Grace to You :: *Unleashing God's Truth, One Verse at a Time*

Cosmic Authority
Scripture: Mark 1:21–28
Code: 41-5

As we come to Mark chapter 1 again, we come to verses 21 to 28, preliminaries are now done and Mark begins his actual account of the events of the ministry of Jesus Christ, the Son of God. Mark begins the ministry events in his history with one incident that takes place in the synagogue in the city of Capernaum. And Mark's purpose is to demonstrate to us what is essential if we are to accept Jesus Christ, the Son of God, as the new king...as God's Messiah. He must exercise power over the current ruler of this world. He must be able to break the bondage that Satan holds and that demons hold over the souls of sinners.

Therefore, Mark begins with an amazing account of how Jesus overpowered a demon. This is one of many, many times and one of many statements about Jesus' power to do that, that are made through the rest of the first chapter, on into the third chapter, on into the fifth chapter. All of this because it is essential that if Christ is to come and establish His Kingdom, He must overpower the current ruler who is none other than Satan. He must have cosmic authority, authority that is beyond human authority, that is beyond this temporal world. He must have power that extends into the universe. He must have power over all the evil forces that exist in the universe. This is necessary if He is to rescue sinners from bondage to this evil power. And so, we find Mark telling us that Jesus has that power.

He has already recorded for us in verses 12 and 13 how Jesus vanquished Satan himself, the ruler of that domain. And now we have an incident in which He shows His power over demons. And there will be more to come in the rest of this chapter and in subsequent chapters leaving no doubt in anyone's mind about His power to break the bondage of Satan that holds sinners captive and carries them all the way to hell.

Let's begin in verse 21. “They went in to Capernaum.” That's how he begins the history of Jesus' ministry...they went into Capernaum. They, meaning Jesus and those who were following as His disciples, “And immediately on the Sabbath He entered the synagogue and began to teach. They were amazed at His teaching for He was teaching them as one having authority and not as the scribes. Just then there was a man in their synagogue with an unclean spirit and he cried out, or screamed, 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.' 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. They were all amazed so that they debated among themselves saying, ‘What is this? A new teaching with authority, He commands even the unclean spirits and they obey Him.'

Immediately the news about Him spread everywhere into all the surrounding district of Galilee."

Now there are a number of things that strike you about that account. The one that strikes me first of all is the stark difference between the response of the demons to Jesus' authority and the response of the people. His authority amazed the people. That is indicated in verse 22 and again in verse 27, "the people were amazed." On the other hand, the demons were terrified. The people were amazed, the demons were terrified. The people wondered, the demons panicked.

What was the reason for the difference in the reactions? Simply this, the people didn't know who He was, the demons did. Verse 24, this one demon who speaks, speaks on behalf of all of them when he uses the plural pronouns, "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."

The demons knew who He was obviously. Chapter 3 and verse 11, whenever the unclean spirits saw Him, they would fall down before Him and shout, "You are the Son of God." Chapter 5, a man, verse 2 says, with an unclean spirit, coming out of the tombs where he lived, is confronted by Jesus. He is screaming, verse 5 says, constantly night and day in the tombs and in the mountains and gashing himself with stones. Seeing Jesus from a distance, he ran up and bowed down before Him and shouting with a loud voice he said, "What business do WE have with each other, Jesus, Son of the Most High God?"

In the first half of the gospel of Mark, the only beings that are sure who Jesus is are the demons. They know Him. They have known Him since they were created by Him. They have known Him since they were dwelling in heaven as holy angels before they rebelled. They have known Him since they surrounded the throne, before Lucifer led them in their rebellion. Luke says in chapter 4 verse 40, "The sun was setting and all who had any were sick with various diseases, brought them to Him, laying hands on each of them He was healing them. Demons also were coming out of many, shouting, 'You are the Son of God.' But rebuking them He would not allow them to speak because they knew Him to be the Christ."

