

When Jesus Came to Church Mark 1:21-28

Slide 1

If Jesus were to walk into our church this morning, what would it be like?

Probably some would feel an awesome peace; others a heavenly love might pervade, while others might feel tenderness and compassion.

In today's text, Jesus showed up for Sabbath worship, and it was WAY different than anyone expected. But, before we launch into our text, let's get our bearings with a little background.

In the first verse of the Gospel of Mark, John the Baptist tells us his theme.

He says, "*The beginning of the good news about Jesus the Messiah, the Son of God.*" Everything in Mark's book was written to convince us that Jesus is the Son of God.

Each section of chapter 1, that we've looked at so far, was written to reinforce these truths:

- That Jesus was the fulfillment of the Old Testament prophecies about the Messiah.
- At His baptism, God the Father gave His verbal approval of Jesus and the Holy Spirit descended like a dove to anoint Him for service.
- Jesus overcame Satan in 40 days of temptation in the wilderness.
- His preaching succeeded greatly and resulted in a remarkable attraction.
- He called believers to be his Apostles and they immediately responded.

In verses 21-35, Mark records a single day in the ministry of Jesus. In a single twenty-four-hour period, Jesus demonstrated that He was the Son of God by His extraordinary authority.

Authority! That's the key word in verses 21-35. In this passage, and throughout His whole life, Jesus exercised the type of authority reserved only for God Himself. That's the point Mark tries to convey.

The word "authority" is found 10 times in Mark. The Greek word for authority has several shades of meaning, but all the language lexicons and dictionaries can be summed up in this definition: "*Authority is the inherent ability and power and the resultant right to exercise that power.*"

In verses 21-35, the subject of today's and next week's messages, we'll see how Jesus suddenly, and beyond anyone's expectations, assumes power possible only to God.

Jesus displays the rights and prerogatives reserved only for God, thereby proving that He is indeed the Son of God.

Slide 2

Mark 1:21-22, "*They went to Capernaum, and when the Sabbath came, Jesus went into the synagogue and began to teach. The people were amazed at his teaching, because he taught them as one who had authority, not as the teachers of the law.*"

This verse tells us that, when the Sabbath came, Jesus attended the synagogue in Capernaum, the hub of His ministry in Galilee.

Now, the Temple was the place of worship and sacrifice, while the synagogue was a place of teaching and instruction.

There was only one Temple, located in Jerusalem, but wherever there were at least ten righteous men, a synagogue could be established.

Therefore, the synagogue was the logical place for Jesus to begin to establish His divine authority. That's why, when He entered the synagogue, He began to teach.

Now, Mark doesn't bother to tell us WHAT Jesus taught; he only tells us the response to His teachings which was amazement!

Being amaze is also a common response of people who first read the Gospels with an open mind. The teachings of Jesus are truly remarkable. Even atheists marvel at Jesus' teachings.

In his book, *Reflections on the Psalms*, C.S. Lewis wrote, *"In Jesus' teaching there is no imperfection. He wrote no book. We have only reported sayings, most of them uttered in answers to questions, shaped in some degree by their context. He preaches but He does not lecture. He used paradox, proverb, exaggeration, parable, irony; His teaching cannot be grasped by the intellect alone."*

So, why were Jesus' teachings so different? Because all the religious teachings at that time were derivative. Jesus' taught with direct, PERSONAL authority from God because, He WAS God.

The scribes, who were largely Pharisees, *"were in bondage to quotation marks!"* They loved to quote the authorities.

It was secondhand theology! Their teachings descended into convoluted, petty, legalistic distinctions that were boring, with no spontaneity, no joy! But Jesus was different!

When He spoke, He spoke as if he needed no authority beyond Himself, because He WAS the authority.

He spoke with utter independence, citing no experts. He spoke with the finality of the voice of God, because He WAS God.

When Mark says they were amazed, that doesn't necessarily mean everyone liked it. They were amazed because His teachings shocked them.

