

THY KINGDOM COME

Pt 3: Kingdom Power

Turn to Mark, Chapter one, P _____

We've been talking about the Kingdom of God and what that means for you and me as believers in Christ.

Mark 1:14-15, 21-28

¹⁴(AD) Now after John was arrested, Jesus^(AE) came into Galilee, proclaiming the gospel of God, ¹⁵and saying, ^(AE) "The time is fulfilled, and^(AG) the kingdom of God is at hand;^(AH) repent and believe in the gospel."

Jesus came to earth. He was baptized. He went into the wilderness, fasting and praying for 40 days, facing temptation from Satan. And when then he returned with a message and a ministry.

His message was: The Kingdom of God is here. And His ministry was healing, taking authority over nature, raising the dead and casting out demons.

After this initial proclamation of the kingdom, Mark records the selecting of disciples and then Jesus has an encounter with the demonic world.

²¹(AK) And they went into Capernaum, and immediately^(AL) on the Sabbath^(AM) he entered the synagogue and was teaching. ²²And^(AN) they were astonished at his teaching, for he taught them as one who had authority, and not as the scribes.

So, He had a message. People were astonished by what he taught. And right off the bat, he had an opportunity to confirm or to authenticate the authority of that message.

²³And immediately there was in their synagogue a man with an unclean spirit. And he cried out, ²⁴(AO) "What have you to do with us, Jesus of Nazareth? Have you come to destroy us?^(AP) I know who you are—^(AQ) the Holy One of God."

Not until now has this kind of encounter ever been documented.

Satan has been the prince of this world since the day Adam and Eve sinned and surrendered dominion in the Garden of Eden.

But it's interesting that in all of Israelite history, 39 books in the Old Testament, only 5 even mention Satan.

And nowhere does any prophet or priest, king or wise man ever have a personal encounter with Satan or one of his demons.

As soon as Jesus invades this world and establishes a new kingdom – the entire spirit world comes out of the woodwork.

Up until now, the demonic world has been operating behind the scenes. When Jesus shows up, the demonic world becomes visible.

Let's answer this first question.

What/Who is a Demon?

Satan was a created being. He was an arch angel which meant he held an elevated position in the angelic realm of heaven.

Something you need to know: Satan does not have the attributes of God.

He is not omniscient, omnipotent or omnipresent.

He is limited in what he knows, what he can do and where he can go.

His pride and rebellion got him thrown out of heaven, but he didn't leave quietly and he didn't leave alone.

Rev. 12:9 (NIV)

The great dragon was hurled down--that ancient serpent called the devil, or Satan, who leads the whole world astray. He was hurled to the earth, and his angels with him.

So here's the answer: What angels are to God, demons are to Satan. A demon is simply a fallen angel in service to Satan. Second question:

What do Demons Know?

Let's look Mark 1 again. Verse 24

²⁴(AQ) "What have you to do with us, Jesus of Nazareth? Have you come to destroy us?" (AP) I know who you are—(AQ) the Holy One of God."

Number one, they know who Jesus is.

1. WHO JESUS IS

The call him by name and the acknowledge his true identity. Right there is a place of worship where Pharisees were judging his character and credentials, the demon states clearly, you are the holy one of God.

James 2:19 says,

James 2:19 (NLT)

Do you still think it's enough just to believe that there is one God? Well, even the demons believe this, and they tremble in terror!

Throughout the gospels on several occasions Jesus would encounter a demon who addressed him appropriately. What does Jesus do?

²⁵But Jesus^(AR) rebuked him, saying, "Be silent, and come out of him!"

Now, why did Jesus tell the spirit to be quiet?

Maybe he didn't want to engage a demon. Why would you want to talk to the enemy?

But here's a more probable reason: Two weeks ago we looked at Matthew 12 where the Pharisees charged Jesus with demonic power.

He must be a demon because he casts out demons.

And Jesus pretty well dismantled their argument.

A house divided against it self cannot stand.

But it might stand to reason: if the demons were calling him by name, (and these people had never witnessed such a thing before) maybe Jesus was, in fact associated with demons. Jesus didn't want the crowd to get the wrong idea. Here's the deal:

John 5:36 (NLT)

But I have a greater witness than John—my teachings and my miracles. They have been assigned to me by the Father, and they testify that the Father has sent me.

Jesus doesn't need the testimony of any one; man or demon. He has a message authenticated with a ministry of signs and wonders.

James says the demons believe and tremble, why? Because, number two, they know what Jesus came to do.

2. WHAT JESUS CAME TO DO

Verse 24 – the demons come right out and ask: are you come to destroy us? Now, that could have been a cynical question.

It could have been a challenge to Jesus. Just try to get rid of us.

And that's exactly what Jesus did. Verse 25 - He told them to shut up and they did. He told them to get out and they did.

Not without creating a little trouble. Verse 26

²⁶And the unclean spirit, ^(AS) convulsing him and ^(AT) crying out with a loud voice, came out of him.

And the mission of God was fulfilled.

²⁷And they were all ^(AU) amazed, so that they questioned among themselves, saying, "What is this? ^(AV) A new teaching with authority! (a new message, they've never heard before and a new ministry) He commands even the unclean spirits, and they obey him."

