



LESSON 3 // CRISIS POINTS AND CHRONIC PROBLEMS

God is always ready and willing to give us a fresh start. In this series, we're looking at people who met Christ in powerful ways and the newness and changes they experienced through Him. From these stories, we learn lessons for our lives and believe that Jesus will change us as we experience Him. In Mark 1:29-34 we see how Jesus addresses crisis points and chronic problems to bring healing and new hope to those who are suffering.

Mark 1:29-34 (NIV) *As soon as they left the synagogue, they went with James and John to the home of Simon and Andrew. ³⁰ Simon's mother-in-law was in bed with a fever, and they immediately told Jesus about her. ³¹ So he went to her, took her hand and helped her up. The fever left her and she began to wait on them. ³² That evening after sunset the people brought to Jesus all the sick and demon-possessed. ³³ The whole town gathered at the door, ³⁴ and Jesus healed many who had various diseases. He also drove out many demons, but he would not let the demons speak because they knew who he was.*

From these two stories we learn spiritual lessons that will guide us through the crisis points we face and help us overcome the chronic problems we have to deal with in our lives.

1. The causes of a crisis

The crisis in Peter's mother-in-law's life was a fever that had spiked to potentially destructive levels. All of us have crisis points in life. Behind closed doors we find ourselves at critical crossroads—physically, emotionally, financially or relationally.

There are a variety of causes behind the crisis points in our lives: unexpected disappointments, shocking events, escalating situations, unfortunate failures, mismanaged mistakes and sudden storms are just some of these causes. The question is how will we respond in crisis?

2. The right response to a crisis

While the crisis was with Peter's mother-in-law, the disciples had to respond to it because she was in no condition to respond herself. Mark 1:30 tells us that "they told Jesus about her." Although these men had not known Jesus very long, they believed that He cared about the crisis, the suffering of this woman, and had the power and willingness to do something about it.

From their example we learn that the right response to a crisis is to recognize it, remember where to turn, release the situation into Jesus' hands and rest in His response. Each crisis we encounter or experience should be a call for intercession. Don't just accept crisis with resignation, intercede in the face of it. Hebrews 4:16 summarizes this call to intercession that we can apply in every crisis: "Let us then approach the throne of grace with confidence, so that we may receive mercy and find grace to help us in our time of need."

3. Jesus' response to our crisis

Mark 1:31 tells us about Jesus' response to this crisis: "So he went to her, took her hand and helped her up. The fever left her and she began to wait on them." Jesus responded to the situation immediately. This reveals to us the heart of our Lord. He cares about people in crisis. When He is invited into the crisis, there is no delay on His part in responding.

Jesus went where this lady was. She could not make it to Him, but He came to her. Notice that He also took her by the hand. He reached out to touch her. He took her hand into His hand. The simple act of holding a person's hand has great power and significance. How wonderful it is when the Lord's hand takes our hand in the midst of our crisis! His hand communicates comfort, companionship, compassion, capability and commitment to us.

Then Jesus "helped" Peter's mother-in-law get "up." This is what He does for us in our crisis—He takes our hand and helps us up. He lifts us to a higher and better place. The help of the Lord comes in a variety of ways. We can't prescribe how He helps us in our times of crisis, but we can be confident that He will help us, if we truly turn our lives and situations over to Him.

4. Jesus' cure for chronic problems

In Mark 1:32-34 the story changes focus. Jesus' intervention in the crisis was a catalyst for many people to approach Him with their chronic problems. "Possessed" and "various diseases" used to describe these problems indicate long-standing circumstances. These folks had been in their conditions for an extended period of time with little or no hope of help. When they heard of Jesus, they found hope. They realized that their problems could be addressed in His presence!

There are many who are struggle with chronic problems in their lives. Chronic problems cry out for help, but their voice is more muted than the cry of a crisis. These long-term problems can produce tiredness, resignation, skepticism, guardedness and desperation.

Mark 1:34 shows us that Christ helps people with chronic problems just as He does folks in crisis. The Scripture states that "Jesus healed many who had various diseases. He also drove out many demons." The root of the Greek word for "healed" (*therapeuo*) gives us our English word "therapy." It means "to restore to health." Chronic problems require therapeutic intervention, which the Lord brings to those who come to Him. The therapy takes many different forms, but the ultimate result is that our diseased and dysfunctional condition is addressed.

The phrase "drove out many demons" means "to cast out, drive out, send out with a notion of violence; to expel and banish." This is what the Lord does for us when we consistently come to Him with any bondage. He extracts destructive powers forcefully from us.

Jesus wants to minister to you in the crisis points and chronic problems of your life. Trust Him to heal and restore you and He will lift you up!

Discussion questions

1. What is "the right response to a crisis"? What is the Lord teaching you about this in your life?
2. How does Jesus respond to us in the midst of our crisis? How does this encourage you?
3. What difference can your faith in Christ make when you face chronic problems?