

Divine Authority
Mark 3:13-27

mathew:12:22-30

luke 11:14-26

Congregation Psalm 19:7-11

This morning I wanted to read the 2 other accounts of this discourse between Jesus and the scribes so that we can further understand what was going on here. So even though it may feel a bit redundant I wanted to get a bigger picture of what Jesus' response was to them then what was recorded in Mark.

So, Last week we ended at verse 19, reading through Christ's appointing of the 12 Apostles. I want to start out there this morning, starting in verse 13 and we will take a deeper look into these verses. So lets read verse 13-19. What we have seen so far leading up to these verses shows Christ's authority and power over the physical and the spiritual. With the accounts of the healing of the leper, and the paralytic and also the casting out of demons all serve to show that Jesus is the Messiah, the Son of God who has been granted all authority over these realms.

What we see in these verses this morning is another aspect of Christ's authority. We have seen it before in the calling of the disciples, but we see it here now even more specifically in the calling and commission of the 12 apostles. I suppose a good place to start would be to define some terms, such as what truly is the difference between an apostle and disciple. The bible often uses both terms when in reference to the 12 we see here in chapter 3. But there is a distinct difference between the 2 terms. The term Apostle is usually a reference to someone being a messenger, being sent out for a specific purpose. Disciples on the other hand are followers, it is similar to being students, following a teacher. Mark uses this term disciple in this sense in chapter 2, verse 18 when the pharisees ask Jesus why his Disciples, or followers do not fast like the followers of John the Baptist.

So we can see that the use of both of these terms in reference to these 12 men is suiting. They were followers of Jesus, he was their teacher, their mentor but out of all of his disciples and followers he called these 12 to specifically be apostles, to send them out to preach the gospel. While one could argue that is the mission, or purpose as it were to all who believe upon Christ, to share the gospel we see that these 12 were appointed for a special mission at that time being granted the power to heal the sick and cast out demons in the name of God.

In the calling of these men, and the appointing them to be apostles, granting them the power to heal shows Christ's authority, not only over the physical realm, and spiritual realm, but also over individuals. It is personal, when God calls there is no other answer then Here am I Lord. We already saw this with the calling of the 4 fishermen and tax collector. How Christ sought them out, specifically and personally and called them to follow him. And here out of all of those who would be called disciples, he calls 12 specific ones up into the mountain to promote them as it were, to not only be followers and students, but to also be teachers and leaders.

As we touched on last week, we see that Jesus called them up on the mountain. This is significant for throughout the old testament God would call his people to a mountain to give them a revelation and it is no different in the new testament. Mountains are often referenced during times of revelation, or important events in the ministry of Christ. And we see that it says Jesus called to himself those he wanted. His followers did not decide amongst themselves who would be his apostles, they were summoned according to his will.

These disciples did not decide to help Jesus in his ministry in this way, they didn't see a need and step in to fulfill it, they were chosen, they were called to do so. We see here Christ's authority in the lives of these individuals, his will supersedes the will of all others. We can see 2 examples of God's authority over the will of men later in this book of mark. Chapter 5, starting in verse 15, this is the account of the man who was possessed by a large multitude of demons that Jesus cast into the herd of swine. "Then they came to Jesus, and saw the one who had been demon possessed and had the legion, sitting and clothed and in his right mind. And they were afraid.

And those who saw it told them how it happened to him who had been demon possessed, and about the swine. Then they began to plead with Him to depart from their region. And when he got into the boat, he who had been demon possessed begged him that he might be with him. However, Jesus did not permit him, but said to him. "Go home to your friends, and tell them what great things the Lord has done for you, and how he has had compassion on you. "

