

Mark 1:21-28

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[0 : 00] If you have a copy of God's Word, I invite you to open with me to Mark chapter 1. Mark chapter 1. We've been tracking with Jesus through the book of Mark over the past several weeks.

And in case you've missed it, or just to refresh your memory, I want to catch you up to where we are thus far, and where we've been thus far in the book of Mark. And to do that, I want to use a map. Sometimes it's good to see a geographical context of where we've been and where we are.

So we could get that map up there. This map that we're using is a map of the upper region of Galilee. Galilee is a region. It's not a town. It's not a country. It's a region.

A lot of times people get confused about that. Over here is the Mediterranean Sea, just to kind of give you a geographical context. This is in modern-day Israel. And where we've been thus far is, we'll come down here and we'll see that Nazareth is right there.

Nazareth is the town where Jesus grew up in. It wasn't where he was born, but where he grew up. But we've seen Jesus move from Nazareth over to this region over here, where it's the Jordan River. The Jordan River flows between these two bodies of water and actually flows south of here as well.

[1 : 08] But the Jordan River is right here where Jesus was baptized. And then we see Jesus come down from the Jordan River to the shores of the banks of the Sea of Galilee, where he's called his first four disciples.

So far we've seen Simon Peter, Andrew, James, and John. And this week we arrive in a little fishing village called Capernaum. It's right there. If I can hold the thing on there just right.

It's Capernaum. It's a fishing village. It's a very prominent fishing town of this time. And it's actually the hometown of Simon Peter. And this is really where we pick up in verse 21 of chapter 1 of Mark. It says, They went to Capernaum, and immediately on the Sabbath he entered the synagogue and began to teach. I want to pause here for a moment because Clay last week pointed out something that's really important to us as we track through the book of Mark.

Mark likes to use words indicating immediacy, or things that show quick action from one place to another. In fact, we see this word immediate no less than ten times in the first chapter alone of Mark.

[2 : 12] So Jesus, we see, immediately is compelled to go into the wilderness after his baptism. Simon and Andrew immediately drop their nets to follow Jesus. And here Jesus gets to Capernaum and immediately begins to teach.

So Mark is really, by using these words and using this immediacy, he's really showing the urgency of the task at hand, that Jesus' ministry is one of urgency. It's one of necessity.

And we move from places very quick in the book of Mark. And so, Jesus gets to Capernaum, likely with the first four disciples, and says, Man, that was a tough hike.

I'm feeling pretty tired today. I think, since it's the Sabbath, we're just going to take a break and just kick up. No, that's not what happens. Jesus gets to Capernaum and he says, Does somebody say it's the Sabbath? Surely there's got to be somebody at the synagogue.

Let's get to work. And Jesus begins to get to work. He begins teaching in the synagogue. By the way, the reason why Jesus is able to do this is because there is a Jewish tradition in the synagogues of that day where traveling teachers could go into a synagogue and begin to teach.

[3 : 18] They did that so that they could hear from other teachers. And if somebody happened to be traveling, then it was a great thing to be able to hear from different people. And so they allowed traveling rabbis and known teachers to be able to teach within the synagogues.

So Jesus is using that right that he has to go into these places and teach when he's teaching there. Verse 22, it says that they were amazed at his teaching. For he was teaching as one having

authority and not as the scribes.

So there's something different about the way Jesus taught. He was different than the scribes and the teachers of that day. This is really important. We're going to come back to that. Verse 23, then there was a man in their synagogues with an unclean spirit.

In other words, he was demon possessed. This demon possession and men filled with unclean spirits is synonymous in the New Testament. 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. Now notice here, the demonized man was in the synagogue, which is essentially the old covenant equivalent of the church gathering place.

[4 : 24] It would be like somebody coming into this room or into this building and creating a scene and shouting out loud during the teaching time. So don't think for a minute that in the church all the people there are great, and that the people outside of the church are the only ones who are demon possessed.

Because I would almost guarantee you, I can't know for certain, but I would almost guarantee you there are people all across our nation right now who are entering into church buildings with demon possession.

Jesus called them wolves in sheep's clothing, and the enemy loves to enter into these places. He loves to infiltrate our camps.