There is no question about their knowledge of Jesus. Here we have then the first testimony in the gospel of Mark to the identity of Jesus and it comes from a demon, chapter 1 verse 24. They know who He is. In fact, in the first half of the gospel of Mark, they are the only ones who are sure. In chapter 3 and verse 6, the Pharisees and the Herodians do not recognize Him as the Messiah and are already trying to find a reason to kill Him. In chapter 3 verse 22, the scribes came down from Jerusalem and said about Him, "He's possessed by Beelzebul and He casts out the demons by the ruler of the demons." In chapter 6 He began to teach in the synagogue, verse 2. Many listeners were astonished saying, "Where did this man get these things and what is this wisdom given to Him and such miracles as these performed by His hands? Is not this the carpenter, the son of Mary and brother of James and Joses and Judas and Simon? Are not His sisters here with us?' And they took

offense at Him."

The Pharisees didn't know who He was. The Herodians didn't know who He was. The scribes didn't know who He was. The people didn't know who He was. And even His own followers weren't sure. If you look at chapter 8 and verse 17, Jesus recognized their discussion about not having enough bread. The problem with that discussion was they had just been through two miraculous feedings, one where He fed five thousand, one where He fed four thousand...He created the food. How blind can you be after that?

So Jesus aware of this discussion said to them, "Why do you discuss the fact that you have no bread? Do you not yet see or understand? Do you have a hardened heart? Having eyes do you not see? Having ears do you not hear? Do you not remember when I broke the five loaves for the five thousand how many baskets full of broken pieces you picked up? They said to Him twelve. And when I broke the seven for the four thousand, how many large baskets of broken pieces did you pick up. And they said to him seven. And He was saying to them, "Do you not yet understand?" They didn't understand. It wasn't until finally a great confession of Peter in chapter 8 verse 29, "You are the Christ."

The first half of the book of Mark, the leaders didn't understand who He was. The people didn't understand who He was. Even His disciples were unsure about who He was. That was the difference. The crowd was amazed. The demons were terrified. The difference? The demons knew they had reason to be afraid.

When sinners come to a true understanding of the person of Christ, when sinners come to a true understanding of the authority of Christ as the Son of God, they are also terrified. And terrified sinners tend to run in holy fear to Christ for forgiveness and grace, something demons cannot do. They were terrified and could not be saved. The people were amazed and would not be saved. So the amazed people and the terrified demons end up in the same hell.

James 2:19 says, "The demons believe and shudder." What makes demons shudder? What makes demons scream? By the way, I read you a number of passages in Mark in which the demons when they speak are always screaming. And you need to understand something. They scream because they're terrified of Jesus. They scream because they're panicked, because they know where they're headed. They know about the Lake of Fire long before Jesus refers to it in His Olivet Discourse in Matthew 25:41. They know about the Lake of Fire and that they're going there long before the Book of Revelation is written to describe it in chapter 20. They know about it because they know from the time they were thrown out of heaven where they are headed. They know their destruction is coming. They are terrified. They can't resist screaming.

You will notice in verse 23, the end of the verse, “He cried out, Anakrazo,” means to shout with strong emotion, to scream. These are the deeply-felt screams of someone suffering, someone traumatized. Same verb is used later on to refer to the kind of fear that is expressed in the presence of Christ by certain people. They are in panic because Jesus has arrived.

Now I want you to get something in mind. This is an important thing to understand. The demons do not attack Jesus during His ministry, they attack souls of sinners. They've always done that. They will always do that. They don't attack Jesus. Jesus attacks them. Just by showing up, they panic. They are terrified. They blow their cover. They can't restrain their fear because while to us they are invisible, they know to Him they are not invisible. And when in His presence they are fully aware that He recognizes them and they must therefore scream because of the terror that grips their wicked souls. The demon in this man is a representative of the demon dread that exists in all demons when confronted by Jesus. So this is not an illustration of Jesus going through His ministry attacking demons. Demons are always there. They're around now. They were around before. They will be around until the Lord comes and throws them all in the Lake of Fire at the end of the time of the Millennial Kingdom. But they're always around but they don't always blow their cover.

