

Sermon Title: Amazed or Terrified  
Scripture Text: Mark 1:21-28

Speaker: Jim Harris  
Date: 1-14-18

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I was thinking while Miguel and Dirk were playing the instrumentals during our communion time and leading the little interlude there in the song, you know, one of the several Hebrew words in the Old Testament that has to do with praising God and glorifying God and worshipping Him corporately—the Hebrew word literally means "electric amplifier"—no, no, no, that's a *different* one! There's a Hebrew word that comes from a root that means to pluck, vibrate, to be able to connect with sounds and the sensory perception of all of those things. That's why it's *impossible* to worship alone in the way that we worship together. If you ignore the corporate worship of the body of Christ, you're ignoring His bride—you're missing such an important part. What a wonderful day it already is! We've called upon the Lord, we've celebrated the arrival of one of our dear friends in His presence, we've come around His Table, and now it is our privilege to open the Word of God.

And we're going to come back to the Gospel of Mark. He's my new best friend that I'm hanging out with these days as we get to know each other and his way of portraying the life of Christ. We have, so far, finished Mark's introduction. I think he put Verse 1 as we call it—Chapter 1, Verse 1—as a title of the book: "The beginning of the gospel of Jesus Christ, the Son of God" (NASB, and throughout, unless otherwise noted). This is the beginning; it goes on through the centuries. It is all about the gospel—the good news of salvation. It's all about Jesus, who is the Anointed One, the Christ, the Messiah, and He is God the Son. Everything that Mark's going to say is about that. Now, the introduction that we have seen already summarizes how he is presenting Christ as the Messiah. He *is* the Son of God. He was preceded by a predicted royal forerunner: John the Baptist. He was introduced in what you might think of as sort of a public coronation at His baptism. He defeated the prince of darkness, Verses 12-13; He began proclaiming the kingdom of God, the message of salvation in that way, Verses 14 and 15; and He started calling His disciples to follow Him, the beginning of which is in 16-20.

That brings us to Mark 1:21, where today we're going to look at the first specific incident that Mark records from Jesus's ministry in Galilee, and it's going to demonstrate His amazing authority, and His authority over demons. Our passage for today shows a stark contrast between the response of people to what Jesus did and said, and the response of demons to Him just showing up. The people were amazed and the demons were terrified. Now, both the people to whom Jesus preached and the demons that He alarmed—they were both sinful and alienated from God, but only the demons cried out in fear. In the text before us today, the demons have better theology than the human hearers. They understood that Jesus is their judge who will ultimately send them to the lake of fire, and the people didn't get that—at least not yet. It's interesting as you work your way through the Gospel of Mark, which we intend to do—in the whole first half of Mark, the only beings you will encounter who were sure of Jesus's identity were the demons. The Jewish leaders rejected Him outright, and they were irritated by Him and they wanted Him to go away. The crowds were fascinated—they swelled more and more, and they were indeed curious and they found Him compelling, but most of them were uncommitted. The disciples—well, they were committed, but even *they* had this lingering hard-heartedness and spiritual deafness and they often struggled to grasp all that Jesus said and did and taught them (see Matt. 15:16). That's why Jesus sometimes refers to His disciples as "you of little faith" (see Matt. 6:30; 8:26; 14:31; 16:8), not grasping what He was saying.

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In contrast to those crowds of people, the demons knew for certain who Jesus is. We're going to see it in our text, but more clearly, you skip ahead to Mark 3:11—Mark adds this comment: "Whenever the unclean spirits saw Him, they would fall down before Him and shout, 'You are the Son of God!'" You see, the demons know who Jesus is (Acts 19:15) and they know He is their judge (Matt. 8:29). Long before it was ever written down for us in what we think of as Matthew 25:41, the demons already knew that the lake of fire has been "prepared for the devil and his angels." In our text today, they're going to respond accordingly. The demons were absolutely *terrified* in the presence of Jesus.

