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Title: The Gospel of Jesus Christ in Galilee – Early Galilean Ministry –
The Servant’s Ministry: His Authority Established by Demonic Activity
Text: Mark 1:23-28
Theme: Jesus has power over doctrine, demons, and disease.

BIG PICTURE:

- The Servant’s Message (1:14, 15)
- The Servant’s Men (1:16-20)
- The Servant’s Ministry – His authority established (1:21-34)
 - by doctrinal truth (vv. 21, 22)
 - **by demonic activity (vv. 23-28)**
 - by diseased sufferer (vv. 29-34)

“Biblical passages that highlight the demonic are principally found in the gospels of Matthew, Mark and Luke, and the Acts of the Apostles. Paul's epistles focus on the victory of Christ over principalities and powers. The Book of Revelation portrays the casting down of Satan and his being bound forever due to the triumph of Christ in the resurrection. Other passages concerning demons and angels are scattered throughout both the Old and New Testament.”
http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Spiritual_warfare

“According to the gospels, Jesus was involved in sixteen healing miracles. God, through Jesus and the power of faith, healed sixteen people during Jesus' lifetime here on earth. The Gospel of Mark records ten consecutive incidents at the beginning of his gospel. These healings were signs that the reign of God was present. The first of Jesus' healing miracles is the gospel story for today, the healing of a man with an unclean spirit. It appears this miracle involved the serious issue of ‘demon possession.’” http://www.sermonsfromseattle.com/series_b_hunger_for_healingGA.htm

“His ministry will be one of conflict – most especially with the powers of evil. If Jesus is the herald of the kingdom of God, he is also its agent. As the agent of God’s rule, he invades Satan’s domain to seize control (3:21-30).”

http://www.luthersem.edu/word&world/Archives/8-1_Spirituality/8-1_Juel-Keifert.pdf (emphasis added)

Its Eternal Value:

People need to know that God has power over their addictions and bondage. God can, if He chooses, deliver them from their slavery. He might will not to, but He can, should He so will. Let us believe and live with the conviction that God is able to deliver us from the demons that hold us in bondage.

The Present Danger:

In our “modernized” culture, we often minimize and overlook spiritual warfare, but it is real and immediate. In light of this let us consider three initial questions. There is a real tendency to believe that our experience is all there is to the Christian life. In so doing, the Christian life becomes very “plastic” and “fake.” But the Christian life is “soulful” and spiritual. It is expressed in the physical, but its real vitality and essence is spiritual.

Questions:

1. Is demonic activity still feasible? Does it exist in America, in third world countries?
2. Is demonic activity identifiable?
3. As a community of faith, how do we protect ourselves from demonic activity and assist in delivering those from demonic activity?

To Know: The Holy Spirit desires for us to know that Jesus has absolute authority over the demonic world.

To Choose: The Holy Spirit desires for us to choose Him as our victory over the demonic world.

To Feel: The Holy Spirit desires for us to feel love for the Lord Jesus as our conquering King.

How will they best hear:

1. Mental disorders are common in the United States and internationally. An estimated 26.2 percent of Americans ages 18 and older – about one in four adults – suffer from a diagnosable mental disorder in a given year. When applied to the 2004 U.S. Census residential population estimate for ages 18 and older, this figure translates to 57.7 million people. Even though mental disorders are widespread in the population, the main burden of illness is concentrated in a much smaller proportion – about 6 percent, or 1 in 17 – who suffer from a serious mental illness. In addition, mental disorders are the leading cause of disability in the U.S. and Canada for ages 15-44. Many people suffer from more than one mental disorder at a given time. Nearly half (45 percent) of those with any mental disorder meet criteria for 2 or more disorders, with severity strongly related to comorbidity.
<http://www.nimh.nih.gov/health/topics/statistics/index.shtml> (National Institute for Mental Health)
2. The following statistics relate to the incidence of Mental illness: 3% of non-institutionalized adults had severe psychological distress in the past 30 days in the US 2002 (National Health Interview Survey, 2003, NCHS, CDC)
http://www.wrongdiagnosis.com/m/mental_illness/stats.htm

Although I do not believe everyone with any type of mental or behavioral disorder is demonic, I cannot dismiss the demonic realm from the attack.

The wording of verse 23 tells us the healing of the demoniac follows His teaching.

“It is a strange commentary on the spiritual situation in Capernaum that a demoniac could worship in their synagogue with no sense of incongruity until confronted by Jesus...” (Cole, Mark, p. 61)

I find the response of the demon world to Jesus and that of the religious leaders startling. The demons appear to know far more than the religious leaders as to who He is and what He is capable of doing. There are two ideas expressed about the demons: their description and their declaration.

I. The demonized defined

Demons are fallen angels who were initially created by God. They are restless spirits and have no physical existence.

“The unclean spirit was in the man in the sense that he, an incorporeal being entered the man’s body, took up his residence in it, and controlled the person in whose body he dwelt. The man was in the demon in that he lived within the sphere of the demon’s control.” (Kenneth S. Wuest, Wuest’s Word Studies, [Eerdmans, 1973], 1:32).

