

Mark 1:21-31 Discussion Guide

TEXT - Read Mark 1:21-31 (ESV)

²¹And they went into Capernaum, and immediately on the Sabbath he entered the synagogue and was teaching. ²²And they were astonished at his teaching, for he taught them as one who had authority, and not as the scribes. ²³And immediately there was in their synagogue a man with an unclean spirit. And he cried out, ²⁴“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.” ²⁵But Jesus rebuked him, saying, “Be silent, and come out of him!” ²⁶And the unclean spirit, convulsing him and crying out with a loud voice, came out of him. ²⁷And they were all amazed, so that they questioned among themselves, saying, “What is this? A new teaching with authority! He commands even the unclean spirits, and they obey him.” ²⁸And at once his fame spread everywhere throughout all the surrounding region of Galilee. ²⁹And immediately he^[a] left the synagogue and entered the house of Simon and Andrew, with James and John. ³⁰Now Simon's mother-in-law lay ill with a fever, and immediately they told him about her. ³¹And he came and took her by the hand and lifted her up, and the fever left her, and she began to serve them.

- What sticks out to you in this text? Any questions that come up?
- What is going on in this text (summarize the main points)? What is the context for the text?
- How does this text connect with the Gospel? What Gospel themes do you see in the text?

THEOLOGY - What do we learn about God from this text?

- What attributes or aspects of the character and nature of God do you see in these passages? What else can we learn about God from the text? Take a moment to list these out together.

LIFE

- Jesus preached with authority and people were astonished. How are you preparing yourself to speak God's Word with authority?
- As Christians, Christ is in us in the person of the Holy Spirit, but sometimes we leave our selves open to “demons” such as having secular worldviews, etc. What “demons” do you have that you need Jesus drive out?
- Jesus performed a very personal act of kindness by healing Peter's mother-in-law. What small acts of kindness can you do today by calling on the power of Christ in you?

PRAYER

- Pray in response to what God revealed to you in this text. If there is sin, confess it to him in prayer. If there is a need, petition God in prayer. If there is encouragement, praise God and share with others.
- What is one personal need you have that we can pray for you as a group?
- Pray for one friend, family member, or coworker with who you want to share the love of Jesus with.

Commentary on Mark 1:21-31

V. 21 They went into Capernaum: One can go to Capernaum today and see the remains of an ancient Jewish synagogue, which still has the foundation of this same building Jesus taught in showing the historic accuracy and reality that this took place for real in a place in time and history. Typically, the *synagogue* had no set teachers.

V. 22 For He taught them as one having authority, and not as the scribes: The scribes of Jesus' day rarely taught boldly. They would often simply quote a variety of Rabbis as interpreters. Jesus taught with authority because He *had authority*. He brought a divine message and was confident that it was from God. He wasn't quoting from man, but from God.

V. 23 A man... with an unclean spirit: The similarity in the wording (Paul used to describe the Christian's being "in Christ" ([1 Corinthians 1:30](#)) between the Christian having Jesus and this man having a demon demonstrates that He is in us, and we are in Him. Even as Jesus can live in us, so one uninhabited by Jesus can be inhabited by a demon if the doors to the demonic world are left open.

V. 24 I know who You are; the Holy One of God! The demon himself testified that Jesus was holy and pure. The demons admitted that their wilderness temptations failed to corrupt Jesus.

V. 25-28 Jesus rebuked him: Jesus didn't need to rely on hocus-pocus or ceremonies. Be quiet, and come out of him! There were other exorcists in Jesus' day. He was not the only one who tried to cast out demons. But there was a huge difference between Jesus and other exorcists. Jesus never failed to cast out a demon, and He never used an elaborate ceremony. "The people were accustomed to the use of magical formulae by the Jewish exorcists ([Matthew 12:27](#); [Acts 19:13](#)), but here was something utterly different." (Robertson) Jesus avoided such theatrics and merely delivered the afflicted man. He simply demonstrated the authority of God.

V. 29-30 They entered the house of Simon and Andrew: Jesus didn't only "perform for the crowds." Here, He ministered to one person in a private home. Jesus' interest was in meeting the needs of individuals and not in promoting Himself.

V. 31 So He came and took her by the hand and lifted her up, and immediately the fever left her:

In this healing of Peter's mother-in-law, Jesus showed kindness in both *simplicity* and *power*. "Peter's mother-in-law was suffering from what the Talmud called 'a burning fever.' The Talmud actually lays down the methods of dealing with it. A knife made wholly of iron was tied by a braid of hair to a thorn bush. On successive days there was repeated, first, *Exodus* 3:2, 3; second *Exodus* 3:4; and finally *Exodus* 3:5. Then a certain magical formula was pronounced, and thus the cure was supposed to be achieved. Jesus completely disregarded all the paraphernalia of popular magic, and with a gesture and a word of unique authority and power, he healed the woman." (Barclay).

And she served them: Peter's mother-in-law responded the way we should when Jesus blesses us. She immediately served Jesus out of gratitude.