

Written Copy: Mark 1:22-27 "The Advent of Christ's Rule Over Satan"

Midweek Advent #2

Wednesday, December 11th, 2024

Text: Mark 1:22-27

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. 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." ²⁵ 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. ²⁷ 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."

Exegetical Statement

Jesus speaks with the authority that belongs to the LORD God, the authority that created and sustains all things. His dominion, His reign and rule is expressed in the authority of His Word. He taught like no other rabbi or scribe, because He didn't just talk about God's word, He proclaimed the truth of it in power. His presence and teaching caused the demon possessed man to come forward and address Jesus, insolently yet fearfully. It knew who He was in His humanity as Jesus of Nazareth, but also knew of His divine nature as Son of the Most High God. It recognized the eternal destruction that lay in its future, but insolently charged Jesus with coming to bring that about now in an effort to cast dispersions upon Him in the presence of the men Jesus is trying to save. Jesus immediately expresses sharp disapproval to the demons work and words and immediately shuts it up. Jesus gives the command and the demon comes out of the man. This causes a report to be circulated all around Galilee about Him and His authority. Jesus goes on to heal Peter's mother-in-law, as well as heal many afflicted by various diseases and cast out many demons as His reign and rule frees people from bondage to physical and spiritual affliction.

Focus Statement:

Jesus Christ as the Son of the Most High God reigns and rules over Satan and his forces absolutely. Through His life, death, and resurrection Satan has been chained, and cannot claim those who are protected under His reign and rule by faith. These powers of darkness must obey His commands and will. And Christ uses these forces to accomplish His will in ways we cannot always understand. His Spirit works though this powerful word to keep us protected by pointing to our sinful disobedience, which works for Satan, and then confirming in our hearts and minds it has been forgiven, atoned for, and gone. We rest in faith knowing that a day is coming when all the evil forces will be forever removed and will never bother us again for eternity.

Function Statement:

Why it's important to know:

People see the devil as a myth, or symbolic of the evil in the world as opposed to a real entity to be warned of. Others fear him as having power equal to Jesus, or as able to work evil that comes unexpected, or beyond God's control. We can fail to understand the power and authority of His Word in the implementation of His control over Satan and the forces of evil.

What the hearer should do as a result:

Rest securely in Christ's reign and rule by faith knowing that He through His Word and His angels is protecting you from being claimed and led away by Satan. Allow His Spirit to keep you safe through Word and Sacrament.

Subject Sentence: Satan can only do what fulfills the will of Christ

Introduction

Tonight we continue our Sermon Series on the Advent of Christ's Reign and Rule, the reason He came as a baby on Christmas morning. As you can easily discern, our two Gospel Lessons deal with demons and exorcism. How does the subject of demonic work and influence among people in our day and age make you feel? In my experience there are three viewpoints that exist within the Church and outside of the Church, which are unhelpful and wrong. And perhaps all three are fueled by how Satan and demons are portrayed on TV and in the movies.

The first is that Satan and demons are a figment of human imagination, that they are at best a personification of the evil that does exist in the world, an evil which is a necessary counterbalance to the good in the world. The idea here is that without evil how would one know what is good. This is promoted among other places by "Star Wars", which adapts Eastern Mythology in it's dark side and light side of "The Force". But the Bible, which is our source of truth clearly stands against the necessity of evil for the existence of good. In the beginning the LORD created all things very good. There was no evil, no hatred, no war, and no death. Evil broke into the world via a fallen angel named Satan, who tempted the first two human beings, who then fell from being totally good to being totally corrupted. They fell into Satan's grasp. And all human beings born after them are born under the control of sin, death, and the devil. For us Satan is real and something to be wary of.

A second viewpoint sees Satan and his demons as being not too bad of a guy. What comes to mind that promotes this kind of thinking are the TV shows "Supernatural" and "Lucifer". In Supernatural there are two brothers who hunt evil creatures and monsters. They at times hunt demons, but at various times in the show they team up unwillingly with demonic forces to work together to conquer monsters that are more evil than demons. In the show Lucifer, Satan is portrayed as a creature who comes to live among people and teams up with a detective to help solve crimes. I'm sure the real Satan appreciates this PR campaign on his behalf, but this is far from the truth.