Demons cannot go anywhere that God does not want them, and they cannot possess what they do not own. Even the unbelieving belong to God and He may do with them what He wills. It is impossible for the people of God to be possessed by demons. We can encounter demonic attack, but we can never be possessed by demons. This man was filled with and controlled by a demon.

II. The demoniac described (v. 23)

In describing the demon, Mark shows us that demons are unclean, uncontrollable, and capable of producing physical disability. It is because I believe the record, that I conclude that some who are immoral, uncontrollable, and physically disable are under demonic attack. I do not believe the saved can be possessed by demons, but I do believe immoral Christians could be under demonic attack.

A. Unclean spirit (vv. 23, 26, 27)

The frequency with which this character of "impurity" is ascribed to evil spirits—some twenty times in the Gospels—is not to be overlooked. <http://www.ccel.org/ccel/jamieson/jfb.xi.ii.ii.html>

The word unclean has a horrific and overpowering meaning to the Jewish mind. The word, unclean [akathartos, GSN169], carries not only the connotation of being physically dirty—but one would use a phrase like “demonic dirtiness” or even “demonic lewdness”. It was a word of repulsion, anything that was this dirty would turn the stomach of the common believer.

To be unclean was not to be the *opposite* of clean—it was to be in *opposition* to cleanliness [kathairo, GSN2508], a word which not only meant to cleanse or expiate, but also to prune. To be unclean meant to abhor cleanliness. How in the world was a demon allowed to testify in a place of God? This miracle tells us about the religious “State of the Union” prior to the Christ’s arrival. It tells us how dark the age had become and how ineffective the religion had become in recognizing it.

There were thousands of years of history behind the term “unclean” to the Israelite. It wasn’t something used for unwashed dishes or a child coming in from the mud. It was used for a “condition” that permeated the soul. If you touched an object “in that condition” you would also become unclean; “guilty” of a sin. http://onefamilyoutreach.com/bible/Mark/mk_01_21-28.html

"This spirit is defiled and defiling, whether or not it is recognized as such by an ordinary observer. While the **euthus** here may seem surprising, it is intended so: the presence of Jesus and the realm he represents constitute a clear and present threat to this spirit and the realm which it represents." <http://www.ioa.com/~cwconrad/Mark/>

The king, the Anointed of God, the Messiah has arrived and the temporal rule and reign of the fallen has come to an end.

Unclean spirit (notice the plural "we" [vv. 23, 26, 27 **akathartos**] 30 times in the GNT with 11 times in Mark (1:23, 26, 27; 3:11, 30; 5:2; 8:13; 6:7; 7:25; 9:25). This is equal to Acts and Luke's occurrences. In Mark it always refers to an unclean spirit. Translated "foul" in Mark 9:25. It carries the idea of immoral and vile. It is opposed to that which is godly.

- B. Uncontrollable (5:4, 5)
- C. Dumb and deaf spirit (9:25)

When we are confronted by these conditions we must pray for a hedge of protection around the individuals in order to cast out the demons and protect them from further attack.

III. The demoniac declaration (v. 24)

"The demon recognized that Jesus was a powerful adversary, capable of destroying the forces of Satan." (NIV Study Bible on Mark 1:23).

"'What have we to do with thee' – an expression of frequent occurrence in the Old Testament (1Ki 17:18; 2Ki 3:13; 2Ch 35:21). It denotes *entire separation of interests*: – that is, 'Thou and we have nothing in common; we want not Thee; what wouldst Thou with us?'" <http://www.ccel.org/ccel/jamieson/jfb.xi.ii.ii.html>

There are a number of contrasts in these verses. One that I just mentioned is between the unclean spirit/person and the holy one of God (Jesus). In fact, Ched Myers (*Binding the Strong Man*) writes briefly about this: "The demon's challenge to Jesus (1:24) is a curious phrase in Greek (*ti hemin kai soi*;) translated by Taylor as 'What do we have in common?'" Literally that phrase is: "What to us and to you?" The implication might be that there is nothing in common between "us and you" -- nothing in common between what is unclean and Jesus. <http://www.crossmarks.com/brian/mark1x21.htm>

"The demon cried out, using the man's vocal organs. It was a deep, throaty, terrible cry. It had in it the fear of impending doom." (Kenneth S. Wuest, Wuest's Word Studies, [Eerdmans, 1973], 1:32)

James 2:19 tells us that the demons know who He is and tremble. The demons knew who Jesus was and they bowed before Him. This same idea is brought out in Mark 1:34.

A. They knew the certainty of His person (v. 24)

Interestingly enough, it says that they “knew” who He was. The Greek word is **oída**. There is really no distinction between this and **ginosko**. James 2:19 states that demons believe and tremble. Belief is two-pronged. If there is no repentance/obedience, then there is no faith/belief/salvation.

1. The humanity of Jesus Christ
2. The deity of Jesus Christ
 - a. The Holy One of God

This title “THE HOLY ONE OF ISRAEL/GOD” is found thirty times in the OT. Twelve times in Isaiah 1-39 and fourteen times in chapters 40-66. Elsewhere it is found only four times. Notice the antithesis to unclean in vs. 23.

