Mark 1:27 Everyone was so amazed that they began to discuss this with each other. They said, “What is this? A new teaching with authority!

We’ve talked of this before but it is well worth repeating. The reason for all the demon possessions and high activity of evil forces during the days of Jesus is because there was an all-out war going on. The Son of God was walking the earth and Satan had pulled out all the stops in order to try and destroy Jesus and the work he came to do. When you study the Scripture, the highest level of such “spiritual warfare” was during the life of Jesus and somewhat into the lives of the Apostles. After that, Satan went back to his normal method of attacking souls: secretly.

Think about it. I am not as smart as Satan but if I were to be the deadliest of enemies to the souls of the world I would not do it openly! Because every time I do something openly it proves my existence and proves the need to oppose my evil. But if I operate secretly, I can fool people into believing I am a figment of imagination, a remnant of superstitious days gone by, and the silly and backward way of all those “Christians.” And please note that most world religions don’t teach or preach the existence of evil as a force but rather only teach a laziness of people to strive for and achieve the highest good. That’s the biggest fault of man, according to world religions, his laziness for good, not the soul sick reality of being inclined to evil and lost to the wonder of God.

Is there spiritual warfare going on? Yes, Scripture tells us so. But the demons and evil angels are limited, bound, and defeated by the power and wonder of Jesus. Our problem is that we don’t stick to Jesus. For instance, in James 4:7 we are told, **“Submit yourselves to God. Resist the Devil, and he will flee from you.”** Several times we are told to resist the Devil, to not give him an opportunity to enter our lives. We are given the very armor of God which we are told will give us strength to stand against the Devil’s schemes. My favorite is 1 Peter 5:8: **“Your adversary, the Devil, prowls around like a roaring lion, looking for someone to devour. Resist him by being firm in the faith.”** As I tell people, if you know anything about the cat world you would know that in nature a cat, no matter how big or small, does not roar when on the prowl, yet God makes Satan roar so that we can hear him, see him coming and stay away from his claws and talons. But we aren’t paying attention!

So the Devil and his minions are out there, he just has little to no power over you because of Jesus. The best the Devil can do from his bound position is lure you with temptations and talk you into getting within reach of his grasp. Again a favorite passage here is 2 Cor. 11:13-15: **“In fact, such men are false apostles, deceitful workers, masquerading as apostles of Christ. And no wonder, for Satan himself masquerades as an angel of light. So it is not great surprise if his ministers also masquerade as ministers of righteousness.”**
There is how Satan is going to work. He is going to lure you into thinking his way is good and beneficial, upright and honest. But it will be destructive. We are told we can resist, we can cause him to flee and not give him opportunity to destroy. All of this because of the power of Jesus, the victory and Word of Jesus.

If there is one thing that is clear in our text for today it is the power of Jesus. Jesus hasn’t even given his life on the cross yet or risen from the dead to ascend to the right hand of God and still Jesus commands evil spirits and they flee. His Word is effective. His Word gets the job done. We have that word, so why is there a problem? Again, perhaps because we are just not paying attention and staying firm in the faith. All too often we give the Devil that opportunity in our lives he should not be allowed to have. In Jesus, Satan’s power is broken! The Word of Jesus wins! That is what really caught my eye in this text for today. That little line about the Word that Jesus was sharing. That’s what is important here. Our theme: **A NEW TEACHING!**

Here is Jesus in the city of Capernaum. As was his custom on the Sabbath Day, Jesus went into the synagogue and began to teach the wonder of God. And please note what is immediately recorded as the reaction of the people, **“They were amazed at his teaching, because he was teaching them as one who has authority and not as the experts in the law.”** Please take a moment to contemplate and savor that line.

So what would it take to “amaze or astound” you when it came to teaching? I can tell you what it is for me. I am most impressed when I sense honesty, sureness, straight truth and a personal stake for the speaker. I remember one such talk that struck me. I was watching a “TED Talk” and it was a woman speaking of her life. Harvard educated, big corporate executive, supposedly a woman in control and yet she had married an abusive husband who beat her and threatened her life numerous times. She was there to tell you how she ended up that way and how she, big exec, big education didn’t have the brains to escape from her spousal tormentor. She was honest, truthful and there was no doubt it was personal! She was telling her story to hopefully save others from the same horror.

I would imagine much the same is true for Jesus when he spoke. He spoke clearly and precisely about sin and its devastation. He spoke surely about the rescue and hope that mankind had in the Savior God had provided. And yes, Jesus had a personal stake…He is the one who would die for mankind’s sins and put an end to the threat and horror of hell. And please note that it says Jesus taught with “authority.”

Jesus impressed because he spoke with authority. And why not? He is God’s Son. He speaks the words and truth of the Father. There is no confusion in the mind of God, no doubts as to true and false, good and right. There is no lack of understanding for the condition of mankind or for the foundations and reality of God. Yes, I can clearly see the confidence and authority of Jesus that the people perceive.