Both His style and content were radically different. It wasn't the norm and it rattled them.

C.S. Lewis wrote: *"[Jesus] was never regarded as a mere moral teacher. He did not produce that effect on any of the people who actually met Him. He produced mainly three effects: Hatred, Terror, or Adoration. There was no trace of people expressing mild admiration."*

Why was this? Because Jesus didn't just teach to educate but to call people to decision; to call people to His kingdom, and a kingdom implies a king, a ruler, a master, and that King was Jesus.

Some people simply won't bend their knee to Jesus; they hate Him and everything about Him.

Some run in terror at surrendering their lives to Jesus, not realizing that only in Jesus is there eternal life, but an abundant life here on this earth, as well.

Then some people hear Jesus' words and respond in faith and obedience, experiencing the joy of knowing Him and His blessings.

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Already the people in the synagogue are perplexed and astonished with Jesus' teaching and the authority with which He taught, as if HE were the authority in Himself. But listen to what happened next.

Mark 1:23-27, *"Just then a man in their synagogue who was possessed by an impure spirit cried out, "What do you want with us, Jesus of Nazareth? Have you come to destroy us? I know who you are—the Holy One of God!" "Be quiet!" said Jesus sternly.*

“Come out of him!” The impure spirit shook the man violently and came out of him with a shriek. The people were all so amazed that they asked each other, “What is this? A new teaching—and with authority! He even gives orders to impure spirits and they obey him.”

The congregation was only starting to process this teacher who taught with such compelling authority when suddenly a man with an unclean spirit, another word for a demon, caused a disturbance in the congregation.

Can you imagine what would happen if that happened in our service? It'd freak you out, wouldn't it?

Then suddenly, the demon speaks through the voice of the man and says, *“What do you want with us, Jesus of Nazareth? Have you come to destroy us? I know who you are—the Holy One of God!”*

This demon-possessed man was so totally controlled by this demon that He couldn't stand to listen to Jesus' teaching.

But also notice... that demon possessed man was in the synagogue; he was in a place of spiritual learning; a place of religious activities.

His religious and cultural ties to Judaism had done him no good. He was absolutely helpless.

Several commentaries say that the phrase, *“Have you come to destroy us?”* is not really a question. Rather, it was an accusation: *“You have come to destroy us!”*

While the congregation didn't understand who Jesus was, there was no doubt in the mind of that demon. In several demonic encounters in Mark, the demons know instantly who Jesus is.

In this verse, the demon identified Him as the *“Holy One of God,”* in chapter 3, verse 11, *“the Son of God,”* and *“the Son of the Most High God”* in chapter 11, verse 7.

Demons knew exactly Who He was. They knew that among the other things Jesus had set out to do, He would destroy them in time.

This was another piece of evidence that Mark provided to show that Jesus was the Son of God. Yet, despite hearing these things with their own ears, the people couldn’t process it.

Now, demon possession wasn’t unknown to the ancient world. There were many exorcists who claimed to be able to cast out demons.

Jewish and pagan exorcists used elaborate incantations and spells and magical rites.

Whether they really had any control over the demons is debatable because they were trafficking in the very arts controlled by demons.

But so-called exorcisms were known to go on for hours or days to quieten a demon’s influence, at least for a while. Not so with Jesus.

With one command of clear, simple, brief authority, Jesus says only six words: *“Be quiet! Come out of him!”*

INSTANTLY the demon obeys and comes out of the man in a horrible demonic convulsion and a loud violent scream. And then, in a flash, he was perfectly whole and free from the demon’s power!

No one had ever seen anything like this before! WHAT POWER AND AUTHORITY! The power was not in a spell, a formula, an incantation, or an elaborate rite; the power was in JESUS HIMSELF.

The reaction of the congregation was sheer astonishment, and again we see the word “authority” again.

Verse 27 says, *“The people were all so amazed that they asked each other, “What is this? A new teaching—and with authority! He even gives orders to impure spirits and they obey him.”*

The effect of this kind of power and authority was electrifying. They began to realize that Jesus wasn’t some simple wandering religious rabbi, He was A POWER with which TO BE RECKONED!