Satan knows he is a defeated foe who will spend eternity suffering terrible punishment for his work to undermine and thwart God's will and plan. He hates God and therefore hates what is precious to God, which is us-mankind. Rather than provide any kind of help, Satan wants us to suffer, as can be seen by what his demons were doing to the body of the man with the Legion of demons, forcing him to cut himself on stones, and in what the demon tried to do to the young child Jesus' disciples could not exorcise. That father told Jesus that the boy would often try to throw himself into the fire. Satan and his demons want nothing more than to destroy us in this life and to join them in eternal suffering and destruction in hell.

Of course, there are a small number who out and out worship him. But keep in mind, any time you worship anything or anyone other than the Triune God you are in effect worshipping Satan. That means all of the unbelieving world in effect worships Satan and does his bidding. Whenever we bow to and follow the desires of our sinful heart we are working for Satan's cause, which is do anything and everything except worship and obey God.

With that realization, you can understand why some Christians live with a real fear of Satan and his power. This is fueled by such movies as the Exorcist, or other scary movies about demonic possession. In these Satan is portrayed as having great power and authority that rivals that of God. They portray a battle raging in this world, God vs. Satan, and it is a real struggle with at times no clear winner. In fact, it appears that at times Satan gets the upper hand. And when we look at all the evil that exists in the world, one can assume that there are places just too dark and evil for God to help or work, as if they are enemy territory that God has had to concede over to Satan. In this line of thinking there are Christians that are uncomfortable discussing anything to do with Satan, or demonic possession, for fear it will bring an enemy attack upon them.

Now Satan and his demons are nothing to laugh and joke about. They are real and the evil they promote in the world is real. We should be aware of and respect the power, cunning, intelligence, and influence Satan has. But should we live in fear of him? Tonight let's take a Biblical view of The Reign and Rule of Jesus Christ over the Satanic Realm.

Mark Chapter 1

In our reading from Mark Chapter 1 we see how Jesus' teaching and words have authority beyond the power of any man or demon. His Words have the very power that created all things and sustain all things. What He declares not only informs us as to what is truth, it makes what He says truth in our world and in our hearts.

Mark 1:24 "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."

Notice that when Jesus is preaching in the synagogue it not only grabs the mind and attention of the people gathered, but it also brings out of the woodwork a demon possessed man. This demon knows who Jesus is, better than anyone else there at that time, even the disciples. It knows that in His humanity He is Jesus of Nazareth. It also knows that in His divinity He is the Son of the Most High God. It knows what its fate will be on the Last Day, destruction. While it knows all these things it doesn't have saving faith in Jesus. It hates Him and speaks insolently to him, "***What business do you have with us, Jesus of Nazareth? Why have you come to meddle in our affairs?***"

Jesus has not come to destroy but to save. Jesus has come to meddle in Satan's affairs to snatch from his grasp what rightly belongs to God, the precious soul of this man whom God truly loves. And that is the work Jesus words of command accomplish. **Mark 1:25-26** ²⁵ **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.** And the result is the demon must comply with this word of command. There is no struggle, no wrestling match between Jesus and the demon, it leaves. Jesus will go on to not only heal physical afflictions but cast out many demons from many people. He is able to do this because the power and dominion of His reign and rule cannot be thwarted or stopped by Satan.

Mark 5

The absolute authority that Jesus has can be seen clearly in the story from Mark Chapter 5. We can also see the love and care exhibited by Jesus for all men, Jew and Gentile alike. Jesus crosses over to the other side of the Sea of Galilee to the territory of the Gerasenes, which is a Gentile territory, just to encounter this one demon possessed man.

As soon as Jesus lands the demon possessed man sees His arrival from a long way off and came running to first stand and then kneel in His presence. He does this not out of joy, or because the demons missed Jesus, or because they are glad to see Him. They voice the same insolent complaint as the demon in the synagogue. **Mark 5:7 "What have you to do with me, Jesus, Son of the Most High God? I adjure you by God, do not torment me."** These demons must come and appear before the Son of God in human flesh not because they want to, but because Jesus' reign and rule forces them to comply. He has total dominion over them, even though they hate Him for it, as seen by the insolent snarky plead not to torment them. But they too know that the end will be for them, and there isn't anything they can do about it. This man is someone who is feared by the locals because of his supernatural strength, but Jesus is not afraid one bit by Him, because Jesus is in complete control.

