

Who is Jesus?
Mark 4:35-6:29

Most of us are familiar with the figure of the white haired absent-minded professor, writing $E=MC^2$ on the blackboard.

We think about Albert Einstein as the great genius, working in prestigious universities, consorting with politicians and scientists and philosophers.

But there is another Einstein that fewer of us know.

Before he rocketed into a place of honor and distinction in 1905, Einstein was an unknown bureaucrat living in Berne, Switzerland.

There was nothing about Einstein to indicate the great genius he possessed.

He learned to speak late in childhood and was still not fluent by the age of nine.

His parents feared he might be retarded.

He was a poor student in school – so much so that when his father asked his teacher what profession little Albert should adopt, the answer was simply,

“It doesn’t matter;
he’ll never make a success of anything.”

He was expelled from school
at the age of fourteen
for disruptive behavior.

He failed his entrance exam to university.

Throughout his life, he was chronically absent-minded:
forgetting his keys, neglecting to put on socks,
unable to figure the correct change.

Until 1905, the year Einstein published
four shattering papers that revolutionized physics,
he worked in a Swiss patent office,
studying other people’s inventions.

Who would have imagined
that such a person might possess
one of the greatest intellects of the 20th century?

Only Einstein’s *accomplishments* forced people
to sit up and take notice.

He had neither credentials
nor background
nor position.

All he had was
the sheer power of his genius
and the ideas
which flowed from it.

What Einstein had, though,
was enough to make the world sit up
and take notice
and begin asking the question,
“Who is that fellow anyway?”

Something similar happened with Jesus.

There were asking, “who is this guy?”

I. Who is Jesus?

A. But Jesus was a nobody

1. Mark gives no background on Jesus.

a. He appears from nowhere
to be baptized by John.

b. Mark gives us no indication that
there was anything special
about Jesus’ **ancestry** (as in Matthew),

or that wonderful things **accompanied
his birth** (as in Matthew and Luke),

or that as a boy was obsessed
with Scripture (as does Luke).

- c. Only incidentally do we learn (in Mark) that Jesus is from Nazareth, has brothers and sisters, and was a carpenter by trade.

2. Mark presents no credentials for Jesus.

- a. Mark does not use the O.T. to “prove” Jesus is the Messiah.
- b. The other gospels are full of quotes from the OT proving
 - that Jesus is the Messiah:
 - his parentage,
 - the place and timing of his birth,
 - his escape to Egypt,
 - his choice of Capernaum as a base of operations,
 - his healing ministry,
 - his speaking in parables,
 - his betrayal and death.

All are explained
as fulfilling Old Testament prophecy.

- c. Mark does not give a single instance where **O.T. prophecy** is used in this way.

- d. Furthermore, Mark offers no “witnesses” to Jesus.
- e. The other gospels tell of Simeon, Anna, the heavenly host, wise men from the east.
- f. Mark presents only two sentences from John the Baptist and a one sentence statement from a voice out of heaven.
- g. We know nothing of Jesus’ religious or secular education.

Transition:

Jesus was a nobody.

He had no background,
no credentials,
no formal training,
no position.

All he had was **himself**,
and a **message he believed in**,
and a Father who was **well pleased with him**.

That was enough.

B. The accomplishments of this nobody

1. He was *teaching* with power and authority.
2. Everyone had *heard* of Jesus.
3. He possessed *miraculous powers*.

Transition:

Who is this Nobody?

People wondered about Jesus.

The common folk talked about him
around the dinner table.

The religious leaders
sent **delegations**
to listen to him
and **try to discover**
what he was about.

The disciples knew he **was special**
but didn't quite know
what to make of him.

In Mark 4:35-6:29 we see
a discussion
about the identity of Jesus.

And we see that
the power of Jesus
forces people
to make decisions
about his identity.

The result is that some people
move **closer to real faith**
and some move **further away.**

II. The Powerful Jesus

Let's look at four of those **powerful deeds** in chapters 4-6.

A. Jesus has power to calm a storm - Mk 4:35-41 [NATURE].

1. A furious storm blows up on the Sea of Galilee.
 - a. This is no ordinary storm.
 - b. At least four of the disciples were fishermen,
raised all their lives on this particular body of
water.
 - c. Yet they are afraid for their lives.

d. *“Don’t you care if we drown”* (4:38).

2. Jesus rebuked the wind and waves – “Quiet! Be still!”

**B. Jesus has power to cast out demons - Mk 5:1-20
[SATAN].**

1. This is the quintessential case of demon possession.

a. The man lived in a graveyard.

b. He could not be bound even with chains.

c. Day and night he **screamed**
and **cut himself with stones**.

d. He had a legion of demons
inside him.