Now remember, Satan is an angel of light and all his ministers are disguised as angels of light. They want to hide in religion. The last thing a demon wanted to do was to reveal himself in a synagogue because the whole idea of being an angel of light is covering yourself in a religious environment. In every false religion, demons dwell. To one degree or another, they possess, oppress, obsess, whatever, people. False teachers are demonized, sprouting doctrines of demons by supernatural demonic power. False teachers are in the domain of Satan. False adherence are in the domain of Satan. Demon go to church. They attend every religious service. If you were to go to the Mormon meeting, this is in the kingdom of Satan, this is controlled by demons, but you wouldn't see demons shouting because they wouldn't reveal themselves. They're hidden in their false religion.

But Jesus exposes them by simply showing up and they can't restrain their terror. This one incident is also recorded in Luke 4:31 to 37 and it answers this very important basic question as to whether the Son of God can save sinners from Satan's kingdom. And the answer is, He has complete power already over Satan and also as illustrated here over demons. Can He transfer sinners from the domain of darkness into the Kingdom of His own power? Can He do that as Colossians 1:13 puts it? Can He take them out of the kingdom of darkness into the domain of light? Can He overwhelm Satan who has held sinners captive all their life long, according to Hebrews 2:14 and 15? John 8:44 Jesus said, “You are of your father the devil,” 1 John 5:19, “The whole world lies in the lap of the evil one.” Second Corinthians 4:3 and 4, “The God of tis world has blinded the minds of the unbelieving.” Ephesians 2, “All unbelievers are under the control of the prince of the power of the air, the spirit that works in the sons of disobedience.” And in Acts 26:18 it is said that salvation turns one from the domain of Satan to God.

Now if sinners therefore are to be liberated from satanic dominion, then the liberator must have power over that kingdom. Can He? Can He tear, as it were, sinners out of the clutches of demons? Well according to 1 John 3:8, “The Son of Man appeared for this purpose, that He might destroy the works of the devil. The Son of Man appeared for this purpose, that He might destroy the works of the devil.” The new King has to demonstrate His power to dethrone Satan, to rescue sinners from his power. The need of the human race is twofold. One, we need a sacrifice for our sin. We need a substitute who will pay the penalty for our sin so we don't have to pay the penalty. And then we need someone who has the power to rescue us from the domain of Satan. And so our Lord Jesus left the divine realm and entered this world to be the sacrifice for our sins on the cross and to demonstrate His power to destroy the grip of Satan and demons and rescue sinners.

The evil spirits, the demons know why the Son of God has come. They know the battle is on. They know the kingdom has arrived because the King is present. And they are well aware that this could mean that their destruction is imminent. So more than any other time in history, they escalate their activity in the realm of Judaism. They don't want to expose themselves but they can't help it when confronted by Jesus. And His invincibility over them becomes manifestly obvious.

Now in this passage, let's ask the question...what makes demons scream when they are confronted by Jesus? What is it about Him that makes them panic? What is it about Him that terrifies them?

Number one, the authority of His Word...the authority of His Word. It's all about His cosmic authority. Verse 21 and 22, “They went into Capernaum, immediately on the Sabbath He entered the synagogue and began to teach. They were amazed at His teaching for He was teaching them as one having authority and not as the scribes.”

Now just in a general sense, the demons do not like the truth, they did not like the fact that Jesus arrived and taught the truth because they also know that the only possible way in which deceived people can be liberated from their clutches is by means of the truth. Here came Jesus teaching the truth...the truth which does damage to their kingdom. Apart from the truth, no one can be rescued from their clutches. He comes with authoritative teaching of the truth.

Now let's look at the scene a little bit. “They...” meaning Jesus and His newly called disciples, you met some of them in the prior passage, and those who were His followers come into Capernaum. This is where Mark begins. Remember, He's been baptized by John in the Jordan River, gone into Judea in the south around Jerusalem, had a ministry there for months and months. Finally arriving in Galilee and all Mark tells us is they went into Capernaum. Capernaum, Kaphar-Nahum. Nahum is the name of the prophet Nahum. Kaphar is village, the village called Nahum.

