

The First Miracle

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[0 : 00] The following message is given by Walt Alexander, lead pastor of Trinity Grace Church in Athens, Tennessee. For more information about Trinity Grace, please visit us at TrinityGraceAthens.com.

! Mark chapter 1, second to last message on this wonderful chapter. So Mark chapter 1, if you look with me there, I'm going to begin reading in verse 21.

So Mark 1, verse 21. This is the Word of God. And they went into Capernaum.

And immediately on the Sabbath, He, Jesus Christ, entered the synagogue and was teaching. And they were astonished at His teaching, for He taught them as one who had authority and not as the scribes.

And immediately there was in their synagogue a man with an unclean spirit, and he cried out, What have you to do with us, Jesus of Nazareth?

[1 : 15] Have you come to destroy us? I know who you are, the Holy One of God.

Verse 25. But Jesus rebuked him, saying, Be silent and come out of him. And the unclean spirit, convulsing him and crying out with a loud voice, came out of him.

And 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? And at once, or immediately, His fame spread everywhere throughout all the surrounding region of Galilee.

It's the Word of God. They say first impressions are lasting impressions. It's because the first time we do anything is a time we don't easily forget.

[2 : 33] So students remember the first day of school. Parents celebrate first steps and first words. Businesses celebrate their first sale.

And lovers look back fondly on their first conversation and their first kiss. Sorry, homeschoolers. As for me, I'll never forget my first ham sandwich with mayonnaise.

I was swimming at my friend Reeves Tinkler's pool on a hot summer day when I was about 12 years old. Around lunchtime, his mother brought out a plate of ham and cheese sandwiches with mayonnaise.

At that point in my life, I didn't like mayonnaise. There was something about that pasty, white, lard-like substance that I did not want any part of.

But I didn't have many options at that moment. I was hot and hungry, and I could have wiped off the mayonnaise, but the bread was basically submerged in mayonnaise by this point.

[3 : 37] And there was no way I could have removed the mayonnaise without a mess and thus ruining my chances of ever being invited back. So I took a bite.

And I don't know what to say. The heavens ripped open, a dove descended, and I was changed. I tore through two or three more sandwiches with delights, and Duke's mayonnaise became a condiment mainstay for the rest of my life, at least until now.

And that first impression of a hand sandwich with mayonnaise left a lasting impression on my life.

Beginning of Mark's gospel, he's aware of the power of first impressions.

What comes first leaves a lasting impression. And recording this first miracle, Mark wants to leave a vital, lasting impression with us.

Just as you remember, a couple Easter's ago, the Apostle John places the miracle of turning water into wine first as a sign of who Jesus was. And so Mark places this miracle of casting out a demon first in his gospel as an example of why he came.

[4 : 53] It begs the question, what is our first impression of Jesus Christ? What did those cardboard cutouts teach us about the Savior? I remember at my grandmother's church, these

cardboard cutouts teaching us about Jesus.

And maybe you learned that he was a Savior, which is so wonderful, right? He was born to save from our sins. But maybe you remember that he's a friend of sinners.

I mean, is there a better word in the English language than the word friend? And so he's a friend of sinners, a true friend who dies for us. Or maybe you think that he was a fellow man, that he was born like you, made like you in every respect, tempted like you in every respect, yet without sin so that he might help you.

So wonderful that he is God. But it is so wonderful that he is man as well. And all those are great. But what Mark wants your first and lasting impression about Jesus Christ to be is that he is the mighty king.

According to Mark, Jesus came to preach this good news. We saw that last week. And he came to call sinners.

[6 : 03] We saw that last week. We're going to see that in a couple more weeks. And Jesus came in Mark 10 to give his life as a ransom for many. But Jesus also came as a mighty king to conquer evil and advance his kingdom.

Several weeks ago, we studied how Jesus faced down the devil and his temptation. But this episode is placed first by Mark as an example and model of how Jesus will face down and conquer all his cronies.

How he will run out all the demons of the devil. Every visible and invisible power will fall before the mighty king, Jesus. Every visible and invisible power will fall before the mighty king, Jesus.

Point one, the kingdom of God advances with words. The kingdom of God advances with words.

