

LENT DEVOTIONAL MARCH 11, 2014

SCRIPTURE

Mark 1:14-28

14 Now after John was arrested, Jesus came to Galilee, proclaiming the good news of God, 15 and saying, "The time is fulfilled, and the kingdom of God has come near; repent, and believe in the good news."

16 As Jesus passed along the Sea of Galilee, he saw Simon and his brother Andrew casting a net into the sea - for they were fishermen. 17 And Jesus said to them, "Follow me and I will make you fish for people." 18 And immediately they left their nets and followed him. 19 As he went a little farther, he saw James son of Zebedee and his brother John, who were in their boat mending the nets. 20 Immediately he called them; and they left their father Zebedee in the boat with the hired men, and followed him.

21 They went to Capernaum; and when the sabbath came, he entered the synagogue and taught. 22 They were astounded at his teaching, for he taught them as one having authority, and not as the scribes. 23 Just then there was in their synagogue a man with an unclean spirit, 24 and he cried out, "What have you to do with us, Jesus of Nazareth? Have you come to destroy us? I know who you are, the Holy One of God." 25 But Jesus rebuked him, saying, "Be silent, and come out of him!" 26 And the unclean spirit, convulsing him and crying with a loud voice, came out of him. 27 They were all amazed, and they kept on asking one another, "What is this? A new teaching - with authority! He commands even the unclean spirits, and they obey him." 28 At once his fame began to spread throughout the surrounding region of Galilee.

DEVOTIONAL

I love the Gospel of Mark. In part, it's because he gets so much mileage out of so few words. "He taught as one having authority, and not as the scribes." Mark does a great job using this short phrase to tell us not only who Jesus is, but also who the scribes were. The encounter with the unclean spirit is also fascinating. It's something we aren't really comfortable with today. Nonetheless, these encounters run throughout Mark's account. Some prefer to view these passages as straightforward supernatural encounters. Others lean toward more psychological or physiological explanations. Others may pursue a different alternative altogether. However you choose to understand the unclean spirit, Mark's point stands—he's not really talking about the unclean spirit. Whatever afflicts the man, Jesus heals him with His words, and the people are amazed. Mark's point is the amazing grace found in Jesus Christ.

*Message provided by the **Miller Summer Youth Institute**.*

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