Now, without going into a study of Angelology and Demonology, I'll just make the summary statement, because we've covered it in the past, that there is no salvation for fallen angels, for demons (see Heb. 2:16; cf. 2 Pet. 2:4; Jude 6). But, whenever a human sinner comes to understand who He is and is terrified by the threat of eternal punishment, he or she is invited to run to safety in the arms of the Savior (Rom. 5:9; 1 Thess. 1:10), where they receive grace and forgiveness and eternal life. And nevertheless, the vast majority of sinners still refuse to fear hell and come to Christ for salvation (see Matt. 7:13-14). That's the irony that is depicted in our passage for this morning. The demons recognize who Jesus is but, they have no possibility of salvation. The crowds were offered divine forgiveness, but they refused to recognize the only one who can provide it. You could put it another way and say it like this: the demons were terrified and *could not* be saved; the people were amazed, but they *would not* be saved (see Lk. 7:30; Jn. 5:40). In other words, the people who refused to believe, and the demons who had no hope, are going to ultimately end up in the same eternal lake of fire.

Now, as you work through Mark and the other gospels, here's something interesting that you will observe. During Jesus's ministry, the demons do not attack Him. Now, He did His face-to-face thing with the devil—we've already seen that. But the demons that He encounter always assaulted the souls of sinful people, but never Jesus. They knew they couldn't touch Him! In every confrontation that occurs, it's *Jesus* who attacks the demons. His very presence made them panic in terror of their sure-to-come judgment (see Lk. 8:28-31). Now, friends, you understand—we can't see demons. We can't see angels. We're not allowed to see that realm of spirit, that domain in which angels and fallen angels, or demons, live. But according to 2 Corinthians 11:14, when demons act in our world, they disguise themselves as angels of light. They are the authors and overseers of false religion. That includes apostate Judaism, like in Jesus's day; apostate Christianity, as in our day; cults; all the other world religions (see 1 Tim. 4:1). But demons couldn't hide from Christ. Whenever He showed up near them, they blew their cover of anonymity because they were so terrified of Him—and rightly so—they'd panic, and they'd just start blurting out who He is (Lk. 4:34) and begging that He won't judge them right there (Matt. 8:29).

Now, with that background and that little bit of overview, let's look at our passage today—Mark 1:21-28. And it's a pretty easy passage to break down. We're going to see people amazed, and then we're going to see demons terrified, and then we're going to see people amazed some more. It starts out with people being amazed. Chapter 1, Verses 21 and 22. Now, remember from last time that at least six months, maybe a little bit more, have elapsed since the time of Jesus's baptism. During those months, both John the Baptist was ministering in the

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wilderness down by the river Jordan, still baptizing people (Mk. 1:4-5). Jesus was in the area of Judea, including going to Jerusalem, where He cleared the temple for the first of two times that He would do that (Jn. 2:14-16; cf. Mk. 11:15). Once John the Baptist was arrested—and Mark will circle back and tell us about that in a few chapters—but once John the Baptist was arrested, Jesus went up north to Galilee (Mk. 1:14), and that's where He did the bulk of His public ministry. Now, recall also that, to the arrogant, snooty, proud Pharisees and Sadducees in Jerusalem, Galilee was nowhere. I used the analogy last time—they thought of it as "redneck" country. "That's the backwoods! That's the bayou! Nothing *good* ever comes out of there (see Jn. 7:52). That's just irrelevant—we and the temple, that's the whole show!" That was their mindset.

