think evil in your hearts? Which is easier?” Then he asks the same question. “Easier to say, ‘Your sins are forgiven,’ or to say, ‘Rise and walk’? But that you may know that the Son of Man has authority on earth to forgive sins.” He said to the paralytic, “Rise, pick up your bed and go home.” And you have a simple statement in verse 7 there. “And he rose and went home.” You don’t have the expansion that you have in Mark. In Mark, “And he rose and immediately picked up his bed and went out before them all, so that they were all amazed and glorified God, saying, ‘We never saw anything like this!’” That’s a fuller description. Matthew compactifies that description. “The crowds saw it (verse 8), they were afraid, and they glorified God.” Matthew has the crowds afraid. Mark has them amazed. “They glorified God who has given such authority to men.”

Luke, in 5:17-26, does what he does. And let’s take a look at it. Verse 17. “On one of those days, as he was teaching, Pharisees and teachers of the law were sitting there, who had come from every village of Galilee and Judea and from Jerusalem.” So that’s added detail. That’s not present in the others. And our comparison is between Luke and Mark. So he returns to Capernaum after some days. In Mark, he’s at home. Many are gathered together. There are scribes sitting there. That’s all we find out. In Luke, however, what we find is that there are Pharisees, teachers of the law, who had come from every village of Galilee. They had come from Judea in the south. In particular, they had come from Jerusalem because the reports about Jesus have spread far and wide. Then we’re told, “And the power of the Lord was with him to heal. And behold, some men were bringing on a bed a man who was paralyzed, and they were seeking to bring him in and lay him before Jesus.”

And much of the material in verse 19 all the way to verse 24 and arguably after that is similar. There are just a few shifts in word usage here and there. “And the scribes and the Pharisees began to question,” Luke tells us. In Mark, it’s just the scribes. “Who is this who speaks blasphemies? Who can forgive sins but God alone?” Jesus perceived their thoughts. So Luke follows Mark in that regard. “Why do you question in your hearts?” He doesn’t say, “Why do you think evil in your hearts?” like Matthew does. “But that you may know that the Son of Man has authority on earth to forgive sins,” he said to the paralytic. “He said to the man who was paralyzed.” That’s how Luke renders that. “‘I say to you, rise, pick up your bed and go home.’ And immediately he rose up before them and picked up what he had been lying on and went home, glorifying God.” So he, the former paralytic, is the one who is glorifying God. In Mark, you don’t see him glorifying God. You certainly do not see it in Matthew. In Matthew, we read that the crowds that were present were afraid and glorified God. But here in Luke, it’s the former paralytic who glorifies God, at least in verse 25. Verse 26, “Amazement seized them all. They glorified God and were filled with awe, saying, ‘We have seen extraordinary things today.’”

And so you have these variances but essentially the same story. Let’s do one more before we end the segment. Take a look at Mark 2:13-17. “He went out again beside the sea, and all the crowd was coming to him.” Mark 2:13. “He was teaching them. And as he passed by, he saw Levi the son of Alphaeus sitting at the tax booth, and he said to him, ‘Follow me.’ And he rose and followed him. And as he reclined at table in his house, many tax collectors and sinners were reclining with Jesus and his disciples, for there were many who followed him. And the scribes of the Pharisees, when they saw that he was eating with sinners and tax collectors, said to his disciples, ‘Why does he eat with tax collectors and sinners?’ And when Jesus heard it, he said to them, ‘Those who are well have no need of a physician, but those who are sick. I came not to call the righteous, but sinners.’”

So that's the Marcan tradition, the call of Levi. In Matthew 9:9-13, we see Jesus pass on from there. So missing from Matthew is he went out again beside the sea. Mark adds that detail. He went out beside the sea. Matthew does not include that detail. He passed on from there. He saw a man called Matthew sitting at the tax booth, and he said to him, "Follow me." And he rose and followed him. Jesus reclined at table in the house. Not at his house, like you see in Mark 2:15. "Many tax collectors and sinners came and were reclining with Jesus and his disciples." Similar to what you see in Mark. "Many tax collectors and sinners were reclining with Jesus and his disciples, for there were many who followed him." So far, so good. "The Pharisees saw this. They said to his disciples, 'Why does your teacher eat with tax collectors and sinners?'" Mark simply says, "Why does he eat with tax collectors and sinners?" Jesus heard it. Well, Matthew says. "But when he heard it, he said, 'Those who are well have no need of a physician, but those who are sick.'" And that's pretty much what you have with Mark. So Matthew follows Mark. "I came not to call the righteous, but sinners" is what you have in Mark. But in Matthew, there's an added detail. "Go and learn what this means." He sends a message to the Pharisees. "'I desire mercy, and not sacrifice.' For I came not to call the righteous, but sinners." So Matthew adds a detail that Mark does not.

What does Luke do with Mark? For that, we turn to Luke 5:27-32. So in Mark, we have the call of Levi. Luke follows Mark. "After this he went out (verse 27), saw a tax collector named Levi, sitting at the tax booth. And he said to him, 'Follow me.' And leaving everything, he rose and followed him." Verse 29, "And Levi made him a great feast in his house." That's quite explicit. No question there. "There was a large company of tax collectors and others reclining at table with them." Not with Jesus and his disciples. It means the same thing. "With them." Just the use of the pronoun. "And the Pharisees and their scribes grumbled at his disciples." Well, in Mark, it's just the Pharisees, I believe. But now in Mark, it says, "And the scribes of the Pharisees." But Luke says, "The Pharisees and their scribes." Kind of the same thing but languaging it differently. "They grumbled at his disciples, saying, 'Why do you eat and drink with tax collectors and sinners?'" And Jesus answered them, 'Those who are well have no need of a physician, but those who are sick. I have not come to call the righteous but sinners to repentance.'" So "to repentance" is missing from Mark. And of course, in Matthew, "Go and learn what this means. 'I desire mercy, and not sacrifice.'"