Jesus enters right here, you know, in this scene, this prototypical example model scene.

Jesus enters the synagogue in Capernaum and begins to teach. Look in verse 21. They went into Capernaum. Immediately on the Sabbath, he entered the synagogue and was teaching. And there's a couple of things we need to know background here.

[7 : 07] Capernaum is just a fairly large town on the northwest shore of the Sea of Galilee. And it must have had a number of Jews there because they had a synagogue. And you had to have 10 male Jews, 10 heads of households to get a synagogue.

And they had money to build one. And so, but it's important for us right at the outset to know the difference between a temple and, between the temple and Jerusalem and a synagogue wherever Jews gathered.

You know, each year we know this in our scriptures and even in the Lord Jesus' Christ, his life when he goes to Jerusalem. And Jews would go to Jerusalem for feasts and they would offer sacrifices by a priest.

But a synagogue was different. There was one temple in those days in Jerusalem. And so they would go to offer sacrifices in Jerusalem.

But a synagogue is where Jews would gather to hear the law read and explained by a rabbi. And so that's why you see these rabbis and priests running throughout the gospel.

[8 : 08] And those are the distinction between the temple and the synagogue. And so as a Jew on the Sabbath, Jesus goes to church. He goes to the synagogue. He didn't need to learn anything, but I think that's really cool that he goes.

So he went into the synagogue and the rabbi must have noticed very quickly that Jesus was different. Like he was a teacher because he had disciples with him, verse 21. And they, so those guys he just recruited out of their boats and away from their dad, they were with him.

And so as was common in those days, when a teacher came in, they would often invite him to teach. And so Jesus began teaching, but Jesus' teaching was different.

Look in 22. He says, and they were astonished at his teaching. So the day there is not the same day in 21. The day in 21 is the disciples in Jesus. The day there is everybody gathered, including the disciples in Jesus, but mainly people gathered in the synagogue.

And so they were astonished at his teaching, for he taught as one who had authority and not as the scribes. The scribes were often, they were these rabbis. The scribes were a select group of people who carefully interpreted the law and explained it to their students, their followers, but also to people in the synagogue.

[9 : 25] And because of this, they were, they were greatly respected. In fact, when they would walk into a room, everyone would rise, kind of like a judge in our day, all rise before the scribe. But when

Jesus entered their synagogue, you see that?

It's an important emphasis Mark is making. When he entered the synagogue and he was teaching, he taught as them who had authority and not as the scribes.

And the focus is not on what Jesus said, but on how he said what he said and the effect it had.

Jesus taught as a man who had authority.

Mark's not trying to ridicule the scribes here, though they do go on to play a little back and forth with Jesus. Mark is underlining the unique authority of Jesus Christ.

That word authority emerges again in 27. Look down there, he says a new teaching with authority. It brackets this whole scene. This word goes on to be a very important word for describing the identity of Jesus Christ.

[10:33] The word authority literally means being made out of the right stuff. Having the right stuff. The person who has authority has the rightful say-so.

So in a symphony, the rightful say-so goes to the conductor about who plays this or who plays that.

On a basketball team, the rightful say-so, and how the game is run, goes with the coach.

On Friday night, we introduced our children to the great basketball movie Hoosiers. That's right.

Gene Hackman, fabulous in that.

He's a high school basketball coach trying to put together a winning squad, and he understands authority. At one point, he says to a team, what I say when it comes to basketball, and this basketball team is the law.

In another place, I couldn't find the quote, but he says, between three and five, I am absolutely in charge, because that's when practice is. So he understands where his authority begins.

[11:34] He understands where his authority ends. And so they immediately notice about Jesus Christ that this man understands that he has the rightful say-so to say some things to them. And that's the difference between Jesus' teaching and those of the scribe.

When Jesus went into their synagogue, he taught them as one who had a rightful say-so. He did not submit to the scribe. He did not merely unpack the scriptures. He taught as one who had absolute authority over everyone and everything.

Now, it's interesting. We don't know what he taught. We don't know what was read. In Luke 4, we know Isaiah 61 was read in this scene, or in a similar scene in the synagogue.

I think it's very likely that with Simon and Andrew and James and John in tow right there, that Jesus called them to follow. He said, the kingdom of God is at hand.

