

JESUS DOMINATES: A SUPER BOWL MESSAGE Mark 1:21-28

We can be delivered from all influences (external and internal) and the forces in our lives that have nothing good about them (evil) by the power of Jesus. Jesus show that someone can even be delivered from unclean spirits that enslave, no matter how invasive and tight the grip is.

1. JESUS IS DIFFERENT: HE TEACHES WITH AUTHORITY (Mark 1:21-22)

Authority: the power to determine, adjudicate, or otherwise settle issues or disputes; jurisdiction; the right to control, command, or determine.

2. AUTHORITY DEMANDS A RESPONSE (Mark 1:23-24)

“possessed by an evil spirit” = “in an unclean spirit”

He was under the power, spell, the will of the unclean spirit.

1 John 5:19 We know that we are children of God, and that the whole world is under the control of the evil one.

Mark 1:24 "What do you want with us, Jesus of Nazareth? Have you come to destroy us?"

- **Wealth** cries, "Leave us alone. Let' secure ourselves, build up, and bank more and more."
- **Power** cries, "Leave us alone. Let's take over, exercise authority, rule and reign, dominate, maneuver and manipulate as we will."
- **Ego** cries, "Leave us alone. Let's seek recognition, attention, esteem, honor, and praise as we wish."
- **Flesh** cries, "Leave us alone. Let's excite, indulge, stimulate, relax, release, escape, party as we desire."

Acts 7:51 "You stiff-necked people, with uncircumcised hearts and ears! You are just like your fathers: You always resist the Holy Spirit!"

1 Samuel 15:22 Samuel replied: "Does the Lord delight in burnt offerings and sacrifices as much as in obeying the voice of the Lord? To obey is better than sacrifice, and to heed is better than the fat of rams."

Ecclesiastes 5:1 Guard your steps when you go to the house of God. Go near to listen rather than to offer the sacrifice of fools, who do not know that they do wrong.

Monday, February 2nd *Read Mark 1:21-28*

Jesus is now in the midst of launching His ministry in full force. It might be said that this was the beginning, the opening of His ministry. As He launched forth, just *what* He did is important for us as we consider our serving. Our lesson breaks out in this way:

- 1. Jesus began with worship: immediately—in the synagogue (v.21).**
- 2. Jesus seized the opportunity to teach (v.21).**
- 3. Jesus astonished the crowd (v.22).**

Jesus began His ministry with worship—immediately. This says several significant things.

1. Jesus launched His ministry in worship. That should say something.
2. Jesus was faithful to *weekly worship in the synagogue*. The synagogue, with its leaders and its worshippers, was far from perfect (yeah-just like Red Hill Lutheran!), yet on the Sabbath day, Jesus entered and worshipped faithfully. Such an example leaves all without excuse.

So, is a synagogue like our church? The word means a gathering, a community of people. It can also mean the building in which the gathering took place. Synagogues were often held in homes. In fact, if ten Jews lived in a community, they were bound by law to conduct a synagogue meeting someplace. If there were enough Jewish citizens in a place and the local laws allowed, they constructed a synagogue building. There is no sure mention of synagogues in the Old Testament, but they are mentioned over fifty times in the New Testament.

Synagogues began to rise either during or right after the Jews returned from the Babylonian captivity. The leaders became convinced that the nation could never survive unless its people really knew and practiced the law of God. Therefore, it was established that wherever ten or more Jews lived, they were to meet together on a regular basis in a synagogue meeting. They were to study and practice the law of God. The growth of synagogues was staggering. The number can be imagined by keeping in mind how the Jews had been deported and dispersed all over the world, and by remembering that wherever ten Jews lived, they were to form a synagogue meeting (cp. [Luke 4:16f](#); [Acts 9:2](#)).

The head of the synagogue was the Ruler of the Synagogue. He was the administrator, handling the business affairs and overseeing the services. He arranged for speakers and readers and the men who were to pray (cp. [Mark 5:22](#); [Luke 13:14](#); [Acts 18:8](#)). There was also the chazzan or sexton or minister. He was in charge of the sacred scrolls or Scripture, the teaching of the law in actual class sessions, and the care and maintenance of the synagogue building (cp. [Luke 4:20](#)). The service of the synagogue meeting was very simple. There was prayer, the reading of the Scripture (scroll), and an exposition of the Scripture. (Cp. [Luke 4:16f](#); [Acts 13:14-52](#) for a picture of two services.)

As one reads the New Testament, there are two important facts to remember about the synagogue.

(1) Its primary purpose was to teach the Word of God. All other functions were secondary. (2)

There was no permanent preacher or teacher. It was the practice to call upon both local and visiting teachers to give an exposition of the Scripture.