Now into this moment of teaching there is this issue of the man with the unclean spirit. Again, it happens because there is all-out war between God and Satan and Satan’s desire is to trap and destroy Jesus somehow and in some way. Did you notice the unclean spirit’s words? There is fear of Jesus there. The demon wants Jesus to ignore him, to go about his business and stop teaching his authoritative word. This demon is clearly and surely aware of exactly who Jesus is: **“I know who you are—the Holy One of God!”** That confession of this unclean spirit reminds me of what is said in James 2:19: **“You believe that God is one. Good for you! Even the demons believe that—and shudder!”** The demons know the truth and power of God and they are absolutely afraid of God in every way. That doesn’t mean they won’t attack, even a cornered squirrel will attack and trust me, at this point, every demon realizes that their greatest enemy is Jesus. Because yes, Jesus has come to destroy them, eternally in the depths of hell.

Jesus simply commands this demon. Two commands of great power. First, **“Be quiet!”** No one wants to hear the lies that will come from your mouth for you are in partnership with Satan the very father of lies and deception. Oh, so far the demon has spoken truth, but that would not last, it is not in their nature. Jesus forbids further discussion. Second, Jesus commands: **“Come out of him!”** The unclean spirit obeys. Oh, it puts on a show, the convulsions and the loud crying, to try and show it has some sort of ability to resist, but it is just a show. The demon leaves. It has no choice but to obey the voice and word of Jesus. There is the point we need to focus on, the voice and word of Jesus. All too often, sermons focus on the possession or on how to deal with this or on what ceremony to use to get rid of it. All you need is the voice and word of Jesus.

That’s why I highlighted the text I did. What did the people say? **“What is this? A new teaching with authority!”** Please contemplate and savor those words and what they mean.

Once again it is the teaching of Jesus that is spoken of. Solid teaching, truthful teaching, authoritative teaching, teaching that is without any doubt the Word of God. This teaching has power. This Word has authority so that even the unclean spirits obey! Dear people, if unclean spirits obey the teaching of Jesus then how much more you and I should hear and obey the teaching of Jesus.

But don’t miss that all important word found here in this verse. Not just any teaching, not the old teaching of work righteousness: what you must or must not do. Not the tilted and worldly idea that you can do it, you can be right, good and holy if only you would just put your mind to it. I have to tell you, every time I hear in some movie or TV show the line: “If you just follow your heart it will all be alright,” I just want to get sick. I say that because right now, if you just look at what is going on in the world, that is exactly what is happening, people following their wicked hearts and the impact is actually pretty devastating all the way around. We foolish humans declare things right and good, not because they are but rather because we feel they are! And if you disagree, why you are just some sort of fool and lost soul, why I bet you are even a Christian!

The important word here is **“new.”** Jesus brings a new teaching. A teaching contrary to what the religious leaders of the world promote and I include the religious leadership of the Jews here. A teaching that tells you that religion and faith is not about what you can do for God but rather what God is doing for you. God has sent his Son. God’s Son has and is going to live the perfect life, keeping God’s Law flawlessly, that He might be the atoning sacrifice for our sins. Because of what this “Lamb of God” is going to do, God is going to forgive, to overlook and cast aside the wages your sin deserves. God is going to grant you eternal life because God is going to clothe you with the robe of his Son’s righteousness and salvation. God is going to save you, to heal you, to bless you, yes, to forgive you all because of the Savior Jesus he has sent.

This teaching is called “the gospel.” It is the message of God’s love found in Jesus. The Gospel is about faith and trust in God’s Son Jesus. Faith and trust. Do understand, to have faith in Jesus is to be clothed with his mindset, his attitude, his righteousness. So if you are pursuing sin, if you think sin your right and privilege, I don’t think you have faith. If you are ignoring the truth of sin and its devastation to your soul, I can say, “You don’t have faith.” A case in point is 1 John 1:7-9, **“But if we walk in the light, just as he is in the light, we have fellowship with one another, and the blood of Jesus Christ, his Son, cleanses us from all sin. 8If we say we have no sin, we deceive ourselves, and the truth is not in us. 9If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness. 10If we say we have not sinned, we make him out to be a liar, and his Word is not in us.”** I tell you these things simply because to many think Jesus a license to sin and do evil. Faith, true faith in the Gospel is to hear and believe Jesus.

All of this is a part of this new teaching that Jesus brought. No longer saved by our works, but saved by God’s grace and love as found and demonstrated in his Son Jesus. His Son who gave his life for you. His Son who has been raised from the dead for you. His Son who has now ascended into heaven and all authority in heaven and on earth is placed in his hands. His Son who loves us so much that He is our sure Savior and salvation. This is the new teaching. The gospel of God. The proclamation that God has saved us in Jesus and that God has impacted our lives for His good in Jesus.

It is this new teaching that truly is the power of God. Please, don’t get wrapped up in what the Devil might be doing or the way the world is going, but rather always focus on Jesus and what He is doing. He is teaching. Teaching with authority. Teaching his Word. Teaching the Gospel. Hear and believe Jesus. Amen.