

The Story of Jesus

Part 3: What's up with demons and healings?

Mark 1:21-39 - [watch online](#)

Summary: There are many parts of the Story of Jesus that are hard to believe (especially the weird stuff about healings and demons). But these stories prove something even harder to believe... No matter who we are or what we have done, Jesus sees us and loves us.

Main Points:

[01:30] Lack of control over our lives can create a fear that takes over our lives.

[02:13] Sometimes the hardest thing to trust about the Story of Jesus is that we can actually trust Jesus.

[05:05] Jesus unapologetically challenges our preconceived ideas about the world.

[05:38] We gravitate toward Jesus' teachings because Jesus was more than a teacher.

[06:29] If a man can predict his own death and resurrection and pull it off, it's a good idea to believe everything else he says.

[12:29] Jesus is infinitely stronger than any other spiritual force.

[16:19] Jesus' authority is enough for the world's biggest issues and our smallest problems.

[17:43] Jesus doesn't use his authority to impress but to love.

[18:07] Jesus has the authority to accept and heal whomever he wants.

[20:21] Jesus' priorities are people not power.

[23:44] Jesus' authority proves we can trust him with our story.

Invitation [22:00]

Make Jesus the authority of your story

Memorize Matt 28:18

Pray: Jesus help me trust that this is under your authority. Show me what you can do.

Discussion Questions:

1. What stood out to you in this message?
2. What are some of your common fears (large and/or small)?
3. How do you usually manage those fears? Is it helpful?
4. Read Matthew 28:18-20. What stands out to you? How do you think this can influence how we live and deal with the inevitable fears of life?
5. How can your group pray with you this week?

Transcript:

IN: The Story of Jesus is full of accounts of healings, miracles, and even demons. The closer you look the weirder it seems to get.

How can anyone believe any of it actually happened? ...and even if we do, what does it have to do w/ our story right now?

Great questions! Let's talk about it together.

WE: What are your biggest fears?

- Kid: Thunderstorms Now: Snakes

But there are deeper fears aren't there...

- Don't I have what it takes... What if they find out who you really are?
- What if kids get sick/don't turn out alright? [ME]
- What if you choose wrong? (School, spouse, church?)
- What if future doesn't turn out way I'm planning or hoping?

Can be crippling/exhausting... **Lack of control over our lives can create a fear that takes over our lives.**

Now if you've been around church enough you know what I'm going to say... w/ Jesus we don't have to be afraid.

- Jesus says we don't need worry. When that fear comes we can choose to sit in it, or choose to focus on Jesus and who he is.

It's true but some might have heard it so much it's become a cliché.

Doesn't really do you much good when things really hit the fan.

- I've been there. Especially last 3 years.
- Had those sleepless nights. Those worries that just seem to torment and taunt.

Sometimes the hardest thing to trust about the Story of Jesus is that we can actually trust Jesus.

We don't need more knowledge about Jesus. What we need is to experience proof that Jesus actually sees us and can do something about what we are going through right now.

And in Mark's account of Jesus' life we discover the proof we need... we find it just as the story starts to get a little weird...

GOD: Mark has laid out Jesus' claim to be bringing the Kingdom of God... Has subtly portrayed him as God coming to establish his kingdom on earth...

Now, if there is a God and he came to earth to start a revolution against the old world order and establish his new kingdom of light... What do you think that would look like?

V. 21 Not like just walked in and co-opted the service... the leaders of the synagogue chose who had the right to teach

Most likely had heard Jesus' message, had some interactions w/ him and invited him to speak at synagogue....

Normally the teacher would read from Jewish scriptures and then sit down and comment on them... quoting other teachers.

Read Leviticus... Moses said, "An eye for an eye and a tooth for a tooth. Now my teacher, Rabbi Schmuel, teaches that this not only applies to our bodies but also our belongings. So if someone breaks your cart you can break theirs."

Jesus was very different... Like the difference between a teacher simply reading from the teacher's manual, and a teacher who has lived their material and can enchant the class w/out any notes.

He didn't rely on anyone else's expertise/authority for what he said... "You've heard the law says an eye for an eye... BUT I SAY... forgive your enemies... turn the other cheek."

- He even put his words above Moses!

He is teaching what life in the KOG will be like... a life where God's true law of love is written on our hearts by the HS.

- Where people don't have to obey to earn or keep God's favor but are changed from inside out b/c of God's love

Jesus unapologetically challenges our preconceived ideas about the world.

And the people had never heard anything like it!

For us... This is the stuff many of us like about Jesus... "Yeah, no more dead religion... relationship over religion... love over laws..."