Well, we're told in Mark 1:21 that, now that Jesus is up in Galilee, it says, "They"—and notice "they" instead of "He," "they" because He's just started calling His disciples—"They went to Capernaum; and immediately on the Sabbath He entered the synagogue and began to teach." Now, that really sets the stage for us. First of all, Capernaum. Capernaum is literally "village of Nahum" because it's believed to be the hometown of the Old Testament prophet whose book we recently studied as the sequel to the book of Jonah. Capernaum is on the northwest shore of the Sea of Galilee. At that time, it was a prosperous fishing town. It's where Peter and James and John and Andrew had their fishing businesses thriving when Jesus came there and called them. We know that the disciple Matthew, or Levi, was also a tax collector from Capernaum (Matt. 9:1, 9). There are some rather extensive and interesting ruins of the biblical portion of Capernaum. It's an interesting place to visit and it's still a beautiful setting on the Sea of Galilee, and you can do a lot of Bible teaching with great visual aids in Capernaum. I'll mention more next time—you can even probably tramp through the ruins of Peter's house there and the synagogue there. It's one of those cases where you might actually be able to know that you could stand in the same place that Jesus stood when He taught in that synagogue...and that doesn't mean anything as far as anything spiritually significant, but, it is there, very real place.

Jesus made Capernaum His headquarters during the times when He ministered in the region of Galilee. There was a synagogue there "and immediately on the Sabbath He entered the synagogue" (vs. 21)—remember the word "synagogue"? That was one of the key things that I taught you when we did the introduction to Mark. "Synagogue" is a relatively new thing; you won't find a synagogue in the Old Testament because there was no such thing until Israel was taken away into captivity in Assyria and Babylon, and without access to the temple. The temple having been brought down to ruins, the Jewish people began to gather in these little clusters in places they called "synagogues." They came there for instruction and fellowship. The synagogue is much more like what we think of as the church than was the temple. The synagogue is the gathering together—as a matter of fact, the word synagogue comes by direct transliteration—that's where you take the letters from one language and put them into another language—the Greek word is *sunagoge*. The preposition *sun* means "with" or "together"; the verb *ago* means "to gather"; the synagogue is the noun form—that's the place where you gather together, or a gathering-together-place or a gathering of people. Synagogues proliferated even after the return from captivity, even after the days of Ezra and Nehemiah.

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And synagogues were present even in Jerusalem during the time of Jesus, so once the concept of Jews meeting in smaller groups—other than gathering at the feast days in the temple—once that concept got started, it stuck. The rabbis determined—rather arbitrarily, but I think there's some human wisdom behind it—they determined that a synagogue could be planted anywhere that there were at least ten Jewish men. Now, I've observed in Russia: they will allow a church to be registered once there are ten baptized believers. I don't think there's anything hyper-spiritual about that—if it was *really* spiritual, it would be 12 or 7, right?—or 40...sorry, that was a jab. But, it makes sense, where there's a group, you know, enough that there could be a spiritual family involved.

On the Sabbath—Saturdays—people gathered for worship in the morning, similar to what we do. The rabbi or the rabbis would give instruction in their own style, which is rather sadly far from the teaching of what the Scriptures actually say, but they would do the rabbinical "teaching." During the week, the synagogue was often used as a school. Now, there was a custom, a very strong custom, that a visiting rabbi would always be asked to teach. And you can imagine, as soon as word began to spread of the things that Jesus was doing, and especially the miracles, there was no problem with Him getting an invitation to speak in the synagogue. It would have been a "command performance," if you will. The people were eager to hear Him, so "immediately on the Sabbath He entered the synagogue and began to teach."

Now, Mark isn't going to, in this chapter, major on the content of what Jesus taught, because that's not *his* point. He kind of leaves that to Matthew and Luke and John. We know the gist of it from what we saw last week, because we were told that "after John had been taken into custody, Jesus came into Galilee, preaching the gospel of God, and saying, 'The time is fulfilled, and the kingdom of God is at hand; repent and believe in the gospel.' " (vss. 14-15). So He's giving the gospel—the good news—the King is here, repent, believe, and He's telling people, come to the King, come to the kingdom of God. But, Mark isn't as concerned about the content as he is *who* Jesus is, so he majors on the *responses* to Him. And the first one is in Verse 22—"They were amazed at His teaching; for He was teaching them as one having authority, and not as the scribes." Big contrast between the way Jesus taught and what they were used to.