This is at the northwest edge of the Sea of Galilee, at the top of the Sea of Galilee. It is a city that became the largest city on the lake because it was the crossroads. People went through this city going north and south and east and west. It had a Roman garrison because it was a potential area of crime because there was so much action, so much trade, so much travel traffic. It had a customs tax office as well. It belonged in the tetrarchy of Herod Antipas, on the border of his brother Philip's domain.

Capernaum became Jesus' headquarters apparently during His Galilean ministry. It wasn't Nazareth where He came from because you remember the first time He went to Nazareth, according to Luke 4, and preached in the synagogue, they tried to throw Him off a cliff. And by the way, Capernaum was a beautiful place, still is, but a very, very sinful place, far away from Jerusalem, far away from the quote/unquote “Holy Influences” of core Judaism on the fringes of a Gentile world. It was a very evil place. In fact, in Matthew chapter 11 Jesus actually said that it would be better for Sodom in the day of judgment than Capernaum. The sins of Capernaum, vile sins, and the opportunity for Capernaum to be exposed to Christ gave them a greater responsibility. And that's why it would be more tolerable for Sodom than Capernaum in the day of judgment, Matthew 11:23 and 24.

Capernaum once had a promenade about 25 hundred feet long we're told by historians, a literal walkway on top of an eight-foot wall on the edge of the lake and pier...piers, perhaps several of them, moving out at least a hundred feet into the lake, it was a fishing center and it was the trade center of the Galilee region. Just to give you a perspective. Nazareth is about 1300 feet above sea level and Capernaum is about 690 below sea level, so it was straight up to Nazareth, straight down to Capernaum. Jesus went there, established His base of ministry there. And having arrived there, it says, immediately on the Sabbath, He entered the synagogue and began to teach. Luke 4:16 says, “As was His custom.” He went to the synagogue as was His custom. Of course He went to the synagogue every Sabbath.

Now what is a synagogue? Simply, a synagogue is a meeting place, a local meeting place...a local meeting place. There are no synagogues in the Old Testament, they had a temple. Temple was the focus of everything. There's no indication that there were local meeting places. There were priests scattered all over the land of Israel, priests that did some teaching, helped the people, counseled them, were spiritual advisors and all of that, but there's no such thing as a synagogue in the Old Testament. They come out of the captivity. Babylonian captivity, Israel is taken into captivity, 586 B.C. They go to Babylon, they haven't got the temple, the temple is destroyed. They want to meet. They collect in small groups. Synagogue is simply a word that means to come together, to collect together and they came together when they were in captivity. When they returned under Nehemiah. They took the concept of the synagogue back and apparently it comes then out of their experience in captivity. Synagogues began to proliferate after the captivity and by the time of Jesus, for example, the Talmud says there were 500 of them in Jerusalem alone. They were like local churches, local assemblies. They were, according to Philo, synagogues drew the name “Houses of Instruction”

because there the Law was read on the Sabbath and explained. And during the week it was a school. And also during the week it was a civil court. Scribes who taught, elders who taught would become judges who would rule in cases of the Law. So they were very, very important places in towns and villages. Josephus says there were about 240 towns and villages in Galilee and they all had synagogues. Capernaum would have had more than one...Capernaum would have had a lot, it only took ten men to establish a synagogue. If you had ten men, that was enough to start a synagogue.

They got together. The Law was read on the Sabbath. The Law was explained to them. Each synagogue had a ruler who really was the organizer, kind of the executive person, not necessarily a pastor or teacher. Then it had elders. Elders would be responsible for the reading and explaining of the Law unless there was a visiting scribe who would do that.

Now when the Lord comes, the synagogues then provide a ready-made opportunity for Him to go from place to place, town to town, neighborhood to neighborhood and teach and explain His message. Maybe they just came into existence for this very purpose. And their tradition was visiting rabbis would speak so it was no intrusion for a guest to come.

END OF SIDE ONE

SIDE TWO

Now, by the time Jesus arrived in Capernaum, according to Luke 4:14, He returned to Galilee in the power of the Spirit and news about Him spread through all the surrounding district. That text also says He was praised by all. The word had come up from His ministry in Judea which lasted nearly a year of all His power, His teaching, His miracles, all of that, they were well aware of it by the time He arrived, He goes into Capernaum, of course they want Him to teach. Eager to hear Him, they give Him the opportunity and He began to teach. Now Mark doesn't tell us anything about what He taught. The focus is not on the content but that's pretty much Mark's approach anyway. But what we do look at is the response, verse22, “They were amazed at His teaching.” Why? “For He was teaching them as one having authority and not as the scribes.”

