

Introduction

- Mark is a very organized and focused writer. His theme is to answer the question, “Who IS this man??”
- Last week Steve Spangler closed Mark 4 with Jesus commanding a storm to calm down. That showed Jesus’ power over the forces of nature. Today we will discuss examples of His power over psychology and human physiology.
- Mark’s theme is *exousia* (absolute, inherent divine authority)

Demons and Unclean Spirits

- Two weeks ago, in Chapter 3, we talked about unclean spirits. Today we have more.
- In Jesus’ time there were no hospitals for lepers; no institutions for the mentally disturbed. These afflictions, as well as epilepsy, muteness, blindness, etc. were attributed to demons and sin. The unfortunate people who suffered these things were forced to live outside of the towns and subsist on handouts and refuse.
- A healthy person could expect to live 40-50 years, and 70 was not unheard of (the average age at that time was about 30 because of high infant mortality).
- They believed in active spirits and considered “demons” and “unclean spirits” to be synonymous. Their beliefs in the 1st century were a bit different from the Old Testament times and certainly different from today.
 - OT – strictly monotheistic Jews attributed ALL good and evil to Yahweh, so demons were spiritual agents sent to test people or to carry out the will of God, including retribution.
 - NT – believed in independent evil spirits (from Book of Enoch & Book of Jubilees) that were at war with Yahweh.
 - Before the great flood, rebellious angels (“Watchers”) came to earth & mated with human women. Children were Nephilim (giants), which were half-human, half-spiritual.
 - When Nephilim individuals were killed, being only half-angel, they could not leave earth.

- They were highly-organized “foot soldiers” in conflict with Yahweh, under satanic or malevolent direction.
- Anyone with one of these spirits in control of them must be cut off from God and the community

Casting Out Demons

After calming the storm on the Sea of Galilee, Jesus and His disciples arrive on the eastern shore, near Decapolis. They are met by a demon-possessed man.

- Such a man, forced to live outside the city, is not an unusual sight for that time.
- Mark emphasizes the theological side of this event:
 - The man is living among the dead, a natural stronghold for unclean spirits.
 - He has the traits of total demon possession
 - Superhuman strength
 - Mindless crying out day and night
 - Self-harm
 - Satan has removed his humanity

Why did the demon call out Jesus’ full name and title?

Here Mark takes some political jabs:

- The man is possessed by multiple demons (no surprise), but Mark uses “Legion,” which is the Roman occupier’s measure for 5,000 – 6,000 soldiers.
- Pigs were considered already unclean
- The Roman Tenth Legion used a boar (pig) as a primary military emblem.
- The pigs rushing into the water & drowning represents a devastating military defeat.

Exorcism was a common practice in that day (remember King Solomon), and usually involved complex ceremonies and amulets, or drink concoctions, or dancing, or incantations.

What shocked the onlookers was not that Jesus performed an exorcism, but that he did it by a simple command.

When challenged that He used the power of the devil, Jesus' response is in Matthew 12:27.

The people were afraid.

They were not afraid of a demon-possessed, super-human mental case; they were afraid of someone who could fix all that – just by saying so.

Jairus' Daughter

- Trying to escape the crowd, Jesus crosses back over the sea.
- Met by Jairus. What do we know about Jairus?

Interruption

On the way to Jairus' house – in the crowd is a woman with a physical problem:

- Blood flow for 12 years
- Women were considered unclean during their monthly cycle, and anyone who touched them during that time was unclean until the evening (Leviticus 15:19)
- Suffered humiliation and pain under ineffective doctors
- Had heard about Jesus' ability to heal
- Tried to be discrete and only touch his cloak

Jesus instantly felt the connection. "Who touched me?"

Her faith made her well.

Jairus

Jesus resumes his trek to Jairus' house. Jesus only allowed Peter, James and his brother, John, to go with him.

The girl is restored simply by Jesus' command.

Summary:

Do you think Mark choose good examples to demonstrate *exousia*? (the divine power of Jesus)?

Though Satan and his minions currently rule this world, Jesus has demonstrated that His is the superior power.

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