

Mark 1:21-31 The Confession of Demons

Well, this week Satan has pounded me because of the Scripture text that we are about to take today. He is not happy and I could tell. But we are going on anyway. We are in Mark chapter 1 verses 21 through 31, that is our focus today.

We took Mark chapter 1 verses 1 through 13, the prologue or introduction, as he introduced John the Baptizer. His Credentials in verses 2 through 8, and the credentials of Jesus in verses 9 through 13. But then as we began verse 14, we started the first main section of Mark's gospel, Mark chapter 1 verse 14 through chapter 9 verse 50.

And last week we took verses 14 and 15, the change of messengers as John was put into prison. And Jesus took up the ministry, saying, **Repent and believe in the gospel.** We took that last week.

But then in verses 16 through 20, the calling of the four disciples. As Jesus walked down by the Sea of Galilee and saw Simon Peter and Andrew his brother fishing in the shallow end of the lake. And Jesus called them, literally - and it is important that we take it specifically and literally. He told them, **Come behind Me.** It was a command. They immediately came, dropped everything, and came behind Jesus. And they walked a little further and came to John and James his brother. This would be the one known eventually as the apostle John. And Jesus said to them, **Come behind Me.** It was a command. And they came behind Him, left their father and the hired servants in the boats mending nets to prepare for the next day's work. **And immediately He called them: and having left their father in the boat with the hired servants, they went away behind Him.** Always where our position is in Christ, it is behind Him. Not alongside of Him, not ahead of Him. We cannot look for Him to give us directions as to where to go ahead of Him and leave Him. We follow behind Him. We follow His lead for our lives.

So Mark is presenting Jesus in such a way, as who is this Jesus who immediately calls these fishermen to leave their jobs, leave their inheritance, leave their industry behind, and follow behind Jesus. Not knowing where He is going to go, how long He is going to be gone, or how they are going to earn a living. Jesus just said, **Come,** and they came. That is what faith is. Trusting the Lord. We do not need to know all that information. We just need to know the Lord. He knows all the information.

Today we are verses 21 to 28, first of all, the commanding of unclean spirits. Verse 21 says, **And they are going into Capernaum; and immediately (Mark's favorite word) having entered into the synagogue, He was teaching on the sabbaths.**

So they are going into Capernaum. Capernaum is on the northwest side of the Sea of Galilee. Capernaum was a prosperous fishing town. It is about eighty-five miles north of Jerusalem. Capernaum became the headquarters of the Lord's Galilean ministry. In fact, the Lord used Peter's home in Capernaum for His ministry. The name Capernaum means village of

Nahum, believed to be the village of Nahum the prophet when he prophesied. He is an Old Testament time prophet.

It was here that Peter and Andrew, James and John had their fishing business. So they are still in the general area, but now they are working out of Capernaum where Peter lives, and Peter's house becomes headquarters for Jesus in His Galilean ministry.

And notice it also says, **He was teaching on the sabbaths.** That is a literal translation, it means a lot. *Was teaching*, imperfect tense, showing habit. Meaning every Sabbath day immediately after He entered into the synagogue, He took the seat and role as a teacher.

Verse 22, **And they were being amazed over His teaching; for He was teaching them as having authority, and not as the scribes.** They were amazed. *Being amazed*, which literally means *to be struck out of one's mind*. So their minds are blown by the authoritative teaching of Jesus; as Mark begins to tell us now some of the reactions to the Lord's teaching there in the Synagogue. These people have their minds blown over His authority and His teaching.

It says that over His teaching they were amazed and, **not as the scribes.** The scribes are those people who copied the law. Because they were well-versed in the law they were the ones that read the law and explained the law to the people. The best scribes and rabbis could do in their messages to the people was to quote some other scholars that came before them. Rashi is one of them that the scribes would quote, one of the main scholars the Jewish rabbis and scribes would quote. If you just got your material on your own and you were a scribe and one of the old rabbi teachers did not teach it then you were suspect, because you had to quote the former rabbis to be accepted. You could not just teach your own material.

So Jesus, obviously, was not quoting anybody. He was teaching with authority. Not as the scribes did who were only limited to repeating what the former rabbis and former teachers had taught. Nothing new, just the old teaching over and over again.

Verse 23, **And a man in an unclean spirit was in their synagogue, and he screamed.** Now an *unclean spirit* is a spirit that causes people to do unclean and immoral things. This is a demonic spirit that is called *an unclean spirit*. **And he screamed.** Interesting, the response of the demon over the authoritative teaching of Jesus is to scream. He is frightened. He is faced with the authority of Christ. They were not struck out of their minds, they were fearful and screamed.

Look at what the demon said in verse 24. **He screamed, saying, "Eah, what do we have to do with You, Jesus, Nazarene?"** That is how it literally reads. He is called Jesus and Nazarene in the same breath. **"Do You come to destroy us?"** the demon says, **"I know You, who You are, the Holy One of God."** That is what the demon says. He said four things:

1) **Eah.**

He screamed. In Greek it is an expression of surprise. The authoritative teaching of Jesus confronted him, and he was expressing surprise.

