



**Sermon: Out of Desolate Places Jesus Brings Our Eternal Destiny – Todd Goldschmidt**  
Sunday Service 10:15 am – February 5th, 2012 – At [Living Hope Lutheran Church](#)

**Lesson/Sermon Text: Mark 1:29-39 – (NIV 1984)**

### **Jesus Heals Many**

<sup>29</sup> As soon as they left the synagogue, they went with James and John to the home of Simon and Andrew.  
<sup>30</sup> Simon's mother-in-law was in bed with a fever, and they told Jesus about her. <sup>31</sup> So he went to her, took her hand and helped her up. The fever left her and she began to wait on them.

<sup>32</sup> That evening after sunset the people brought to Jesus all the sick and demon possessed. <sup>33</sup> The whole town gathered at the door, <sup>34</sup> and Jesus healed many who had various diseases. He also drove many demons, but he would not let the demons speak because they knew who he was.

### **Jesus Prays in a Solitary Place**

<sup>35</sup> Very early in the morning, while it was still dark, Jesus got up, left the house and went off to a solitary place, where he prayed. <sup>36</sup> Simon and his companions went to look for him, and when they found him, they exclaimed: "Everyone is looking for you!"

<sup>38</sup> Jesus replied, "Let us go somewhere else – to the nearby villages – so I can preach there also. That is why I have come". <sup>39</sup> So he traveled throughout Galilee, preaching in their synagogues and driving out demons.



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Hi! My name is Peter. My father, John, christened me “Shimon” when I was born. In Hebrew it means, “He has heard.” The “He” refers to Yahweh, the God we Israelites have worshiped and served for generations. Jesus is the One who first called me “Peter.” Actually, that’s not exactly true. He called me “Cephas” in Aramaic. “Peter” is the Greek translation. Both mean “Rock.” I grew up in Capernaum, a picturesque fishing village on the north shore of the Sea of Galilee. There’s not much there these days, except a Greek Orthodox monastery. Back in my day I’d say there were probably about 1,500 folks who called Capernaum home. Most of us were involved in one way, shape or form in commercial fishing. My brother, Andrew, and I were. Our fishing partners were Zebedee’s sons, James and John. In fact, the four of us were the first followers of Jesus of Nazareth. I mentioned him already. He was from the farm town of Nazareth, an isolated mountain hamlet of about 200 hardy souls at the time, a hard day’s trek west of here. Beautiful spot, but a tough place to make a living! Jesus’ step-dad, Joseph, was the town carpenter.

Anyway, like I was saying, I was one of Jesus’ first disciples. There ended up being a dozen of us, who followed Him all over the region for about 3 ½ years. You should’ve seen some of the stuff we saw, and heard some of the stuff we heard hanging out with Jesus of Nazareth! Take our text, for instance: Right after Jesus exorcised that demon-possessed man in our synagogue, we went over to my house—me, Andrew, James, John and Jesus. My wife’s mom had a real high fever. We were worried for her, so we mentioned it to Jesus. “He went to her, took her hand and helped her up. The fever left her” lickety-split & she waited on us like she’d never been sick! “That evening after sunset the people brought to Jesus all the sick and demon-possessed. The whole town gathered at the door, 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.”



We witnessed the whole show! That's what I thought it was at first—"the show." Put yourself in our sandals for a second and imagine who we felt. Here we were, the humble lot of us, when Jesus called out to us, "Follow me, and I will make you fishers of men" (Mark 1:17). Andrew and I jumped at the chance! So did James and John. Four fishing buddies called to accompany Christ! But I'm getting ahead of myself in my exuberance. That's me: always excitable, ever impetuous, constantly putting my foot in my mouth, Peter. I admit, I have a strong personality; very strong. That could be one of the reasons why Jesus made me the leader of our group. He recognized talent when He saw it. Of course, He was—and still is—the divine Son of God. Man, how I loved Him! Still do. But back then, I must confess, that I admired Him for some wrong reasons. Like most of my countrymen, I longed for a charismatic leader who'd drive those hated Roman oppressors out of Israel. This was *our* ancestral home—the heritage of God's chosen people—*my people*—the Jews: descendants of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob. We longed for a Liberator; a powerful, dynamic, "in-your-face" kind of guy who'd give those arrogant heathens their due comeuppance!

And Jesus had the force! He healed the sick, drove out demons, and performed amazing signs and wonders—miracles, we called them, back in our day. I bet you still do. But Jesus seemed so disinterested in using His uncanny abilities to establish any kind of earthly kingdom—as much as I, and so many others, ached for Him to do. He said as much, on numerous occasions. He told Pontius Pilate that on the day that cowardly Roman governor sentenced Him to death on a cross. Pilate asked Him point blank, "Are you the king of the Jews?" Jesus replied, "Yes, it is as you say." But then He defined His kingdom. He said, "My kingdom is not of this world. If it were, my servants would fight to prevent my arrest by the Jews. But now my kingdom is from another place." Pilate exclaimed, "You are a king, then!" Jesus answered, "You are right in saying I am a king. In fact, for this reason I was born, and for this I came into the world, to testify to the truth. Everyone on the side of truth listens to me" (John 18). My old buddy, John bar-Zebedee, recorded that. His family knew the high priest, so he and I slipped in to his courtyard that fateful Friday night to see what would happen to our Master. I'd foolishly tried to defend him with my sword when He was arrested earlier that evening in Gethsemane. Swung wildly, I did, and cut off the high priest's servant's ear. Found out later his name was Malchus. John told me that, too.