Let's start with the first part, “One having authority.” What does that mean? Rule, there was some...there was kind of objectivity to this. There was a kind of absolute character to this. There was a level of conviction that they were not used to. He didn't quote anybody. This is reminiscent of Sermon on the Mount, Matthew 7:28 and 29 says that after the Sermon on the Mount, they were amazed because He spoke as one having authority. What is authority? Exousia, rule, dominion, jurisdiction, full right, power, privilege, prerogative. He just spoke with this absolute conviction, objectivity, authority, dominion, as if He were in charge and as if this was the truth and that was it. And it says in verse 22, “Not as the scribes...not as scribes.”

How did the scribes speak? Well they didn't speak with authority, they quoted other rabbis. This rabbi says this...this rabbi says this...there are some people who think this rabbi is right, there are some people who think that rabbi is right. And they prided themselves on being able to attach themselves to the past and quote various revered rabbis. Here is someone who doesn't quote anybody. Doesn't get His theology from anybody. Doesn't give five views. This is not what they were used to.

There were other differences as well. His teaching was absolute not arbitrary. His teaching was logical, not evasive. His teaching was concrete not esoteric. His teaching was reasonable, systematic, not mystical, muddled. His teaching was on essential matters, not trivialities. His teachings were clear by way of illustrations and progression...not confusing, allegorical. His teaching had the conviction of truthfulness, not merely suggestion. They never heard anything like it, never. That's bound up in the word “amazed.” There are a number of New Testament words that can be translated amazed or astonished or wonder. This is the strongest, ekplesso. One lexicon says, this is what it means, “To strike a person out of his senses by strong feeling.” He, in the vernacular, blew their minds. Never heard anything like it. Never heard anything like it.

Scribes prided themselves on familiarity with all the possible views. They prided themselves on their labyrinthical musings, their obscure insights, their mystical notions and never saying anything original. Scribes, by the way, were the crucial teaching men, men only, in the first century Jewish society. They traced their heritage back to Ezra who, according to Ezra 7, read the Law and explained it basically. We find that also in Nehemiah 8. He is the first in their lineage, if you will, they were the ones who explained the Scripture. Remember, most people were illiterate. People didn't have copies of the scriptures because they were in scrolls kept in very, very private places, only available in the synagogue to the one who had access to the scrolls, the ruler of the synagogue, the person in charge of that. So people had to hear the Scripture read and they had to have it explained to them. So scribes became the ones who handled the scriptures. They were the ones that read it and they were the ones that explained it.

They became so revered and honored that they were given the title rabbi. Rabbi is a title that means honored one and it was given to scribes. They were the civil jurists, as I said. The Sanhedrin was made up of them, the ruling body of Israel. They were the elite because they handled the Scripture. Remember, they viewed their nation as a theocracy. So for Jesus to ignore their honored approach, Jesus to take a completely different approach was a shock and for Jesus to speak authoritatively quoting no one and concretely and objectively and clearly was something they were utterly not used to. But if they weren't used to it, and it amazed them, it terrified the demon who was living in one man.

Verse 23 says this, “Just then,” or if you will again, “Immediately...immediately,” what do you mean immediately? At the very time Jesus is teaching and the people are in absolute amazement, there was a man in their synagogue with an unclean spirit and he screamed. It was what Jesus said that hit that demon in the synagogue that day and that demon exploded, blowing his cover.

What terrified the demon? What terrified the demon was the truth. He knew that with the arrival of Jesus was the arrival of the truth. The demons knew that they had developed an untrue false system of religion that was highly successful in Israel. And it held people captive unto their damnation. They again are disguised as angels of light. They hide in the middle of false religion. Satan is before all other things a liar and a murderer. He wants to catch everybody in deception and then kill their eternal souls. Truth is therefore deadly to the demonic operation...deadly. This is where the initial conflict comes.

