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February 17, 2010
WED Service
Text: Mark 1:21-28
Series: MARK

The Authority of Christ

“And they were astonished at his doctrine: for he taught them as one that had authority, and not as the scribes” (Mark 1:22).

Lesson No.: 05

Series: Mark (Introducing Jesus)

Introduction: Open your Bibles to **Mark 1:21-28**. This evening we are going to talk about what Jesus' presence among us each service ought to look like.

What would it be like if Jesus Christ came to our church? The truth of the matter is that He is here. He is in His church. When we are ridiculed for our faith in Him, He says, “why do you persecute me?” When we serve the brothers, even the least among us, we are serving Him. When we gather, He is there in the midst of us.

I want to ask you a question. Why are we to come to church? Why do we gather together? I will tell you why. We are to be taught of Jesus Christ. What does that mean? Jesus isn't here, so how can He teach us? I think the passage of Scripture we are going to read tonight is going to inform us about what our church services should be like. We have here in Mark 1:21-28, Jesus visiting a synagogue. I've entitled the message “The Authority of Christ”. What ought our church to be like if Christ is in our midst? We have a taste of it here in this passage.

Mark 1:21-28, “And they went into Capernaum; and straightway on the Sabbath day he entered into the synagogue, and taught. 22 And they were astonished at his doctrine: for he taught them as one that had **authority**, and not as the scribes. 23 And there was in their synagogue a man with an unclean spirit; and he cried out, 24 Saying, Let us alone; what have we to do with thee, thou Jesus of Nazareth? art thou come to destroy us? I know thee who thou art, the Holy One of God. 25 And Jesus rebuked him, saying, Hold thy peace, and come out of him. 26 And when the unclean spirit had torn him, and cried with a loud voice, he came out of him. 27 And they were all amazed, insomuch that they questioned among themselves, saying, What thing is this? what new doctrine is this? for with authority commandeth he even the unclean spirits, and they do obey him. 28 And immediately his fame spread abroad throughout all the region round about Galilee.”

[Prayer for Guidance]

We gather here tonight to grow and change in Jesus Christ tonight. Jesus Christ is present when His Word is preached. How can we grow and change tonight? We need to always remember that Christ is present in His congregation, and we need to submit ourselves to His Word.

In **Mark 1:21**, the Lord makes an unexpected visit a synagogue in Capernaum. Andrew, Peter, James, and John enter Capernaum with Jesus. On the Sabbath day, they enter into a synagogue and Jesus teaches.¹ Several things occur, that we want to see happen in our church. When the Word of God is preached correctly, the authority of Jesus is clear. What does He do with His authority? He preaches His Word, He pursues a spiritual War, He performs the Work of salvation, and He provokes Wonder!

¹ Luke tells us a day or so earlier, the Gentile army officer who generously donated the money for the synagogue in Capernaum to be built, had a servant who was sick, and asked for Jesus to heal him, and Jesus did. So Jesus enters this very same synagogue built by the Gentile officer (according to **Luke 7:5**).

I. **Consider first, the Word that Christ preaches.** Verse 22, “they were astonished at his doctrine: for he taught them as one that had authority, and not as the scribes”.

A. When the Word of God is preached in the power of Christ, **demons tremble and the people are in awe.** A powerful message is not one in which you are simply getting information. Jesus must show up. When He shows up, the devils tremble, and the people wonder. That’s what’s happening here.

When it says they were “astonished at his doctrine” in our text doesn’t just mean Jesus was presenting information. They were surprised that He was challenging their conscience. There was a level of conviction that they were not used to. He doesn’t quote any one like the scribes were known to do. We don’t have Jesus sermon in Capernaum, but remember the sermon on the Mount? Christ said, “Ye have heard that it was said by them of old time ... but I say unto you” (Matthew 5:21-22). Only the Son of God can pierce through our hard hearts!

1. **A Bad Example of presenting Christ’s Word: Modern Education.** Modern education espouses a very dangerous and incorrect theory—Give people the right information and they’ll make proper decisions. The Bible is clear that information is not enough. Learning principles is not enough. There must be an enlightening of the mind.

(1.) Paul tells us in **Ephesians 4:17-18**, that all people until they are converted “walk, in the vanity of their mind, 18. Having the understanding darkened, being alienated from the life of God through the ignorance that is in them, because of the blindness of their heart”.

(2.) Jesus says in **John 6:44-45**, “No man can come to me, except the Father which hath sent me draw him: and I will raise him up at the last day. 45. It is written in the prophets, And they shall be all taught of God. Every man therefore that hath heard, and hath learned of the Father, cometh unto me”.

