

BE SILENT AND COME OUT – Jerome Evavold – January 31, 2021

Mark 1:21-28

The Word from Jesus for us today is this: “Be Silent And Come Out”. We don’t talk about demon possession today, but there are things we might call demons that bother and may seem to control us.

It may be the feelings of despair as we deal with the coronavirus that has changed our lives over the last 10 months. Still today, we are living different lives than we are used to both as ourselves and as our church.

And we hope and pray for the demon to be driven away. And our hope is that it is beginning to happen. God is working through our scientific and medical community to cast out this demon.

In our lesson today, Jesus was in Capernaum teaching in the synagogue. Those who heard him were amazed at his teaching. A man with an unclean spirit came to him asking if he had come to destroy them.

And Jesus recognizing that he had an unclean spirit said “be silent and come out of him” and the unclean spirit came out of him.

Those who saw what happened were amazed and at once his fame began to spread throughout the surrounding region of Galilee.

Today’s Gospel Lesson is an example of what is promised throughout the Bible. Some time ago, I talked about the words of the prophet Isaiah.

In Isaiah 55, we read, “For as the rain and the snow come down from heaven, and do not return there until they have watered the earth, making it bring forth and sprout, giving seed to the sower and bread to the eater, so shall my word be that goes out from my mouth; It shall not return to me empty, but it shall accomplish that which I purpose, and succeed in the thing for which I sent it.”

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And now we recently celebrated Christmas when that word became flesh and dwelt among us. That word which is lived out in Jesus speaks and it is so. He even commands demons and they go away.

He forgives sin and it is forgiven. He speaks a word of healing and it is done.

We are now in the church season of Epiphany when we think of how God sends the light into the world. It's like walking in the dark in the early morning and you see the sunrise.

The sun comes up and there is nothing you can do to make that happen or to stop it from happening.

That's how God's grace works. We do not control it.

Like Paul wrote to the Colossians, "May you be made strong with all the strength that comes from his glorious power, and may you be prepared to endure everything with patience, while joyfully giving thanks to the Father, who has enabled you to share in the inheritance of the saints in light. He has rescued us from the power of darkness and transferred us into the kingdom of his beloved Son, in whom we have redemption, the forgiveness of sins."

God's grace is thought of as an inheritance. It is nothing we do to deserve it. Just as the person with the evil spirit came in criticizing Jesus. That did not stop Jesus from getting rid of that evil spirit.

Jesus has the power to do anything. Even though this man tried to block the healing of Jesus, thinking that he had come to destroy them, it didn't stop Jesus from showing his power to heal.

As one theologian has said, "In a worldly sense, Jesus did not have any power at all. He was not a worldly king with political or military power.

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He was not one of the priests, who had the power in Roman Judea. He was not even a scribe with the authority of Jewish tradition. The only authority he had was the supreme confidence that what he did and said was God's will and God's truth."

Jesus used his authority not to obtain power for himself but to serve humanity. It was all about giving up his life for others.

It seems people often can't see that. As Jesus taught in the synagogue in Capernaum, those who heard him were amazed, but this man who needed healing thought he had come to destroy them.

Why is it that some people seem to see Jesus as the opposite of who he is? Everything he said and did was for the good of God's creation.

Again, God's Word is like rain that comes down to water the earth. The rain accomplishes what it was sent to do. As Isaiah put it, the Word of the Lord never comes back void, but always accomplishes the purposes for which it was sent.

Think of what happens when there is no rain or water for the crops that are planted in the ground. The drought causes the plants to die. They cannot live and grow without the water.

So it is without the word of God. Without the word of God, life is dried up. It does not go on without God's Word.

So in our lesson today, the Word which has become flesh, that is Jesus, is able to speak and deliver a man from an evil spirit.

God continues to work in our world and in all that God has made. We don't always see where God is working, but we trust that it is true. God didn't just create everything and then disappear. But God has promised to live and work in and through us.

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How does God do it? There is a story which illustrates God's work in our lives.

There was a flood and a man went up to the second floor in his house to keep from drowning. A man came with a ladder and said, "Climb down and I'll carry you away from your house. The man said, "No, no, God will look after me".

Next, a man came by in a boat and he said, "Jump in the boat and I'll take you away. The man said, "No, God will look after me."

Finally, the man climbed up to the roof on his house and a helicopter came flying over and offered to rescue the man but again he refused saying, "God will take care of me".

The man drowned and when he went to the Lord, he said, "why didn't you look after me?"

God said, "I sent you a ladder, I sent you a boat, and I sent you a helicopter, and you didn't want any of them."

God works in different ways, through Jesus and through people like us to help one another.

Like the word to the man with the demon, Jesus says "Be silent and come out". And people are amazed when they see how God works in our lives.