Later, Jesus would begin to claim rights and prerogatives reserved only for God Himself causing the religious leaders concern to become more pronounced.

Eventually, His claims to divine rights and prerogatives would lead to His crucifixion.

Regardless that Jesus told the demons to be quiet, news of His power and authority spread like wildfire!

In verse 34, we’re told, *“He also drove out many demons, but he would not let the demons speak because they knew who he was.”*

And in Mark 3:11-12, Mark records, *“Whenever the impure spirits saw him, they fell down before him and cried out, “You are the Son of God.” But he gave them strict orders not to tell others about him.”*

Yet, Jesus’ power and authority spread everywhere. Mark 1:28, *“News about him spread quickly over the whole region of Galilee.”*

Realistically speaking, could you expect any different response?

Following such an eventful Sabbath at the synagogue, Jesus' fame was bound to spread throughout all of Galilee, and then in all of Judea and then ultimately north, south, east and west.

The people were unable to remain quiet about the wonder they had witnessed, and every day more incredible things happened, which only fed the fame of this miracle worker.

People had to share it with everyone they met. They couldn't hold it in.

Slide 4

Conclusion

These are remarkable events, but what do they mean to us today?

First, we must never forget the reality of the demonic world.

There are evil things that happen in this world that cannot be explained away by sinful human nature. Satan is real and he has a mobilized army to carry out his plan to kill, steal and destroy.

Paul tells us in Ephesians 6:12, *"For our struggle is not against flesh and blood, but against the rulers, against the authorities, against the powers of this dark world and against the spiritual forces of evil in the heavenly realms."*

But Jesus defeated the devil at the cross and we know the final outcome—WE WIN!—JESUS WINS!

Although the destruction of Satanic forces awaits the final judgment, Jesus dealt its death blow on the cross. 1 John 4:4 comforts us with these words, *"Greater is he who is in you than he who is in the world."*

If you're a believer in Jesus Christ, I have good news for you: Christians cannot be demon-possessed.

When you are born into God's family, by faith in Jesus Christ, the Bible teaches that the Holy Spirit indwells you.

The Holy Spirit will not coexist with a demon. But regardless that demons cannot possess a Christian, when we surrender to sin in our lives, we fall under the influence of Satan and His demon world.

When that happens, we should be quick to confess our sins and return to fellowship with God.

The **second** thing I challenge you to do today is to surrender to Jesus' authority.

Each of the four Gospels has a different emphasis, but one thing is clear from all of them: Jesus has the authority to direct and order your life. He has the right to tell you what to do.

The kingdom of God is not a democracy. Jesus is God, Jesus is Lord, and He has the right to rule your life. Be a disciple of Jesus by being obedient to your King.

Lastly, I want you to understand that Jesus can save anybody! This man was under the influence of demons, which happens only when people willingly surrender themselves to the direct influence of Satan.

This hopeless man, who had rolled in the dust and despair before that horror-stricken congregation, rose to wholeness, joy, peace, and deliverance.

There is hope for the worst of us! You may have the hardest heart of anyone on this planet. It may seem to be impenetrable, irredeemable, hopeless, or impossible but I have good news for you.

Jesus is willing and ready to change your life... if you will only let Him. Will you? Will you recognize your sinfulness before God?

You might believe that you're a good person in your own eyes, like this man in the synagogue, doing religious stuff. But he was lost and controlled by Satan. He had religion, but he didn't have Jesus!

1 John 5:12-13 says, *"Whoever has the Son has life; whoever does not have the Son of God does not have life. I write these things to you who believe in the name of the Son of God so that you may know that you have eternal life."*

Jesus has come to church this morning. Don't miss Him! If God is dealing with you now, don't assume He will continue. *"Today is the day of salvation! NOW is the appointed time."*

Don't put off until tomorrow what you should do today. Turn to Jesus and be saved!