In John chapter 8 verse 44, this is brought into bold clarity. Jesus speaking to the Jews, says, “You are of your father the devil. You want to do the desires of your father. He was a murderer from the beginning and doesn't stand in the truth because there's no truth in him. Whenever he speaks a lie, he speaks from his own nature, for he is a liar and the father of liars...the father of lies, but because I speak the truth, you do not believe Me.” There's the conflict. Satan is a liar, he purveys lies. He develops demonic lying doctrines. He concocts false systems of religion, all systems of religion other than the true gospel are lies of Satan. These are the fortresses of 2 Corinthians 10:3 to 5, the fortresses that much be smashed if sinners are to be set free and brought captive to Christ.

So the essential feature, the first thing that makes demons scream, the first attack on them comes from the authority of Christ as exhibited in His Word. The truth crushes Satan's lies. The truth destroys his fortresses, his ideological fortresses.

On the other hand, conversely, to neglect the truth leaves his victims in his bondage. The forces of hell have a deadly fear of the truth. They have a deadly fear of the true gospel. The world hates the Scripture. Do you understand that? Men by nature hate the Bible because the truth is no in them. They hate the truth because they belong to the kingdom of darkness. They're of their father the devil, and we were all there once. They hate the true gospel. They hate the liberating message of salvation. They all lie in Satan's control. Satan hates it, all under his control hate it by nature and by satanic influence. But when it comes to demons, nothing terrifies them more than the truth. Nothing is more deadly to their domain than the gospel truth.

But the demons are also terrified by the Son of God not only because of the authority of His Word, but the authority of His judgment, secondly. “Just then,” verse 23 again, “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?’” There's that immediately again. A man with an unclean spirit, unclean spirit is a New Testament synonym for a demon, fallen angel. We find

it used again in chapter 5 and verse 2 of the man in the country of the Gerasenes coming out of the tombs with an unclean spirit.

Now again, just a reminder, this kind of demon possession has always been a reality in the world. Demons have always had their way with those in their domain. But what happened during the ministry of our Lord Jesus Christ has no parallel either before or after. For example, there is nowhere in the Old Testament where you have one occasion of demon possession. Were the demons there? Yeah. But they were under cover, under wraps. After the ministry of Christ, after the gospels, there are only two accounts of demon possession. One is in Acts 16 and the other in Acts 19, after that none...none in the epistles.

What happened was the demons are very content to stay under cover. They don't want to be exposed, but during the ministry of Jesus when He showed up, they panicked and they said out loud, “You are the Son of God,” and when they said that Jesus silenced them. He silenced them. You see down in verse 34, He permitted the demons...He was not permitting the demons to speak because they knew who He was and He didn't want demons as His publicity agents cause that would just feed the already growing frenzy that He did what He did by the power of Satan. Who could deny that if His agents are demons? So whenever they affirmed who He was, He shut them up.

Demon possession has always been around, but it never was so manifest in all biblical history as it was during Jesus' earthly ministry, and to a small extent to the Apostles extended ministry because He delegated power over demons to the Apostles as well because Satan disguises himself. And as I said, demons sit in every religious service. They stand in every false religious pulpit. They put on the garb of spiritual leaders. But in Jesus' day, they were exposed with wildness, physical deformity, convulsive seizures, torment, self-mutilation, nakedness, screaming...they always screamed in His presence.

This man screams. He screams because he can't help himself. This is the demon screaming through the man's vocal chords. The demons shuddered, terrified at the presence of the Son of God and His proclamation of truth. He is so terrified He reveals Himself though He doesn't want to. Once He reveals Himself, Jesus silences him and shuts him up because He doesn't want him promoting His true identity.

Look at what he says. “What business do we have with each other, Jesus of Nazareth? Have You come to destroy us?” Literally in the Greek, “What to us and to You? What do we have in common? We know...we know this is about You and us, is this the time of our destruction?” Please notice the “we,” he speaks for all the demons. He wants to know why Jesus has now invaded their kingdom. “What is going on here? What to You and to us? What business do we have with each other, Jesus of Nazareth? Why is it now? Is this the hour of our final destruction?”

