**Mark 1:21-28 (ESV)**

**21**  And they went into Capernaum, and immediately on the Sabbath he entered the synagogue and was teaching. **22** And they were astonished at his teaching, for he taught them as one who had authority, and not as the scribes. **23** And immediately there was in their synagogue a man with an unclean spirit. And he cried out, **24**  “What have you to do with us, Jesus of Nazareth? Have you come to destroy us? I know who you are— Holy One of God.” the **25** But Jesus rebuked him, saying, “Be silent, and come out of him!” **26** And the unclean spirit, convulsing him and crying out with a loud voice, came out of him. **27** And they were all amazed, so that they questioned among themselves, saying, “What is this? A new teaching with authority! He commands even the unclean spirits, and they obey him.” **28** And at once his fame spread everywhere throughout all the surrounding region of Galilee.

**“Under The Word”**

 Grace to you and peace from God our Father and our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ. Amen. Have you ever been annoyed by that dangling string on a shirt? Of course, the natural reaction is to pull on it, but what happens? It gets worse and before you know it. The shirt begins to unravel completely. So too, the same thing has happened to us in our times. Truth has been pulled on like a string on a shirt not realizing what this means to the fabric of our western world. The result is that reality has become relative, which means self-made. Truth is now based more on something felt rather than something known or absolute. This has left us unprotected to powers of darkness now lurking at our doorsteps.

 As we consider the Gospel according to St. Mark, the first miracle he reveals was not water being changed into the wine at a wedding. After calling His disciples to follow Him, Mark shows how Jesus plunges them into the thick of it. These fishers of men were not going to do much catching based on their own strength or craftiness. Just as there is a power base for life like production for business, votes for politics, or degrees in academics. Christ brings a power that is actually an authority. As the only Son of God, He holds victory against the Devil and so it means everyone needs what He brings. Jesus by His authoritative word and presence protects us from all dangers to stand upright in Him.

1. **The purpose of the Sabbath was to keep it holy.**
2. Going to the synagogue was to hear God’s word.
* A standard thing to do for any Jew in terms of the 3rd commandment.
* When Jesus taught it was clear He stood apart from the scribes or teachers of the Law.
* While they used human authority, cunning, and clever sayings, Jesus was speaking from Himself as the source of truth and life.
* His authority as the only Son of God opened Scripture shining light to say, “Repent and believe in the Gospel.”

1. The authority of Jesus’ Word is the power basis for the Church to be upright in Him.
* Honoring the Sabbath is not a day, but to be a rest for sinful humanity in God now revealed as Jesus Christ.
* However, much damage by false teachers give no rest, “Americans (56%), especially Millennials (64%), don’t feel that any one religious text has a monopoly on truth, but that they are all different expressions of the same spiritual message.”[[1]](#footnote-1)
* The Gospel is a unique message unable to be mixed and matched for the purpose of Jesus and His Word is to make sinners holy in Him.
* More than a prophet like Moses, God has sent His Son who now mediates salvation not based upon what to do, but what He promises to do for us.
1. **The danger of satanic attack had to be silenced.**
2. Having stirred up life by the Gospel, dead ways of man gave way to the better presence of Christ.
* Notice how the servants of the Devil are not too fond of letting go of power and are quick to respond to true teaching set upon Christ.
* Who knows how this poor man became demon possessed, but unlike an illness, a more powerful presence made him into a victim.
* The demon did not fool around and wanted the upper hand so he made a scene and called Jesus out to be, “The Holy One of God.”
* He was what the demon said, but it was a mockery of the 2nd commandment and Jesus would have none of it saying, “Be quiet, and come out of him!”
1. Wherever Christ brings His Word of truth and purity, He is ready to engage the demonic attacks so that any can stand upright in Him.
* Demon possession is a reality that the western world is naïve about as we open ourselves up to anything that satisfies.
* The oppression of the Devil is also something of a power that entraps plenty in idols of loneliness, guilt, or addictions.
* Christ stares down all this darkness and by His called servants the Devil has no room to speak for He says, “I forgive you all your sins.”
* Be gone devil and be freed you victims, arise for the Holy One of God is here and your baptism into His Name speaks a better word.
1. **The spread of fame needed to go a better direction.**
2. There was no keeping a lid on the amazement over what Jesus did in Capernaum.
* The people were caught up in the moment, “What is this? A new teaching with authority! He commands even the unclean spirits, and they obey him.”
* They missed what the servant of Satan fully understood about Jesus being, “the Holy one of God.”
* If casting out a single demon spread news, then being cast upon the cross became God’s bigger plan to shame all the ways of the devil.
* This news of being the crucified Savior the Holy One Jesus places at the center of His Church and has sent out to the ends of the earth.
1. There is amazing acts Jesus still does because His teaching has authority.
* Power to give life and forgiveness places us under Christ by His Holy Word and Sacraments as a gift.
* Rather than the fading glory of Moses and the Law, the holiness of Jesus has covered all your sins with His righteousness that never fades.
* It means baptism pulls any out of the clutches of Satan, life has new purpose based on forgiveness, and fear of Satan has been crucified in Christ.
* Even if darkness seems to be winning, Jesus as the Holy One of God stands in the sacrament promising His kingdom and sacrifice are for you.

 If we are captivate to self-made truth today, Christ comes to disturb this lie of Satan. In the Lord of the Rings, the wizard Gandalf had to shake things up when he found the king of Rohan possessed by a spirit. After Théoden is released from his captor and begins to regain his senses. Gandalf tells the king, “Breathe the free air again, my friend.” Breathe the freedom given for you in Christ again. He has dragged all darkness down by His death. The absolute truth rests in His resurrection as life for sinners. Jesus by His authoritative word and presence now protects us from all dangers to stand upright in Him. Amen. The peace of Christ that passes all understanding be with your hearts and minds in Christ Jesus to life everlasting. Amen.

1. https://www.barna.com/research/truth-post-truth-society/?utm\_source=Barna+Update+List&utm\_campaign=1d48c68387-EMAIL\_CAMPAIGN\_2017\_12\_28&utm\_medium=email&utm\_term=0\_8560a0e52e-1d48c68387-171894065&mc\_cid=1d48c68387&mc\_eid=1c0dd2ec48 [↑](#footnote-ref-1)