I'm the king. It's time for you to follow me. Immediately. This guy has authority. Jesus advances his kingdom beginning with words. Jesus is a mighty king, but he doesn't come guns blazing.

[12:41] He doesn't pull out the whip yet. More than any other title in the gospel of Mark, Jesus is identified as rabbi, as teacher. And more than any other activity in the gospel of Mark, Jesus devotes himself to teaching.

Jesus shows his authority and power first through his words. And he comes proclaiming the good news. And the kingdom of God is at hand. Now that's important, I think, to ponder.

Why does he come with words? Because Jesus' authority over everything and everyone is established through his word.

Now, it's an understatement to say our culture does not like authority. We hate it.

It was a movie, School of Rock, said they got stick it to the man neosis. You know, like, we're sticking to the man everywhere. That's like the narrative of all of life. A 2014 Gallup poll showed that public faith in the U.S. Congress had reached a historic low with just 6% of Americans approving of Congress.

[13:50] That's less than those who sell used cars. So that's low. And used car guys are always the butt of every joke, so I'm sorry if you sell used cars, but you worked for a joke.

Well, today you did. We associate authority with the abuse of power, right? That's what our culture is talking about. We're against men. We're against so many different things because of the abuse of power.

You associate it with taking away our freedom. Freedom! We've got to fight for it. And so we associate authority with taking it away. And one book I've been reading lately, working slowly through, has talked about in our culture, final authority has moved from being given to a sovereign transcendent.

That means it's kind of out there God. To where authority is placed on what I feel or what I want.

So it's moved from something way outside me, someone I submit to, to what I feel and what I want. That's the only way someone could say I'm a woman trapped in a man's body. What I feel about me has been given final authority over me, higher even than the sovereign God and even than my genetic makeup and anatomy.

[15:13] Do you see that? It's a massive shift in authority. It's a massive shift in the way we understand meaning. Now you may not make the same conclusion about yourself, sexuality, but you are probably mistaken if you don't think you give higher authority to your feelings than you should.

When we withhold forgiveness and hold on to bitterness, we excuse ourselves because our feelings are hurt.

That's an authority problem. Your feelings are meant to submit to God. When we cross the line in the sexual immorality, crude, coarse joking and fantasy, we defend ourselves because of a longing for love.

Who wouldn't want to deny me love? But longing is a feeling and it's an authority problem. When we grumble and complain in our daily lives, we absolve ourselves because of how hard it is.

And so we excuse failure to be content with food and clothing like Hebrews 13.

[16:30] When we wallow in guilt and condemnation for the sins for which Christ died, we do so because it doesn't feel right for us to be forgiven. That's a problem of authority.

See, we are all guilty of giving the final authority to what we feel or what we want. But Jesus came to establish his authority over everything and everyone. It's to his word.

And I love it. He underlines his word first because it's his word that is entrusted to us. In fact, in 2 Peter 1, Peter says, there's something more trustworthy than being with Jesus on the mountain when he was transfigured, and it is the word of God.

And so we submit our feelings and our wants and our desires to his word. We submit our lives to his word. And you guys know the way it is when you follow Jesus Christ, when he calls you to follow him.

He doesn't give you the game plan. He doesn't tell you this is what's going to happen, and then that's going to happen, and then this is going to happen. And they're all going to live happily ever after. It doesn't happen like that. He doesn't give you these things.

[17:29] He just says, follow me. We give him authority. Several weeks ago, I announced to you that our family and churches had adopted a new statement of faith.

My guess is it was a bit of a yawn for you. Like, that's great, Alexander. You know? Yeah, I'm not trying to shame you or something like that.

You know? It is kind of a thing that's going on with us. It may not have as much bearing in your daily life. But in our day and age, I want you to see why we did it. When definitions are being rapidly reformed and reshaped according to our culture's ever-changing feelings and wants, adopting a statement of faith right now is in fact very countercultural.

In an American church, continuing to change its positions on who can be a pastor, who can be accepted in a church, what lifestyle choices are permitted for the people of God, it is countercultural to plant a flag, and say thus far, no further.

Come what may, this is where we stand. That statement of faith may get me in trouble because we submit our feelings, our wants, our lives, our families, and our churches to the supreme authority of Jesus Christ.

