

mark

C O M E F O L L O W M E

The Power of the Kingdom

(Mark 1:21-28)

Bottom Line: Being a citizen of the Kingdom of God grants us access to power over any and every other rival kingdom in this world.

When have you been in a situation where you felt powerless or ill-equipped? Did you do anything to make sure you could handle that situation if it happened again?

Read Mark 1:21-28

Let's review what we've covered already in Mark and that will provide a better context for what we just read. Mark begins by stating that what he is writing is "the Gospel of Jesus Christ, the Son of God." He recounts several Old Testament prophecies and connects them to John the Baptist, which makes sense of Jesus' statement in verse 15 that "the time is fulfilled, and the Kingdom of God is at hand." Mark is trying to show us that Jesus' arrival on the scene is the fulfillment of something planned long ago before the foundation of the world, that what Jesus is doing is intentional and planned, not reactionary. Jesus then, after announcing the arrival of the Kingdom of God, begins to choose disciples to follow Him and learn from Him.

So Jesus has announced the Kingdom of God has come and has called His disciples to come and follow Him. We learned last week that following Jesus meant doing the things He did and living the way He lived. With that understanding, what do you think Jesus' intention was in driving the unclean spirit out of the man in this passage? What was He trying to show His disciples? Why do you think Jesus told the demon to "be silent" when he referred to Jesus as "the Holy One of God?" Why do you think Jesus may have wanted to keep his identity as the Son of God secret?

This demon knew who Jesus was, the Holy One of God. It would be three years before Jesus' disciples proclaimed Him to be the Son of God (Matthew 16:16), and it wouldn't be until His very death that others would start to come to this realization (Mark 15:39). Why would demons have better theology than some people?

Jesus announced the arrival of the Kingdom, called some disciples to follow Him and learn from Him what the Kingdom was, and in this passage we see Jesus demonstrating to the world, but especially to His disciples, the power of the Kingdom. In other words, Jesus is no longer talking the talk of the Kingdom, He's walking the walk; putting on display the very reality and power His preaching ministry consists of. This is incredibly important for us to understand about what Mark is attempting to convey to us: the Kingdom of God and its power is available to us, to regular people, to ordinary men and women of God. Mark recorded seventeen different miracles that Jesus did, but in almost all of them, you find Jesus telling the witnesses or recipients of His miracles to remain silent about what He has done and to tell no one. Jesus didn't want His miracles to be tied to Him and explained away by Him being the Son of God, He wanted to demonstrate that these miracles and this power were signs of the advent of the Kingdom of God, they are proof that what Jesus has invited *us* into is real, living, and powerful.

So let's think for just a moment of our current moment in history. What are some common effects of the fall that you see today? (Sickness, disease, relational strife,

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poverty, etc.). What are some tangible ways that you see these effects being reversed by Christ's work through His Kingdom citizens?

In what ways does the reality of the Kingdom of God give us the ability to combat the rival Kingdoms of the World?

Read Mark 6:1-6 What does our faith have to do with our ability to understand and access this power?

If we follow the trajectory of thought that Mark is outlining for us, then we see that what Jesus is doing in this passage is demonstrating to His disciples (and by extension the world) that His proclamation that the Kingdom of God has arrived is true. He demonstrated it not only in word, saying "the Kingdom of God is at hand", but also in power. Christ silencing and exorcising the demon from the man showed the Kingdom of God's authority over the Kingdom of Darkness in such a decisive way that it couldn't be contested. This is the reality that is presently available to us. The question is do we have the faith to claim hold of it and live in it?

What prevents us from being aware of the Kingdom of God? What can we do about these things to increase our awareness of the reality of God's Kingdom? Is there a step you can take this week to live more in line with the Kingdom of God?

Reflection: Read these aloud, using your discretion about which questions should be pondered and which questions should be discussed.

It's possible (i.e. speculation) that Jesus didn't want to be known as the Son of God at this point in His ministry because it could hinder His disciples' faith that they had just as much access to the Kingdom of God as Jesus did. Jesus would teach His disciples the power that the Kingdom of God brought with it, and He would send them out in pairs of two to exercise this power, all before He revealed to them that He was the Son of God. But for us, we have the greatest demonstration of the Kingdom's dominance over evil and sin and death that anyone could have: the life, death, burial, and resurrection of the Lord Jesus. Jesus being raised from the dead and reigning over all of creation verified that everything He taught us was true. That He has ultimate authority as Lord over the earth and all its inhabitants. It's a lack of faith in Him that will hinder our ability to access His Kingdom. Have you repented of your sin, meaning you've denounced the authority of every rival kingdom this world presents to you, and placed your faith in Christ, meaning you are making a sincere effort to follow Him as Lord of your life? If not, then everything that Jesus offers to us in His Kingdom is unavailable to you. To be in the Kingdom, you have to submit to the King. Will you trust in Jesus and submit to Him as Lord?

Do you lack faith that this kind of power is available to you? Have you "made amends" with the idea that you'll always be given over to a certain sin, to a certain temptation, to a certain attitude or behavior that is contrary to the Kingdom of God? If so, then what you are actually doing is doubting the power of the King to provide for, protect, and care for His Kingdom citizens. What is drawing you away from trust in Christ? Will you renounce it, reaffirm Christ's Lordship over your life, and seek to live in the power of the Kingdom of God?