But how do we know he's right? What gives him the right to challenge 100's of years of tradition and religion?

- And why do we 2000 years later still gravitate *toward* his teachings?

Mark is going to show us... We gravitate toward Jesus' teachings b/c Jesus was more than a teacher.

But there is someone there who's not a big fan... and this is when things really get weird.

V. 23-24 1st of many encounters w/ demons in Mark's account.

Mark (and rest of NT writers) simply assumes existence of demons.

He doesn't try to explain what they are, where they come from, none of it.

Hard to believe... Why I believe? Jesus believed...

Andy Stanley: If a man can predict his own death and resurrection and pull it off it's a good idea to believe everything else he says.

2 extremes:

- There's no such thing... Just ancient superstitious people not understanding mental and physical illnesses
- Go overboard
 - Everything b/c of spiritual realm... if we're sick or sad, its demons
 - If we play D&D or celebrate halloween we are opening ourselves up to demons
 - There's a Demon of alcohol/gambling/etc.
 - We lose our job b/c we mouthed off to our boss... that's just Satan is trying to get us.

So, a quick overview is important.

According to Mark (other NT writers) there is a spiritual world (dimension) behind/alongside the one we experience.

- **Eph 6:12**

There seems to be 2 sides/kingdoms in this dimension... God's side w/ angels and Satan's side w/ demons.

These demons are somehow fallen angels (debate on how that happened/where they came from etc.)

They are different from mental illness or disease... we'll see later Mark makes a clear distinction between Jesus casting out demons and healing people.

- They are not ghosts of dead people... but can represent themselves as such
- They can even disguise themselves as helpful spiritual forces/beings... even Satan **(2 Cor 11:14)**
 - Why seances, mediums, fortune tellers, etc. traditionally been discouraged for JF's
 - Asking unknown spiritual forces instead of relying on HS.
- Are active personalities that can inhabit and control and even speak through a human host and yet are different and distinct from that host... and often speak w/ a different voice than the human

"So everyone who seems unstable is therefore not a JF and could be possessed."

- NO!!! Mental illness is a very real medical condition

But according to the biblical writings, spiritual oppression is also real.

So what do we do? ... explore all options. Start w/ medical... then move on to spiritual or vice-versa.

- Dad's Migraine Story: Migraines for years... sitting in living room... finally said if this is spiritual...
- Everytime came back would pray and it would leave... finally never came back.

Satan is not the Yang to God's Yin. He is not an equal opposing spiritual forces.

- Not Jesus' brother
- There is no real competition **(1 John 4:4)**
 - Why that arm wrestling pic is dumb
- Hell is not the kingdom of Satan where he gets to torture prisoners... it is his prison... **Matt 25:41**

(want to watch another message on hell? Look here: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Lx9KNZy94jA&t=186s>)

So on the spectrum of 'not real' to 'scared to death'... What is a good approach to Satan/demons?

- WASPS
- They are nothing to live in fear of but nothing to mess w/ either.
- Be alert but don't cower in fear and don't be ridiculous looking for them everywhere.

Though they are spiritual beings they are not all powerful, all knowing, nor everywhere at once.

- Can JF be possessed? No. If Holy Spirit, the personal presence of God, is living in you there's no room for a demon to move in...
- Can influence... but can't win if claim identity and position in Jesus

Jesus is infinitely stronger than any other spiritual force...Proof? Watch this...

V. 23-26 Man cries out... (from people w/ experience... yelling is pretty common)

Demon knows what the people don't... Jesus' true identity... the authority Jesus has, that Jesus can destroy them.

Jesus and his disciples aren't the only exorcists mentioned in literature of the ancient Mediterranean world.

- A smattering of stories of other people trying to do same thing... a few stories about them but don't really talk about them being successful.
 - Talk about their rituals and objects, and magical/power words

But according to ancient literature, Jesus was different.

- Jesus of Nazareth is the only historical figure recorded in ancient writings who has many recorded exorcisms w/ detailed accounts.

In those accounts, He didn't use any chants, rituals, holy water, talismans, incantations... He simply told the demon what to do, and it had to obey!

He "reprimands"... better translation is REBUKE.

- Be Quiet = SHUT UP!
- Come out- Greek sense- RIGHT NOW...
- "He ORDERED." Look at that authority!

Spirit screamed and threw the man into a convulsion: Like when tell kid to do something and they know they don't have a choice and they have to throw their tantrum before they obey.

Imagine being there... **v. 27-28.**

Gripped by amazement, No kidding!

Then they start having an intense discussion about who Jesus really is...

This is not some ordinary teacher or magician pretending to have secret spiritual abilities... this is something different/new... this is real authority.