Now, the scribes were the professional scholars, if you will, among first century Judaism. Some scribes were rabbis. You didn't have to be a scribe to be a rabbi. The rabbis were the ones who taught in the synagogues; rabbi essentially means "teacher." And so the scribes were the experts in the documents of Judaism. Now, that included the Old Testament Scriptures, but *far* more extensively, it included the writings of the rabbis. The rabbis would teach what they taught, it would be written down, it would be added to this ever-growing compendium of rabbinical literature and rabbinical wisdom. The teachings of the scribes and the rabbis was *not* "Thus says the Lord." Remember when they came back from the captivity in Babylon—you have it, both in Ezra and in Nehemiah—that they got the people together and they stood up and they read the Scriptures, and like Nehemiah 8:8 says, they read the Scriptures, translating and giving the sense of it, and the people were spellbound? That's because the teaching of the rabbis was not explaining what the Scriptures say; it was talking around it and talking about it.

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The teaching of the rabbis was more like what you would find in modern times in liberal churches. It was moralistic, esoteric theories about things. This is how to live a little better...this how to make your life better...here's an interesting thought to think about...here's a parable you might find interesting...here's sort of a spiritual analogy to something—but not teaching what the Scriptures say. The rabbis were experts at *allegorizing* the Scriptures. That's where you ignore the literal historical intended meaning of the author in favor of finding symbolism or making up parables to teach moral lessons from it. So what the rabbis taught, the scribes recorded, and then the rabbis studied each other and then they quoted one another and always were adding their own theories and insights. The typical teaching in the synagogue was mystical and muddled and it majored on minutiae. It was either some hifalutin thing that you would just entertain your brain with, or it was the minutiae of the legalistic works-righteousness of the Pharisees (see Mk. 7:5-13). *Anything* but the Scriptures. Many alternative views and opinions were offered (1 Tim. 1:4; Titus 1:14). A teacher would show how wise he was by how many different rabbis he could quote and compare and contrast their different theories and how many ideas he could mash together.

Well, then comes Jesus, and He just goes into the synagogue and starts teaching, and it was *profoundly* different. He taught with *authority* (see Matt. 7:24; 24:25). The word translated "authority" embodies rule, jurisdiction, full rights, power, privilege, prerogative—totally unlike the scribes and the rabbis. He taught with conviction. He taught objective truth. There was clarity. And the people were—look what it says there—"amazed at His teaching." The word "amazed" is an amazing way to describe being amazed. This is a really strong word—we've devalued the word "amazed" in our world...now, it can apply to your lunch pasta. This is a very strong word, actually the strongest of any of the words for amazement. It has a root that literally means "to smite," or if you want to be a little more modern, "to strike." The form of this word means, "to strike with panic"—*that* sense of amazement. It was like, "Wow! Where did *that* come from? I've got to *do something* about..." It was that kind of amazement. When Jesus taught, it was the authority of the Word of God, and people didn't come away saying, "Wasn't that a nice homily?" They didn't say, "Oh, there's something to think about. Let's have coffee and discuss that." They were astonished because they were being confronted with eternal truth. You know, the same thing was said at the end of the Sermon on the Mount? Matthew 7:28-29—"When Jesus had finished these words, the crowds"—and this was not far from Capernaum, way bigger crowds—they "were amazed"—shocked—"at His teaching; for He was teaching them as one having authority, and not as their scribes." Jesus comes to Galilee, Jesus goes into the synagogue, Jesus teaches, and people are amazed.

The second reaction—what a contrast—Verses 23 through 26: demons *terrified*. Look at these four verses. "Just then"—pay attention to those two words—"Just then there was a man in their synagogue with an unclean spirit; and he cried out, saying, 'What business do we have with each other, Jesus of Nazareth? Have You come to destroy us? I know who You are—the Holy One of God!' " That's a pretty straightforward comment. "And Jesus rebuked him, saying, 'Be quiet, and come out of him!' Throwing him into convulsions, the unclean spirit cried out with a loud voice and came out of him." Now, try to picture this. "*Just then* there was a man in their synagogue with an unclean spirit." That means this happened immediately when Jesus taught. Probably finished His last words and this demon starts shouting.