So we see here someone who emphatically wanted to follow Christ, it was his desire to be counting among those who were in Christ's presence, but Christ had other plans for him and sent him on his way to be a witness to his friends and family in the town he lived in. We see in verse 20, that he obeyed, it says, And he departed and began to proclaim in Decapolis all that Jesus had done for him, and all marveled. The other example we see is in the negative sense. Chapter 10:17. "Now as he was going out on the road, one came running, knelt before him and asked him. Good teacher, what shall I do that I may inherit eternal life? So Jesus said to him, why do you call me good? No one is good but one, that I God. You know the commandments, do not commit adultery, do not murder, do not steal, do not bear false witness, do not defraud, honor your father and your mother. And he answered and said to him, Teacher these things I have kept from my youth. Then Jesus, looking at him, loved him, and said back to him. One thing you lack; go you way, sell whatever you have and give to the poor, and you will have treasure in heaven, and come take up the cross and follow me. But he was sad at this word, and went away sorrowful, for he had great possessions. Then Jesus looked around and said to his disciples, How hard it is for those who have riches to enter the kingdom of God! And the disciples were astonished at his words, but Jesus answered again and said them, Children, how hard it is for those who trust in riches to enter the kingdom of God! It is easier for a camel to go through the eye of a needle than for a rich man to enter the kingdom of God. And they were greatly astonished, saying among themselves, who then can be saved? But Jesus looked at them and said, with men it is impossible, but not with God, for with God all things are possible.

So we see here a man, who was looking to gain eternal life and favor with God from his own strength and power. The way he approaches Christ in his questioning gives us this indication. What shall I do to inherit eternal life? The short answer, is nothing you can do for with men it is impossible, but with God all things are possible. There is a lot to unpack here, and I am not going to go into it today because we will eventually get to it in the future, but I just wanted to read this to show that without Christ's command to follow him, it is impossible to do so.

As James Edwards put it, The society into which Christ calls his followers is not determined by their preferences, but by his summons. Its members have nothing in common except his sovereign call. Apart from which the community could not exist. Notice in verse 13 where it says, and they came to him. This whole account is interesting for it is something entirely different than the typical teacher, student relationship of that time. Rabbi's did not call their disciples, in fact it was the practice that the disciples would determine who they would follow, much like students picking a college today. But what we see here is Jesus calling his own disciples.

Verse 14 says that he appointed the 12 that they might be with him, and that he might send them out to preach. Last week I mentioned how the translation we have where it uses the word appointed is not entirely correct, for the word that was used here is the same word that was used in Genesis in reference to the creation of the world. Christ did not only appoint these 12 to a task, but there a sense here in Mark writing that he created something entirely new. But this week I want to look at why he called them. Mark says, to be with him, and that he might send them out to preach.

This call to be his Apostles is a matter of being with, and of being sent, it is a relationship that they have with Jesus, and being sent is the result of being in that relationship with him. Being a Disciple of Christ is a relationship with Christ before it is task. And it is no different with the Apostles. First they are taught as disciples, then they are sent as apostles to further the gospel. It was a popular belief among the Jews that subduing the demonic powers would be the characteristic of the messianic age, of the arrival of the Messiah. And we see here that Jesus granted these 12 the power to do just that very thing. This once again acts as a sign pointing to Jesus being the promised messiah that he claimed to be. Yet, the Jewish religious authorities hardened their hearts to the truth, to the evidences and sought instead to have him killed.

Now, moving on to verse 20-30 we see that after this encounter on the mountain the multitudes once again gather around Jesus. READ 20-30. Once again we see Marks recording of the crowd that has gathered around Jesus is more of an obstruction rather than an asset. The Multitude came together again so much so that they could not even eat bread. And we see in the following verse that one of his own people when they heard of this said that he is out of his mind and went to stop him. We do not know who this person, or people are but it is likely they thought because of his clashes with the religious authorities that he must be out of his mind. He was bucking up against the authorities, breaking their laws in the gathering grain on the sabbath, and the healing and casting out unclean spirits on the sabbath. Surely there must be some misunderstanding, there must be some explanation for this Jew's erratic and crazy behavior.

It is possible that these people who sought to confine Jesus in this way may very well had good intentions worried that his actions was drawing the anger and wrath of the pharisee's, but we do not really know because Mark is rather vague here. But we do see in verse 22, that the scribes chime in and respond to this claim that he is out of his mind, by saying that the reason for his actions is because he has a demon. Up until this point the scribes and pharisee's have sought to trap Jesus in their questions. Seeking to discredit him, seeking to catch him in some sort of religious inconsistency to prove that he therefor can not truly be the messiah. Then as we saw in the case of the man with the withered hand, that questioning and seeking to discredit Jesus took a darker turn in chapter 3, vs 6. “ Then then Pharisees went out and immediately plotted with the herodians against him, how they might destroy him.

