

## **When Heaven Meets Hell**

Mark 1:21-28

(preached at Pine Grove BC 8/17/14 AM Service)

If you have lived in SC for any length of time, it is pretty easy to determine the biggest rivalry in the state...

Which would be the rivalry between Clemson and SC, especially their football teams.

Both sides of this rivalry have passionate fans that are devoted to their teams.

What makes this rivalry heated is that these teams always play each other at the end of the season.

All year, the tension builds toward that last game.

As both teams play games that lead up to that last game, the debate starts.

After both teams play their very first game, the fans will begin to say....

“We are the better team.”

And all that talk will eventually build and have to be settled on the field at the end of the season.

But what if Clemson and South Carolina began their seasons playing one another?

Would that affect the rivalry?

Maybe...maybe not.

But that will probably never happen....

Because the tension that builds throughout the year is what makes that rivalry so special.

I don't think TV, the fans, the players would never support moving the game to the beginning of the year.

It just wouldn't seem right.

In the verses before us today, we are going to examine the greatest rivalry of all.

Its not like a football rivalry in a number of ways.

First, the rivalry that we will look at today takes place at the beginning of the season and not the end.

Second, the rivalry that we will look at today is not even competitive.

The question every year in this state is who will win the big game?

There is no such question in this rivalry.

Third, the rivalry that we will look at today will have an eventual winner.

The truth about the rivalry in this state is that it could go on for hundreds of years...

Yet there never be a clear winner.

Finally, the rivalry that we will look at today is the most important rivalry in the entire world.

The rivalry in this state is really unimportant.

Yes, I have wasted too much time myself concerned with the Clemson-SC rivalry.

I have sinned against folks in the past over this rivalry.

And ultimately, the rivalry in this state is not eternal.

Unfortunately, many people treat this rivalry like it matters in eternity.

And the truth is that it doesn't.

The only eternal part on that field every fall are the souls of the players and coaches.

Everything else is just temporary.

Look, I am not trying to ruin the fun of football season.

I enjoy it. I will watch the games.

But I want to keep it all in perspective.

The most important thing in every person I meet is not their school colors...

But their soul.

Because the battle on the field is nothing when compared to the battle for someone's soul.

So, take your Bibles this morning and turn with me to the gospel of Mark, chapter 1.

If you haven't been here recently, on Sunday mornings, we have begun the gospel of Mark.

And we plan to go through the entire book verse by verse until we get to chapter 16.

The reason we are looking at Mark is to learn more about our precious Savior and Lord, Jesus Christ.

If you are here this morning and don't know this Christ, you may wonder why we are studying Him.

Well, for us Christians in church this morning, He is everything to us.

Because He has made us right with God.

He lived a sinless life that we never can.

He died a gruesome death that we always deserve.

And through repentance and trusting in Him, we  
have been saved.

So we love and adore him.

And we want to know more about Him.

And we are amazed to learn about our dear Savior.

And the best place to do that is in the NT gospels of  
Matthew, Mark, Luke and John...

Where these authors write about the life of Christ.

And the good news for you in you haven't been  
here is that we are just starting Mark.

We began a few weeks ago by looking at John the  
Baptist, who came before Jesus to announce his  
arrival.

John was essentially saying that the world would  
never be the same.

“Messiah is coming and you need to repent  
before He arrives...”

That was the message of John.

Then Jesus arrived and was baptized though he didn't need to be....

And then he was tempted in the wilderness.

Unlike Adam, Jesus did not give in to temptation..

And then we saw that Jesus began his preaching ministry by announcing that God's Kingdom....

Has arrived because the King of that kingdom had arrived.

And just last week, we see the King call his first followers..

4 normal fishermen from Galilee

So, Jesus is getting ready to launch into ministry today.

And we are going to look at 8 verses this morning.

I have separated them into 3 sections.

First, we will look at...

The Thrill of Victory in verses 21-22

Followed by...

The Agony of Defeat in verses 23-26..

And ending with...

The Reaction of the Fans in verses 27-28.

So, let's begin with...

## **I. The Thrill of Victory (vv, 21-22)**

Verse 21...

*<sup>21</sup> They \*went into Capernaum; and immediately on the Sabbath He entered the synagogue and began to teach.*

**They went...**

The “they” here would simply be referring to Jesus and the disciples that he has just called...

Simon, Andrew, James and John

And they head to **Capernaum**.

