

Lighthouse Baptist Church

Pastor/Teacher: Jerry W. Arnold

Mark 1:21-24

An Extremely Dangerous Place

Aside from my normal Bible reading I have had a deep interest in the ministry of our Lord Jesus Christ. For some time now I have been reading (when time permits) about the life of Jesus in the gospels, particularly the synoptic gospels. And what I learned anew has greatly enriched my life.

As you read through Matthew, Mark, and Luke, you see that Jesus spends a great deal of time in the synagogues. The synagogues however, were not always a safe haven for our Lord. In fact, they were a most dangerous place – even though they were the center of religious life. As long as empty (or dead) religion is allowed to sleep the sleep of death, all is well. But when the straightforward teaching of the Word of God confronts empty religion, then the real battle begins.

The truth of Scripture challenges empty religion, and when this happens a collision is sure to follow. When any religious system is devoid of gospel truth hell is aggravated when truth enters its door. When the light of the Gospel shines into the kingdom of darkness Satan is provoked; and Satan has no greater stronghold than the house of worship where the truth is suppressed.

It was in such a dangerous place that Jesus found Himself in Capernaum. It was in this synagogue at Capernaum where Satan had gained a foothold. The people in the synagogue had religion, they had ritual, and they had rules; but what they did not have was a relationship with the living God.

After entering Capernaum, Jesus, “straightway on the sabbath day ... entered into the synagogue and taught.” The people “were astonished at his doctrine.” This was no ordinary teacher; there was undeniable power in His words. In fact, “he taught them as one that had authority.” He was unlike anyone they had ever heard; and He was “not” as their religious leaders, “the scribes.”

Now, “there was in their synagogue a man with an unclean spirit” – that is, he was demon possessed. Only God knows how long this man had been associated with this synagogue and no one knew he was demon possessed. But when Jesus walked in and taught the truth of Scripture the demon was revealed.

The demon recognized Jesus immediately, and cried out “Let us alone; what have we to do with thee, thou Jesus of Nazareth? art thou come to destroy us? I know thee who thou art, the Holy One of God.”

Notice the change of pronouns from plural to singular. At first the demon speaks as joined to the man; then he speaks for himself alone.

I ask you two sincere question: Are you hiding behind the facade of religion? Or, is Jesus Christ your Lord and savior?

Jerry W. Arnold  
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