

# THIS WEEK'S MESSAGE

MAY 24TH–25TH, 2025 // GOSPEL OF MARK

## AUTHORITY (MARK 1:21–28)

After Jesus called His first disciples, they entered the village of Capernaum—a fishing village of about 1,500 people on the northwestern shore of the Sea of Galilee (v. 21).

- There in Capernaum, Jesus went to the synagogue on the Sabbath and began to teach.
- Synagogues were gathering places and community centers for the Jewish people used for Torah instruction and community affairs.

Typically, learned guests would be invited to speak on whatever the Scripture reading was for the day.

- The scribes and Torah teachers in Jesus' day would've mostly quoted a variety of other rabbis and their interpretations of the text.
- Not so with Jesus. He taught with authority! Jesus possessed an authority that didn't rely on tradition or interpretation, but on God (v. 22).

Wherever there is a clear demonstration of the authority of God's Word, you can be sure the forces of darkness will be provoked.

- There was a man with an unclean spirit within the synagogue. Someone can be religiously observant yet still completely overcome by darkness (v. 23).
- The demon within this man recognized exactly who Jesus was and cried out (v. 24).

## 7 THINGS TO KNOW ABOUT DEMONS/UNCLEAN SPIRITS

1. Fallen & rebellious spiritual beings (Rev. 12:7–9).
2. Some are confined now (2 Pet. 2:4), some are free to roam (Mark 1:21–34), and some are confined until the end times (Rev. 9).
3. Their activity may have increased during Christ's time on earth, and it will ramp up in the end times.
4. They are set up under Satan's control (Eph. 6:11–12), probably in rank and maybe geography.
5. They have some level of authority, can promote disunity, mentally torment, spread false doctrine, inflict disease, discourage/deceive/distract, and hinder Christian growth.
6. Christians cannot be possessed by demons, but Christians can be attacked and can open doors to demonic activity and influence.
7. Jesus HAS AUTHORITY over demons!

First century writings tell us that Jewish exorcisms were often bizarre, theatrical, and mostly ineffective.

- Jesus simply rebukes the demon, and it comes out of the man immediately (v. 26).
- This was one more display of Jesus' authority!
- Everyone in the synagogue was amazed and began to ask one another about it until news of Jesus spread through Galilee (vs. 27–28).

## OUR STRUGGLE WITH AUTHORITY

One of the most difficult ideas for those in our generation to accept is the concept of the authority of absolute Truth.

- For some of us, the only authority we recognize or trust is our own. Acknowledging God's Word as an authority that has the right to tell us what to do is difficult. You can't fully understand Jesus without acknowledging His authority!

## HEALINGS (MARK 1:29–34)

After leaving the synagogue, Jesus went with His students into Simon and Andrew's house where He found Simon's mother-in-law in bed, sick with a fever (vs. 29–30).

- In ancient times, having a fever was often very serious and could even be life-threatening.
- Fevers were often associated with infectious diseases that could be deadly, especially before the development of antibiotics or vaccines.

The Talmud (the central text of Rabbinic Judaism) prescribes certain treatments for fever, some of which involve doing things like tying an iron knife by a braid of hair to a thorn bush while quoting verses from Exodus.

- When Jesus is made aware of this woman's condition, He goes to her, takes her by the hand, raises her up, and immediately the fever leaves (v. 31).

Since this is still the Sabbath, presumably Jesus and His students had originally come to Peter's house for the Sabbath meal.

- What is the woman's response to Jesus healing her?
- She begins to serve Him! This should be our response, too, when we experience the healing touch of Jesus!
- Our service of Jesus is motivated by gratitude.

As the sun sets and the Sabbath comes to a close, almost all the residents of the little village of Capernaum begin to assemble outside the doors of Simon Peter's house (vs. 32–33).

- They have brought to Jesus all those who were sick and demon-possessed.
- In yet another powerful display of His authority, Jesus healed many who were diseased and drove out many demons (v. 34a).

## "AND HE WOULD NOT PERMIT THE DEMONS TO SPEAK, BECAUSE THEY KNEW HIM" (V. 34B).

1. To control the timing and nature of His revelation as the Messiah:
  - Often in the Gospels, there is a misunderstanding of Jesus' mission as Messiah.
  - Jesus wanted people to know Him through His teaching, faith, and personal encounter.
2. To maintain focus on His mission:
  - Jesus' mission and goal was not to build a platform as some kind of celebrity exorcist or faith healer. He came to fulfill the Father's mission.
  - Widespread, premature fame could stir up fervor for Jesus for all the wrong reasons.

## MINISTRY IN GALILEE (MARK 1:35–45)

Ministry is exciting and thrilling in its own way.