1 John 3:8 (NIV)

The reason the Son of God appeared was to destroy the devil's work.

Jesus has invaded the kingdom of darkness.

C.S. Lewis called this earth – enemy occupied territory.

Right now, you and I are living in the cross hairs of a spiritual battle; two kingdoms in conflict.

So let's consider this next question:

What do Demons Do?

Jesus told us in John 10:10 that Satan seeks to steal, kill and destroy.

In John 8:44 Jesus tells us that Satan is a liar and a murderer.

He's two-fold strategy is to deceive and defeat.

And He customizes that strategy depending on who you are.

Number, if you are not a Christian, he wants to keep you blinded to the truth.

1. BLIND UNBELIEVERS

He distorts the truth of God and plants doubt in our minds so that we would not accept the truth of God.

2 Cor. 4:4 (NIV)

The god of this age has blinded the minds of unbelievers, so that they cannot see the light of the gospel of the glory of Christ, who is the image of God.

Notice that phrase, "blinded the minds."

What can a blind person not do? They cannot see.

A blind person is visually impaired. But this is a good translation because the word that is used here means, “to dull the intellect.”

A dulled intellect is describing a person who just doesn't get it. How many of you are sitting next to a person who just doesn't get a lot of stuff. (don't raise your hand)

We use the phrase, “Oh, now I see.”

It's not that you've just opened your eyes physically, it means that you've come to an understanding of what's been presented or discussed. Before that you were, as we say, “in the dark” about it.

Satan's strategy is to keep us from seeing with our minds.

John Newton wrote: Amazing Grace how sweet the sound. . . I once was blind but now I “see.”

When Jesus saves you, you are transferred from the kingdom of darkness, and you step into the light, you're no longer blinded.

That doesn't mean that Satan gives up.

Satan blinds unbelievers, and number two, he attacks believers.

2. ATTACK BELIEVERS

Many of you will attest to this: you had no idea what spiritual warfare was - your life really didn't get that hard until you became a Christian.

When you're in the dark you're oblivious to the struggle. But now you're aware. Pau wrote this:

2 Cor. 12:7 (NIV)

To keep me from becoming conceited because of these surpassingly great revelations, there was given me a thorn in my flesh, a messenger of Satan, to torment me.

English standard says, to harass me.

Here's the deal: nothing comes to you that doesn't first pass through the hands of a sovereign God who is working all things together for your good and His glory.

Remember, Satan asked permission to get at both Job in the Old Testament and Peter in the New Testament.

Evil never comes from God. But a God who is good and desires the best for you will allow a certain level of activity from Satan to build character in you and to fulfill His ultimate purpose.

Now, before I go on, I need to answer a question that some of you are asking right now. Is it possible for a Christian to be possessed by a demon?

And the answer is 'no.'

You can be oppressed, attacked, as we just learned, but you cannot be possessed.

As a Christian you now live under the rule and reign of God.

You are under new ownership, and you benefit from His protection.

Paul says in 1 Corinthians 6 that your body is the temple of (what?) the Holy Spirit. God's Spirit and Satan's spirit cannot dwell in the same space. So don't get fearful and paranoid about this subject.

Are demons real? Yes.

Should you be afraid of demons? No.

Listen, demons are afraid of you.

They were afraid of Jesus because they knew who he was and what he came to do. And if Jesus is living in you they are afraid of you.

I want you to turn to 2 Corinthians 10. P._____

Write this reference down. I failed to include it in the outline but this is a critical passage in understanding spiritual warfare and kingdom power.

2 Corinthians 10:4-5

^(A)For the ^(B)weapons of ^(C)our warfare are not of the flesh but have ^(D)divine power ^(E)to destroy strongholds. ^(F)We destroy arguments and ^(G)every lofty opinion raised against the knowledge of God, and take every thought captive to ^(H)obey Christ,

Notice the word stronghold. The word could be translated "fortress." Imagine a castle with its thick stone walls, surrounded by a moat; an impenetrable fortification.

Satan wants to build a fortress in your mind to hold your thoughts captive.

Note the word ‘argument.’ The word used here, *logismos*, can also be translated “reasonings.”

Do you ever have an argument in your own head not knowing which side to take? This is a picture of two voices in your mind vying for allegiance. The Spirit of God is trying to lead you in truth, and the spirit of this age is trying to deceive you with arguments, reasonings, contrary to the knowledge or truth of God.

Note the phrase, “lofty opinion.” Some translations use pretension. It’s the Greek word, *hupsoma*, which literally means “high thing” or exalted thing: it’s referring to pride.

Pride is what got Satan thrown out of heaven, it’s what got Adam thrown out of the garden.

At the heart of Satan’s reasonings is always pride; I know better than God, I can do my own thing.

And then, the third word is “thoughts” that are contrary to the knowledge of God. The word used here is *noema*, which refers to “purpose” or “device of the mind.”

2 Corinthians 2:11 (NIV) in order that Satan might not outwit us. For we are not unaware of his schemes.

The word, “schemes” is the same word translated “thoughts,” so 2 Corinthians 10:5 could read, “we take captive every scheme.”