2) **What have we in common with You?**

The demon says, "We do not have anything in common." The use of the plural pronouns *we* and *us* tells us that this particular demon was asking these questions for all demons. What do You have to do with us? What do we have in common with You? What are You bothering us for? Interesting, Jesus was teaching in the synagogue and that is where this demonic unclean spirit was residing in this person.

He says, **What do we have to do with You, Jesus, Nazarene?** The term *Nazarene*, because Jesus was from Nazareth, was a town looked down on by the other Israelites. So it was a term of scorn. In John chapter 1 verses 45 and 46 it says at the time of the baptism of John the Baptist baptizing people that Philip is introduced to the Messiah through John's baptism. (verse 45) **And Philip finds Nathanael and says to him, "We have found Him of whom Moses in the law and the prophets, wrote — Jesus the One from Nazareth, the son of Joseph."** (verse 46) **And Nathanael said to him, "Can anything good come out of Nazareth?" Philip said to him, "Come and see."** So calling Jesus a Nazarene was a term of scorn and contempt by this demonic spirit.

3) **Did You come to destroy us?**

The third thing that he says, if you notice at the end of verse 24, thirdly, the demon says, **Did You come to destroy us?** Demons know that they have but a short time. They know that their destination and destiny is for the lake of fire according to the book of Revelation. One day they will be judged, one day they will be destroyed. So he asks, **Did You come to destroy us?** Is now the time? They know there will come a day when they will be destroyed.

4) **I know You, who You are, the Holy *One* of God.**

And then fourthly, notice this, in verse 24, **I know You, who You are, the Holy *One* of God.** Now that is a good confession, as good as I have ever heard, except it came from a demon. The demons know who Jesus is, the demons confess who Jesus is, but that does not save them. Just believing the truth about Jesus does not save anybody. You have to be surrendered. You have to receive His Spirit into your spirit to be your Lord. So it is not just confession of the truth, this demon knows who Jesus is.

Later on in Mark chapter 3 verse 11 it tells us, **the unclean spirits, whenever they saw Jesus, they were falling down before Him, and they were crying out saying, "You are the Son of God."** Demons were falling down bowing to Him and confessing, "You are the Son of God." True confession. Quoted the truth about who Jesus is.

In fact, it says in James chapter 2 verse 19 it tells us, **You believe that God is one. You do well. Even the demons are believing and trembling!** They believe the truth about Jesus, but it does not save them because they have not submitted to Him, and received Him as their Lord to follow behind Him.

I think I mentioned last week that I read an article on the Internet a couple weeks ago where a man wrote an article about Satan. And he made a statement that just stuck out in the

article - struck me in the mind, amazed. He said, "Satan is a believer." He believes the truth. He knows the truth. He confesses the truth. But he does not submit to the truth.

There are some who teach that a true confession produces salvation. They take you aside and tell you to make certain statements about Jesus like, "Jesus is Lord." If you say, "Jesus is Lord," that is a statement that means you have the Holy Spirit. They get that from I Corinthians chapter 12 verse 3 which says, **Therefore I make known to you that no one speaking by the Spirit of God calls Jesus accursed, and no one is able to say that Jesus is Lord except in the Holy Spirit.** No one can say it except in the Holy Spirit. Well, anybody can say, "Jesus is Lord."

So you look closer into the Greek text, and they do not say the statement *Jesus is Lord*, it makes the statement *Lord Jesus*. So calling upon Him as your personal Lord, you cannot do that without the Holy Spirit. It is a relationship, a personal relationship to call Him, *Lord Jesus*. Anybody can make the statements, anybody can say the words. People go around try to get people to make true confessions and if you make a true confession about Jesus that means you are saved. Demons make true confessions, but it does not save them.

And demons can also witness. I do not know if you knew that or not. There was an incident recorded for us that happened during Paul's second missionary journey. He came into Philippi. It says in Acts chapter 16 verses 16 through 18, **Now it happened, while we were going to prayer, that a certain slave girl having a spirit of Python.** English texts say *spirit of divination*, that is what *Python* means: magical arts, fortune telling, future telling. **She met us, he says, who was bringing much business to her masters by telling fortunes. She having followed Paul and us, was crying out, saying, (here is what the spirit said) "These men are the servants of the Most High God, who are proclaiming to us the way of salvation." And this she was doing over many days. But Paul, having become annoyed, and having turned to the spirit, said, "I command you in the name of Jesus Christ to come out from her." And it came out that same hour.** See, I probably would have gone and told her, "Thanks sister. You are out witnessing for the Lord and bringing people over to hear the gospel." Except Paul was irritated because it was not the Holy Spirit, it was a demon. Even though she was telling the truth, it was a demon and he cast the demon out of her.

