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Sermon Summary #5

A Typical Day in the Life of Jesus Mark 1:21-39

Introduction: What does a “typical” day in your life look like? What might a “typical” day in the life of Jesus have been like? The narrative portrayed in Mark 1:21-39 covers, in general, one day in the life of Jesus. From it we see clearly what happens when the “kingdom of God” (1:14-15) breaks into human experience.

(1) Jesus in the synagogue (vv. 21-28)

Jesus preaches and two things happen.

First, everyone is stunned. They struggle to catch their breath. They are amazed. They are left speechless, not knowing what to say in response to what he has just said. They’ve never heard anyone talk like this before. Unlike the scribes, who bore us with their endless quotations of other authorities, this man speaks from a place of authority within himself. He doesn’t quote authorities. He **is** the authority!

The **second** thing is that demonized people show up and are set free! People are amazed and demons are agitated! That’s what happens when Jesus preaches.

Many struggle with the idea of “demons.” Consider C. S. Lewis in his *Screwtape Letters*: . . . Screwtape (a senior, experienced demon), gives advice to the inexperienced Wormwood:

"I do not think you will have much difficulty in keeping the patient in the dark. The fact that 'devils' are predominantly comic figures in the modern imagination will help you. If any faint suspicion of your existence begins to arise in his mind, suggest to him a picture of something in red tights, and persuade him that since he cannot believe in that . . . he therefore cannot believe in you."

Let me make six observations about this incident.

First, Mark says this man had an “unclean spirit” (v. 23).

Second, although only one unclean spirit is mentioned in v. 23, he is quoted as saying: “What have you to do with **US**?” Why the plural? Probably because the demon knows that Jesus has come not simply to defeat one spirit but to confront and conquer the entire demonic power structure. This demon is only one of many, all of whom knew that Jesus was there to take them down.

Third, he knows who Jesus is (“the Holy One of God”). Demons are evil, but they aren’t dumb!

Fourth, Jesus “rebuked” the spirit and said, in effect: “Shut up! Get out!”

Fifth, in an obvious but pathetic attempt to show his power and make a scene, the demon throws the man into convulsions and shrieks aloud (v. 26).

Sixth, and surely the most important thing of all, is that Jesus simply speaks the word and the demon is compelled to go! No rituals. No incantations. No candles. No mood music playing in the background. No charms. No religious formulas. No chanting. No dancing. No cutting off of a chicken’s head. He didn’t

have to shout or jump up and down. He didn't physically restrain the demonized man or press a cross against his forehead. He didn't use "holy" water or incense. **He simply said: "Shut up! Get out!"**

What about us? **Luke 17:1, 17-20** . . .

(1) V. 1 - By "others" we are to understand other than the 12, i.e., *non-apostolic disciples or followers of Jesus* (cf. 9:15).

(2) v. 17 - "**Even** the demons . . . !" In other words, "Wow!" Note that they are not subject to "us," but "subject to us **in your name**." Christ's authority has been invested in his followers!

(3) V. 19 - "I have given you authority!" Authority = *delegated power*, i.e., not only the responsibility, not only the prerogative, but also *the spiritual power to enforce compliance*. Authority = the right to act and speak as if Jesus were present (v. 16).

Authority over what or whom? *Serpents and scorpions are metaphorical for demonic spirits*. Serpents and scorpions were familiar sources of evil and pain in Palestinian life and thus served to symbolize all kinds of adversity and affliction. See Deut. 8:15; Num. 21:6-9; Ps. 58:4; 140:3. The scorpion was a means of divine chastisement in 1 Kings 12:11,14 (cf. Lk. 11:11-12). Also, Satan is often portrayed as a serpent (Gen. 3; 2 Cor. 11; Rev. 12,20). Hence, his domain is that of snakes and scorpions. See esp. Ps. 91:12-13. In v. 19 Jesus explains the meaning of what the 70 reported in v. 17. Thus the "serpents and scorpions" of v. 19 = the "demons" of v. 17. Also, within v. 19 itself, "serpents and scorpions" are parallel to "all the power of the enemy," i.e., Satan and his hosts. Verse 20 indicates that "serpents and scorpions" = "spirits". Cf. Rev. 9:3,5,10.

(4) *Our authority is not the same as the 72, it is superior!* (1) We live and operate on this side of the cross (where Satan was defeated); (2) we have received the fullness of the HS's power (Pentecost having come); (3) we have received the fullness of Christ's authority (Mt. 28:18-19); (4) we have been raised up and seated with the exalted Lord, under whose feet all principalities and powers have been subjected (Eph. 1:19-2:7; Col. 2:9-10); (5) and finally, the evidence of authority is the exercise of authority - Acts 5:16; 8:7; 16:18; 19:12-16; 2 Cor. 10:3-4; Eph. 6:10-13; Js. 4:7; 1 Pt. 5:8.

So, whereas Jesus simply says: "Shut up! Get out!" you and I are to say: "**In the name of Jesus, Shut up! Get out!**"

(2) Jesus in Peter's house (vv. 29-34)

First, yes, Peter was married! Second, this is actually less a healing than an exorcism. In Luke's version of this story we read that Jesus "stood over her and **rebuked** the fever, and it left her" (Luke 4:39). The verb rendered "rebuked" was a common term for exorcism and indicates that Jesus believed her fever was the result of a demonic presence. Third, after preaching, after delivering the man from a demon in the synagogue, after healing Peter's mother-in-law, after spending hours praying for all manner of sickness and casting out all manner of demons, **he prays** ("very early in the morning"!).

Conclusion:

First, what accounts for this remarkable display of devotion and dedication to hurting people? It was the result of a combination of his love/compassion for hurting people and the authoritative power of the kingdom of God. This is what happens when the kingdom of God breaks into this world, into the darkness of sin, into the depths of demonic influence, into the disabling power of disease.

Second, last week (1:40-45) we saw that **Jesus can make you clean!** Now we see that **Jesus can also set you free!**