When you scheme you plan and strategize.

So in this passage you have Satan’s strategy in spiritual warfare.

Satan knows that if he can get your mind, he can get everything else. It all starts in the mind, you live out what you think, you behave according to what you believe.

So Satan attempts to hold your mind hostage with reasonable sounding arguments that tempt you to pride. How are you going to fight against that? The Bible tells us to be good soldiers, to fight the fight.

Two Weapons to Conquer the Enemy

I'm going to put 2 Corinthians 10:4 on the screen because I want us to see this as we look at Ephesians 6.

2 Corinthians 10:4 (ESV)

For the weapons of our warfare are not of the flesh but have divine power to destroy strongholds.

Turn to Ephesians 6 P _____

We've already learned what a stronghold is. Paul tells us in we have weapons powerful enough to destroy or demolish, tear down the strongholds that Satan attempts to construct.

I'm reminded of how incredibly sophisticated and effective our military is in Iraq and Afghanistan, how they can zero in on a particular target from miles and miles away and with pin point precision they can demolish, physically destroy strongholds.

The word "power" that's in verse 4 is "*dunamis*" from which we get the word dynamite.

Ephesians 6:10-20

¹⁰Finally, ^(A) be strong in the Lord and in ^(B) the strength of his might. ¹¹^(C) Put on ^(D) the whole armor of God, that you may be able to stand against ^(E) the schemes of the devil. ¹²For ^(F) we do not wrestle against flesh and blood, but against ^(G) the rulers, against the authorities, against ^(H) the cosmic powers over ^(I) this present darkness, against ^(J) the spiritual forces of evil ^(K) in the heavenly places. ¹³Therefore ^(L) take up the whole armor of God, that you may be able to withstand in ^(M) the evil day, . . .

And he begins to describe the various pieces of armor that you and I, as believers are to put on. Belt of truth, breastplate of righteousness, helmet of salvation; all these pieces are defensive in nature.

The Bible never tells us to engage the enemy. Did you know that? God never says to us: I think you're tough enough to handle Satan, you can take on a demon or too.

No. He tells us to flee. He tells us to resist. And He tells us to stand.

The only offensive weapons we have to battle Satan and to demolish strongholds is found in verses 17 & 18. Look at these verses:

¹⁷and take^(T) the helmet of salvation, (that's defensive) and^(U) the sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God, (a sword is an offensive weapon)
¹⁸praying^(V) at all times^(W) in the Spirit, (second offensive weapon)^(X) with all prayer and supplication. To that end^(Y) keep alert with all perseverance, making^(Z) supplication for all the saints,

So the two weapons, the Word of God and spirit empowered prayer, if joined together are like dynamite in our spiritual warfare against Satan. Let's talk about the Word of God first.

1. The Word of God

Satan is a liar and he doesn't stop trying to deceive you once you've become a Christian.

One of the most effective strategies he uses is to plant doubt in your mind. I'm not worthy for God to love me.

I'm too sinful for God to forgive me.

I'm not gifted enough to be used by God. Christianity might work for others, but I'm too messed up to experience the abundant life Jesus promises. You buy into the lie and it creates a stronghold in your life.

Paul had a thorn that Satan wanted to use to harass him.

Do you have a hurts in your life, experiences that have harmed you? Satan tries to convince you that your hurt proves God doesn't love you, that God isn't faithful. You buy into the lie and it creates a stronghold that blinds you to truth.

Do you have habits that you can't seem to shake, addictions that overpower you? Satan wants to convince you you're a failure and God would never except someone as weak as you.

You buy into the lie and it creates a stronghold.

What does the Word of God say?

The Word of God tells us that God wants to bring good out of your difficulties, to build character out of your failures and to use your weaknesses to display His strength.

The question is who are you going to believe?

Whenever you let the lies of Satan overrule the truth of God you are allowing that fortress that fights against the knowledge of God to become stronger and stronger in your life. You've got to listen to the right voice. You've got to believe what is true.

Friends, that's why the Word of God is so vital to your life.

The Word of God, repeat after me: Word of God. Say it again, Word of God. Again, Word of God.

The Word of God is life to you. It has power to demolish the strongholds that rob you of life.

Take the Word of God and couple that with prayer.

2. Prayer

The Bible says, if you're in trouble pray.

The Bible says to confess your sins to each other and pray for each other.

Paul constantly prayed that the eyes of our hearts would be enlightened, to see, understand the truth of God.

Prayerless lives are powerless lives.

Prayer is what keeps us connected to God, connected to his power, connected to his protection.

The Word of God, God speaking to you, coupled with prayer, you staying in intimate connection with God: sets you up for victory every time.

That's your bottom line:

Bottom Line: GOD'S RULE IN ME ASSURES VICTORY

I want to close with this last verse on the screen and I want us to read it aloud together.

1 John 4:4 (NASB)

You are from God, little children, and have overcome them; because greater is He who is in you than he who is in the world.

If you're not a Christian you have no protection against the evil one. You have a connection card to let us know where you stand and what you need to do next. Let us know.