He knew, 1 John 3:8, that Christ was revealed to destroy the works of the devil. As I told you, he knew about the Lake of Fire. He knew with all the rest of the demons that they were thrown out of heaven, they knew where they were headed. They knew they were irredeemable. The demon knew the plan of God. He knew they would end up in the Lake of Fire. The demons did everything they could to fight against it. Matthew 11:12 says, “The Kingdom of God suffers violence.” One of the reasons there was such a violent move to come into the kingdom, because you had to fight against your own flesh, your own fallenness, your own pride. You had to be willing to crucify yourself. You had to be willing to take up your cross, as it were, follow Christ, you had to be willing to obey Him, deny yourself. And then you had to hack your way through demon resistance. The Kingdom suffers violence, often the violence was the violent struggle, fierce struggle with demon powers.

But they knew their inevitable damnation. Chapter 5, we'll read about the demon-possessed man in the land of the Gerasenes who said, “Did You come to torment us? Did You come to torment us? Don't send us to the pit. Don't send us to the pit. Send us into the pigs.” What makes demons scream? The authority of Jesus in His Word because His Word smashes their lies. The authority of Jesus in judgment because they know He is their judge and they know the Lake of Fire has been prepared for them. They knew it before it was ever written in Scripture in Matthew 25:41, and they knew Jesus was the judge who had the power to send them there.

What makes demons scream, thirdly, is the authority of His purity...the authority of His purity. By the way, they call Him Jesus of Nazareth, as a footnote. That was the most common name given to Him and it was always a name of disdain...Jesus of Nazareth, because Nazareth was viewed as a disdainful town. And so they speak of Him with the same scorn that others spoke of Him, the ludicrous notion that the Messiah would come from Nazareth. So they join the scorn at the same time express their terror. But, of course, you couldn't expect them to do anything other than what was wretched.

But they know who He is. End of verse 24, “I know who You are, the Holy One of God.” When the angel came to Mary, Luke 1:35, said you're going to have a holy child, Son of the Most High God. The demons know that. The Holy One of God, by the way, is in stark contrast, isn't it, to the unclean spirit? Is that not bizarre, an unclean wretched demon saying You're the Holy One of God? Demons know the Son is holy as the Father is holy. And demons who are ultimate wickedness, cringe in the face of perfect holiness...just as sin cowers in the presence of virtue. Utter sinfulness cowers in the presence of utter holiness. They know God is holy. They know the Son is holy. They know that they were thrown out of heaven because they are unholy. They know that they once faced the holiness of God and were thrown out of His presence, headed for a Lake of Fire. They know they're going to face Him again. They are permanently unholy, permanently wretched. They know the experience that original sin brought upon them and they know that the experience that awaits them in the Lake of Fire is even worse, more confining. And they scream at the anticipation of torment. The Holy One

will deal with these unclean spirits.

Fourthly, they scream at the authority of His power...they scream at the authority of His power. Jesus rebuked him saying, “Be quiet, come out of him. Throwing him into convulsions, the unclean spirits screamed again with a loud voice and came out of him.”

At this point, 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. There's no such thing in the Bible as an exorcism, no such thing. Jesus commanded them and they left. Jesus delegated that power to His Apostles and they did the same. And the only people who ever had demons in them were non-believers. And He spoke them out by the power of His own authority. “Be quiet! I don't want you declaring who I am. I don't need publicity from you.” The same thing we saw, didn't we, in the book of Acts in chapter 16 where a demon-possessed girl is spreading the word about Paul that he is the servant of God and Paul casts the demon out and said, “I don't need publicity from hell.” Jesus says, “Be quiet and come out of him.”

Nobody has that power, folks. You can't do that. You can't walk up to a non-believer if you could discern that that non-believer had demons and command the demons to come out. That belonged to Jesus and the Apostles. But whenever you bring the gospel to a non-believer and he puts his faith, or she puts her faith in the Lord Jesus Christ, He washes them clean and the demons flee.