He loves to infiltrate our churches. And they cause all kinds of division and strife and conflict within the flock. And that's what's happening in this text. Jesus is bringing in the kingdom of God. The kingdom of God, we already know, is at hand.

And as the kingdom of God is ushered in, the kingdom of darkness is lashing out against it. They rightfully don't want Jesus there, because he is disrupting their world.

[5 : 28] He's disrupting their mission to destroy people's souls and destroy people in a very dark way. This time, however, they're messing with the wrong person. As we continue on in verse 25, So three primary truths that we're going to focus on this morning.

And the first thing that we see in this passage is that Jesus had authority in his teaching. There's something different about Jesus when he taught than the teachers of that day. Jesus didn't bore people with the Bible.

That's one of the greatest travesties a teacher of God's Word can commit, is teaching in a boring way. And it's happening all over the country this morning, where preachers and teachers are boring people with God's Word.

And to bore people with this Word that's so rich, is so meaningful, is so powerful and authoritative, sharper than any two-edged sword, and able to pierce as far as joint and marrow, according to Hebrews 4.12.

Jesus didn't just get up there and read some passages and just kind of make a few comments here and there, like most of the teachers of that day did. We've seen already some examples of Jesus' teaching, and examples of how he taught with authority.

[7 : 02] Last week, we saw where he said, The time is fulfilled. The kingdom of God is at hand. Repent and believe in the Gospel. It was foretold that this would happen, by the way, in Isaiah 11.2.

It says that, So we see Jesus teaching with authority, and always in such a way that spurred his followers, the people who are listening to him, into action somehow.

And he was compelling in a very unique way. Now, when I was in seminary, I had the opportunity to listen to a lot of preachers and teachers. When you're in a place, if you can imagine, in a place where you have three chapel services every week, in addition to your Sunday night, Sunday morning, and Wednesday night, activities, you hear a bunch of sermons, and you get to hear from a lot of different people, which for the most part, is a really, really good thing.

It's good to see the different dynamics and teaching styles. It's really good to be able to see how they divide the Word of God differently. But every now and then, you run across someone who's in it for themselves.

And they're in it to make a name for themselves. And oftentimes, you'll see these guys on TV. And the primary reason is because they have made it a mission and a goal in their lives to make a name for themselves.

[8 : 13] And they have placed themselves in a position where they are in front of people. And oftentimes, they're in front of people. And they're on the news. You see them on CNN sometimes

making incredibly unbiblical comments.

It's because they've built themselves up to the point, and they think that they are just going after it. And these guys are really good communicators, by the way. They'll tickle your ears. They'll make you laugh. But when it comes down to the content of what they're saying, it's man-centered truth, not Bible-centered truth, and not God-centered truth. And I want you to hear this this morning.

The deal is that good preaching never leads to man-centered praise. Good teaching, good Bible teaching will never lead to man-centered praise. As a teacher of God's Word, I almost cringe. And I hesitate to say this because I don't want to discourage anybody. But I almost cringe when people say, Good job, Kyle. That was a great sermon. And it's not because I don't like that.

[9 : 13] And if you've said that before, it's not a big deal. I don't want to make a big deal out of just that fact. But the reason why I cringe is because it seems like I'm taking credit where credit isn't due. Because if there's anything good about something that I say or the way I preach, it's not because of me.

It's because of the Spirit that works in and through me. And God deserves the glory, not man. I'd much rather have preached in such a way that people don't say, Great job, Kyle.

I'd rather preach in such a way that people say, Wow, what an amazing God we serve. Because He is amazing. And preaching should lead to God-centered praise, not to man-centered praise, with the exception, by the way, of one preacher who deserves all the praise and the glory that we can give to Him.

And I'm not talking about Spurgeon or Whitfield or Jonathan Edwards. We like those people too. But it's Jesus. He speaks as one with authority because He is one with authority.

He speaks as one with authority because He is the authority. As one writer put it, Jesus' teaching is different than the scribes of that day because His teaching is tied to His very character.

[10 : 32] And that's just it. Everything about Jesus is holy. Everything about Him is God. He is 100% God. When He speaks, every single word that comes out of His mouth is the Word of God.

