



**A BETTER
WORD**

THE GOSPEL OF MARK

A Study Through the Life of King Jesus | with Pastor Nick Gatzke

The Authoritative King

Mark 1:21–45

THE BIG IDEA

The kingdom is here and the King has complete authority.

SERMON SUMMARY

The world is full of empty promises — attractive packaging with nothing inside the box. Jesus had just made the largest claim imaginable: the kingdom of God is at hand. A claim like that has to be backed up. So the rest of Mark 1 is a display of kingdom dominance in four consecutive scenes. He teaches in the synagogue as one who has authority. He silences and casts out an unclean spirit. He lifts Simon's mother-in-law by the hand, heals a city full of the sick at the door, and cleanses a leper.

In Mark's Gospel the miracles function much like the parables. They prove Jesus' power in the physical realm, but they point to something deeper — that he alone meets our greatest spiritual needs. Notice what he does in between: he rises before dawn to pray, then chooses preaching over the crowds, because that is how the kingdom expands. And notice what he does for the leper. He could have healed with a word. Instead he touched the untouchable, becoming unclean so that they could be made clean.

DIGGING DEEPER

1. The crowd was astonished because Jesus “taught them as one who had authority, and not as the scribes” (v. 22). What was missing from the scribes' teaching? What should you be listening for in preaching that will actually feed your soul?
2. A demon recognized Jesus before most people did (v. 24). What did it understand that the crowd had not yet grasped? Notice that even after the exorcism, the people are still talking about the teaching (v. 27) — why is that so striking?
3. By evening the whole city is gathered at the door (vv. 32–33). Many of them wanted the benefits of the King's authority without ever coming under his authority. Where do you recognize that pattern in your own life?
4. Of everything Jesus could have done the next morning, he rose before dawn to pray, and then said, “Let us go on to the next towns, that I may preach there also, for that is why I came out” (v. 38). What do those two choices reveal about his priorities?
5. Leprosy is a fitting picture of sin: slow in its beginnings, ruinous in its power, isolating in its effect. Jesus was “moved with pity,” stretched out his hand, and touched him (v. 41). What does that touch tell you about how Christ meets you in your sin, and how does it anticipate the cross?

LIVING IT OUT

The man who had spent years walking the streets crying “Unclean, unclean” went running through those same streets shouting that he was clean. That is what King Jesus can do — not gradually, but immediately, for anyone who recognizes the leprosy of sin and reaches out to him.

Heart Check: Are you seeking the benefits of Jesus’ authority while quietly withholding your own life from it? What is one area you have not yet surrendered to the King?

This Week: Follow Jesus’ pattern. Before the demands of the day begin, get up and pray. Choose a time and a place, start with ten minutes, and keep it every day this week.

REFLECTION & PRAYER

“And they were astonished at his teaching, for he taught them as one who had authority, and not as the scribes.”

— **Mark 1:22**

Ask the Lord to help you know and feel the complete authority of the one who loves you — then bend the knee of your will to him and say, come, Lord Jesus, come.

Your Prayer:

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