I think what we are seeing here with the scribes claim to Jesus being possessed by a demon is their first attempt to destroy him. They could not catch him in their questioning, they were unsuccessful turning the people against him early on, and now they see their opportunity to strike. Do not follow this Man Jesus, he is possessed, he is being controlled by Beelzebub, the ruler of the demons. This line of thought is interesting for it is not denying the miracles that Jesus has performed as some parlor trick, they are fully acknowledging that he has cast out demon's and that he has healed the sick but they are equating his power to do so is by Satan not by God. This goes to show that faith, and unbelief are not hinged on evidences and proof. How many times have we heard people say that the bible is just a collection of cute stories, and that most of what is in there is over exaggeration, or the author taking creative liberties, or even conjuring up these fantastic stories to dupe their followers.

Some also think that if people could just witness these miracles of God again today that there would be mass crowds converting. I think that is one of the reasons that those who claim such things today are doing so, it is to gather to themselves large groups of people as if these so called miracles they were performing will change the hearts of those who see it. By the contrary, these scribes and pharisee's witnessed the miracles of Jesus, and said he was doing so by the power of satan.

The scribes here have all the evidence and proof that Jesus is the messiah that people claim to be seeking for today yet they still did not believe. So we see that faith, and unbelief are not the result of evidence and proof, but rather of God's will, and sovereign call. But we see that Jesus destroys their claim and arguments against him just as he has in all previous accounts. In this series of parables Jesus' argument is grounded in simple logic. If a kingdom is divided amongst itself it can not stand, it will fall, it will perish. If a house, or family is divided among themselves, they too can not stand, they too shall be divided and split.

If he is casting out demon's by the name of the prince of demons, then Satan's kingdom, and stronghold is divided, it is against itself and it can not stand. If what the scribes were saying was true, then Satan would be working against himself which would only serve in furthering his own defeat. It is therefore illogical that Jesus would be doing these things by any other means or power than by God himself. Christ further shows his sovereign power in the next verse, verse 27. "No one can enter a strong man's house and plunder his goods, unless he first binds the strong man. And then he will plunder his house."

In the context of the previous verses here it would appear that Jesus is answering a question that has not been asked yet but is the logical conclusion to his argument. If he is casting out the demon's by the name of the prince of demons, but is not a part of that house as it were then he could not be doing so unless the prince of demon's has been bound, which is apparent is not the case since it would seem that demonic possession was a known and regularly accepted thing. So that defuses any argument or line of questioning from the scribes that he is dabbling, or borrowing from the prince of demon's power. As a sorcerer, or the like would have done at that time.

Most of the commentaries seem to think that this passage alludes to Isaiah 49:25-26 which says. "But thus says the Lord, Even the captives of the mighty shall be taken away, and the prey of the terrible be delivered. For I will contend with him who contends with you, and I will save your children. I will feed those who oppress you with their own flesh, and they shall be drunk with their own blood as with sweet wine. All flesh shall know that I, the Lord, am your Savior, and your redeemer the mighty one of Jacob." Is this not exactly what Jesus has come to do? To bind satan, and to set the captives free? Christ is the mighty one who has come and plundered the house of Satan. We are all born in sin, are slaves to sin, and our father is the devil, until Christ comes in, saves us and sets us free.

As James Edwards puts it, "The mission of Jesus is not fulfilled in compromise and coexistence, but in invading and conquering Beelzebub, the head of the house binding Satan and plundering his possessions." This creates a vivid picture of Christ's coming into the world and his mission here. As the Jews believed that when the Messiah would come that it would usher in a new era where the demons would be suppressed, and that is what we see is happening here, is it not? Satan may be a strong man, but Jesus is The Mighty One who is able to bind the strong man and take whatever he pleases. All of this serves to point to Christ's authority, his sovereign power, and that he truly is the God-man, the messiah who has come as a conquering hero to once and for all defeat death, hell and the grave. He has come to establish his kingdom, to defeat the oppressor, and to set his children free.