And people are rightfully amazed by Him in this context because He is amazing. He is the spoken, living, breathing Word of God. And so we clearly see that Jesus had authority in His teaching and He was rightfully authoritative in His teaching.

When I teach, or when Nathan teaches, or when other people here, Clay last week and Chris is speaking next week, when we teach, we teach on the authority of the Word of God. We don't want to teach on our own authority.

We teach on the authority of the Word of God. So we see that Jesus was authoritative in His teaching, but Jesus also had authority over demons. We see that very clearly in this text, that Jesus has authority over demons.

So that brings up the question, is spiritual warfare and demons, are they real? But some people in our culture will tell you, no, they're not real. But it's written all over the pages of Scripture, that yes, spiritual warfare is real.

[11 : 37] Demons are real. Satan is real. C.S. Lewis wrote a good little book called Screwtape Letters. Anybody in here ever read that book? A few of us? It's a tough read. Sometimes it's hard for us to read that because C.S. Lewis kind of gets into the mind of what it's like to be a demon or to be on the dark side of spiritual warfare.

It's a crazy book. And it's amazing how he's able to write it. Now, it's not truth. It's fictional. But he does write some truth in there. And he makes this interesting little statement in the Screwtape Letters that goes like this.

He says, There are two equal and opposite errors in which our race could fall about the devils. One is to believe in their existence. The other is to believe and to feel an excessive, unhealthy interest in them.

And so what he's saying here is that people, when they hear demons, when they hear about spiritual warfare, what they often do is they resort to one of two things. Oftentimes they'll either go, I don't want to see them. I don't want to hear about them.

I don't believe in them. I just want to ignore everything the Bible has to say about them. You're making me feel awkward by even talking about them. So some of you might be going there right now. You might be like, Kyle, I'm just kidding. I'm feeling awkward even talking about it right now.

[12 : 43] Others of you will have an unhealthy, inordinate obsession with them where you blame everything that happens that's bad in your life on spiritual warfare.

I've heard some pretty crazy stuff. I won't tell you exactly what I've heard, but it's just crazy stuff. Kind of like somebody would say, you know, my coffee is hot, hotter today than it was yesterday, and hell is hot, so that means that the demons of coffee are trying to scorch my tongue, and they're trying to punish me today.

And I've heard some crazy off-the-wall stuff. I've heard people blame Satan for their sin. Satan made me do it. Let's call sin what it is, and it's an act of our own act, our own choice to commit an atrocity against God, to go outside of what God's Word has told us.

That's what sin is. It's not anybody making us do it. It's our own wrong. It's our own decision. So to deny spiritual warfare is wrongful, and to overemphasize it is wrongful as well.

But spiritual warfare does exist, and demons do exist, and Satan does exist. So what does that mean for us? It means we're at war. We're constantly at war in a lot of different ways.

[14 : 04] We're not just at war spiritually. We're also at war with our flesh, according to Scripture. We know that spiritual warfare is going on, and any good soldier, in order to learn how to defeat the enemy, has to know his enemy.

And so we see here that we need to know our enemy. Scripture reveals much to us about Satan and demons. We're not going to go into everything about that. We don't have time this morning. We could spend weeks on learning about our enemy.

So we're just going to stick to what does this text tell us about demons and spiritual warfare. The first thing that we should note here is that Satan and demons can speak, and that they are crafty.

They're smart. They don't just come to us dressed in red, holding pitchforks, saying, I'm a demon, and I'm here to destroy your soul. Right? They come to us very subtly.

In this case, a demon is coming into the synagogue, into God's camp, so to speak, and he is disguised inside of a human. They're not just going to come to us and make us fearful of them.

[15 : 14] Satan came to Adam and Eve as a serpent. And the way these evil spirits often operate is they'll come to you in the context of truth. They'll begin to twist that truth and turn it into a lie.

And then they'll begin to promise goodness apart from God. We talked about this in our college Bible study a couple of weeks ago, where the lie that Satan tells Adam and Eve in the garden, it's just a mere, it's a simple atrocity.

