Be Amazed at Jesus’ Authority Of Jesus’ Words

Mark 1:21-28

21 They went to Capernaum, and when the Sabbath came, Jesus went into the synagogue and began to teach. 22 The people were amazed at his teaching, because he taught them as one who had authority, not as the teachers of the law. 23 Just then a man in their synagogue who was possessed by an evil spirit cried out, 24 “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!” 25 “Be quiet!” said Jesus sternly. “Come out of him!” 26 The evil spirit shook the man violently and came out of him with a shriek. 27 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 evil spirits and they obey him.” 28 News about him spread quickly over the whole region of Galilee.

Thoughts:

Why was Jesus teaching so amazing to the people?

How can we lose our amazement at His words?

Satan tries to get us to believe God will __________ us instead of __________ us.

“What do you want with us, Jesus of Nazareth? Have you come to destroy us?

Jesus quiets the devil through his words of _________________.

“He shared in our humanity so that by His death He would not destroy us, but destroy the devil who holds the power of death.” Heb 2:14

What are some of the most amazing things you have ever seen? Think about them for a moment.

Whenever we see something truly amazing, we get overwhelmed. It leaves a profound impact on us. We are often able to go back in our minds and relive the experience.

Today we are going to look at a passage of scripture where people are amazed by Jesus. We are going to see what happened when the divine, the human, and the demonic collide.

Jesus is in Galilee in the village of Capernaum. On the Sabbath day, Jesus goes into the synagogue and begins to teach.

It was very common to have a teacher come into the synagogue to teach. It was a Jewish custom often referred to as the “freedom of the synagogue.” Jesus as well as his disciples used this to proclaim the message of the arrival of the Messiah. This is where we find Jesus in our scripture today.

“The people were amazed at his teaching, because he taught them as one who had authority, not
The people were amazed at the authority of Jesus’ teaching. It is Jesus' authority that makes the teaching seem new. The rabbis gave their opinions, made their demands, quoted their human sources. Jesus quoted God. His authority was clear. Authority is internal—or, given that the Greek word for authority means "out of (one's) essence"—essential.

Do we hear the authority in Jesus’ words. The words that you hear in the readings, in the sermon, in Bible study, in your devotions, those are Jesus’ words. They ring with the clear sounding authority of “This is what our God says.” But don’t we say, “yeah, but...?” “Yeah, but he’s such a jerk how can I treat him well?” “Yeah but, she’s a tramp why should I invite her to church?” “Yeah but, if I do that other Christians will think I’m arrogant or stand-off-ish.” Who is talking? These are words of Him is the first and the last. Have we lost the sight and the sound of Jesus’ authority?

But that is what Satan doesn’t want us to hear. As Jesus was teaching, a man in their synagogue who was possessed by an evil 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!"

Demons understand the authority of Jesus. But people often don’t.

Apparently no one in town suspected he had an evil spirit. Otherwise they would have been nowhere near him. Perhaps he had been in the synagogue previously, perhaps no one had ever seen him before.

Demons are disruptive. The scheme is to turn people against Christ. The demon even sounds religious while he does his diabolical work. "I know who you are - the Holy One of God." It sounds like pious praise, but it is really devilish distraction. St. Paul tells us that the devil disguises himself as an angel of light and masks his workers as servants of righteousness. Wolves in sheep's clothing, complete with counterfeit signs and wonders that look so much like the real thing.

Not all pious-sounding praise comes from God. Jesus certainly is the "Holy One of God," but not in the way the demons proclaimed Him. Remember the question, "Have you come to destroy us?" Who does the word "us" refer to?

Certainly the demon could have been asking about himself and all the other evil spirits. Yet there was only one demon in this particular man. When we remember that the devil tries to separate Christ and all people, it becomes more likely that the demon is referring to himself and the people gathered there. Paraphrasing him would be something like this: “I know you, Jesus. You’re the Holy God who hates sin. Have you come to destroy me, the sinful demon that I am? What about these people? They’re sinners too. And doesn’t your Bible say, “He who does what is sinful is of the devil, because the devil has been sinning from the beginning.”

"Have you come to destroy us?" Can anything be more diabolical than to picture Jesus as the destroyer of mankind? Yet isn’t that what satan still tries to get us to believe? He hisses into our
ears, “God spoils your fun when he says “you shall or you shall not.” God is separating friends and people when he insists on who you can and can’t pray with or worship with. God is making you look like a fool when he says you can’t act like a husband and wife before your married. God is out to destroy you!” How diabolical to turn the one who has come to seek and to save sinners, into the one who has come to seek and destroy sinners.

