

Summary: This lesson shows us the Prophet spoken of by Moses. Jesus teaches with divine authority, and then he demonstrates it by driving out evil spirits. Jesus reveals himself and his glory.

I want to start out today with some numbers that I crunched for you. Now I used the national averages for a few of these and others, I used very reasonable guestimates. First off, 131,040. That is the number of hours that you will spend sleeping from the time you are 20 years old if you were to live to 80 assuming that you get an average of 6 hours per night. Now in that same time span, from the time you are 20 til you are 80, you will watch approximately 109,200 hours of television. Again using the same time frame, 62,400 hours. Would you care to guess at what you will be doing for that long? Well if you have a job that requires you to work at a computer screen, that's approximately how much time you will have spent surfing the internet. Which is really sad when you realize that if you spend the national average of 7% of your life outdoors, you will only have been outside for 21, 840 hours of your life. I've got 1 more number for you. 3120. Clearly much smaller than all of the other numbers, the things that take up time in your day to day. Something that, honestly only accounts for .006% of your entire life during that same time, and that is how much time you will have spent in God's house, assuming you never miss a Sunday. Now of all the things that you do, which one do you think is easiest, or most likely to be far less? If you said church, you would be correct. And yet which one, I think everyone of us would say, should be most important? Time spent on your relationship with your Lord.

You see but the devil knows that too. He knows that the most beneficial thing that you can do is to spend time in the Word, in the house of your Lord, hearing his Word preached to you. And so he tries to convince you, you have other things to do. He wants to distract you in anyway possible. Because anywhere that Word is preached, **Anywhere That Word is Heard, the Devil Loses.** Because that Word works.

We just heard in our Gospel lesson today, just how that devil, and his demons, his whole kingdom, are actively fighting against the Word of God and the spread of that powerful Word. Its actually super interesting and super fitting for how this lesson is introduced. And I read now from the English Standard Version of the Bible, because they capture the original Greek really well into English here.

²¹ And they went into Capernaum, and immediately on the Sabbath he entered the synagogue and was teaching. ²² And they were astonished at his teaching, for he taught them as one who had authority, and not as the scribes. ²³ And immediately there was in their synagogue a man with an unclean spirit.

There is an urgency to Jesus entering the synagogue to teach. It says he does this immediately. He wastes no time in spreading this life giving message. But you notice what else happened immediately. Immediately the man possessed by a demon shows up. The devil works hard, so that people don't hear that message. If Jesus Word is going to be preached, well, you better believe the devil is going to try to distract, or stop you from hearing it.

And unfortunately, he is pretty good at what he does. Pretty good at trying to separate you, from hearing that powerful Word. And he has a strong ally in this fight. Your own sinful heart. Your heart that so often is willing to give in a little to easily maybe? You know what I mean?

Like, “boy, I am a little sleepy today. Probably should just stay in bed, I’ll catch the service next week.” Or maybe, “you know I have a chance to boost my numbers for the time spent outdoors this weekend. I can probably skip this Sunday, go fishing, hunting, camping, golfing,...” whatever it is. Just as long as you are doing anything else, besides sitting at the feet of your Savior.

But he doesn’t just work on your heart before you are there. No, it says this demon possessed man, is in the synagogue. Yes, even in church the devil is working hard, to get you to stop! Stop paying attention, stop finding comfort, stop being strengthened. It’s the same thing that he does in all your life. I don’t have time for a devotion. I am too afraid of inviting my neighbor, I am too hungry to pray before I eat. All places, that the devil is looking to steal a small victory. Because he knows if he can rack up enough small wins, maybe he can get the big one. Convince you, that you have no need for you Savior’s Word. Kind of like this demon, from our text for today, who shouts out when he sees Jesus,

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.”

What have you to do with us Jesus? Are you here to ruin everything, you the Holy one of God, come here to ruin all the fun? He’ll say anything to distract from what Jesus was here to do. It’s ironic that the destroyer, tries to put that title on the Savior.

He doesn’t want you to see Jesus for what he is. He wants you to ask that question, “What does Jesus have to do with me?” Jesus who has everything to do with you. Who yes, indeed came to destroy, the devil. Who was in fact the Holy One of God.

The Holy one who came not to destroy this world but to save it. The one who in humility, would hand himself over to the powers of evil to suffer a death that he never deserved. The very one who demanded that we be perfect or die, made himself one of us, so that he could be perfect for us. Then because he had no sin, he took the death our sins deserved. He let the devil do his worst to him there on that cross, and came out the other side, victorious. He conquered the devil, once and for all that battle is over. Jesus, the risen and ascended Savior wins, and the devil loses.

That is the story and power of his Word. The Word that you hear here, in the house of the Lord, hopefully for somewhere around 3120 hours of your life. But you know that its more than that. This is the Word that you live everyday. Because you live everyday trusting in the power of your Savior to save you!

A power that he proves that he has by what happened next,

But Jesus rebuked him, saying, “Be silent, and come out of him!” 26 And the unclean spirit, convulsing him and crying out with a loud voice, came out of him.

In Greek that is only two Words. Two words from your Savior Jesus, and the devil loses. But Jesus has done it in less Words too. In fact one word, spoken from the cross tetelestai, “It is finished.”. And with that, the devil could never win again.

Its like Martin Luther said in his famous hymn, "Though devils all the world should fill, all eager to devour us, we tremble not, we fear no ill, They shall not overpower us. This world's Prince may still, scowl fierce as he will, He can harm us none, he's judged the deed is done One little Word can fell him."

That Word, is the Word of your loving God. That Word is the same Word as that of your Savior today as he casts out demons. That Word that creates faith in your heart, simply through hearing that he has saved you from this world, from the devil, even from your own sinful heart. All through the death of his only Son. So as that devil scowls fierce in this world, we are not shaken, not afraid, because we know, **Anywhere That Word is Heard, the Devil has already Lost. Amen.**