[19:01] That's the way the church has marched forward. Not by hiding, by standing on these things. Point two, the kingdom of God advances with power.

The kingdom of God advances with power. Immediately, an unclean spirit confronts Jesus. Look in 23, and immediately there was, in their synagogue, that's that there I was looking for earlier, and in their synagogue, a man with an unclean spirit that was there.

You know, there's a couple quick things, kind of background type things, a few more of these things. If you remember, I told you that Mark was the, he gave, I mean, Peter gave Mark the testimonies, eyewitness testimony, this gospel is based on.

I told you, some of the ways we see that, we see it in a number of ways, but one of the ways we see it is that when they're moving about, Mark uses language like they, he uses plural language.

But when he gets in the synagogue, or when they stop moving, he uses singular language again, and you see that in 21, right? So the idea is that Peter is with them in the they, they're walking

around, but then when they get in the synagogue, when they get wherever they're going, Peter is one in the audience watching.

[20 : 18] So you see that in 21, when they went into Capernaum, immediately on the Sabbath, he entered the synagogue and was teaching. So that's one of those episodes that I pointed out. If you want more of those, you can listen to the first message.

Notice too, the repetition of immediately. So we see it in 21, immediately. We see it in 23, immediately. We also see it, as I interpreted it, in 28, immediately at once means immediately. Mark used this word to notice a shifting of scenes, and he does it three times here so that we would capture the shifting of scenes in this episode. So that's really what our points are based on, these shifting of scenes defined by this immediately.

And so immediately, there was in the synagogue, a man with an unclean spirit. There's so much here to ponder. Literally, it's a man in an unclean spirit.

Unclean spirit is Mark's description of someone who's been overtaken or possessed by a demon. Like a pebble that drops into a glass of water, completely covering the pebble, this man is completely covered by a spirit of uncleanness, ungodliness, and wickedness, unlike the pebble, it is driven deeper into him.

[21 : 33] Not merely an external covering. He is not who he was. Just as Jesus is led and controlled by the spirit, this man is led and controlled by an unclean spirit.

His mind, his heart, his will are directed unto godliness by this unclean spirit. And if you look in 23, it's like he just appears.

Jesus is there teaching and then this man disappears. Maybe like a spirit, he walks to the wall and he appears there. I don't think that's the idea at all. I think it just seems that everything was going fine and then until Jesus began teaching and declaring his authority over everyone and everything, including this man.

I think there's a sense in which this demon felt Jesus was invading his territory and so he speaks up. It's really interesting to note the first time Jesus encounters a demon in the Gospels is not in the red light district.

It's among the people of God. They find a good home there. So at the presence of Jesus, this demon cries out.

[22 : 45] This unclean spirit cries out. Look in 24. He says, What are you to do with us? Jesus of Nazareth. The first question he asks is a question like you would ask in the midst of battle. What have you to do with me?

That's repeated throughout the Bible. What have you and I together in this? What do you want with me? So the demon perceives something the other people in the synagogue do not see.

The demon perceives something the disciples do not see. Jesus has come to make war on every evil spirit and to destroy him. Look at the way he talks. He said, What have you to do with us?

Now, you know, to envision a bunch of demons filling the room, but he's speaking the same way legion says that. We are legion. And what he means by that is he recognizes that Jesus did not come for a single demon or a single battle, but Jesus came to up in the demonic system.

He's come to overtake the devil and all his entourage. And so the demon kind of shouts out, What do you do with us? What's this battle all about? You know, have you come to destroy us?

[23 : 56] So you're coming, you're making an assault on us. This is a big battle. And then he shouts out, I know who you are. The only one of God.

The first person that rightly identifies Jesus Christ in the gospel is a demon. But he's not uttering his name to submit to him.

He's not uttering his name to follow him. He's proclaiming his name to try to overcome him. Some of the prosperity preachers, you've heard of them. They talk about a name it and claim it type of gospel.

This idea is that you name that evil thing that's trying to overtake you and you will overtake it. And so you name whatever it is, you know, addiction of some sort and you will overtake it. And kind of don't deny it.

