

I.N.I.

Fourth Sunday after Epiphany
January 29, 2017
Mark 1:21-28

In Christ Jesus, whose Gospel is the power of God unto salvation, Dear Fellow Redeemed,

This past week while Ruth and I were walking, we saw a Christmas tree still lit up in a neighbor's window. Can you believe it is over a month since Christmas? In some ways it seems so much longer ago than that. All of those special Advent services, Christmas Eve and Day services are over. We are back in the Sunday only routine. May this routine keep in us the ongoing blessings and joy of hearing the precious Word of God. That Word alone brings life, a life which never ends.

As an adult Jesus' routine was to spend His Sabbaths in the synagogue. In our text this morning we see that something wonderful happened this particular Sabbath Day in Capernaum. These people in that synagogue had heard the word of God before, probably all of their lives, but on this particular day they were confronted with the Word in person—in the person of Jesus, the Christ. They were amazed at the authority of His words and His work.

What a refreshing thing it was for the people that day in the synagogue in Capernaum to hear Jesus get up and speak the Word. We are not told what Jesus' specific message was on that Sabbath Day, but Mark does tell us about the impression His preaching made on the worshipers. They were amazed, for Jesus did not teach as the teachers of the law did. Jesus quoted no legal experts or past rabbis, no, Jesus proclaimed the Good News on His own authority. This was also one of the lessons the disciples had to learn, that in Jesus they were face to face with the final authority. His is the final Word. He is the One who in Word and deed reveals to mankind the undeserved love of God for sinners.

Another amazing thing happened in that service. A man who was demon possessed suddenly cried out, **LET US ALONE! WHAT HAVE WE TO DO WITH YOU, JESUS OF NAZARETH? DID YOU COME TO DESTROY US? I KNOW WHO YOU ARE--THE HOLY ONE OF GOD!**

One thing all the demons had in common was that they all recognized Jesus for who He was. Satan realized that Jesus had come to take away his death-hold upon mankind. His position as "prince of this world" was under attack. Jesus had already defeated him at His temptation in the wilderness. It is most interesting to note this demon's words were wiser than many modern theologians of our day who do not know the real reason for Jesus' coming or who He really is and who deny the very existence of Satan. Satan knew his days were numbered and it filled him with fear and trembling, with hatred and spite.

Even though what the evil spirit said was true, (Jesus had come to destroy Satan, He was the Holy One of God), Jesus would not accept this demon's words as a testimony to Him. Satan was not a proper witness for Jesus. People who heard what this demon possessed man said could easily conclude, "These are the words of the devil, the father of lies. How can we believe and trust them?" Also Jesus was not ready for Himself to be openly proclaimed as the Messiah. Most people would not understand the spiritual nature of that revelation as we see a short time later in the lesson of the feeding of the five thousand the people looked upon Jesus as a physical king, an earthly Messiah. So Jesus commands the evil spirit, **BE QUIET!**

Jesus didn't need nor want his testimony. Jesus' words and deeds would speak for themselves and soon Jesus would call His own chosen apostles to speak for Him, and then also call all of His followers to be His spokesmen, His witnesses to the world.

The evil spirit has no power over Jesus and has to obey and is silent. In compassion then for the man who was possessed Jesus also said, **COME OUT FROM HIM!** The unclean spirit convulses the man and then comes out. Here we see the power of Satan and his evil angels over us human beings, but it also shows the ultimate power of Christ and His Word over Satan and his evil angels.

Yes, something wonderful happened that day in Capernaum. The people were amazed at what they heard Jesus speak, calling it "**a new teaching, with authority.**" They marveled at His authority and at His power over even the devil. His Words and His work showed Him to be the Messiah and

news of the events of this day spread throughout all the region around Galilee.

But you know what, something special and wonderful happens also every Sunday in God's house here at Peace Thru Christ. We have entitled as our theme this morning;

IN CHURCH WITH JESUS, OUR EPIPHANY LORD.

Every Sunday when we come to church we are with Jesus. He speaks to us in and through His Word. He reveals to us His glory, majesty, power and might. He manifests Himself to us as the Son of God, the Savior of all of mankind. Every Sunday we come to church

1) TO RECEIVE HIS MIRACLE

What miracle is that? Healing, raising the dead? No, the miracle of Jesus' power over Satan. Every Sunday we come to God's house and we hear how impotent we are, how we can do nothing to save ourselves. We need to hear this, because even though we see it daily as we fall to Satan's attacks and temptations and fail to live the kind of perfectly obedient life God demands, our corrupted heart and sinful mind lies to us, deceives us. It tells us that we are pretty good, better than most and somehow deserving of something. Or we deceive ourselves into thinking that we don't need Christ and His Word everyday because we have enough strength on our own to face the problems and trials of daily life and the continual onslaughts of Satan and we only need Jesus for the bad things, the real big problems of life. We must feel that way, or else WE ALL would diligently be in God's Word daily and in His house to hear His Word regularly and consistently. But we aren't!

