

set of facts, rather than introducing them to God, inviting them to place their lives in the living God's hands, knowing that he had forgiven them their sins making it possible to share God's life with him.

So Jesus has empowered his citizens to make a personal relationship with God possible and to keep it healthy through giving us the authority to forgive sins. Jesus said; "I give you the keys of the kingdom of heaven; whatever you bind on earth will bound in heaven, and whatever you loose on earth will be loosed in heaven." (Matt 16:19) "Truly I tell you, whatever you bind on

earth will be bound in heaven, and whatever you loose on earth will be loosed in heaven." (Matt 18:18) Jesus said; "'As the Father has sent me, I am sending you'. And with that he breathed on them and said, 'Receive the Holy Spirit. If you forgive the sins of anyone, their sins are forgiven; if you do not forgive them, they are not forgiven.'" (John 20:21-23)

Let us pray:
Jesus thank you for sending the Holy Spirit to live with us; open our ears that we might hear, soften our hearts that we might obey, and fill our minds with your

wisdom giving us your love so that we don't just talk about you, but that we introduce you to all those we meet, that they too might have a living relationship with the Father though you, lived out now with the Holy Spirit. We bring these people before you soften their hearts that they come into a living vibrant relationship with you. Let your forgiveness free them to live life in all your fullness, that they become contagious, introducing you to all the people they know. Come Lord Jesus, expand your kingdom in our network of people. Amen.

Christ Church Lutheran

Worship Times - 9.00am & 10.45am
Pastor: Tim 0427326553
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Reaching Out with the Love of Jesus that All my Know, Worship & Grow in Christ

1 February 2009

DISCIPLESHIP 3.

Mark 1:21-28 Jesus Teaches with Authority

In the Gospel reading for today the first thing that strikes me is that the evil spirit said; "I know who you are – the Holy One of God." (Mark 1:24b) I know who you are, but he obviously wasn't a disciple of Jesus. Jesus has commanded us; "go and make disciples of all nations..." (Matt. 28:19) Facts and figures a disciple does not make. That is glaringly obvious; the evil spirit knew who Jesus was, but he wasn't a disciple, quite the opposite. So there is more to being a disciple of Jesus than knowing a few facts and figures.

The scary thing for me about this situation is where this person with this evil spirit is found. He is where? In the synagogue! In the church! How long had he been coming and

gone unnoticed? I find this scary, alarming, unsettling, because in the very place you'd hope to find followers of God you find the exact opposite; a person possessed by an evil spirit. This screams at me; there's much, much more to being a disciple than just head knowledge and ritual performance. Tim don't deceive yourself!

This guy, this evil spirit, knew who Jesus was and had been joining in the ritual performances in the synagogue. So there is more to being a disciple of Jesus than knowing a few facts and performing a ritual.

Up to this point this man is still possessed by an evil spirit, so there has to be more. Jesus comes that we might be owned by him

and nobody else. Jesus love is total. His death on the cross was to set us free that we might be changed and live with him as his disciples. Live as legal citizens of his kingdom, and in his kingdom there are no evil spirits, to which I'm sure we all say; 'thank God for that'.

This also reminds me of Jesus disciples who after Jesus ascension were told; "Do not leave Jerusalem, but wait for the gift my Father promised... you will be baptised with the Holy Spirit." (Acts 1:4) The disciples weren't to simply go off with their knowledge and their own enthusiasm and do things their way. They were commanded to wait, till they received the Holy Spirit, and go out in his power and authority, doing things

Jesus' way, to Jesus glory, honour and praise.

In the end I don't think knowledge changes anyone. It's an encounter with the living God through the Holy Spirit at work in Jesus' people. I'm not called to give my approval to a creed so that I can become a club member.

Jesus has come to love me, to remove the guilt and punishment of my sin, so that God can embrace me and share his life with me; today in the person of the Holy Spirit and when Jesus returns we'll be sharing God's life with him person to person at his place. Which will also be our place because he's our dad. Because he's legally adopted us as his children, having paid the price of Jesus death on the cross. We belong to him, to our Heavenly Father.

The people were amazed; "What's this? A new teaching— and with authority!" (Mark 1:27)

Jesus didn't come offering more rules and regulations to memorize, more rituals to perform as if we just had to work a little harder. As if we just

The evil spirit knew who Jesus was!

had to obey the club charter better. No, Jesus comes with a 'new teaching'. You can have a living relationship with God in the person of the Holy Spirit, because Jesus has made that a reality.

Christianity is not one religious expert persuading us that they're right and we're wrong. The evil spirit knew who Jesus was, but the man stayed trapped till Jesus broke

into his world. Jesus didn't debate with the evil spirit he simply commanded; "Be quiet! ... Come out of him!" (Mark 1:25)

The person didn't encounter a teaching, but a person, the person of Jesus, who was committed to giving his life that this person

might be set free and enjoy living life with Jesus, under his power and authority, as a child the Father loves.

That's why Jesus doesn't call us to believe in the truth as if it were a bunch of facts we had to give our ascent to. No, Jesus said: "I am the way, and the truth and the life. No one comes to the Father except through me." (John 14:6)

The evil spirit didn't encounter a set of rules and regulations but the living God, who has the power and authority to

tell this spirit what to do, and it must obey. It was this personal encounter that set this person free. Free to live life with Jesus.

I wonder what that person did. We're not told. Did he walk off with Jesus following him, or did he go off and do his own thing, only to be trapped again?

Christianity is a personal encounter with God, the living God, who comes to us through the Holy Spirit, who Jesus has poured out on his people. So we don't go out arguing people into the kingdom—the evil spirit knew who Jesus was, but the man stayed trapped, till Jesus spoke and set him free. Till Jesus spoke his authoritative word as the King. The King of the Kingdom of Heaven. And King Jesus must be obeyed, it's not a choice, it's a matter of authority. Jesus has the authority

and the power to back it up. Notice the demons don't mess with him.

What has Jesus said to us, the 'Body of Christ' his personal presence in the world today; "All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me. Therefore go and make disciples of all nations..." (Matthew

Jesus has given us authority, not to lecture...

28:18,19)

Jesus has given us authority, not to lecture people, but to make him personally known. To come in Jesus' name, in the power of the Holy Spirit and speak his authoritative word setting people free. Free to share life with the living God, who promises to come to them and live with them in the person of the Holy Spirit.

That's why we don't agree with the JW's, because they lie about the Holy Spirit only being a power that is with us and not the person of God, come to share his life with us.

We're not like 'Star Wars', wanting the force to be with us. No way, I want people to come into a living

relationship with the living God as he has made himself accessible in the person of the Holy Spirit, poured out at Jesus' command.

The Holy Spirit isn't a power we tap into, but a person we live with. A person sent by Jesus to be with us, and he has the authority to send the Spirit because he has died and risen again and sits at the Father's right hand.

That's why the disciples had to wait in Jerusalem, till they had the Holy Spirit, otherwise they'd have just been inviting people to believe in a