Don't skirt it under the rug. Name it. And you will claim it. Name it. Declare it. And you'll claim victory over it. So the demon thinks that if he names who Jesus really is, he will gain victory over him.

[24 : 55] That's the idea. You are Jesus of Nazareth. I'm very blunt with you. Same. You remember that scene in Acts 19, the lady following Paul around?

You know, I know you are, but let me know the words of eternal life or whatever it is. And then the Siva tries to do that too. He goes, you know, Paul I know. Jesus I know. Paul I know. But who are you? That's actually a pretty funny scene.

But, you know, it's this idea that I can conquer him by that. But Jesus commands him to be silent and come out. Look in 25. Jesus rebuked him.

Notice, Jesus doesn't recite a special prayer or formula. Jesus doesn't cast a spell or begin to chant. Jesus drives the demon out with a word.

He's silent. One word. And come out of him. And the unclean spirit convulsing him and crying out with a loud voice came out of him.

[26 : 05] Jesus drives him out with a word. Jesus rebukes him. Now, our rebukes are very different. You know, we come to somebody we want to rebuke or something like that. Hey, could you stop doing that please?

You know, something like, it has no power. But Jesus' rebuke, his very word, brings about the submissive effect that he desires. So Jesus' rebuke, he rebukes him with the authority and power of the Lord.

2 Samuel 22, Jesus, I mean, David talks about his deliverance in a similar way. The Lord thundered from heaven and the Most High uttered his voice. He sent down arrows and scattered them, lightning and routed them.

Then the channels of the sea were seen. The foundation of the world would lay bare at the rebuke of the Lord, at the blast of his nostrils. So what Mark is telling us is this is the Lord.

Everything bows. His word, in some ways, to separate his word and power is a false distinction. His word is power. He commanded and it stood firm.

[27 : 08] He spoke and it came to life. And so here he says, he rebukes, be silent in immediate submission. And then it's over. Don't you just love how vivid this encounter is?

I mean, it's Peter. He's right. How vividly this spirit convulsing him and crying out with him. It's a front row seat we have in this really bizarre encounter with his unclean spirit and then the man is completely set free.

And Jesus doesn't say to him, go do something else. He doesn't say, go wash up. He doesn't say, go to the temple and offer sacrifice because this man is a victim. Lots of people are victims in our culture but this one is a real victim and now he's free.

He's free. It reminds me of Lazarus. When Jesus goes to the tomb, unbind him and let him go. The pangs of death, the clutches of death will no longer hold him.

Jesus advances his kingdom with power. Jesus advances his kingdom with power. Mark is saying Jesus is the king. Jesus is the king.

[28 : 19] We've said again and again Mark does not tell us Jesus is the king. Mark shows us. Mark does not kind of break it out in a systematic theology sort of way. Mark shows us scene after scene of who Jesus is and so this episode is an example.

It's a model. It's a paradigm for how Jesus will advance his kingdom with words and with power. There's going to be many more examples. It's going to cascade on us as we walk through Mark. Jesus is going to do miracles after miracles. More miracles than any other gospel and he places a special emphasis on casting out demons because Jesus is that king.

Because the ideal person in the Bible is not a politician or a life hacker or a self-help expert. The ideal figure in the Bible is a warrior king.

David is a man after God's own heart but he's not just a songbird. He's a warrior. He leads his people into battle. He fought for his people so too Samson and Gideon and Joshua and Ezra and so too.

[29 : 26] Why is that? So too the Lord. The Lord delivered the people out of the Red Sea with an outstretched arm. I've been reading through Exodus this month. It's just coming alive. He's outstretched arm.

Outstretched arm. He can emphasize and Moses said I sing to the Lord for he triumphed gloriously. The horse and rider he's thrown into the sea. Why? Because the Lord is a man of war. The Lord is his name and he continues to fight with his people just a few chapters.

Waiter. You remember Moses faced the Amalekites and Moses called them to fight on the mountain. He raises his hands but then when his hands start to lower the people start to lose and so Aaron and her on either side raise up his hands.

What's going on? What's the idea there? The idea is that in their own strength they fall but when the Lord when he raises his hand and they depend on the Lord the Lord conquers.