I mean, it is just an affront on God. He tells them that by eating the fruit, they will be like God. And here's the lie. Adam and Eve, when they were created, they were already like God.

They were created in God's own image. He states it more than once in Genesis chapter 2. And so we see that the Satan, in the context of truth, he twists that truth and turns it into a lie.

The reality was for Adam and Eve, they became less like God. when they sinned. Because before, they were able to commune with God. They were running to God. They were enjoying His presence.

[16 : 25] After they sinned, it became a whole different story. They're running from God in sheer terror of God. They became less like Him in reality. So we need to recognize the enemy's schemes and resist him.

The next thing that we need to recognize and understand about our enemy is that even though they may be crafty, that God is creator and they are creature.

Which means that God is sovereign and Satan and demons are subordinate. You look at what happens in this passage. Verse 25, And Jesus rebuked him saying, Be quiet and come out of him.

There's no magic formula there. There's no sprinkling of holy water. There's no priest standing over him reciting incantations. Just a simple command, but firm command that Jesus gives.

He says, Be quiet and come out of them. And we see that demons recognize Jesus' authority over them. Not only that, but they respond in immediate.

[17 : 27] They have to respond in immediate obedience. Verse 26, Throwing him into convulsions, the unclean spirit cried out with a loud voice and came out of him. And just like that, the demon has to be obedient to Christ.

His authority and his rule are too much to overcome. So it's important for us to understand because we often think of spiritual warfare like dualism. Dualism is what we see in a lot of our stories and a lot of our movies that we come to where, like in Star Wars, where you have the evil emperor who shocks people into submission.

And you have this incredibly evil, just everybody under his control is incredibly evil. His sidekick, Darth Vader. And everything that's happening is just evil from their side of things. Then you come over to the light side and you have Luke Skywalker and the last remaining Jedi. And you have all the goodness and they're fighting for the good and trying to save the universe. And oftentimes in our stories you see this picture where you have the evil side and the dark side are equal and opposing forces that are going against each other. That's not what we see in the text of Scripture when it comes to spiritual warfare.

[18:39] This is not dualism. This is total domination. This is God supreme and Satan subordinate. God as the ruler of all things, demons subject to his rule.

And when the time comes for Jesus to return, these guys are done. They're just done. You get the revelation and it's all over for them.

Because the day will come when God says, enough is enough. We're moving forward with Operation Christ Return. And when that happens, Scriptures already told us that the God of peace will soon crush Satan under your feet.

And on that day, whether rich or poor, whether angel or demon, whether lost or saved, every knee shall bow and every tongue confess that Jesus Christ is Lord.

And our God will reign as He always has for the rest of eternity. And demons, they come into contact with Jesus and they know the authority that Jesus has.

[19:42] Verse 24 saying, What business do we have with each other, Jesus of Nazareth? Have you come to destroy us? And the demon recognizes Jesus' authority and His ultimate ability to destruct in the spiritual realm.

This demon recognizes that Jesus has the power, if He wanted to, to destroy Him. And if that's not enough, he further declares, I know who you are, the Holy One of God.

And I love the fact, and hopefully you'll get this with me, but I love the fact that demons, every ounce that is within them, they hate and loathe everything about Jesus.

And yet at the same time, they have no, they are powerless to do anything apart from His sovereign authority, His sovereign command. It's just amazing. It's good to be on Team Jesus.

It's good to be on this side of the cross and to be able to see the power and the authority that He has. Satan can do nothing in this world. The minions, His minions can do nothing in this world to you apart from God's divine authority and apart from what God says that they can do.

[20:52] Satan is a lion, according to 1 Peter 5, but he is a lion that is on a leash. And the leash is being held by the Son of God who takes away the sins of the world. It would be one thing if this just happened one time, but it doesn't.

This happens over and over and over again where Jesus encounters demons and spiritual warfare and over and over and over again they submit to His authority.

I can't help but see a contrast here. I want you to think about this with me. Demons have fear because of their belief. They know who Jesus is and they're scared out of their minds.

They believe in and know that Jesus has authority and that's why they're scared. But we're the opposite. Oftentimes, not always, but oftentimes we fear because of our disbelief.