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It happened right there in the synagogue, and this man has what is called "an unclean spirit"—that's one of the terms for a demon. A demon is a fallen angel, one who followed Satan in his rebellion (Rev. 12:3-4; cf. Is. 14:12ff; Ezek. 28:11ff.). The demon spoke through the vocal cords of the man in whom he lived, and that's always the way they do it. The demon "cried out"—another strong word; it means he "shrieked" or "screamed." It wasn't just raising his voice, like saying, "Oh, hey, Bob—Bob! *BOB!*" It wasn't just raising your voice like that, it was screaming this out. It was *terror* and *fear* that motivated this demon to just blurt this out.

And notice, this man was "in their synagogue." That's significant, too. You see, demon possession is always around, but you almost never see it because it's almost always hidden. Why? Because it is Satan's strategy. False teachers who bring corrupting lies are, what 2 Corinthians 11:14 says: they are disguising themselves as angels of light. Demons don't go around wearing demon costumes! They go around inhabiting nice, clean-cut, well-spoken, friendly people, because they creep in among you "unnoticed" (Jude 4; cf. 2 Pet. 2:1). So no demon would normally "blow its cover" in a synagogue, or in a church, but this shows the effect that Jesus has on demons. It actually thwarts the purpose of Satan for demons to manifest themselves in a synagogue or a church or even in an idol temple because the strategy is disguise and deception (see 2 Thess. 2:10).

Now, the demons know their eternal fate, but they don't know the timing. Neither do we. No man knows the day or the hour (Matt. 24:36), so every time they encounter Jesus, they freak out! They want to know, "Have You come to destroy us?" (Mk. 1:24). They know Jesus can send them to the lake of fire; they know He eventually *will*. They know that, even before then, Jesus can send them, if He wants to, to a kind of a spiritual prison that's called in the New Testament "the abyss" (Lk. 8:31; cf. Rev. 20:1-3). These demons know that some of their colleagues are imprisoned there now, and they will be released only briefly during the Tribulation—Revelation Chapter 9; and they know that others of their colleagues did something that got them imprisoned *never* to be released (2 Pet. 2:4; cf. Jude 6), except momentarily when they will be transferred to the lake of fire in Revelation Chapter 20. So that's why demons are always saying, "Have you come to torment us?" (Matt. 8:29). Have You come to judge us? "Have you come to destroy us?" (Mk. 1:24). Remember when the bunch of them—and I think we'll get to this in Mark, too—the bunch of them begged to be sent into a herd of pigs rather than being sent to the abyss (Mk. 5:1-17; cf. Matt. 8:28-34; Lk. 8:26-37)? And for some reason He didn't choose to explain to us, Jesus accommodated them. And, yes, that's where "Deviled Ham" was invented.

They're scared of Him—rightly so! And would you notice, the reason they're afraid is that they have no doubt whatsoever about who He is: "Jesus of Nazareth...the Holy One of God" (vs. 24). They are unclean, they are wicked, but would you notice also—they're totally under the authority of Jesus. No demon, including Satan, can ever do *anything* apart from God allowing it to happen (Jb. 1:12; 2:6; cf. 1 Cor. 10:13; Rev. 12:12). And when Jesus tells the demon, "Be quiet, and come out of him!" (vs. 25), the demon obeys. Now, because these demons are unclean, because they are desperately wicked, mean, cruel, and twisted in their unspeakable desire for evil, he does throw the man into convulsions and makes him shriek one more time, but "he came out of him."