No, Jesus has not come to destroy you, or me, though we both deserve it. The demonic forces barely have to lift a finger. We think nothing of letting our minds wander while the Scriptures are read, yet we pay close attention to satanic gossip. We have cherished the demonic temptations dancing in front of our eyes and failed to look away, but so easily look away from our Savior’s tortured body hanging on the cross. And in doing so, you and I have hated the Lord who hates sin.

Yet God loves us. The Lord intervenes. "Now is the time of God's favor. Now is the day of salvation." For God's Son has not come to condemn the world, but to save us by being condemned as if He had been filled with your greedy hunger for earthly things. Jesus suffered God's wrath against the hatred that burns in your heart against your neighbor. For all your lust for pleasure, all the jealousy in your soul, Jesus died our death. Therefore we will not perish, but have His everlasting life.

Our enemy's howling makes us afraid. They create unrest in the world, destroy marriages, make strife in our churches. They coat their lies with just enough truth to get us to believe them. The shouts of your guilt echo through your soul and drive you to despair. Do not let the demons drag you down. The Son of God "shared in our humanity so that by His death He would not destroy us, but destroy the devil who holds the power of death."³

"'Be quiet!' said Jesus sternly. 'Come out of him!' The evil spirit shook the man violently and came out of him with a shriek." With surgical precision the Savior removes the demon's claws from this poor man's heart and mind.

Jesus’ words have authority and the demons must obey immediately. How can we, who say we love Jesus, obey any less quickly? Jesus uses the power of His Word not just in Capernaum on that Sabbath, but also here in Alma this Sunday. What happened there happens here.

These words of Jesus are similar to the absolution which is spoken at the beginning of each worship service. We come with the claws of satan wrapped around our minds, with the screams of the demons accusing us of guilt and shame ringing in our ears. And Jesus says, “Be quiet! I forgive you in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit.” The grip of sin and death is broken. We are free to live as a new people of God.

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 evil spirits and they obey him." News about him spread quickly over the whole region of Galilee.” Mark 1:23-28

³ Hebrews 2:14
God's people are gathered to hear, learn, sing and pray the Word of God. All the while Jesus stands in our midst teaching with His authority. With His authority, He removes sin from souls. Jesus sternly tells your enemies of the devil and your own sinful nature to "Be Quiet!" This is the Word that declares the authority of God to cut through the darkness and cast out dark spirits. This is the Word of God that transforms water into the Baptismal rebirth in Christ to destroy Satan's power in the heart of another child of God.

This is the Word that works faith inside you so that you run to the Lord rather than run from Him. His Word has the power of His death upon the Cross for you. By His Word your sins are forgiven, and you are declared to be saints in Christ. By His Word He will raise all the dead from their graves and give eternal life to you and all believers. "He who believes and is baptized shall be saved." The demons cannot harm you - for even they must obey the Lord.

Be amazed with the people of Capernaum. Amen

CHILDREN'S TIME
Object: Rock, Scissors, Paper
Theme: Love is The Strongest
Source: Concept from Harold Uhl "Object Lessons From Gospel of Mark"

How many of you know how to play the game "Rock, Scissors and Paper"? Rock is strong (fist) so it can break scissors (two fingers) and scissors can cut paper (flat hand). Paper can cover rock. The way you play is to put your fist in the palm of your hand and as a person counts to three you bring your fist down three times into your hand - on the third count you make rock, paper or scissors. Since each one is stronger than something else you know who wins. Lets do it..

Oh - The winner gets to slap the wrist of the other person. Lets do it again...

This is a game and it can hurt after a while. That is because the stronger person can hurt the weaker one. He is given authority by the rules of the game to do what he wants. But every time you play someone new wins - someone new is given the authority. That is like life - some people have authority and power over others - and they use it to do what they want. Sometimes what they want to do isn't nice - like in the game.

Jesus shows us that he is stronger than anyone today in the scripture reading. He shows that he has power over evil – that his love - that God's love can defeat the worst enemy. The nice thing is that Jesus uses his power and authority to help others instead of to hurt them. Instead of slapping us, or taking what he wants - he heals people. Jesus is the strongest and the best. When we follow him, his power and authority do good things for us and through us.

Let us Pray -- Dear Lord God - we thank you for giving Jesus power -- we thank you that his power is always good -- we thank you too that Jesus always helps us -- that he never hurts us -- help us follow him -- and use our power to help others -- Amen