Well the demon wants to stay. He wants to hold that soul captive for hell. And so he protests, verse 26, by throwing the man into convulsions, sparasso in the Greek, to agitate greatly, convulse, distort by convulsions or seizures. Throwing him into convulsions, the unclean spirits screamed with a loud voice, came out of him.

A final protest, but necessary obedience. The power makes them scream, just like the truth makes them scream, just like the purity makes them scream. Whenever they are confronted by Christ, they're terrified because they have reason to be terrified.

But the demon makes a final statement by slamming the man around in convulsions. It reminds me of Matthew 17, they came to a crowd, a man came up to Jesus, verse 14, falling on his knees before Him and said, “Lord, have mercy on my son, he's a lunatic, very ill. Falls into the fire, into the water.” This is a demon-possessed boy, the demon slams him into the water to drown him, throws him into the fire to burn him. And Jesus answered and said, cause the disciples couldn't cure him the man said, “You unbelieving and perverted generation, how long shall I be with you? How long shall I put up with you? Bring him here to me.”

Jesus rebuked him and the demon came out of him and the boy was cured at once. Does He have power to rests souls out of the kingdom of darkness? Absolutely.

So back to Mark 1. In this case the man goes into convulsions, but Luke tells us in Luke 4:35, his record of the same incident, “The man was not harmed...the man was not harmed.” There's no information about the man at all because he's not the focus. He's not the point. The attention is on the Son of God who publicly displays divine power. By His own authority He sent the demon out. Jesus is showing that He is the Messiah, He is the King, He is the Savior, He is bringing the Kingdom. He has the power that He needs to break the bondage that Satan possesses. He can destroy Satan and his forces and deliver souls. The King's power is now visible. It is unmistakable.

How do we know? Verse 27, “They were all amazed.” They had been amazed, they were now more amazed. “And so, they debated among themselves saying, ‘What is this?’” This is what we would call the buzz, not a debate in a formal sense. It's the buzz...What is this? Who is this? A new teaching, we've never heard teaching like this with authority. He commands even the unclean spirits and THEY obey Him.

Everyone knew. Everyone knew, He taught like nobody taught and everyone knew He had power that no one ever, ever possessed. According to Matthew 9:33 He cast a demon out of a mute man and they said it was never seen in Israel.

What makes demons scream is the authority of Christ. It terrifies them. And it should terrify you, as well. It should terrify sinners the way it terrifies demons. The difference is, sinners don't understand the reality of their doom...demons do. It's not enough to be amazed by Jesus. The amazed people and the terrified demons will spend forever in the same Lake of Fire. Jesus doesn't want your astonishment. He doesn't want your amazement. He wants your fear. He wants you to fear Him as judge and then run to Him as Savior.

“Immediately,” verse 28 says, “the news about Him spread everywhere into all the surrounding district of Galilee.” And that was just the start. Go down to verse 39, “He went into their synagogues throughout all Galilee preaching and casting out the demons.” He put on a power display that was shocking. Tragedy was again, people were always amazed and went to the same hell the terrified demons will occupy forever.

The demons knew who He was and couldn't be saved. The people didn't believe He was who He claimed to be and wouldn't be saved. What is necessary is a combination of both. You need to be amazed and terrified. Amazed at such a Savior and terrified at such a judge.

Our Father, we see here again the majesty of Christ who is both Savior and judge. If He is not the Savior, He is the judge. We will never escape a face-to-face confrontation with Jesus Christ, either in that hour when He embraces us in His eternal love and takes us to live in His own home prepared for us, or when He faces us as our judge and executioner and sends the impenitent and unbelieving to an eternal hell prepared for demons. The evidence is in. The demons know it. May sinners know it as well. Yes, we are to be amazed by Him, amazed by His teaching, its clarity, its truthfulness, its power. We are to be terrified by His holiness, His purity and His judgment. May Your grace be abundant to sinners this day. Transfer people, Lord, from the kingdom of darkness, the kingdom of Satan, into the Kingdom of light, the Kingdom of Your dear Son. And may sinners who have only been amazed to hear about Jesus become terrified at the reality of His judgment and repent and cry out for forgiveness and salvation. We pray in His name. Amen.

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