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And Jesus commanded the demon to "be quiet" for a reason. The demon identified Jesus correctly—"Jesus of Nazareth...I know who You are—the Holy One of God!"—but Jesus always rejected publicity from the agents of Satan (see Mk. 1:34; cf. Mk. 3:12; Lk. 4:41). He didn't call together a choir of demons to sing about who He really was, even though they knew. And I think there's a reason, even behind that. You see, later on, the Jewish religious leaders are going to reject Jesus and accuse Him of—you know where I'm going, right? Matthew 12—"casting out demons only by Beelzebul the ruler of the demons" (vs. 24). And so Jesus, whenever a demon starts talking about Him, He shuts up the demon—He doesn't want to give any credence to their idea that He is in league with Satan. So, He shuts him up. Paul did the same thing, by the way, in Acts Chapter 16 when it happened to him during his ministry; you can read about that (vs. 16-18).

What a stark contrast, indeed. People are amazed, *shocked*; the demons are *terrified*; and then, again, the people are amazed. Look at verses 27 and 28—"They were all amazed, so that they debated among themselves, saying, "What is this? A new teaching with authority!" Now, the implication is, they were getting the old stuff and it *didn't* have any authority, right? It was just a bunch of opinions. "He commands even the unclean spirits"—they said—"and they obey Him. Immediately the news about Him spread everywhere into all the surrounding district of Galilee." And we'll be picking it up and seeing part that next time. This time, Mark uses the more normal word for "amazed." They were blown away, they were astonished at the contrast between Jesus and the Pharisees, the scribes, and the rabbis. They didn't have a category for Him. It says "they debated among themselves." Now, they didn't sit down and have a formal, organized debate, but this was the buzz! This was the chatter. This was all they could talk about. And they were trying to figure it out because it was *hard* to get all the fog of all the nonsense and the moralistic stuff that they'd been taught and get that swept away. What they'd grown up in had drifted so far from the truth that they were just trying to sort it out.

But, they were amazed. And at this point, the amazement was mainly manifested in an uncontrollable excitement over Jesus. Yeah, they were being confronted with the true gospel instead of the moralistic do-good-works-righteousness of the Pharisees, but it was a lot to handle! They wanted to hear more. They wanted to bring more people to hear. They wanted to talk about it, they were compelled to talk about it and think about it. Now, it's interesting that the times that Jesus spent in and around Galilee include the vast majority of the miracles and most of the teaching that you have recorded from His lips in the gospels. Other than at the very end of His life—the Olivet Discourse and those last few days in that last week in the temple, but this is the front end of what is called "The Great Galilean Ministry." He did a lot there. They were so hostile to Him down in Jerusalem, it was a good thing to go to "redneck country"—be out where the real people were. Now, in time, Jesus's work and teaching in Galilee was going to capture the attention—and the ire—of the Pharisees and the Sadducees down in Jerusalem. They would eventually send representatives up to Galilee to shut Him up. They wanted to confront Him and discredit Him and silence Him, and that didn't go so well. When they couldn't shut Him up, then they went back home and started plotting His murder—worked on it for over a year. And we're going to see how that unfolds as we go on in Mark.

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But let me ask you—how do you compare to these two reactions? You really ought to be having *both* of them. First of all, are you *amazed* by Jesus? Does it blow you away to know what He did, what He taught, and what He calls you to? And are you terrified at the thought of eternal damnation (Lk. 12:5; cf. Heb. 10:31; Rev. 14:10)? You should be amazed by Jesus, and you should be terrified at the fact that you have sown up an ironclad reservation for the lake of fire—unless you stand under the umbrella of Christ's atonement. And you need to realize that the true message of the gospel is that you are alienated from God because of your sin (see Is. 59:2; Eph. 2:1-3). You could say it a different way: you should be amazed by Jesus and you should be terrified at the prospect of eternal damnation because you're separated from God, apart from Christ, and the only way for you to be forgiven—the only way for you to have eternal life, the *only* way (Jn. 14:6; Acts 4:12)—is by receiving the free gift of eternal life that is what Jesus bought with His own death (Rom. 5:8-9). Your wages—they're owed to you; that's death (Ezek. 18:4). But the free gift of God is eternal life in Christ (Rom. 6:23). Be amazed...and be terrified. But then, make the right choice.

