



1/28/18 Mk. 1:21-28 & Dt. 18: 15-20

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ENTERING THE SCENE:

With Mark's characteristic urgency, we are thrust into the conflict of whose understanding of God is right. Obviously, Jesus' teaching impressed the people as being very different from what they usually got from their other teachers. Immediately the spirit of the status quo recognizes a threat to its dominance and accuses Jesus of trying to destroy it. The people identify the spirit as coming from evil and are amazed at how Jesus had authority over it. It seems like the people had their 'truth detectors' turned on. Now we need to turn ours on as well.

Mk. 1:21-28

21 They went to **Capernaum**, and when the **Sabbath** came, Jesus went into the **synagogue** and began to **teach**. 22 The people were **amazed** at his **teaching**, because he **taught** them as one who had **authority**, not as the **teachers** of the law. 23 Just then a man in their **synagogue** who was **possessed**

by an **evil spirit** cried out, 24 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!**" 25 Be **quiet!**" said Jesus **sternly**. "**Come out** of him!" 26 The **evil spirit** **shook** the man **violently** and **came out** of him with a **shriek**. 27 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." 28 **News** about him spread **quickly** over the **whole region** of Galilee.

DISCUSSION QUESTION: The people could identify the source of the evil spirit that day in the synagogue. How do you identify the source of a 'spirit' today?

PRAYER: Lord, I find it hard to question the source of a teaching when it agrees with what I think or want. Yet, you give me a conscience that starts ringing alarm bells when it senses something isn't quite right about I am experiencing. My mind goes to work on it and finds all kinds of "good" reasons to ignore the bells, but your love keeps me from resting easy with this way of dealing with the question. Help me to cherish those alarm bells and heed them. Amen.

Jesus lets God fill in the page.

Some years ago, a young man who wanted to change his life went into a church and sat down in the sanctuary for awhile. He took out a piece of paper and a pencil and began writing down a long list of things that he promised he would do to change his life - a whole page of things - and he signed his name at the bottom and took it up and placed in on the altar, and sat down again in the sanctuary.

As he was sitting there, however, he began to sense the voice of God speaking softly in his own soul. And the more he listened to it, the more he heard God saying to him, "You've done it all wrong. I want you to go back up there and get the piece of paper and tear it up. And then I'll give you another instruction."

So, the young man got out of his pew and walked up to the altar and did as the Lord told him. And then he went back to sit down in the pew and waited for the Lord to instruct him. It did not happen immediately, but finally the message came through.. The Lord said to him, very gently, "Now take a piece of paper and sign your name to it at the bottom and let me fill in the rest."

Boulware, Barry P.: First United Methodist church, Kansas City, KS, who got it from a colleague Norman Neaves)