2. **A Good Example of presenting Christ’s Word: Two on the Emmaus Road.** Remember the testimony of the two on the road to Emmaus after they spoke with Jesus? **Luke 24:32**, “they said one to another, Did not our heart burn within us, while he talked with us by the way, and while he opened to us the scriptures?”

Remember Christ’s method earlier in **Luke 24:27**? “And beginning at Moses and all the prophets, he expounded unto them in all the scriptures the things concerning himself.”

Paul said, in **1 Corinthians 2:2**, “For I decided to know nothing among you except Jesus Christ and him crucified.” Christ brings awe to people and trembling to the demons!

B. When the Word of God is preached in the power of Christ, **Christ is present among us.** Christ is both **transcendent** (far above us) and **immanent** (near us) in the preaching of His Word. He is exalted, but Jesus is also in the midst of us when His Word is preached.

Application: In other words, it is not enough to dispense biblical information to people. Our aim is that people would meet Christ. When we hear the Word of the Lord, we ought to tremble at the authority of Christ and have a willingness to obey it. We are not to be hearers only, but doers of the Word (**James 1:21ff**).

- II. **Consider next, the War that Christ pursues.** Verse 23-24, "And there was in their synagogue a man with an unclean spirit; and he cried out, 24 Saying, Let us alone; what have we to do with thee, thou Jesus of Nazareth? art thou come to destroy us? I know thee who thou art, the Holy One of God".

So Jesus preaches His message, and after he is done, there is a very radical response. A man in the synagogue starts crying out, literally *screaming*! He's possessed of a devil. The demons within this man are terrified! They panic. As far as they are concerned, this is too close for comfort. They know that at any moment the "Holy One of God" could cast them into eternal torment. It says the man with the unclean spirit "cried out" or literally screamed! "Leave us alone...have you come to destroy us? I know thee who thou art, the Holy One of God." (v.24).

- A. **Christ has come to declare war against the enemy of our soul.** The demon asks in **verse 24**, "art thou come to destroy us?" What is the answer? YES! Eventually, yes, but not at this very moment.

Jesus is truly the Messiah, God in human flesh, and He came to exercise power over the current ruler of this world, to destroy him who has the whole world in the captivity and slavery of sin.

Paul says in **Romans 16:20**, near the end of the book of Romans, "And the God of peace shall bruise Satan under your feet shortly." This is what Christ came to do.

Ephesians 6:12, "For we wrestle not against flesh and blood, but against principalities, against powers, against the rulers of the darkness of this world, against spiritual wickedness in high places." We are not to resist and fight against flesh and blood, but demonic forces.

Here Jesus Christ reveals himself to the demons, and they are terrified.

1. **How do the demons know this is the Christ?** Because of the authority of His Word. He is the Word who became flesh. He is the ultimate and final expression of the revelation of God (**Hebrews 1:1-3**).

They were not sure it was Christ, but remember (though it's not recorded here), He has just finished preaching the Sermon on the Mount, and then Christ has healed a high ranking centurion's servant (**Luke 7:1-10**).

2. **How does anyone know Who Christ is?** In the first 8 chapters of Mark, the only ones that recognize Jesus as God in human flesh are the demons. Peter, at the end of chapter 8 finally breaks that trend in **verses 27-29**, "And Jesus went out, and his disciples, into the towns of Caesarea Philippi: and by the way he asked his disciples, saying unto them, Whom do men say that I am? 28 And they answered, John the Baptist: but some say, Elias; and others, One of the prophets. 29 And he saith unto them, But whom say ye that I am? And Peter answereth and saith unto him, Thou art the Christ."

Matthew tells us in **16:17** that “Jesus answered and said unto him, Blessed art thou, Simon Barjona: for flesh and blood hath not revealed it unto thee, but my Father which is in heaven”.

B. Jesus Christ has total power to deliver sinners from Satan’s kingdom.

1. The world is in the devil’s grip.

- **1 John 5:19** (ESV), “the whole world lies in the power of the evil one”.
- **2 Corinthians 4:4**, “...the god of this world hath blinded the minds of them which believe not, lest the light of the glorious gospel of Christ, who is the image of God, should shine unto them.”
- **Ephesians 2:1-3**, “in time past ye walked according to the course of this world, according to the prince of the power of the air, the spirit that now worketh in the children of disobedience: 3 Among whom also we all had our conversation in times past in the lusts of our flesh, fulfilling the desires of the flesh and of the mind; and were by nature the children of wrath, even as others”.