Jesus healed it—instantly. Then He rebuked me: “Put your sword away! Shall I not drink the cup the Father has given me?” What in the world did He mean by that? What “cup”? Oh, now I remember. He’d talked about that cup before. I hated to hear about that cup! On our final trip to Jerusalem, just before the Passover, He “took the twelve [of us] aside and said to [us], ‘We are going up to Jerusalem, and the Son of Man will be betrayed to the chief priests and the teachers of the law. They will condemn him to death and will turn him over to the Gentiles to be mocked and flogged and crucified. On the third day he will be raised to life!’” (Matt. 20:17-19). That’s the part we all seemed to miss—the good part at the end: that He would be raised to life! We were so focused on our own individual agendas, still so confused about His whole mission and purpose, that we missed the best news of all! What were we thinking? Right after that, the Zebedee boys’ mom knelt before Jesus and had the audacity to ask Him, “Grant that one of these two sons of mine may sit at your right and the other at your left in your kingdom.” What weasels!

But that’s when He mentioned the dreaded “cup” I referred to earlier. He looked at the brothers, and said to them, “You don’t know what you’re asking. Can you drink the cup I am going to drink?” “We can,” they answered. Then Jesus told them: “You will indeed drink from my cup, but to sit at my right or left is not for me to grant. These places belong to those for whom they have been prepared by my Father.” When the rest of us heard what they’d asked Jesus, we were furious! Who’d they think they were! But Jesus called us all aside for some spiritual redirection. He said, “You know that the rulers of the Gentiles lord it over them, and their high officials exercise authority over them. Not so with you. Instead, whoever wants to become great among you must be your servant, and whoever wants to be first must be your slave—just as the Son of Man did not come to be served, but to serve, and to give his life as a ransom for many” (John 20). That’s what God’s kingdom is all about: service and self-sacrifice, not worldly glory and honor.

When it came to misunderstanding Christ’s mission and ministry, I was the worst offender. In the Upper Room, right before we headed out to the Mount of Olives—right *after* Jesus washed our filthy feet (to my shame, I must admit) and established His Sacred Supper “for the forgiveness of our sins”—I boasted, “Even if all fall away on account of you, I never will” (Matt. 26).

I wanted Jesus to believe that I’d do anything at all to prevent Him from drinking that “cup” of God’s wrath that would be poured out on Him on the cross. He replied: “I tell you the truth, this very night, before the rooster crows, you will disown me three times.” I shot back defensively: “Even if I have to die with you, I will never disown you.” To be fair, “all the other disciples said the same.” Fast forward a few hours to the high priest’s courtyard. I’d gone there, as I mentioned, with John. In hindsight, I shouldn’t have. My faith was tested, and I failed. I not only disowned Jesus three times, but I said, in effect, “God damn me to hell if I even know who this Jesus is!”



Then came “the look.” I now realize it was a look of love. You see, just as I “was speaking” my third denial, “the rooster crowed.” Then “The Lord turned and looked straight at” me. I’ll never forget the mixture of sadness and pain in His eyes—the disappointment He must’ve felt when I fulfilled His prophecy exactly as He said I would. I not only “remembered the word” He’d “spoken to” me, but I ran out of that courtyard “and wept bitterly” (Luke 22). I couldn’t believe it! How could I’ve denied the One I loved and followed with what I thought was my whole heart? He’d patiently, lovingly, sometimes sternly, guided and corrected me for so long? Could He ever forgive me? I was so ashamed. I’d bragged that I’d die for Him & I flat-out denied Him.

Thank God, there’s more to the story! John told me some of the words my dying Lord spoke from His cross. The very first words from His parched lips were, “Father, forgive them, for they do not know what they are doing,” as His executioners drove the nails through His hands & feet. He cried out, “Eloi, eloi, lama sabachthani?” That’s Aramaic for your English, “My God, my God, why have you forsaken me?” I now realize that the Father forsook His oSon on that tree for me—and for you, too. He abandoned His Son to hell during those hours of darkness. There He was condemned to suffer for our sins & make the full payment to His Father for their guilt. That includes my denials that night—and yours, too. You see, every time we sin we deny Christ, don’t we? Every single sin separates us from our Holy God. Jesus’ brother James wrote: “Whoever keeps the whole law and yet stumbles at just one point is guilty of breaking all of it” (2:10).

But John told me that Jesus also cried out “It is finished!” before He died: “Tetelestai” in Greek. That’s the word the guy down at the marine hardware store would write on the bottom of our credit account once we’d paid it off. That’s what Jesus meant! “I’ve paid for the sins of the entire world in full”—mine, yours and everyone else’s! He proved as much by His glorious resurrection! Before He ascended into heaven, He took me aside and graciously restored me to my position as an Apostles. “Feed my sheep . . . take care of my lambs,” He said. And I did! I spent the rest of my life leading others to Him. “Very early in the morning, while it was still dark” the day after He healed my wife’s mom and so many others, “Jesus got up, left the house and went off to a solitary place, where he prayed.” He did that a lot. The rest of us went looking for him, once the sick showed up. We exclaimed: “Everyone is looking for you!” Do you know what He replied? “Let’s go somewhere else—to the nearby villages—so I can preach there also. That is why I have come.” So he traveled throughout Galilee, preaching in their synagogues and driving out demons.” I reckon there’s folks who still need a spiritual fixin’ up. But that’s up to you. I’d stay and help, but I’ve got to go up and post myself at the pearly gates . . . Amen.