

“The Authority of Jesus”

Mark 1:21-28

INTRODUCTION TO MIRACLES

1. Miracles in the gospels.

- In the gospel of John miracles bear witness to Jesus as the Christ.
- In the gospels of Matthew, Mark, and Luke the emphasis is on the miracle's relationship to the Kingdom.

2. Jesus' life begins and ends with miracles.

- Birth narratives in Matthew & Luke: angels, virgin birth, star
- Resurrection accounts in all 4 gospels.
- 34 distinct miracles in all 4 gospels. 15 healings/exorcisms

→ Jesus' life is intrinsically linked with miracles.

3. General types of miracles:

- Exorcisms – casting out of demons; sometimes associated with physical problems
- Healings – of all kinds. Jesus takes what is broken/harmed and makes it whole/healthy.
- Resurrections – Jairus's daughter (Mk 5), son of widow of Nain (Lk 7), Lazarus (John 11)
- Nature miracles – feeding 5,000, miraculous catch of fish, stopping a storm on Sea of Galilee

→ With one exception, Jesus' miracles restore, but do not destroy.

→ In Mark, miracles are associated with Jesus' teaching and the coming of the kingdom of God.

JESUS TAUGHT WITH AUTHORITY. v.21-22, 27

1. The scribes focused on trivialities. E.g., Matthew 23:23

→ Jesus spoke truth from His Father (John 18:37) and IS the truth (John 14:6).

2. The scribes focused on outward behavior. E.g., ceremonial washing of hands, dishes, etc.

→ Jesus focused on the heart. Matthew 23:25

3. The scribes mis-applied and distorted the meaning of the law so they could keep it.

-E.g., The Ten Commandments. The scribes actually thought they kept them.

→ Jesus made plain the truth and application of the law.

4. The teaching of the scribes was all about them.

-E.g., Mark 12:38-39: Beware of the scribes, who like to walk around in long robes and like greetings in the marketplaces and have the best seats in the synagogues and the places of honor at feasts

→ Jesus taught with both truth and love.

5. For these and other reasons... the scribes lacked authority in their teaching. v.22

→ Jesus taught with authority because his words came straight from the heart and mind of the Heavenly Father.

John 8:26: He who sent me is true, and I declare to the world what I have heard from Him.

→ The Word of God incarnate was teaching the Word of God. With authority.

JESUS HAS AUTHORITY OVER UNCLEAN SPIRITS. v.23-27

1. A man with an unclean spirit presents himself. v.23

2. The man with the unclean spirit is disturbed by Jesus. v.24

- Jesus and the unclean spirit have nothing to do with one another. (different realms)
-a Hebrew idiom. 'Why do you interfere with us?' 'Mind your own business!'
-the demons know our language, our idioms, our sayings.
- Jesus has come to destroy the unclean spirits. 1 John 3:8: The reason the Son of God appeared was to destroy the works of the devil.
- The unclean spirit recognizes Jesus for who He is: the Holy One of God!

3. Jesus rebuked the unclean spirit. v.25

4. The unclean spirit obeyed Jesus. v.26

5. The people were amazed at Jesus' authority over the unclean spirits. v.27

→ This 1st miracle in Mark shows a conflict of kingdoms: Jesus' coming is disrupting & displacing Satan's kingdom. The Light of the world is breaking into the strong man's house to bind him.

This week I (Pastor Ken) received mail from a ministry my wife and I support called Harvest USA (see below). The mission of Harvest USA is to bring the truth and mercy of Jesus Christ by helping individuals and families affected by sexual struggles and by providing resources that address biblical sexuality to individuals and churches. Their purpose is to partner with and equip the Church in bringing the power of the Gospel of Jesus Christ to transform the lives of those affected by sexual sin.

Dear Harvest USA Ministry Partner,

You may have heard that Harvest USA will be excluded from participation in the Lancaster County Community Foundation's "ExtraGive" fundraising event. Of course, we are very disappointed by this decision. Harvest USA has participated in this event for the past four years. Because of the generosity of donors like you, we raised over \$55,000 last year in that one-day event.

A letter we received from the Foundation in July notified us that we no longer qualify to participate, and several of our supporters recently received emails from the Foundation indicating that an organization had been disqualified. That was Harvest USA! The Foundation told us that this decision was an extension of their new "equity" values and "anti-hate" policy, inferring that Harvest USA is a hate organization.

This is a sad turn of events, but not surprising. In a Lancaster newspaper letter to the editor that I saw last spring, the writer implored the Foundation to drop organizations that did not comply with LGBTQ+ values. This has now happened to Harvest USA because of our commitment to the authority of Scripture regarding human sexuality. Recently, several other Christian organizations that formerly participated in ExtraGive have voluntarily withdrawn from it, realizing that they are now required to subscribe to new anti-discrimination policies that may be contrary to their faith.

Because of these developments, **Harvest USA will host a "Fall Harvest USA Special-Give Day" on Thursday, November 10**. Please mark your calendar and stay tuned for more information on this one-day online giving campaign—directly through our own Harvest USA website! We are in the process of raising seed-matching funds for this special event now and hope to have a matching gift drive that day. We hope you can participate.

Finally, please keep the staff of Harvest USA in your prayers. Pray for clarity, boldness, and peace-of-heart for them. This latest incident is one of many acts of hostility and aggression aimed at Harvest USA this summer, including two rounds of vandalism at our office building, where terrible things were spray-painted about us. Still, God is in control. He is our protector. Please know that you are a great encouragement to us! If you have any questions, please don't hesitate to ask.

In Christ,

John Freeman
Founder

For more information, go to www.harvestusa.org

Brothers and sisters in Christ, this is a disturbing trend that is taking hold in our country: if you endorse and practice a Biblical sexual ethic you are/will be labeled a 'hater'. I wonder if the Community Foundation of Sarasota County or the Gulf Coast Community Foundation are following in the same footsteps as the Lancaster County (PA) Community Foundation. I hope not. But if so, every follower of Jesus should sincerely pray before they give any money to such 'community foundations.' Perhaps it is time that Christians begin our own Community Foundation?
His,
Pastor Ken