2. Christ has come to deliver us from Satan’s grip. This is why He was confronted by the demons in Capernaum.

- **Mark 3:27**, “No man can enter into a strong man’s house, and spoil his goods, except he will first bind the strong man; and then he will spoil his house.”
- **Colossians 1:13**, “Who hath delivered us from the power of darkness, and hath translated us into the kingdom of his dear Son”.
- **Hebrews 2:14-15**, says that Christ “also himself likewise took part of the same [speaking of Him taking on our human nature]; that **through death he might destroy him that had the power of death, that is, the devil**; 15 And deliver them who through fear of death were all their lifetime subject to bondage”

So Christ is at war! And He is winning! He has bound the strong man (Satan) that He might spoil and his goods (sinners saved by grace).

We are told in **Revelation 11:15** that one day the seventh angel is going to sound his trumpet, and all the saints and angels in heaven are going to shout this chorus: “The kingdoms of this world are become the kingdoms of our Lord, and of his Christ; and he shall reign for ever and ever.” The demons in Capernaum had every reason to be terrified!

III. **Consider thirdly, the Work that Christ performs.** Verses **25-26**, “And Jesus rebuked him, saying, Hold thy peace, and come out of him. 26 And when the unclean spirit had torn him, and cried with a loud voice, he came out of him.” Christ says to the demon “Hold thy peace” or literally “be muzzled!”

This man was demon possessed, but all people are voluntarily under the authority of Satan, unless Christ saves them.

- **1 John 3:8**, "He that committeth sin is of the devil; for the devil sinneth from the beginning."
- Jesus said in **John 8:44**, "Ye are of *your* father the devil, and the lusts of your father ye will do."

But Christ has authority over the devil, and He has come to destroy his power. The aim of the Word of God is the conversion of the soul. The purpose of the Word of God is to cut sinner's hearts that they might see their sin and flee to the Saviour.

- **Hebrews 4:12**, "For the word of God *is* quick, and powerful, and sharper than any twoedged sword, piercing even to the dividing asunder of soul and spirit, and of the joints and marrow, and *is* a discerner of the thoughts and intents of the heart."

When Christ rebuked the demon, the demon threw the man into convulsions and screamed "with a loud voice, he came out of him" (**verse 26**). At this moment, it's not yet time for the destruction of demons, that is still yet to come. But this demon gets a taste of the authority and the power that Christ has over them. This is the very power that one day will speak them into the Lake of Fire. Jesus rebuked him. He had the instant authority to commend. No dialogue, no negotiation, no formula, no prayer, no exorcism, absolute power.

Now we do not have the power to do this today. You don't see any of this in the epistles. The Apostles were given this power, but nobody has that power today to directly cast our demons. That belonged to Jesus and the Apostles. We cannot walk up to a non-believer and discern whether someone is mentally deranged because of sin, or whether it is a demon. But people today think they have the power to cast out demons, and it leads to a distraction away from the Gospel.

Illustration: I tell you there is a lot of silliness that goes on out there. When my wife was a little baby, her aunt who is a godly Christian woman, got that idea that she had the power to cast out demons. One day Jill as a baby was over there, and she would not stop crying. Jill's aunt thought she was demon possessed. Well it turns out she wasn't. She just wanted her mother!

Application: I do know this! Whenever you bring the gospel to a non-believer and they put their faith in the Lord Jesus Christ, He washes them clean and the demons flee. Demons cannot possess a Christian. The way to become free from the power of Satan, sin, and death is to be born again! You need the new birth.

IV. **Finally consider, the Wonder that Christ provokes.**

Verses 27-28, "And they were all amazed, insomuch that they questioned among themselves, saying, What thing is this? what new doctrine *is* this? for with authority commandeth he even the unclean spirits, and they do obey him. 28 And immediately his fame spread abroad throughout all the region round about Galilee."

Listen, we can be changed by seeking our Lord as He is! They thought this was just some teacher, but it was "the Holy One of God"—the promised Messiah, God in human flesh.

Growing in Christ comes through wonder and awe at Christ through His Word. You want to know how to change? How can you be crucified with Christ? How can you die to self? How can you be raised with Him? You get glimpses of His glory in His Word.

2 Corinthians 3:18 (ESV), “And we all, with unveiled face, beholding the glory of the Lord, are being transformed into the same image from one degree of glory to another. For this comes from the Lord who is the Spirit.” We behold the glory of Christ in His Word.

How can you do this: my challenge to you is to memorize a portion of Scripture. Let Christ's Word rule in your heart. **Colossians 3:16**, “Let the word of Christ dwell in you richly in all wisdom; teaching and admonishing one another in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing with grace in your hearts to the Lord.”

It's not just reading the Word, but meditation on it that will change you. Gaze into His face and you will be changed!

When we see Christ, that is when we are willing to give up sin. When we see Him as the hidden treasure, we are willing to sell all so that we can obtain Him.

Conclusion: Wouldn't it be great if Jesus came to church? Listen, He is always in the church! You are the church. When He speaks, demons tremble, and saints wonder. Spend time with Christ!