

**Prayer of the Day:**

Lord God, you know that we are surrounded by many dangers and that we often stumble and fall. Strengthen us in body and mind, and bring us safely through all temptations; through Jesus Christ, your Son, our Lord, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever. Amen.

**Verse of the Day:**

Alleluia. The Spirit of the Lord is on me; he has anointed me to preach good news. Alleluia. (Luke 4:18a cf. NIV)

**Sermon Text:**

When does the devil speak? I know it seems like a weird question and it is an honest question not the set up for a joke this morning. When does the devil speak? Is it not when the truth is most clear and evident in the world around it? Then Satan must act,

must speak to cause confusion, discord, strife. He hates the truth and must oppose it, doing everything he can to hinder the Gospels proclamation in the world. So the words of our lesson aren't so surprising. As Jesus is teaching and we are introduced to a demon possessed man and an important lesson. Today Jesus shows us how to **SILENCE SATAN. CLING TO CHRIST** Himself. **CLING** also **TO CHRIST'S WORD.**

As we follow along in the book of Mark, the earthly ministry, that three-year portion of public proclamation as the disciples follow Jesus around, has begun. In recent weeks, as we have followed along in our lessons and sermons, Jesus has called Peter, Andrew, James and John to follow him. His next act is no huge shocker. He walks into Capernaum and on the Sabbath day goes to church (there is a whole other sermon included in that one phrase) and as is common of all big named rabbis, Jesus is invited to teach in the synagogue. That's where the "usualness" of it all begins to disappear.

Jesus teaches with authority and not like the teachers of the law. Pharisees and Sadducees loved to make up more and more laws to make the 10 impossible commands of God look more possible, imagining they had kept them all and needed more. In so doing, they missed not only the point of the Law but their intense need for the Gospel. Jesus kept to the Word, because He was the Word made flesh, the incarnate Son of God. So He spoke like it, with the authority of the One through whom Sinai's laws were handed to Moses and every promise of the Messiah was proclaimed through the prophets.

Of course, as we said before, this is something that Satan cannot permit. Silent and satisfied when false teaching is prevalent within the church, Satan simply cannot stand it if the God's Word should ever be proclaimed in its truth and purity. <sup>23</sup>*Just then a man in their synagogue who was possessed by an evil spirit cried out,* <sup>24</sup> *"What do you want with us, Jesus of Nazareth? Have you come to destroy us? I know who you are—the Holy One of God!"* The devil and the demons damned with him, know who Jesus is and why He is here. If they do not attempt to stop Him their doom is secured, even if they do try to stop Him who can master the Maker of all things?

**Text: Mark 1:21-28**

<sup>21</sup> They went to Capernaum, and when the Sabbath came, Jesus went into the synagogue and began to teach. <sup>22</sup> The people were amazed at his teaching, because he taught them as one who had authority, not as the teachers of the law. <sup>23</sup> Just then a man in their synagogue who was possessed by an evil spirit cried out, <sup>24</sup> "What do you want with us, Jesus of Nazareth? Have you come to destroy us? I know who you are—the Holy One of God!" <sup>25</sup> "Be quiet!" said Jesus sternly. "Come out of him!" <sup>26</sup> The evil spirit shook the man violently and came out of him with a shriek. <sup>27</sup> The people were all so amazed that they asked each other, "What is this? A new teaching—and with authority! He even gives orders to evil spirits and they obey him." <sup>28</sup> News about him spread quickly over the whole region of Galilee (NIV84).

Jesus makes it evident once more, who He is. To be announced as the Son of God by demons, will not be helpful to the proclamation of the message of the Messiah. Even as He battles these demons, the Pharisees and Saducees, in their vanity, will try to link Jesus to Satan. So He silences the enemy, <sup>25</sup> *“Be quiet!” said Jesus sternly. “Come out of him!”* <sup>26</sup> *The evil spirit shook the man violently and came out of him with a shriek.* So it is that evil in the face of the stern command of the Word has no reply. It can only shriek and rage and must give in. Jesus holds all the power in the battle against, Satan. Even before He travels to the cross, it is evident that Satan holds no power over Him.

The Devil knows this fact, as well as anyone. So he looks for opportunities like those he took with Adam and Eve. He tries to make us believe that Jesus really doesn't have this control over all things. And perhaps even if He does, He wields it to punish and destroy us all. He wants us to feel hopeless, unsavable or perhaps even worse, as if all of this business with church and Jesus, even a God is just pure folly to begin with. Ah, but then there is another truth you and I do well to remember. This One who casts out demons and defeats the fearful foe gives us the strength, His strength to overcome Satan even now. **Yes, dear Christian Satan is Silenced all over again as faith Clings to Christ.**

But how is one supposed to do that? Didn't we just finish saying that Satan is crafty, far smarter than any of us. How are we supposed to outwit the wily foe? Consider the hidden glory of our lesson today, the teaching of Jesus as He stood in that synagogue. I know the exact words aren't given, but Mark does provide a summary of the teaching of Jesus a few verses before this. <sup>14</sup> *After John was put in prison, Jesus went into Galilee, proclaiming the good news of God.* <sup>15</sup> *“The time has come,” he said. “The kingdom of God is near. Repent and believe the good news (Mark 1:14-15)!”* He was proclaiming Law and Gospel, sin and grace, the wretchedness of man and the gift of forgiveness through the Lamb of God who had come to take away the sin of the world. He was announcing the defeat of sin, the victory over Satan, the salvation of all people.

He would provide it once and for all for us. He had defeated Satan's temptations in the desert, throughout His entire life he had remain *The Holy One of God*, perfectly obeying His heavenly Father's will. On the cross, while Satan may have believed in his deluded damnation that he had won, the very blood he had led Pilate and Caiaphas to spill would splash the altar of God as the perfect sacrifice to take away sin, and silence the serpent, Satan. If we should have missed the tearing of the curtain on Good Friday, Sunday's resurrection would announce it triumphantly for the ages as Jesus life, meant life for all, freedom from sin and Satan and the condemnation they desperately desired to drag all of God's people into.

So, should Satan thunder in rage in our day, there is no cause for fear. Though he screams his loudest, he is defeated. Though he shake us with the might of a thousand men, he must let us go. Oh, sure, the world writhing in the wretchedness of sin, will surely bring the consequences of that sin to bear. Our own sinfulness, will cause pain and hurt, but forgiven and set free by the Son of God, our Savior, these too are not permanent but only temporary and God can and will use even these hardships to drive His people to His word were they will find strength once again.

Notice that it is the power of that teaching over which the people finally marvel. The people marveled at the power Jesus put on display, *The people were all so amazed that they asked each other, “What is this? A new teaching—and with authority! He even gives orders to evil spirits and they obey him.”* The casting out of the demon was only proof of the words He had spoken. And once again, the news spreads. How can it naught?

I suppose, it would have been foolish for the demonic to cling to the demons Jesus had just cast out. He was now free. So also it would be foolish to buy into the lies of Satan all over again after he has been forever defeated by our Savior. So this Sunday and into eternity, **SILENCE SATAN.** Clinging to Christ by faith, we follow after One who has real power and holds it out to us. Clinging to His Word, God grants us strength to stand against the assaults of our greatest foes, until we stand with God forever. Amen!