And if we could only realize what the demons realize about Jesus, then we can experience security and understand that we have no reason to fear. He is the Son of God who takes away the sin of the world.

[21:57] He came to us. He walked among us. He ate and drank like we do. He had a power over disease. He had a power over nature. And ultimately, He sacrificed Himself on the cross so that we can come into communion.

We can have a relationship with Him. And that same God is holding us and we can feel safe and secure in His arms.

You know, this kind of reminds me of this whole concept of us not really having that faith in Christ. It reminds me of when He was with His disciples and they were out on a boat and the storm came and the waves were rising and the wind was coming up upon them.

And Jesus was asleep in the boat as you recall. And the disciples, they are just rightfully just like out of their minds scared. They're just scared out of their minds. And Jesus awakens and He calms the sea.

He rebukes the wind and the waves and says, Be calm. And immediately, nature calms when He speaks. And then, He rebukes the disciples and says, O ye of little faith, there's been a time in my

life when I've been scared out of my mind just like the disciples.

[23 : 07] It was on Palm Sunday, 1994. My brother was there with me. My brother's sitting in the back and his family and my dad and they're all here.

It's good to have them here this morning with us. If you disbelieve anything about this story, go and talk to my brother afterwards because he was there. It was me and my brother and my mom were at home. Anybody remember 1994?

Anybody from Lumpkin County remember what happened in 1994 on Palm Sunday? Maybe not. Craig remembers. Okay. That day, Lumpkin County was ravaged by a series of tornadoes. Our house was the first of the tornadoes to come through. We were eating a late lunch that day and we usually ate around noon but we were eating more like 2 o'clock that day, I believe. and we were finishing up with lunch. We had observed all throughout the day how strange the weather was. It was just a weird weather day. We saw the clouds racing and sometimes they were kind of colliding into each other which by the way, if you see that, it's time to get to the basement because, I mean, that's a good sign that there's tornado weather coming.

[24 : 18] And we even made the comment that day that hey, this looks like a lot like tornado weather. just to give you kind of a picture of how weird things were, there's a cloud we observed that day.

There's a cloud up in the sky that just had lightning just surging through it. It was like unending lightning just surging through this cloud. Never seen anything like it before in my life. So we already knew how strange the weather was that day and so Craig goes out on the porch and out into our yard just kind of observing the weather one more time and we'd already been out there several times but he went out there again and he's kind of looking over to the east and kind of looking up to the clouds just kind of, man, this is so strange and he looks toward the west to our next door neighbor's house and there was a tornado just standing there moving toward us and beginning to rip apart our next door neighbor's house.

Now, I want you to know that because you need to know why my brother was acting the way that he was. He's not normally scared of a lot of things but he came bolting in the house yelling at the top of his lungs get down to the basement everybody get down to the basement and so he and I it was the three of us in the house at the time it was my mom me and my brother and my dad was somewhere else serving in the community but the three of us were there and so Craig and I just bolt down and we get to the bottom of the basement and we're standing there looking at each other where's mom? Mom was not down there yet. I don't know how she could have missed him yelling get down to the basement but somehow she did and apparently we found out later that she was upstairs turning lights off and closing the garage door while a tornado was barreling towards our house.

So, we get up to the top of the stairs and we said mom get downstairs and we get down there and by the time that we got to the basement we're sitting on the basement floor we're kind of in a triangle huddled together we start to see the effects of this thing.

[26 : 13] I didn't see the tornado personally my brother did and so this is how is it okay if I tell them how you're reacting? So, he's going oh no look at the trees let me tell you what the trees were doing the trees would be sucked toward the tornado they'd be blown over and then they'd suck back and just snap off I'm talking about big trees just snapping off and flying away I've never seen power like this before in my life just sheer power of wind and he's going oh no look at the trees oh no look at the look there goes the fence and I mean he was just like we're observing everything we're looking out the windows seeing everything that's going on it is utter chaos mom's to my right and she's going it's going to be okay it's going to be okay it's going to be okay and then Mr. Future Preacher man I'm over here in my corner of the triangle going let's pray let's pray let's pray and finally I said let's pray now and I just began to spill out words out of my mouth