And that's what he does. That's the story of the Bible. The Lord delivers again and again. The Lord is a great warrior and so years later in exile the Lord promised that he would come again.

[30 : 30] He would send his arm again to deliver his people. Look in Isaiah 40. He says Behold the Lord comes with might and his arm rules for him.

Behold his reward is with him. His recompense before him. Two chapters later Isaiah prophesies again the Lord is a mighty man. The Lord goes out like a mighty man like a man of war who stirs up his zeal.

He cries out. He shouts aloud. He shows himself mighty against his foes. The arm symbolizes strength and so the Lord promises to rule with his strong one.

Promises to rule with his mighty one with his outstretched arm again. And so Mark Sanders who is this arm of the Lord? Who is he? He leaves us with no doubt.

He is the one who John said is mightier than I. Where did that word come from? Right here. He is the one.

[31 : 27] Jesus is the arm of the Lord who comes with might. This scene shows how he comes to make war and to conquer each of his demons and finish them off on the cross.

And you may be thinking I thought you said a couple weeks ago Satan was bound. What's going on here? I did.

Satan was bound. He's a strong man who was bound. His defeat was finalized but not yet actualized.

actualized. Satan's demons still roam the world but his cronies still deceive and distort and corrupt. John says we are we know that we are from God and the whole world lies in the power of the evil one.

But while he moves about he knows he's done. So what happened in the temptation? Satan was bound until Jesus returns again. Jesus is going to keep mopping up his cronies until the very end.

[32 : 54] I think that's what's going on. I think the idea is so he's bound in earlier in this chapter and yet we see these episodes. We see more casting out of the more exorcisms if you want to call it that in the gospel of Mark than any other gospel.

I think what's going on is Jesus Jesus is mopping up what's left over. You know if suddenly your dishwasher sprung a leak in the middle of the night the first thing you would do is not grab the mop. You would go and shut off the source right? But then your work wouldn't be done because your room would be filled with water. I think that's what's going on.

Jesus shut the source and now he's mopping up the rest. And so we're going to see these episodes. We're going to continue to see them in this age until the very end of the age where Jesus is mopping up the demons the leftover wreckage from his finished work and brings his kingdom in full.

So Jesus comes with words and he comes with power and he comes finally by faith. The kingdom of God advances by faith. So after the man is set free everyone in the synagogue is amazed.

[34 : 13] and his fame spreads. Look in verse 27. They're all amazed and they question one another.

What is this? He commands unclean spirits. They obey him. They're dumbfounded. What is this?

It's a question of astonishment at something only God can do. What happened? What is this? A couple months ago we were given a car. We were calling my wife.

We're like, what is this? You know? We knew it was a car but you know, what in the world? Where did this come from? This is only the Lord. Only you can put something like that on somebody's heart.

That's what they're doing. They're responding with amazement. Only God can accomplish a miracle like this. And then look in verse 28. At once his fame spread. Literally it's a report spread and gathered this fame.

[35 : 18] You know? The report spread and gathered fame everywhere throughout the surrounding region of Galilee. Jesus advances by faith.

What happened to these guys in the synagogue? Did they trust in Jesus Christ? Did they leave their nets so to speak?

They leave their boat. We don't know. Mark doesn't tell us. In fact, these words, astonishment and amazement, two different words here, but they're littered throughout the gospel of Mark.

Sometimes they refer to the astonishment that leads to faith. Sometimes they refer to astonishment that only ends in doubt. We see this throughout our culture.

We think that the people who have experienced the greatest success and prosperity would be the ones who are truly happy, content, and thankful to God. Far too often that's not the case.

[36 : 21] Which brings me to Tom Brady. Yes, he won. In case you didn't know, last week, Tom Brady won his seventh ring. It was a total snoozer.

If you didn't watch, that's fine. It'll silence people like me forever. He's the goat. If anyone cares. Yet even though he has seven rings from all appearances, he does not seem to have rested in Jesus Christ.

In fact, after winning his third Super Bowl, he's on a radio show. And he said, why do I still think there's something greater out there for me? I mean, maybe a lot of people would say, hey man, this is what it is.

I've reached my goal, my dream, my life. Me, I think, God, there's got to be more than this. I mean, this isn't, this can't be what it's all cracked up to be.