And we see one of the main questions of Mark's account... **WHO IS THIS?**

Immediately, Mark gives us another clue...

v. 29-31 Jesus goes from doing something amazing at the largest gathering in town... and then in a quiet, private home he does something just as amazing.

He didn't wait for the news crew, didn't wait until she was dead, didn't wait for more people to find out she was sick.

He simply and kindly lifts up this sick woman, and heals her.

Jesus doesn't just care about the crowds... he personally cares for each individual.

- "Oh sure he cares about the big things but what about my little problem?"
- What is big and little to someone like Jesus?

Jesus' authority is enough for the world's biggest issues and our smallest problems.

Again... another eye-witness detail... Simon's mom gets up and starts making them dinner... "Oh, you look like you haven't eaten... eat! eat!"

Since most of the town saw what happened at the synagogue... Jesus has become a local celebrity so once the Sabbath is over and people are able to move around again...

V. 32-34 See the differentiation between casting out demons and healing the sick? They knew the difference.

And b/c the demons knew who Jesus was he didn't let them speak... weird, right?

- Throughout accounts, Jesus is always telling people to keep his healings secret... why?

Mark never really says. One idea is Jesus wasn't looking for fans... he was looking for people to follow him into the new kingdom.

- So he healed b/c he cared about their problems and wanted to show them the love of the new kingdom... not to impress them in order to get a larger crowd.

Jesus doesn't use his authority to impress but to love.

And who is he healing?

- Those who passed the bible verse tests? Confessed their sins? And then promised to be good?

He's healing everyone. They came to Jesus and he healed them.

Jesus has the authority to accept and heal whomever he wants... something that will be questioned as the story continues.

Now according to Mark this all happened on the same day! Big day! Must be tuckered out. What does Jesus do?

V. 35 Got some rest and then went out for some silence/solitude/prayer.

To connect w/ God the Father. Be refreshed and reminded of his value to the Father. To make sure his priorities are inline w/ those of the Father.

And silence/solitude/prayer does the same for us. It allows those outside noises to fade so we can hear Jesus more clearly.

- Our lives are so busy/stressful
- Our attention is so scattered... like jar of water/sand shaken up... we need a way to settle it, in the right order...

So we take the time to focus on the true priorities of our King and his Kingdom. Just like Jesus did.

Needed to make sure priorities were straight b/c people had their own idea of what Jesus' priorities should be...

V. 36-39 Disciples excited... "This is amazing... you're bringing the kingdom and now we have some momentum... let's keep this going."

Jesus could have set up shop, made his own synagogue and had people from all over just come to him for healing, and 'come listen to Rabbi Jesus' 9:00 am and 3:00pm daily teachings'...

That would make sense. But the KoG rarely looks what we would expect. What they all expected.

Jesus' vision is much broader than theirs.

He didn't come to get fans, he came to change lives... he came to seek and save the lost... To go out to others so they can know they are seen, known, and loved by the Heavenly Father.

Jesus' priorities are people, not power.

YOU: And that's where our story intersects... we are Jesus' priority... The worries/fears/what if's we have, ARE Jesus' priority!

He either wants to heal us or help us put them into their proper perspective.

When Jesus appeared to his disciples after rising from the dead he told them... **Matthew 28:18**

And they believed him b/c... he had just risen from the dead!

Jesus has ALL authority... he has authority over every dimension.

He has authority over our biggest problems and our smallest. He proved it in his life, his death, and his resurrection.

He has promised to always be w/ us by giving us the personal presence of God to live in us and through us the HS.

- The people of Capernaum wanted Jesus to stay, to always be w/ them... in his limited humanity he couldn't be everywhere at once... now he can.
- No matter where, what, how difficult... if follow him... can be confident he is w/ us...

If Jesus is who he said he is and can do what he said he can do... What fear? What need to be anxious about?

Where could we have confidence and peace?

Invitation:

Make Jesus the authority of your story... pledge allegiance... not just believe (James- "even the demons believe and shudder")... but trust and follow.

Memorize Matt 28:18... When you start to worry... say it... then

Pray: Jesus help me trust that this is under your authority. Show me what you can do.

WE: A lot about the story of Jesus can be difficult to believe... sometimes the hardest is to believe that he is actually w/ us and can truly do something about our lives...

Sometimes the hardest thing to trust about the story of Jesus is that we can actually trust Jesus.

But as we continue exploring this story we will see he has proven over and over that he is trustworthy. As we walk w/ him daily in our stories we will see that we can trust him.

We will discover for ourselves... [Jesus' authority proves we can trust him w/ our story](#)

[Next up: mark 1:40-2:17](#)