I don't remember everything that I prayed but I remember specifically asking that God would place a dome of protection over our family and over our house after I got done praying Craig prayed and mom prayed and by that time the tornado had moved on and we could see outside that there was no more wind at least there were no more effects of the wind at the time so we thought well hey we're okay right now at least we're alive and we're very grateful and thankful for that we walked up the steps from our basement our basement door kind of opens up into the foyer area of our house and we saw that for the most part our house is intact and we're grateful again all over again that we didn't know what we were going to see when we went up to the next floor we had no idea if we had a house above us or if we had a roof above us or if there was anything there but we're grateful that

at least our house was intact so we walked out our front door and we looked to the west to that house that Craig saw with a tornado hitting it at that time and it's leveled all but one wall the only one wall was left standing in that house and we realized how fortunate we were at the time it wasn't until a couple weeks later when somebody came into my dad's pharmacy and told him what they saw that we realized the gravity of what happened that day because they said when I saw it coming through your neighborhood

I saw the tornado split into two different funnels it's a phenomenon that they call the double vortex tornado and they'll split into two different funnels there's a funnel there's damage on the back side of our house in the backyard there's damage to the lot across from us now there were some damage to our house but structurally speaking it stands today like it stood before the tornado structurally speaking it was pretty sound and the only way to explain it is that the God who can calm the wind and the waves place a dome of protection over our house and he is sovereign there is nothing that we should fear and let me tell you something even if we had died that day our eternal security rests in Christ Jesus so either way no matter what had happened that day we were secure in him so whom shall we fear Paul puts it this way he says for I am convinced that neither death nor life nor angels nor demons neither the present nor the future nor any powers neither height nor depth nor anything else in all of creation will be able to separate us from the love that is in Christ Jesus our Lord we have nothing and no one to fear because Jesus has all authority last but not least what we see in this passage and I want us to see this clearly is that Jesus' authority his sovereign authority leads us to total allegiance to him I'm going to say that again because that's kind of wordy I didn't know how else to word it but Jesus' sovereign authority leads us to total allegiance to him this particular passage is bookended with the people's amazement of Jesus they were amazed first by his teaching and then at the end of this passage they were amazed by his authority over demons this word amazed here in the text is a compound form of the Greek verb pleso and what pleso means it literally means to strike or to smite and so we're talking about a very strong word with very strong meaning here so the picture is here is that the people weren't just amazed they were dumbfounded they were astonished they were shocked in other words Jesus may have caused a few jaws to drop that day what we know for sure and don't miss this is that people who were there that day were compelled to go and spread the news about him all over the region of Galilee you see one thing Jesus never had to do was to beg people for followers or to follow him he never had to beg people to spread the news about him he was just amazing he amazed people and in their amazement of Jesus they went out and they shared the truth about him the good news about him last week we saw him approach four fishermen he said follow me there's no begging there's no pleading he just said follow me and it says they immediately dropped their nets and followed him the picture is the same this week Jesus didn't ask him people to spread the word about him they just do it out of their amazement their amazement led them to action and those followers told other followers and those followers told other followers until Jesus just has these crowds of people who are following him around everywhere so brothers and sisters in here this morning

[32 : 16] I exhort you if Christ has done anything amazing in your life if you are counted among the redeemed then go out and share what he has done for you there are plenty of people all over north Georgia and all over the state of Georgia and all over the United States and to the ends of the earth there are people who do not yet know Jesus as their Lord and Savior there is a mission field right here where we are in northeast Georgia so if you are counted among the redeemed it's time that we act as if we're redeemed and out of the joy that overflows in us through what Christ has done for us it's time that we go and share that with our lost people to share it with our neighbors to proclaim it in your workplace to proclaim him in your schools or on your campuses to proclaim him to the nations he is worthy to be on our minds he is worthy to be the topic of our conversations more than football and more than TV shows and more than politics he is worthy

Jesus is worthy may his name be glorified as we go out from here and as we go into our communities and we go to the various spheres of influence that we have may his name increase because of our amazement in him and because we are willing to share the gospel with a lost and dying world let's pray together together