Now, we saw the Sea of Galilee last week, which is the lowest freshwater lake in the world.

Well, Capernaum was on the northwestern shore of the sea of Galilee.

It was home to the fishing industry of the area, but it was a very busy city....

And Jesus made it the base of his ministry.

**And Mark writes that immediately on the Sabbath, Jesus entered the synagogue to teach....**

Notice a couple things here,

First Jesus gets right to work...

Most likely, Jesus had called these disciples on Friday evening...

And they entered the synagogue on Saturday morning, which was the Sabbath.

Yet, he wastes no time getting to work.

I can't imagine the faces of these fishermen.

We are going in there??

Talk about getting thrown into the fire.

And that's a good reminder to get to work for the Lord on the first day.

There is not to waste.

If you are a new believer, go to work.

That doesn't mean you need to teach a class on the first day, but find a place to serve.

If you are a seasoned believer, continue to work and look for someone that you can take with you that may not be working.

Jesus took 4 ordinary men straight to work, and though they remained silent, I'm sure they learned much.

That is what discipleship is.

Taking someone under your wing and teaching them.

Jesus was the master disciple, and he calls us to do the same.

The force of the Great Commission command is not to go, but rather to make disciples.

And Jesus takes these men and begins discipling them by taking them into the synagogue.

Now, **the synagogue** was simply a gathering of Jews, where they would read the OT out loud.

Usually they read a section from the Law and the Prophets, made some comments and prayed.

And any man was qualified to read and comment.

So for Jesus to stand up and teach was not unusual at all.

And the second observation to make of this opening verse is to see how Jesus began his ministry.

By teaching the OT.

In v 14, he was preaching or proclaiming to call people into the kingdom.

Now, in verse 21, he is teaching as a means to call others into the kingdom.

And ministry should include both preaching and teaching, and make disciples.

Yet, none of that is reserved only for the pastor.

Sure, I need to be doing all those things, but those are all things that you can do as well.

There are opportunities to proclaim the gospel to the lost.

There are people who need to be disciplined by you.

And there are opportunities to teach, and that doesn't mean a Sunday School class.

You can simply take them time to teach others what you have learned in your walk with the Lord.

If you have lost a job, offer help to someone else who may be going through the same trial.

If you've had to deal with the loss of someone close to you, teach others how God helped you get through it.

Making disciples, preaching, and teaching were important priorities for Jesus.

How do we know?

Well, he has done all 3 in the opening chapter of his ministry.

So, they should be priorities for all of us.

So Jesus stands up the synagogue and teaches, and then look at the response...

Verse 21...

*<sup>22</sup> They were amazed at His teaching; for He was teaching them as one having authority, and not as the scribes.*

Talk about the thrill of victory....

Being taught by Jesus is not just thrilling but mind blowing....

That's what "amazed" really means.

It was the strongest word that Mark could have chosen.

It means that they were blown away by Jesus teaching.

And why were they amazed??

Because he taught with such authority...

Well, what does that mean?

To understand what that means, we need to understand how the scribes taught.

Because Mark says that Jesus did not teach like them.

The scribes were men who also taught the Scriptures.

Now, you need to understand something here.

Jesus was teaching the OT in the synagogue.

The NT was not even written at this point in history.

So, the OT was the sole source of authority for Jews in Jesus day.

But in this day, the words of men carried more authority than the words of God

For years, rabbis had made comments on what was written in the OT.

And their comments are what people listened to instead of what God had written.

In fact, when scribes taught the Bible, they usually just read what someone else had said about the Bible.

And sometimes, the rabbis disagreed about what the Scriptures taught.

In that case, the scribe would read both rabbis comments and just increase the confusion.

They taught without any certainty.

And that is what happens when we rely on man's word instead of God's Word.

But Jesus spoke with authority.

He spoke with sureness and conviction.

He didn't speak confusion, but clarity.

He didn't speak "I think so.."

But "I know so."

And people were completely amazed.

But not everyone on that day was amazed.

Look at verse 22....

The Thrill of Victory gives way to.....

## **II. The Agony of Defeat (23-26)**

Verses 23 and 24....

*<sup>23</sup> Just then there was a man in their synagogue with an unclean spirit; and he cried out, <sup>24</sup> saying, "What <sup>[n]</sup>business do we have with each other, Jesus <sup>[o]</sup>of Nazareth? Have You come to destroy us? I know who You are—the Holy One of God!"*

Do you know what happens when the truth of God's word is taught?