- b. The Son of God (3:11)
- c. The Son of the Most High (5:7)

B. They knew the certainty of their punishment

Perhaps they saw in the Son of God the seed of the woman who would destroy the head of the serpent (Gen. 3:15). There is no doubt in the mind of the demon as to what awaits him and his kind. They were there in their rebellion against God and have felt the sting of God against them. Mark uses the word “destroy” in 1:24 and “torment/torture” in 5:7 to describe their punishment. Destroy is the word **apollumi**. It is translated by the English word “marred” (2:22), “perish” (4:38), and “lose” (8:35). The idea is not of eternal loss as much as eternal ruin. The demons knew that their end was damnation. Torment is the word **basanidzo**. Related to this idea is the word found in Luke 16:23, 28 describing the condition of the rich man in hell.

IV. The demoniac defeated (vv. 25, 26)

“The verb is in the imperative mode and the aorist tense, issuing a sharp command to be obeyed at once. The same holds true of the command ‘Come out.’” (Kenneth S. Wuest, Wuest’s Word Studies, [Eerdmans, 1973], 1:34)

A. Be quiet!

Martin Luther translates by the German equivalent of our “Shut up.”

It is the word used for muzzling a dog. It means “to stop the mouth, to make speechless, to reduce to silence.” (Kenneth S. Wuest, Wuest’s Word Studies, [Eerdmans, 1973], 1:33)

“This is the first appearance of the celebrated theme of the Marcan “**Messianic secret**,” most simply formulated as the narrative motif recurring in this gospel especially, to a lesser extent in

the other Synoptic gospels, that the identity of Jesus is recognized by demonic spirits and blurted out by them, despite explicit warnings by Jesus not to do so, while nevertheless this identity remains undiscerned by other human beings about him and is not understood even when it is somehow given explicit expression." <http://www.ioa.com/~cwconrad/Mark/> (emphasis added)

B. Come out of him!

Note the power of verses 25 and 26. The demonic world bows before their Lord and Master and His name is Jesus. If we think Satan is Lord of the netherworld, we are mistaken. Satan is God's dog, and he is on a short leash. He does only what his Master allows to be done. He might appear threatening, but He can do us no harm. The demon world bends to the will of God.

"Our Lord has the hosts of Satan under His absolute power at all times. Unwilling and incorrigible as they are, He can command them at will, and they obey Him. Satan always operates on a limited tether. To the synagogue crowd, the most astonishing thing was that the demons obeyed Him." (Kenneth S. Wuest, Wuest's Word Studies, [Eerdmans, 1973], 1:35)

Notice that WE ARE ENGAGED IN A SPIRITUAL BATTLE (Eph. 6:10-13). Our enemy is deceitful (2 Cor. 11:14; John 8:44), defeatable (2 Cor. 10:3-6), destructive (1 Pet. 5:8; Eph. 6:16).

V. The demoniac defiant (v. 26)

Malignant cruelty. "This was no doubt vindictiveness on the demon's part in protest at being ordered to come out of the man." (Kenneth S. Wuest, Wuest's Word Studies, [Eerdmans, 1973], 1:34). Their response to His command shows the violence done to their "free" will. They did not choose to obey, but obey they must.

Fallen angels are incorrigible. "They refuse to be convicted of their sin, and they will not acknowledge it nor repent." (Kenneth S. Wuest, Wuest's Word Studies, [Eerdmans, 1973], 1:33)

We must never doubt who is running what appears to be an asylum. God is the captain of this ship; he is the pilot of this craft and we are but passengers. This world is exactly what God has willed it to be. From the fall into sin and creation's ultimate deliverance from it is not a parenthesis to the plan of God. The rebellion of some within the created order is a part of His plan to show Himself mighty to save.

"The audience, rightly apprehending that the miracle was wrought to illustrate the teaching and display the character and glory of the Teacher, begin by asking what novel kind of teaching this could be, which was so marvellously attested." <http://www.ccel.org/ccel/jamieson/jfb.xi.ii.ii.html>

The wording of verse 29 tells us the event follows in sequence. Again, let us not forget the movement of this short study. He teaches, casts out a demon, and enters the home of the sick and heals.

"The last thing Mark wants is for us or our congregations to be left behind when we encounter his opening scene. One of the skills of the pastor is to create the space, the 'synagogue', where our madness can come face to face with the holiness of Jesus. That also means coming to terms with our own madness." <http://wwwstaff.murdoch.edu.au/~loader/MkEpiphany4.htm>

APPLICATION: (What's the NEXT STEP?)

1. How an exorcism is performed is secondary to the primary purpose of liberation of a soul.
2. The good news of God sets people free and that is our primary business.
3. Christ is our present victory over all our addictions and fears.
4. What real or imaginary demon is holding you in bondage? God came to bring deliverance in and from your bondage. He came to liberate you from your anxiety and fear. I fully recognize our expectancy is for something to happen right now in a manner that we can comprehend, but I am telling you in this moment God is bringing you deliverance. Open your eyes to it and see it for what it is.