These two facts explain why Jesus, and later the apostles, were able to find an open pulpit in the synagogues as they carried out their mission throughout the world.

Tuesday, February 3rd *Read Mark 1:21-22*

Two big ideas here:

Big Idea #1: Jesus seized the opportunity to teach. The idea is that He excitedly entered and immediately began to teach. This was the very day He was to launch His ministry; this was the first chance He had to take the podium and teach. He immediately rushed forth and seized the opportunity.

Jesus utilized the moment. His time was short, so He seized the opportunity to teach. Time is short. We must use every minute to the fullest, for the night is coming when no man can work. There are several mistakes made with time.

1) We can lose time: just let it pass, never seize the opportunity.

- 2) We can ignore time: pay no attention to it, give it little if any thought.
- 3) We can neglect time: be unconcerned and non-caring, fail to realize its potential and exactly what could be achieved with its proper use.
- 4) We can abuse time: use time to do the opposite of what we should be doing; misuse time by using it half-heartedly, sloppily, inefficiently.

John 9:4 *As long as it is day, we must do the work of him who sent me. Night is coming, when no one can work.*

Psalms 90:12 *Teach us to number our days aright, that we may gain a heart of wisdom.*

Big Idea #2: Jesus astonished the crowd. The word "astonished" (*ekplessonto*) is a strong and expressive word. Its literal meaning is to be *struck in mind*, to be *astonished*. The people were stricken, stirred, aroused, moved by the Lord's teaching.

Jesus astonished the crowd for two reasons.

1. His message was very different.

2. His authority was strikingly different. Note the words, "*And they were astonished at His teaching, for He taught them as one having authority, and not as the scribes.*"

Five comparisons will show this.

- a. Tradition vs. authority.** Other teachers relied upon esteemed men, their traditions and teachings, and quoted them as their source of authority; but not Jesus. He taught with a personal authority; He spoke independently of all others. He spoke with a certainty, a positiveness, a finality that no one else had ever done.
- b. Form vs. power.** Other teachers stressed ritual, ceremony, and form. Jesus stressed the need and availability of power to overcome the trials and sufferings of life.
- c. Humanism (laws) vs. the spiritual (truth).** Other teachers reasoned and formulated law after law, teaching that these were the way to real life. Jesus spoke about matters of the heart and life, of the soul and spirit. The answers He gave were spiritual truths, not human thought and rationalism.
- d. Religion vs. life.** Other teachers preached their religion; Jesus preached life—a life to be lived abundantly and eternally.
- e. Profession vs. possession.** Other teachers professed to follow God, but they twisted and interpreted the law of God to their own liking. What they followed was their own *man-made religion*. They were anything but followers of God. Jesus practiced and lived what He taught. His life was so different from other teachers that people sat up and took notice of what He had to say.

Wednesday, February 4th *Read Mark 1:23-28*

Here we see that people can be delivered from all the forces of evil by the power of Jesus. You can even be delivered from unclean spirits that enslave you, no matter the grip of the enslavement. Jesus has the power to deliver humankind. The basic outline is as follows in three pictures:

1. Picture 1: the need of the possessed man (v.23-24).
2. Picture 2: the power of Jesus (v.25-26).
3. Picture 3: the impact upon people (v.27-28).

The first picture is that of the possessed man and his need. The words "with an unclean spirit" (*en pneumati akatharto*) should be translated "in" (en) an unclean spirit. The man was in the grasp, in the possession of the unclean spirit. He was in the grip, captivated by the unclean spirit. He was under the spell, the will of the unclean spirit. To better understand the meaning, think of all the evil in the world, all the evil that occurs every hour and every day. Then note John's words, **1 John 5:19** *We know that we are children of God, and that the whole world is under the control*

of the evil one. That is, the world lies under the influence, power, bondage, will, and grip of the evil one. In the very same sense, this man was possessed by an unclean spirit. Note three things.

1. The possessed man, surprisingly, was in the synagogue. What was he doing there? Was he a regular attender, did he come for the donuts, or had he come just to hear Jesus? We are not told. But if he was a regular attender, then the synagogue was spiritually dead. How do we know this? Because the man could attend services time after time and never be helped spiritually.

Acts 7:51 "You stiff-necked people, with uncircumcised hearts and ears! You are just like your fathers: You always resist the Holy Spirit!"