It brings comfort and conviction to those belonging Christ

It brings agony and anger to those belonging to Satan.

Jesus in teaching with authority and the demon in this man can't take it.

So he cries out in anger but mainly in terror...

The demon is terrified to see the holiness of God.

And please take note of a couple of things here....

First, unclean spirits go to the synagogue.

And we would be wrong to think that demons don't visit here.

In churches where the truth is compromised or even all together lost, demons find a home.

However, in those situations, they remain hidden.

The only way to draw them out is with the truth.

And that is exactly what Jesus did here.

Second, notice that the unclean spirit or demon has the correct view of Jesus.

Though Satan is the father of lies, one of his demonic associates actually speaks truth here.

Jesus is the Holy One of God.

And what is really amazing here is that the demon is the only one in this scene...

That knows Jesus true identity....other than Jesus himself.

The congregation doesn't know it.

They are amazed, but they don't know why.

Even the disciples don't know it.

Yes, they have decided to follow Jesus, but at this point, they don't know exactly.

It won't be until Peter declares Jesus to be the Christ in chapter 8 that even they get it.

So, here we are in the very beginning of Jesus ministry, and just two people in this synagogue know who Jesus is.

And this is where this eternal rivalry begins.

Listen to Eph. 6:10-12...

*<sup>10</sup> Finally, be strong in the Lord and in the strength of His might. <sup>11</sup> Put on the full armor of God, so that you will be able to stand firm against the schemes of the devil. <sup>12</sup> For our struggle is not against <sup>le</sup>flesh and blood, but against the rulers, against the powers, against the world forces of this darkness, against the spiritual forces of wickedness in the heavenly places.*

There is an invisible struggle in the world around us everyday.

Evil battles good every day.

I mean if you watch nearly any kids movie and even adult ones....

The storyline is always a struggle of good vs. evil.

It has been the story of history going all the way back to the garden.

When the serpent tempted Eve.

And the truth is that our eyes see very little of this battle that takes place all around us every day.

And yet, here is the battle on the pages of Scripture...

And no one is aware of it, except the two opponents.

Heaven is clashing with hell right here in Mark chapter 1.

But why does Mark write about this battle so soon?

Well, the point of Mark's gospel is to show that Jesus is God's Son.

He said that in verse 1.

And if Jesus is indeed God's Son, he must demonstrate his authority over Satan.

So, the rivalry begins here...

But it is over as soon as it began...

Look at verse 25...

*<sup>25</sup> And Jesus rebuked him, saying, "Be quiet, and come out of him!" <sup>26</sup> Throwing him into convulsions, the unclean spirit cried out with a loud voice and came out of him.*

This is unmatched power on display here.

We are going to see this all throughout the book of Mark.

In fact, to call this a rivalry is not exactly fair.

This is a one sided contest.

Look, I could walk around and say that me and Caleb Proveaux have a rivalry on the golf course.

And it may sound good, but the truth is that there would be no rivalry.

If we played, I would lose.

There is no rivalry there.

And the same is true of Jesus and his contest with demons.

The demons don't stand a chance.

Jesus speaks and the demon obeys.

The same word that spoke the world into existence is the same word that cast demons out.

This is not a contest.

Some people think that there is a battle that rages  
between good and evil.

And that sometimes Satan wins and sometimes God  
wins.

That is not what the Bible teaches.

Satan and evil are on a short leash in God's hands.

They can do no more than God allows.

And here God in the flesh tells the demon to leave  
and he departs.

Jesus displays his authority when he teaches and  
when he throws out an unclean spirit.

And the people take notice.

Now that we have seen the Thrill of Victory....

And The Agony of Defeat....

Lets look at....

### **III. The Reaction of the Fans**

Verse 27..

*27 They were all amazed, so that they debated among themselves, saying, "What is this? A new teaching with authority! He commands even the unclean spirits, and they obey Him."*

Though the demon was terrified, the people are amazed.

Two groups have both seen and heard Jesus, but it produces two different reactions.

Why the difference?

Well, the demon knew the truth.

Jesus was the son of God.

The people didn't have a clue.

For instance, my girls and I went to Six Flags in California.

At the time, they have the largest free fall ride in the world.

The Drop of Doom.