We need to come to church to hear God's Word say to us that we too are demon possessed, not like the man in our text, but in our hearts. We too fall for Satan's lies and our sinful flesh desires, longs for, and even enjoys the life of bondage under his control. We need to hear that **HE WHO SINS IS OF THE DEVIL, FOR THE DEVIL HAS SINNED FROM THE BEGINNING.**

But even more so we need to hear these words: **FOR THIS PURPOSE THE SON OF GOD WAS MANIFESTED, THAT HE MIGHT DESTROY THE WORKS OF THE DEVIL.** (I John 3:8) and: **INASMUCH THEN AS THE CHILDREN HAVE PARTAKEN OF FLESH AND BLOOD, HE HIMSELF LIKEWISE SHARED IN THE SAME, THAT THROUGH DEATH HE MIGHT DESTROY HIM WHO HAD THE POWER OF DEATH, THAT IS, THE DEVIL, AND RELEASE THOSE WHO THROUGH FEAR OF DEATH WERE ALL THEIR LIFETIME SUBJECT TO BONDAGE.** (Heb. 2:14-15)

In John 12 Jesus said **NOW IS THE JUDGMENT OF THIS WORLD; NOW THE RULER OF THIS WORLD WILL BE CAST OUT.**

Jesus has fulfilled Genesis 3:15 and **CRUSHED** Satan's head. All of His and therefore all of our enemies have been put **UNDER HIS FEET**. He has entered Satan's house, bound him **AND PLUNDERED HIS GOODS. HE HAS DELIVERED US FROM THE POWER OF DARKNESS,... HE DISARMED PRINCIPALITIES AND POWERS, HE MADE A PUBLIC SPECTACLE OF THEM, TRIUMPHING OVER THEM.**

Jesus' defeat of Satan by casting the evil spirit out of this man was a foreshadowing of what He would accomplish for us on the cross and in the empty tomb. After He rose from the dead, Jesus descended into hell to **PROCLAIM HIS VICTORY** over Satan and all his evil cohorts. Every Sunday we come to receive this Good News of His miracle for us. He has set us free from sin, death, Satan and hell.

But we also come to church on Sunday

2) TO SHARE HIS WORD

We need to share His Word with each other to strengthen our faith-life. There are some theologians who deny the possibility of demon-possession, back then and now. It is true that today we don't see many cases. But we know that Satan and his evil angels are wise enough to adapt themselves to the times. Today we find their power displayed in different ways. We see it displayed in those who deny the truths of God's Word. False teachings in Christian churches is rampant; cults are flourishing among those who have lost their way; pagan eastern religions are booming throughout the world; the spread and interest in Islam has increased dramatically; evolution and scientific theories that reject Scripture is taught daily in our public schools and is accepted by most of the elite and sophisticated of the world. Alcohol & drug abuse, legalized gambling, pornography and sexual promiscuity are also Satan's tools to destroy lives and bankrupt faith. Accepting immorality and disobedience as the norm by society and by our political leaders is another way

Satan can get the young in his clutches. The devil uses all of these ways and thousands more to possess the souls of his own. He uses them on me and on you as well. He is that **ROARING LION WALKING ABOUT SEEKING WHOM HE MAY DEVOUR.**

Scripture says, **RESIST HIM!** How? **BY STANDING FIRM IN THE FAITH.** We need to turn to Jesus and His Word for strength. We need to share His Word with each other in our services, in our Bible Classes, in our Sunday School, in our Confirmation Classes, in our Christian Day Schools, in our Hannah's Helping Hands meetings, in our fellowship gatherings.

We also are called upon to share His Word with others outside of the church. Let's read again the last verse of our text: **AND IMMEDIATELY HIS FAME SPREAD THROUGHOUT ALL THE REGION AROUND GALILEE.** How did that happen? The people who were there in the synagogue that day were moved to tell others who were not there. I'm sure that if this morning Jesus were present in person and He actually raised a dead person, or cast out a demon, or healed a paralyzed man right before our eyes, we would hardly be able to wait for the service to be over so we could run out and tell others about it, text it to someone, call the T.V. stations and the newspapers.

Well, He is present in His Word. He has done those things and more. He suffered and died for us. He gave His life as full payment for our sins. He rose again from the dead and lives and reigns forever. He continues to rule over Satan with His powerful Word and strengthens us in our faith-walk with that same Good News. Why don't we after service this morning run out and tell others about what we have seen and heard so that we could hear God say, **AND IMMEDIATELY HIS FAME SPREAD THROUGHOUT ALL THE REGION AROUND (Madison).**

No matter where God has placed you, He will give you many opportunities to share that Good News with others.

Now that we have seen Jesus with eyes of faith, seen His suffering and death for us, witnessed His victorious resurrection, and received His miracle of forgiveness and deliverance from Satan this morning through His Word, let us go out as faithful servants and share that same Good News with all whom we meet.

Amen.