

## Running Naked

Text: Mark 14:32-52

I have enjoyed the study of the four Gospels through the years. I love the way they are divinely put together and harmonize. I am fascinated by the things mentioned in Matthew, Mark, Luke and John. Some events are mentioned by all four or by two or three. One of the fascinating aspects of the study of the Gospels is those things uniquely mentioned by only one Gospel. One of the most intriguing of an “only mentioned events” has to be the record of a young man who followed Jesus after our Lord was arrested, but fled naked from the scene upon discovery.

There are two other incidents of nakedness that stand out in Scripture. First, in Genesis 9:20-23 we see Noah was naked and his son Ham looked upon his father; the outstanding understanding of this experience was shame. God speaks to this issue in Leviticus 18:3, 6: “After the doings of the land of Egypt, wherein ye dwelt, shall ye not do: and after the doings of the land of Canaan, whither I bring you, shall ye not do: neither shall ye walk in their ordinances... None of you shall approach to any that is near of kin to him, to uncover their nakedness: I AM the LORD.” On the subject of modesty and purity, the Lord is explicit in His desire for our separation from the world on these matters as seen in I Thessalonians 4:3-5.

The second incident is found in Luke 8:26-35 in the story of the maniac of Gadara. The obvious characteristics of this man were that he was insane and demon possessed. A person who is unclothed reflects one in an altered and troubled state of mind. Yet, it is even more serious in the case of some, such as this man in Gadara, being driven in this altered state of mind by the powers of darkness. It is interesting to note that when Jesus met him and delivered him from the demon influence he was found to be “...sitting at the feet of Jesus, clothed, and in his right mind...” (Luke 8:35b).

We observe three things about these two incidents: (1) Public nakedness is shameful. (2) It is forbidden among God’s people. (3) It reflects a confused state of mind at best and/or demonic activity at worse.

Returning to our text, most students of the Bible would agree that the young man mentioned in Mark is John Mark, the penman of this first and oldest Gospel. Although the incident is recorded in only two verses, the story within the story is most revealing and, God willing, will end up being an edifying piece of inspired literature. Let’s get into the Mark’s life and see what help we all may find.

### 1. JOHN MARK WAS REARED IN A GODLY ENVIRONMENT.

In Acts 12:11 and 12 we see that the great prayer meeting that delivered Peter out of prison and from a death sentence took place in John Mark’s mother’s house. In Colossians 4:10 we see that the blessed “son of consolation,” Barnabas (Acts 4:36) was the uncle of John Mark. John Mark, like Timothy had the benefit of a Christian home (II Timothy 1:5; II Timothy 3:15).

Psalm 16:6: "The lines are fallen unto me in pleasant places; yea, I have a goodly heritage." The word "lines" is referring to a measuring line that marks off a boundary as well as a connecting line or rope. The word "pleasant" is referring to something wonderfully sweet. The word "goodly," comes to us from the Hebrew word, *shaphar*, which means "to glisten." This verse is saying my inheritance has been a great connection and has set me within the boundaries of a godly environment and protection. No one should ever take for granted the blessing of being reared in a Christian home.

## 2. A PATTERN OF BEHAVIOR IS ESTABLISHED WHEN KEEPING AT A DISTANCE FROM THE LORD.

Mark 14:51, 52 says, "And there followed him a certain young man, having a linen cloth cast about his naked body; and the young men laid hold on him: And he left the linen cloth, and fled from them naked." Presuming this young man is John Mark, and is the scribe of the Gospel of Mark, he gives a brief, albeit unflattering autobiographical reference of himself. We recognize that in many ways John Mark is showing us the influence of Simon Peter in his life. Mark 14:54: "And Peter followed him afar off, even into the palace of the high priest: and he sat with the servants, and warmed himself at the fire." Because John Mark, like Peter, followed Jesus, but not too closely, havoc ensued. The same could be said of any of us who attempt to follow Jesus from afar.

