

Jesus has Power in Preaching, Healing, and Casting out Demons
Mark 1:21-34

How do we think about healing?

Healing is for us? What does our view of healing tell us about ourselves?

What does it tell us of what we think about Jesus? What do the narratives tell us about HIM.

What do we think about demon exorcism?

What does that tell us about ourselves? What do the narratives tell us about Jesus?

21 They *went into Capernaum; and immediately on the Sabbath He entered the synagogue and began to teach. 22 They were amazed at His teaching; for He was teaching them as one having authority, and not as the scribes. 23 Just then there was a man in their synagogue with an unclean spirit; and he cried out, 24 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!" 25 And Jesus rebuked him, saying, "Be quiet, and come out of him!" 26 Throwing him into convulsions, the unclean spirit cried out with a loud voice and came out of him. 27 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." 28 Immediately the news about Him spread everywhere into all the surrounding district of Galilee. 29 And immediately after they came out of the synagogue, they came into the house of Simon and Andrew, with James and John. 30 Now Simon's mother-in-law was lying sick with a fever; and immediately they *spoke to Jesus about her. 31 And He came to her and raised her up, taking her by the hand, and the fever left her, and she waited on them.

This is the first healing miracle and exorcism in Mark

Power in Preaching – he gets the people's attention as they begin asking, "Who is this?"

Power over Demons

Power for a Purpose

Power in Preaching – he gets the people's attention. Jesus is a Renegade Rabbi

Who is this? EX: the mysterious Clint Eastwood character who comes to town, except he's from there.

They go 'into Capernaum' They -= Jesus and disciples. Hometown for 4 of the men from the fishing industry.

He takes them to their hometown- awkward

They go "Into the synagogue" – center of Jewish life. 'satellite' temples for study and worship. 10 males over the age of 13 could form a synagogue. Taught by scribes – masters of Torah and teachers, honored by all but puffed up.

Synagogue = "a gathering place"

Mark is quick to point out that the ministry of Jesus is characterized by preaching, healing, and casting out demons.

The early focus is not the content per se but the REACTION OF THE PEOPLE.

The people were 'amazed at his teaching'. But the word is stronger than mere amazement. It comes from the idea of "inflict or smite" i.e. there was an element of fear because they'd never heard anyone talk like this.

Jesus was not teaching as the scribes

Jesus taught with authority, not as scribes. They deferred to those who came before them, not their own ideas. They appealed to other authorities, but Jesus spoke on his OWN authority. i.e. sermon on mount...

“you’ve heard it said, but I say..”

Luke 4 describes an incident in Nazareth that was just before the narrative of Mark. Jesus reads Isa 61 and 58, then says, “Today this scripture has been fulfilled in your hearing.” As he continued to speak the audience was filled with wrath and drove him out of town. No doubt that by the time he gets to Capernaum the word was out and they are out to get him.

Jesus taught on a different level, and as such he posed a threat to the status quo.

SPROUL “The word translated “authority” comes from the Greek *exousia*. The root of that word, *ousia* is a form of the verb “to be,” so its literal translation would be “being.”

The ancient Greek philosophers were very much concerned with the word *ousia* because *ousia* represented the ultimate reality the philosophers were seeking—the ultimate transcendent, supreme being of all reality.

The word *ousia* is not just a form of the verb “to be” but a term loaded with content in the history of Greek and Christian thought. We could translate “being” as “substance.” When Jesus spoke, He spoke *ex-ousia*, out of substance. His teaching was supremely substantive; nothing superficial, nothing light.

This was the utterance of the One who was of the same essence as the Father, so that Jesus’ authority was rooted and grounded in God Himself. That is what terrified the people. They said, “Never have we heard anybody speak like this.”

Jesus was like the OT PROPHETS who spoke, “Thus saith the Lord”.

*** When WE read the Word, do we have a sense of holy awe that we are hearing the Word of God?

v. 23 Power over Demons

This is the first post Wilderness temptation recorded by Mark in which Jesus encounters a demonic spirit. Luke 4 gives the same account with the same basic details. Matt 4 gives an overview of Jesus in Galilee teaching, healing, and dealing with demoniacs.