2. The possessed man raged and cried out, sensed and recoiled from purity. The unclean spirit recognized and cried three things.

a. The unclean spirit cried, "Let us alone! What have we to do with You, Jesus of Nazareth? Did You come to destroy us? I know who You are--the Holy One of God!" The unclean spirit was entirely different from the clean spirit of Jesus. Jesus is perfectly pure and sinless. The unclean spirit had nothing to do with the purity of Jesus. The unclean spirit was diametrically opposed to the holiness of Jesus.

b. The unclean spirit recognized that Jesus had come to destroy him. Down deep within, the unclean persons know they are to judged and destroyed. They hate and despise, ignore and neglect, hide and rationalize in order to continue in their unclean ways. The paradox is that they know they will be judged even while they are sinning and rebelling against God. "For this purpose the Son of God was manifested, that he might destroy the works of the devil" (1 John 3:8).

c. The unclean spirit identified Jesus. He said, "I know thee who thou art, the Holy One of God." He confessed Jesus. As James says in 2:19, "*You believe that there is one God. Good! Even the demons believe that--and shudder.*"

3. The possessed man identified Jesus. This point is so significant it bears repeating: "**Mark 1:24** "Let us alone! What have we to do with You, Jesus of Nazareth? Did You come to destroy us? I know who You are--the Holy One of God!" that is, the Holy Son of God. One of the major purposes of Jesus in confronting evil spirits was to prove His Messiahship

Thursday, February 5th Read Mark 1: 25-26

The second picture is that of the power of Jesus.

1. Jesus rebuked the unclean spirit. Note the words, "Be quiet." Jesus did not accept demonic testimony to His Messiahship. Why? Such acknowledgment was involuntary, that is, of the mind only. It was only the mental knowledge that Jesus was the Son of God. It was not of the heart nor of the will to follow Jesus. It did not come from being born again. The witness Jesus wants is the witness of a person who has made a deliberate decision to profess Him as Lord; the witness of a heart truly changed; the witness of a heart moved by the Spirit of God to confess, **Mark 8:29** "*But what about you?" he asked. "Who do you say I am?" Peter answered, "You are the Christ."*

Note also the power of Jesus. He casts the unclean spirit out. How? By His Word, by simply saying, "Come out of him."

2. The evil spirit obeyed. Note the words "shook the man" (*sparassō*). The words mean to be convulsed. Apparently the man had a convulsion, jerking to and fro and crying out with a loud voice.

The question is sometimes asked, Why all this? Why such a scene? Why did Jesus not calmly heal the man in a serene atmosphere? There are probably two reasons.

a. The evil and unclean spirits in the world are powerful forces, possessing enormous power to enslave and possess man. Their power could be more clearly seen in a convulsive and noisy scene. People needed to know that the evil and unclean forces of the world are the true enemies of mankind. They are the powerful forces who enslaved men with their dirty, intoxicating, and immoral habits.

b. **The man was possessed by an unclean spirit.** The convulsion and cry were evidence of the unclean spirit actually being in the man.

3. **The convulsion and cry demonstrated the power and Messiahship of Jesus.** Jesus was actually conquering the force of evil within a man, and only God had such a power.

Hebrews 4:12 For the word of God is living and active. Sharper than any double-edged sword, it penetrates even to dividing soul and spirit, joints and marrow; it judges the thoughts and attitudes of the heart.

Friday, February 6th *Read Mark 1: 27-28*

The third picture is that of the *impact* upon people. The people reacted in three ways.

1. **They were amazed** (*ethambethesan*^{PWS: 129}), astonished. What the people had witnessed was unbelievable. Using no charms, no invocations, no exorcising devices, Jesus simply said, "Come out of him"; and the unclean spirit was dramatically cast out of the man. The people were shocked and stunned.

2. **They questioned and buzzed among themselves**, "What *thing* is this? What new power or revelation (doctrine) is this? What is God showing us? Is the revelation, the doctrine, the power from and of the Messiah? 'For with authority commandeth He even the unclean spirits, and they do obey Him.'" The people were doing just what Jesus had wanted. They were questioning if He was the Messiah.

3. **They spread His fame everywhere.** Imagine the conversation in the stores, businesses, homes, and streets as people traveled throughout the area and throughout the world. The impact upon us should be the same. All three responses should characterize us as we witness the power of God in changing and healing lives. Yet, how *gospel-hardened* so many of us become.

2 Timothy 2:2 And the things you have heard me say in the presence of many witnesses entrust to reliable men who will also be qualified to teach others.

1 Peter 3:15 But in your hearts set apart Christ as Lord. Always be prepared to give an answer to everyone who asks you to give the reason for the hope that you have. But do this with gentleness and respect,

1 John 1:3 We proclaim to you what we have seen and heard, so that you also may have fellowship with us. And our fellowship is with the Father and with his Son, Jesus Christ.