This ride takes you 415 feet into the air.

40 stories in the air...

And then drops you straight down.

Well, I had ridden one year ago at Carowinds.

It was the most terrifying ride I had ever ridden.

So we get to Six Flags.

And we see the Drop of Doom.

The girls are saying things like,...

“That’s awesome.”

Pure amazement.

Im saying things like....

“I would never ride that in a million years.”

We are looking at the same ride, and we have two very different reactions.

What’s the difference?

I know the truth of how the ride operates and feels.

And the same thing happens in church.

You can come and sit and listen to teaching about Jesus and be amazed...

You can say “Wow, he fed 5000 people with two fish and five loaves of bread.”

You can say “Wow, he walked on water.”

You can say “Wow, he gave sight to the blind.”

You can say “Wow he rose from the dead”

And you can leave church amazed week after week.

But the real response that you need is the one of fear.

The fear that comes from seeing the truth about Jesus.

The fear that says, “Jesus is God’s Son.”

And “I am a condemned sinner.”

That is a fearful and good reaction to seeing Jesus.

Jesus is amazing for sure.

But He is also completely holy.

And that is terrifying when you see your sin.

Be amazed at Jesus, but even more understand the authority and holiness of Him.

And your need to repent and turn to Him.

The crowd didn't have that response on this day.

Instead, they murmured among themselves...

What is going on here?

Did you hear his teaching?

Did you see his authority over the unclean spirit?

There's chatter and wonder.

People are whispering about Jesus, but they should be worshipping Him.

That's how far we have fallen as humans.

Its easier to run our tongue than bow our knee.

And often times, our mouths open so that our hearts can stay closed.

And what I mean is that, we often stop conviction by talking.

There are times when you fall under conviction of your sin as you hear God's Word preached.

But then you look for ways to be distracted rather than deal with that conviction.

If the Word of God convicts you, take action.

If that means getting alone and dealing with your heart, then do that.

If that means speaking with another believer, do that.

If you that means you need to speak with me, I am available after every service here, come find me.

If that means you need to kill a sin in your life, take the steps necessary to do that.

We live in a world full of distractions.

The TV distracts.

The Internet distracts.

Our phones distract.

Even our friends can distract us.

The people in the synagogue were amazed, but they talked to each other, rather than talking to Jesus.

God was in their synagogue that day, and they missed Him.

And He is here today speaking to your heart through His Word, don't miss Him.

And then finally verse 28....

*<sup>28</sup> Immediately the news about Him spread everywhere into all the surrounding district of Galilee.*

What was the news that was spreading around Galilee that day?

This man doesn't teach like the scribes.

This man can cast out demons with his words.

The news was that Jesus had authority.

Authority that had never been seen before in Galilee.

Authority that had never been seen before in the world.

Authority that has never been seen since his death and resurrection.

And authority that will one day return and judge the world.

This news has also come to your ears today.

And you will either bow and submit to this authority.....

Or you will remain stiff necked and reject this authority.

But the news remains the same....

Jesus has authority like no other

## **Conclusion**

Here are a few truths to take with us this morning...

### **First, Jesus saw the importance of teaching.**

He is just beginning ministry and he goes into the synagogue to teach.

Don't miss that.

Preaching and teaching were high priorities in his ministry.

And we live in a day where these two activities are becoming less important in ministries.

About 5 years ago, I went to a very popular Baptist church in Tennessee.

The building was nice.

The parking lot was huge.

The technology was amazing.

The music was great.

And then the preacher got up and preached for just 22 minutes.

Now look, time is not important when it comes to preaching.

But it does say something about that church's priorities.

That is one thing about this church that really drew me here.

The search committee or deacons never said to me..

You only have this many minutes to preach.

And that is rare in this day.

So thank you for being a church like that.

I never want to abuse that great privilege.

Teaching was a priority for our Lord.

And it should be a priority in His church.

**Second, this passage teaches that Jesus is both amazing and terrifying.**

The demons were terrified because they knew who He was.

The people were amazed because they didn't know who he was.

Jesus is amazing.

I love seeing him in the book of Mark.

HE constantly amazes me with his power,  
love and compassion.

But the first time I understood who HE was,  
I was terrified by his holiness.

That why I made peace with him through  
repentance and belief in what HE did.

So, don't just leave stunned and amazed  
today.

Leave as someone who submitted to his  
authority.