Mark 5:10-12 ¹⁰ **And he begged him earnestly not to send them out of the country.** ¹¹ **Now a great herd of pigs was feeding there on the hillside,** ¹² **and they begged him, saying, "Send us to the pigs; let us enter them."**

But despite the insolence, their attitude is one of total subjection to the reign and rule of Christ. They know that He will cast them out of this man, and they must go. But they seek a way to manipulate things so that they can stay around and cause more mischief, perhaps encourage more people to turn away and stay away from faith in the One True God. Notice they beg Jesus earnestly, pleading with Him. What is happening here is not just them pleading once, but over and over again that He would not send them to the place where all evil beings go await Judgement Day.

The devil and his demons are intelligent and crafty. But they are not intelligent and crafty enough to pull one over on the Christ who rules and reigns over all things. The demons go into the pigs, who run headlong into the Sea of Galilee and drown. It should be noted that the depths of the sea were regarded by the people of that time to be the abode of lost souls and demons. While this is a myth, the point being made seems to be that these Legion of demons will not be bothering people on this earth anymore.

Revelation 20

In our world today it may seem that the devil and his satanic forces have free reign and rule over various parts of the globe, including places surrounding us where there is a plethora of graffiti covered burned out buildings and vacant houses. But our text from Revelation enlightens us to the spiritual reality of things.

Revelation 20:1-3 ¹ Then I saw an angel coming down from heaven, holding in his hand the key to the bottomless pit and a great chain. ² And he seized the dragon, that ancient serpent, who is the devil and Satan, and bound him for a thousand years, ³ and threw him into the pit, and shut it and sealed it over him, so that he might not deceive the nations any longer, until the thousand years were ended. After that he must be released for a little while.

The Apostle John in this highly symbolic book reveals the spiritual truth about the freedom and power Satan and his evil forces have. The symbolic picture of the chains and the bottomless pit describe him as a bound creature, under the control of Christ Himself. He can only do what Christ allows him to do. And all that Christ allows him to do always works to further and fulfill the will and plan of God on earth, to complete all that must happen before Jesus returns on the Last Day. The devil can plan and plot all he wants to try and foil the will of God, but all that he is allowed to do will always work to fulfill God's will and plan, even though that is the last thing Satan wants to do.

And when was Satan and his demons bound? When Jesus Christ asserted His dominion over them in His life, death, and resurrection. Satan is the adversary, the Accuser, who wants to accuse us of all our sinful disobedience and put forward that we deserve the same punishment as he, to live apart from Christ's love and rule now and suffer with him for eternity. But Jesus foiled that plan of Satan by taking all our sins and disobedience that he would accuse us of and removing it from us forever as our atoning sacrifice. When He suffered and died, He cleared the record books of all that would make you worthy of eternal suffering and death. And instead through your baptism He gives you all the good He did for you to earn for you a place before Him now in His reign and rule, and forever in eternal life. With no sin to charge you of Satan has no authority over you, no claim to you either now or for eternity.

Conclusion

Christ has brought His reign and rule into your heart this day so that you need not live in fear of Satan and the power he exerts in this world. We live knowing and confessing that he is real, he exists, and is far more intelligent, cunning, and powerful than any human being on their own. But as a believer in Christ, saved by His life, death, and resurrection, you never face him on your own. You face him with the power of the Holy Spirit who dwells within you, who wields the power and authority of the Word of God that all demonic forces must comply with. In Christ you have been saved from the eternal suffering that Satan and his demons will face. You have been saved and brought into His reign and rule for life with Christ now and for eternity. You live in the shelter of the Most High, abiding in the shadow of the Almighty. Together we confess **Psalms 91:2 I will say to the LORD, “My refuge and my fortress, my God, in whom I trust.”** May you continue to live with Him as your refuge and fortress, protected and built up by His Word and Sacrament, unto life everlasting. Amen.