I said something before—I think it bears repeating. Actually, I said this when we were working our way through 2 Peter and, interestingly, that sermon just hit the radio program this week, and I heard back a couple times about this, and I thought, "You know what? This is the right time to say that again." So I want to say this. My friend, you don't need Christ because you feel a lack of purpose. You don't need Christ because you've had a career setback. You don't need Christ because you're unemployed. You don't need Christ because maybe you've gotten yourself into debt beyond your means. You don't need Christ because you have a chronic illness. You don't need Christ because you fell into sexual sin, or because your spouse cheated on you or left you. You don't need Christ because you're struggling as a parent. You don't need Christ because you were a victim of a crime. You don't need Christ because you were bullied. You don't need Christ because you were hurt by someone. You don't need Christ because you were betrayed by someone. You don't need Christ because you're in legal trouble. You don't need Christ because you have a wayward child. You don't need Christ because you are depressed. You don't need Christ because you drink to excess. You don't need Christ because you abuse drugs. You don't need Christ because you have an anger problem.

Now, don't get me wrong! God has *great compassion* toward *anyone* who is dealing with any of those things, but that's not why you need a savior. You need a savior—you need Christ—because your sin has alienated you from God (Matt. 7:23), and your innate sinfulness—and all of the various ways that you have found to express your innate sinfulness (see Mk. 7:21-23)—has made you an enemy of God (Eph. 2:12; Col. 1:21)! If you've ever, for one fleeting moment, broken *any one* of His laws, you are a lawbreaker (see Gal. 3:10; Jas. 2:10; cf. Matt. 12:36) and you are alienated from God, and the Bible says you're an enemy (Ps. 68:21). And nothing else will satisfy your soul unless and until you are first reconciled to God. You can improve any of those situations that I mentioned, painful as they are, but any improvement is nothing more than like putting a Band-Aid on cancer—until you're right with God (see Mk. 8:36). You need to come to Him.



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What did Jesus preach? He preached the *gospel*—the gospel of the kingdom, that the King is here! What's the message of that King? Well, we have it in its fullness now. Romans 3:23—"For all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God." Romans 6:23—"For the wages of sin is death, but the free gift of God is eternal life in Christ Jesus our Lord." Romans 5:8, 10—"God demonstrates His own love toward us, in that while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us...For if while we were enemies we were reconciled to God through the death of His Son, much more, having been reconciled, we shall be saved by His life." That's the gospel—He did it for you! But you need to embrace it! John 1:12—"As many as received Him"—welcomed Him, embraced Him—"as many as received Him, to them He gave the right to become children of God, even to those who believe in His name." And therefore, 2 Corinthians 5:20-21 is true—"Therefore, we are ambassadors for Christ, as though God were making an appeal through us; we beg you on behalf of Christ, be reconciled to God. He made Him who knew no sin to be sin on our behalf, so that we might become the righteousness of God in Him."

So, as you think about Jesus, be amazed—you should be. Be terrified—you should be! Hell is real (Matt. 13:50). But most importantly, let your terror of judgment, and your amazement with the wonderful Son of God, lead you to be reconciled to Him. Maybe you've been in church countless times. Maybe you've heard this many times, but don't let yourself slip into becoming numb to it. Have you been reconciled to God? That's the only thing that'll make you safe from the wrath of God which is coming (2 Thess. 1:7-9). Be amazed. Be terrified. And cling to the Savior.

*Father, thank You for putting this in Your Word. Thank You for making this known to us. Most of all, thank You for the redemption that is ours in Your Son. May You get the glory for what is accomplished in every life here today. If there is a soul that is still dead in trespasses and sins, please bring new life today, give that one the gift of repentance that he or she might have new life in Christ, for Your glory. And we pray in Jesus' name. Amen.*

END OF AUDIO