And then the Scriptures teach that Satan can and will perform signs and wonders. It says in II Thessalonians chapter 2 verse 9 where it talks about when the antichrist is revealed and the working of Satan - II Thessalonians chapter 2 verse 9, what will happen when the lawless one is revealed. It says, **The coming of the lawless one is according to the working of Satan, in all power, signs, and lying wonders.** We learn from our study of the last days that Satan can and will perform signs and wonders with power. He is and will be a miracle worker, and people will be taken in by it because it is a benefit to the flesh as he appeals to the flesh. I call it *the gospel of the preservation of the flesh*. That is what Satan does, and his demons.

Paul told Timothy in I Timothy chapter 4 verse 1, **Now the Spirit expressly says that in the latter times some will depart from the faith, paying attention to deceiving spirits and teachings of demons.** Spirits that come in and deceive and seduce and then produce doctrines to back up the experience. That is why I mention what I do when I come across certain doctrines

that are being proclaimed today by certain groups that the doctrines are not found in the Bible. They are made up. It is teachings of demons. People would rather follow the demons say, thinking that it is the Lord.

Verse 25, **And Jesus rebuked him, saying, "Be silent, and come out of him."** This is the unclean spirit that made confession. He had to come out because Jesus cast him out. And He cast them out because Jesus will not take testimony from demons. It does not matter if it is the truth or not. As the apostle John explained, **The Son of God appeared for the purpose to destroy the works of the devil**, I John chapter 3 verse 8. Did you ever notice, of course you already know how powerful demons are, you know how powerful Satan is, but do you notice how effortlessly the Lord cast out the demons. He did not have to make up some kind of formula. He did not have to work up a sweat to fight with this demon and get him out of there. The authority of Jesus over demons is very real and powerful to the point the demons do not have a chance. They are already defeated.

Verse 27, **Then all were astonished, so as to be questioning to themselves, saying, "What is this? What is this new teaching, that He according to authority even commands the unclean spirits, and they obey Him?"** That is the authority of Jesus. So when you read this account you have to take into consideration *who is this Jesus?* He commands people and they come and follow Him. He can cast unclean spirits out and they know who He is. They confess He is who He is, and they have to obey Him. If Jesus has authority over demons and they have to obey Him, then who He is this Man? This is my Lord. This is my Savior. And everybody keeps telling me, "You have to be afraid of those demons. You have to cast them out all the time." No, Jesus is the authority. Demons have no authority over Christ. As we will see in a moment, they have already been defeated.

Verse 28, **And His fame went out immediately into the whole region of Galilee.** So now word is starting to spread about Jesus and His fame.

Very quickly, verses 29 through 31, the curing of Peter's mother-in-law. Reading at verse 29, **And immediately after having gone out of the synagogue, they came into the house of Simon and Andrew, with James and John.** Remember Jesus is making Peter's home in Capernaum His headquarters. But He also comes with James and John. Verse 30, **And the mother-in-law of Simon was lying down, burning with fever, and immediately they speak to Him concerning her.** Peter's mother-in-law, he was married. There are those groups today who say Peter was never married. Paul even says in I Corinthians chapter 9 verse 5 that Peter was married, and his wife traveled with him on some of these missionary ministry journeys.

Verse 30, **And the mother-in-law of Simon was lying down, burning with fever, and immediately they speak to Him concerning her; and having come to her, He raised her up, after having taken her hand; and the fever left her immediately, and she was serving them.** The word *servicing* is in the imperfect tense and again it shows continuous action. She was serving. She was completely healed. Her symptoms were gone. There is no recovery time. She was continually serving them.

So again, Mark's gospel asks the question, Who is this Man that can just take somebody by the hand and lift them up and they become completely well? No hocus-pocus. No formulas. Just Jesus and the authority of Jesus. Who is this Jesus that when He comes to people and says, "You follow after Me, you come behind Me and when I go, wherever I lead you, you go. You do not go in front of Me, you go behind Me. You follow after Me. When I call you, come immediately." Who is this Jesus?

Secondly, who is this Jesus that even the demons believe and tremble and that they are in obedience to Him. There is a lot of authority there in Christ. This is the One that asks me to put my trust in Him. When Satan attacks, Jesus asks me to put my trust in Him. He has all authority. Now Satan can harass me through circumstances, or it could be mental, or it could be emotional, it could be pressure, it could be stress, it could be a direct attack on me. What the Lord asks me to do is to put my trust in the One who has already overcome Satan, and has already defeated him.

Listen to what the Scripture says. In I John chapter 4 verse 1, John says, **Do not believe every spirit, but test the spirits, whether they are of God or not.** But then he goes on, down to verse 4, in speaking of these spirits of antichrist that are in the world, he says (I John chapter 4 verse 4), **You are of God, little children, and you have overcome them.** Notice the verb tense. It is called *the perfect tense*, which means you stand in a condition of already having overcome him. Why do people tell us you have to fight him? Satan wants to get in fights all the time. He wants to be the center of attention. He wants the flesh to be the center of attention. But John says, **We have overcome them because He who is in you is greater than he who is in the world.** What a realization. When you come to that realization in your life, not just for a moment, but it stays with you and changes your life, and transforms your life, then you will be living in authority of Christ over everything that Satan and demons can do. It is really knowing Christ and coming to receive this One who has this authority.

Let's close in prayer.