The authority that Jesus showed in his preaching is also seen in the realm of spiritual warfare. The terms ‘authority’ is also translated as ‘power’. Jesus is the “Alpha male” of the spiritual world. We’ll see how demonic spirits try to challenge him, but they get shut down or destroyed.

While the texts from the gospels indicate the presence of demoniacs, the idea of demonic possession is extremely rare in the OT period. What we see in the gospel narratives is an outlier of demonic activity during the ministry of Jesus.

The unclean spirits don’t act out until Jesus shows up, but they begin an assault to oppress people during the years of Jesus’ public ministry. It does not continue at the same pace or level during the apostolic age even though there are some accounts in the Book of Acts and writings about spiritual warfare in the letters of Paul and Peter.

If we’re honest, we’re probably a bit freaked out by the topic of demoniacs. “Above my pay grade” would be our thought, right?

As a culture, there has been an ebb and flow in our thinking about this stuff. We’d rather not think about it.

We’d like to think that there is a purely natural explanation for what we call evil in the world:

“Some people are just evil”, but that would contradict the adage that “Deep down, there is good in all of us.”

“It can all be explained away as some sort of mental or psychotic break or delusion, and if we just get the right medications, then we can fix it.” REALLY?

EX: In 1973 The Exorcist gave rise to a whole genre of films that continue to this day. (BTW, that was based on a real-life story).

EX: Last Christmas a Satanic Temple display was put up in the State House in IOWA.

All that to say that the demonic issues have not gone away. We just don’t have Jesus in person walking

here among us to give a smack down to the demons.

Admittedly, the description of demons and the demonic realm is rather slim in scripture. There is a good bit of mystery in all of this, but we know from scripture that evil spirits exist and that they are agents of the Devil. We do well to be content to stop where scripture stops and not try to make claims that go beyond scripture.

CULTURAL HYPOCRISY- it strikes me that our culture is hypocritical or has a split personality when it comes to their worldview. On the one hand we hear that “people are basically good, and that mankind has progressed and ‘evolved’”. The word sin has all but disappeared from the cultural language even though talk of “Fascism” is rampant.

YET, the past century featured 2 world wars and numerous other forms of attack and atrocities. The entertainment industry makes a killing (so to speak) on portraying death, violence, crime, greed, and immorality committed by “basically good people.” Either we’re not as good as we like to think we are, or there is something deeply evil and nefarious going on that we don’t want to admit.

The PURPOSE OF THESE NARRATIVES is to demonstrate the power of Jesus and to inform us that spiritual warfare is real.

We might agree with J. Gresham Machen from the early 1900’s when he wrote, **“The New Testament without the supernatural would be far easier to believe. But the trouble is, it would not be worth believing. Without the miracles the New Testament would contain an account of a holy man.... But of what benefit would such a man, and the death which marked his failure, be to us?”** Christianity and Liberalism

Note: In Mark 1, this man is introduced, and he doesn’t seem to be a newcomer, but a regular. For some reason the demon didn’t know or sense the power of God prior to this. It’s possible that the man was a religious regular who was going through the motions, but it doesn’t bother the demons.

** the demon was comfortable enough to be in a synagogue without Christ present.

How comfortable might a demon be in many churches today?

It is interesting to note that in the Gospel narratives, the first ones who fully recognize the identity of Jesus are the demons. While the religious leaders and the people were slow to see Christ for who He is, the ambassadors of hell called it out when they encountered Jesus.

In the ANE it was a cultural reality that you had a role of power over someone if you know his name. The demons try that in Mark 1 and that doesn’t work.

The NT presents three groups of people:

Disciples

Crowds

Religious people

All three groups missed the real purpose of who Jesus is, but the demons recognized it.

v. 24 A relevant statement, “What business do we have with each other, Jesus of Nazareth?”

This man is there in the synagogue. He’s not out in the part of town where we think the devil would live and control.