In Acts 15:36-39, it is revealed that John Mark's character flaw had followed him into a temporary breaking of fellowship involving Paul and Uncle Barnabas. Sadly, it was provoked by John Mark's tendency to turn back when the going got rough and challenging. Psalm 133:1, 2: "Behold, how good and how pleasant it is for brethren to dwell together in unity! It is like the precious ointment upon the head, that ran down upon the beard, even Aaron's beard: that went down to the skirts of his garments." It is no accident that the Bible records in Acts 2:1:"And when the day of Pentecost was fully come, they were all with one accord in one place." Even in this separation, Uncle Barnabas lived up to his nickname in the way he put young John Mark beneath his wing of loving and familial discipleship.

## 3. JOHN MARK FOUND HIS PATH BACK HOME.

We find in Philemon, verse 24: "Marcus (John Mark), Aristarchus, Demas, Lucas, my fellowlabourers." Here Paul describes John Marcus a fellowlaborer." We read in I Peter 5:13, "The church that is at Babylon, elected together with you, saluteth you; and so doth Marcus my son." Peter calls John Mark his son. Bible scholars are pretty much in agreement that Peter narrated the Gospel of Mark under the inspiration of the Holy Spirit and John Mark (who had become a spiritual son to Peter much like Timothy had to Paul) penned the Gospel.

It is worthwhile to note that Paul, who wanted to stop ministering with John Mark, had a change of heart. In his dying words Paul said in II Timothy 4:11, "...Take Mark, and bring him with thee: for he is profitable to me for the ministry."

Failure is meant to be a lesson learned, not a life sentence!

Conclusion:

Hebrews 4:9-13.

We need to live a transparent, open life before God. Our Lord knows us for who we are. God sees the naked truth. We should be honest in serving our Lord, with nothing to hide or cover. Let us know ourselves as God knows us. I Peter 5:5: "Likewise, ye younger, submit yourselves unto the elder. Yea, all of you be subject one to another, and be clothed with humility: for God resisteth the proud, and giveth grace to the humble."

In II Samuel 6:12-16, David was jubilant as he led the way for the incoming Ark of the Covenant. In reference to this occasion, I Chronicles 15:27 says, "And David was clothed with a robe of fine linen, and all the Levites that bare the ark, and the singers, and Chenaniah the master of the song with the singers: David also had upon him an ephod of linen." His wife Michal threw a fit. II Samuel 6:20: "Then David returned to bless his household. And Michal the daughter of Saul came out to meet David, and said, How glorious was the king of Israel to day, who uncovered himself to day in the eyes of the handmaids of his servants, as one of the vain fellows shamelessly uncovereth himself!" I Samuel 18:4: "And Jonathan stripped himself of the robe that was upon him, and gave it to David...." Here we understand that Jonathan took off his robe that signified he was heir apparent to the throne of Israel. So when it was time for David to lead the parade that brings the Ark, which was the representation of the presence of the Lord into Zion, David humbly dresses in the humble linen ephod of the priests. In essence, he was saying, I am subservient to the King of Kings; when I come before Him I am only another worshipper. Michal wanted David to exalt himself above the people by wearing the kingly robes. The shepherd king reminds his wife in II Samuel 6:21, "And David said unto Michal, It was before the LORD, which chose me before thy father, and before all his house, to appoint me ruler over the people of the LORD, over Israel: therefore will I play before the LORD."

David was running naked before the Lord! Hebrews 4:13: "Neither is there any creature that is not manifest in His sight: but all things are naked and opened unto the eyes of Him with whom we have to do."

One who lives in abandoned worship of the King of Kings is not ashamed (Romans 1:16). One who lives in abandoned worship to the Only Worthy One is not in a confused state of mind. He or she has the mind of Christ (Philippians 2:5; I Corinthians 2:16). The devout worshipper of the Lord our Christ is the opposite of the naked possessed demoniac. The one who lives for Jesus in complete, naked honesty is filled with the Holy Spirit (Ephesians 3:19; Ephesians 5:18).

-Pastor Pope-