- It's always amazing to watch people get touched by the power of God and encounter Jesus.

- But ministry is also emotionally and spiritually exhausting. Think of the rapid succession of events from verses 21–34.
- Jesus is fully God, but at the same time, Jesus is fully man. Jesus felt tired at times and needed to be alone with His Father.

## "VERY EARLY IN THE MORNING...HE...MADE HIS WAY TO A DESERTED PLACE; AND THERE HE WAS PRAYING" (V. 35).

Often, when there is pressure, busyness, stress, and fatigue in our lives, we use these things as reasons to stay in bed and not rise early for prayer, silence, and solitude with God.

- The busyness of life is often what draws us away from getting still before God and drawing strength from Him.

The temptation when we are tired, stressed, and emotionally/spiritually drained is to lay around and do nothing while we pump mindless stimulus into our minds and souls.

- That kind of "rest" might be OK for the short term, but our souls need more: connection with God to be restored and strengthened.
- Fellowship and communion with God in the private place is what strengthens us for public service.

Jesus knew the importance of being alone in prayer with His Father.

- There is a growing body of research in psychology and neuroscience that suggests that silence, solitude, stillness, and prayer significantly strengthen and restore us mentally, emotionally, and spiritually.
- It allows our brains to rest/reset, lowers stress hormones, and helps us process emotions.

The disciples wake up to everyone looking for Jesus (v. 37) and they go off to look for Him (v. 36).

- Jesus could have come back to the village of Capernaum and continued to ride the wave of His growing celebrity, but instead, He announced to His disciples that they were going to the neighboring villages to "preach"—to proclaim the truth. This was His purpose (v. 38)!

Jesus and His disciples move through the villages of Galilee, teaching in the synagogues and driving out demons (v. 39).

- The word "leprosy" was used in biblical times to describe a wide variety of skin diseases (Lev. 13, seven forms of the disease).
- A person with leprosy was the worst kind of outcast imaginable. They were unable to touch or be around others for fear of making them unclean.

Someone with leprosy had to wear distinct clothing to show their status, always keep distance from others, and shout, "unclean, unclean!" as a warning (or maybe even wear a bell).

- Amazingly, Jesus is approached by a leper.
- This man falls to his knees and begs Jesus to make Him clean (v. 40).
- Moved with compassion, Jesus touches him and the leper is made clean (v. 41).

It was against Jewish ceremonial law to touch a leper, yet Jesus does not break the law, because as soon as He touched this man, He ceased to be a leper.

- The leper is healed and told to present himself to the priest for the healing to be confirmed and the man to be restored to community (v. 44).
- Again, Jesus instructs the man not to tell anyone for the same reasons as before.

Leprosy in the Bible can be understood as a picture of sin.

- Like sin, leprosy was an inward disease that had noticeable outer symptoms—sin proceeds from the heart but works itself into our behavior.
- Leprosy spread and was destructive through numbing the body—unrepentant sin rarely stays small or localized; sin has a way of making us numb to the things of God.

Leprosy was a disease that isolated people and separated them from communion with God. Sin alienates us from real community and harms our fellowship with God.

- Lepers couldn't cure themselves. We can't "snap out of" or fix our sin problem. We need a Savior.
- Jesus was not repulsed or disgusted by lepers. He touched and made them clean. Jesus can touch and make us clean.

## AUTHORITY OVER SIN

- We often try to hide our sin, brokenness, and shame. The more we try to hide it, the more alienated/isolated we become.
- Sometimes we try to scrub it away, distract ourselves, or ignore it, but it is still there, and we cannot remove it.
- Jesus is willing to touch us despite our sin and make us clean—are we willing?

## AUTHORITY OVER SICKNESS AND DISEASE

- No matter how far medical science, nutrition, or bioengineering progress, humanity has no answer to the problem of finite bodies that get sick, age, and die.
- Only Jesus displays absolute authority over sickness, disease, and death. Sometimes in this life He heals, but ultimately, He always heals because we are promised eternal life!

## AUTHORITY OVER DEMONS AND DARKNESS

- There is a real Satan, real demons, and a real spiritual war going on for the souls of humanity.
- Far too many open doors to demonic influence and activity in their lives.
- Far too many live in fear, superstition, and anxiety over demonic activity and attack.
- Jesus has complete authority over demons and darkness! Are you walking in that authority?

## AUTHORITY THAT IS PREEMINENT

- Jesus is the ultimate and supreme authority over the entire universe. Do you acknowledge His authority?
- It is right for us to learn how to be still, get alone with Him, and simply acknowledge His authority as we let Him strengthen, restore, and fill us.
- "Be still, and know that I am God; I will be exalted among the nations..." (Ps. 46:10, NIV).