It makes me wonder how many people “in the visible church” are secretly asking or thinking the same thing, “What business do we have with each other, Jesus of Nazareth?”

They might not say it out loud, but functionally it’s where they are. And functionally, the answer would be

“Nothing. We have nothing to do with each other.” They may even go through the motions. They may be in the church, but in reality, they are merely qualified to be a demon.

If they are honest, they would also add, ‘You have come to destroy us.’”

V 25 Jesus displays his power over the demon. He says, “be silent” and he did, he came out.
v. 25 “hold thy peace: or rebuke” i.e. “MUZZLE”

The demons recognized that they were in the presence of the Holy one of God and they fell silent. Nothing strikes terror in the heart of creatures, even demons, like the presence of the Holy.

The Christ, the Son of God is wholly other than the demons and He is totally in charge.

Mark is showing us that Jesus has authority to accomplish what he intends to do.

V 27 Power of Jesus and His purpose

All were amazed ‘stupified’ He spoke the command and it happened.

Jesus didn’t strut around making a big show like NFL players doing an end zone dance after a TD.

He wasn’t doing a Nature Boy Rick Flair routine. He just muzzled the demon, and he came out.

Who is this? What is this new teaching, instruction, doctrine? Can you believe it? Those are the key questions in Mark

He is the Son of God and YES, you can believe Him.

** We can’t separate Jesus from His teaching.

“I like much of what Jesus did, but I’m not a big fan of some of the things he said.” That is not a coherent position.

V 28 Fame spreads- word of mouth – hearing

29 And immediately after they came out of the synagogue, they came into the house of Simon and Andrew, with James and John. 30 Now Simon’s mother-in-law was lying sick with a fever; and immediately they *spoke to Jesus about her. 31 And He came to her and raised her up, taking her by the hand, and the fever left her, and she waited on them.

This is not the most dramatic healing account, but it was significant for Simon Peter and his wife.

Again, we get the eye-witness account from Peter given to Mark. It is a simple narrative in Mark, Matt 8, and Luke 4.

Jesus goes into the home; Peter’s mother-in-law has a high fever and Jesus heals her. She then begins to serve those in the home. As far as healing narratives go, this one is quite simple.

NOTE: The healing of Peter’s mother-in-law means that Peter was married, yet the wife is not mentioned in the narratives. We don’t know if she was dead or alive at the time.

You are probably aware that in the Roman Catholic tradition, Peter is viewed as the first pope, and the papacy is established on Peter. The papacy is called The Chair of St. Peter. I find it a bit odd that the first pope was married while others in the catholic clergy have an imposed rule of celibacy.

EX: France – those who’d never met a Protestant pastor came to understand that I was a priest who could get married.

We’ll finish this section with v. v 32-34

32 When evening came, after the sun had set, they began bringing to Him all who were ill and those who were demon-possessed. 33 And the whole city had gathered at the door. 34 And He healed many who were ill with various diseases, and cast out many demons; and He was not permitting the demons to speak, because they knew who He was.

The Lord's silencing of the demons is the first instance of what is referred to in the Gospels as "the messianic secret." In the various gospels, Jesus speaks of "the hour, my hour or the time" that had not yet come. Jesus was cautious to keep a lid on his identity and ministry early on so as to avoid an even greater demand upon his time. He would also want to avoid an unnecessary conflict with religious leaders and Rome. Neither of those groups had a proper understanding of why he had come.

Jesus became attractive when people realized that he could heal and deliver from demons.
If he can do that, He change you and me.

It should be a great comfort to know than that the spiritual forces that are arrayed against us, individually and corporately, are subject to the authority of Jesus Christ?

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Discussion group

How does this topic land with you?

How do you think about healing??

How do we respond to the authority of Jesus' Words?

How do you think about the demonic world? Has your view changed over the years?

How does the world explain 'evil' or does it?

What happens if we try to separate the life and work of Jesus from his actual teaching?

Why did Jesus seek to keep the "Messianic Secret" at the early part of his ministry?