The interviewer asked, what's the answer? Hauntingly, he responded, I wish I knew. I wish I knew.

[37 : 34] We assumed if we were in Brady's shoes, we wouldn't have that struggle. We assumed if we just lived and walked with Jesus, then we'd have no trouble believing. If we just saw some of the miracles with our own eyes, then we would follow him.

But Judas warns us about that. What? And in conclusion, we're being pressed to see it's not enough to hear the words of Jesus Christ.

It's not enough to know about him. It's not enough to walk down the aisle and pray the prayers. It's not enough to be able to recite the scriptures. The demon knew Jesus Christ. Even the demons, James tells us, believe in God and shudder.

It's not enough to see the power of Jesus Christ. It's not enough to have spiritual powers. It's not enough to be a part of a church and to serve powerfully in his name.

Hauntingly, again, Jesus addresses the crowd, not every one of you says, Lord, Lord, will enter the kingdom of heaven by the one who does the will of my father. On that day, many will say, Lord, Lord, did we not prophesy in your name?

[38 : 42] Cast out demons in your name and do mighty works in your name and then I will declare to you, I never knew you. Depart from me, you worker of lawlessness. It's not enough to see things.

Mark doesn't tell us how the people in the synagogue responded so that we would carefully consider our response. The only ones who are saved are those who put their complete trust in Jesus Christ.

The only ones who are saved are those who submit to him and follow him, who turn over the keys of their life to Jesus Christ, who bow and receive him as Lord and Savior.

Listen to what John Newton commented on these verses. The great hymn writer wrote, Let us take heed that our faith be a faith of the heart as well as the head. Let us see that our knowledge has a sanctifying influence, a godly influence on our affections and our lives.

Let us not only know Christ but love him from an actual sense of actual benefit received from him. Let us not only believe that he is the Son of God and the Savior of the world but rejoice in him and cleave to him with purpose of heart.

[40 : 01] The life of Christianity says Luther, Martin Luther, consists in possessive pronouns. It's one thing to say Christ is a Savior.

It's quite another to say he is my Savior and my Lord. The devil can say the first. The true Christian alone can say the second.

life of Christianity consists in possessive pronouns. Come to Jesus Christ.

The Bible says in Adam all die. It says our sin and guilt in Adam is so great that God is committed to pouring out his furious wrath on all those who refuse to trust in Jesus Christ.

It is that bad. But in Christ all shall be made alive. There is one sin bearer. There is one wrath of sword. There is one escape valve from the furious judgment of God.

[41 : 03] It is the man, Jesus Christ. And you can come to him whether you are 12 years old and you are just hearing these things for the first time and you are 42 and you have heard these things a number of times.

You think you understand but you are not quite sure that your faith rests in a possessive pronoun. Maybe your faith rests in Jesus as the Savior. But I want to appeal to you that is not enough to save you from the wrath that is coming.

There is a storm brewing on the horizon of the wrath of God for sinners and you need more than a definite pronoun to rescue you from that wrath.

You need a possessive one whereby you say I cannot stand on that day unless I stand behind another. the man Christ Jesus the righteous for the unrighteous the guiltless for the guilty the perfect one for the sinner that we might be brought to God.

That's the truth of the gospel and it's not enough to be outside of him for all his benefits only flow from being possessed by him hidden in him to be one of those that get up and follow him and say I don't count my life of any value nor is precious to myself if only I might finish the call of God in following him all the way if you'll but come the scriptures say today is the day of salvation the heavens will part and the verdict of your life will be I am pleased because of Jesus let us pray Father in heaven we thank you for these truths God we need our faith to rest on something greater than our fleeting feelings and our fickle ones we need our faith to rest on the authoritative word of Jesus

[43 : 16] Christ we submit to you we humble ourselves before you we refuse to live in our own strength raise the arms of Moses God there is no help in the flesh but in the spirit there is life Lord we hide beneath you and cry out to you save us from the wrath that is coming to the blood that was spilled we worship you and praise you in Jesus name amen you've been listening to a message given by Walt Alexander lead pastor of Trinity Grace Church in Athens Tennessee for more information about Trinity Grace please visit us at trinitygraceathens.com BORIS