2. Yet, so strong is Jesus, that he can say,

“come out of this man you evil spirit” (4:8).

e. And immediately
the man is changed –
he is dressed
and in his right mind
and wants to accompany Jesus.

**C. Jesus has power to heal the sick - Mk 5:24b-34
[DISEASE].**

1. This was no ordinary illness.
 - a. The woman had been sick for 12 years.
 - b. She saw every doctor she could...
 - c. and spent every cent she had.
 - d. But she only grew worse, not better.

2. Jesus is no ordinary physician.
 - a. A hand reaches out
from the crowd
and touches him.
 - b. She is convinced
that to touch him
is to be healed.
 - c. Immediately,
her pain is gone!
 - d. Jesus tells her,
“Your faith has healed you.” (5:34).

**D. Jesus has power over death - Mk 5:21-24a, 35-43
[DEATH].**

1. Jairus, the synagogue ruler's
12 year old daughter is dead.

- a. Jesus takes Peter, James, John and James' brother along with the girl's mom and dad to see the dead girl.
- b. Jesus says to her "*Talitha koum,*" which means, "*little girl I say to you get up*" (5:41).
- c. And the little girl stood up and walked around!

2. He is proclaiming his power over death.

III. "What do you think of this Jesus?"

A. Look at the people's responses to these deeds of Jesus

1. 4:41 - the disciples are *terrified*.
2. 5:15 - the townsfolk are *afraid* (see also vs. 30).
3. 5:33 - the woman *trembles with fear*
4. 5:42 - parents and disciples are "*completely astonished.*"

B. This powerful Jesus provokes an identity crisis.

1. The disciples struggle with the identity of Jesus.

⁴¹ *They were terrified and asked each other, “Who is this? Even the wind and the waves obey him!” (Mark 4:41, NIV)*

- a. Not “How did he do that?” but a question about his identity.
- b. What kind of man orders nature around?
- c. You tell me. Who can do that?

2. His neighbors question his identity.

¹ *Jesus left there and went to his hometown, accompanied by his disciples.*

² *When the Sabbath came, he began to teach in the synagogue, and many who heard him were amazed. “Where did this man get these things?” they asked.*

“What’s this wisdom that has been given him, that he even does miracles!

³ *Isn’t this the carpenter? Isn’t this Mary’s son and the brother of James, Joseph, Judas and Simon? Aren’t his sisters here with us?” And they took offense at him.*

⁴ *Jesus said to them, “Only in his hometown, among his relatives and in his own house is a prophet without honor.”*

⁵ *He could not do any miracles there, except lay his hands on a few sick people and heal them.*

⁶ *And he was amazed at their lack of faith.*
(Mark 6:1-6, NIV)

a. They see the miraculous (6:2).

b. And they're offended.

c. They know who he is already!
He is Mary's boy.

d. Where does he come off
presuming to be a Rabbi?

e. Who does he think he is?

3. His identity is the pressing issue.

¹⁴ *King Herod heard about this, for Jesus' name had become well known. Some were saying, “John the Baptist has been raised from the dead, and that is why miraculous powers are at work in him.”*

¹⁵ *Others said, “He is Elijah.”*

And still others claimed, “He is a prophet, like one of the prophets of long ago.”

¹⁶ *But when Herod heard this, he said, “John, the man I beheaded, has been raised from the dead!” (Mark 6:14-16, NIV)*

- a. Again, it’s two things:
 - Jesus’ **miracles**
 - & his **identity**

- b. He is John the Baptist come back to life.

- c. He is Elijah.

- f. He is some other great prophet.

IV. Mark is making a Point about Faith and Discipleship.

A. Jesus leads disciples to faith by showing his power.

1. It is as if Jesus does something amazing and then turns to ask,

“What kind of man could do something like that?”

- a. Calm the storm
- b. Cast out a demon
- c. Heal a sick woman.
- d. Raise a dead girl
- e. You tell me! If not God, then who?

**B. Jesus leads disciples to faith
by showing them other people.**

1. 2 examples of faith:

The sick woman and Jairus.

“Woman, your faith has healed you.”

2. 1 example of unbelief:

The people of Nazareth.

Those who had the best view of Jesus.

Those who had God in their midst
didn't recognize Him.

Conclusion:

1. Faith is not the acknowledgement of something special about Jesus.
2. Faith is not the intellectual acceptance of Christ's claims.
3. Faith is the willingness to trust yourself to Jesus, to put your life in his hands, to risk yourself to his care and lordship.

Invitation