

SERIES: **#come**
#comeoutofhim – Mark 1:21-28

Today I want to begin by telling you the story about Dinklefred Dorkmeister – “Dinky”, they called him. With a name like Dinky you’d think he was an itty bitty boy, but he wasn’t. He was rather large and round and always smelled like peanut butter. And since Dinky was bigger than all of the neighborhood kids he thought he could boss them around. One day, a group of them were out playing in the snow; making snow angels, and rolling balls of snow to make little snowmen. All of a sudden, Dinky stood up, put his hands on his hips and said “Stop this snowman nonsense! I am the mighty Snow King and we shall build a mighty snow castle for me and my servants. Hurry, go to your homes and find buckets so that you may begin making bricks for my castle!” But no one wanted to make a snow castle because they always took too long. So they just ignored Dinky and kept playing. “Did you hear me” said Dinky. “I am your snow King and you are my subjects.” One little girl piped up and said “You’re not the Snow King. You’re Dinky Dorkmeister, and you’re not the boss of us!” With that, Dinky disappeared into his house only to return a few minutes later with a blanket draped over his shoulders and tied under his chin. He wanted it to look like a robe, and he held a broom upside down to look like a staff. He spoke again, “Your Snow King has returned, and for my loyal subjects who build my snow castle, I promise hot chocolate with marshmallows. It is being prepared now, so hurry and gather your buckets.” But everyone just kept doing what they were doing, and it wasn’t long before his mother called out “Time for all of you to come inside and warm up with some hot chocolate”. So, what do you think they did? They went inside for some cocoa. But, why did they obey his mother, and yet didn’t feel the need to obey Dinky?

Some people have *authority* over us – they’re in charge and can tell us what to do because they are taking care of us and are in positions of authority over us. These are people like teachers, babysitters, police officers, and our bosses and parents. But there is one person who has authority over EVERYTHING. He is Jesus.

As we look at the Gospel today, the people of Capernaum probably didn’t expect anything out of the ordinary as they made their way to the synagogue that day. It was the Sabbath, so there would be prayers, followed by the reading of the Law, then a reading from the prophets, and finally a “sermon” followed by a priestly benediction. But a “sermon” at that time wasn’t the eloquent and witty message that *you* are so accustomed to – rather, it was an academic, theological discussion of *previous* Rabbinical work. Today, it would be the equivalent of us discussing the teaching of Martin Luther, or John Wesley, or Pope Benedict – or some other well-known “authority.”

So you can imagine the concerned looks on the faces in the crowd, and the dead silence as they listened to Jesus speak as if HE were the authority! Scripture says the people were amazed – and perhaps not in a good way – as we are also told they debated amongst themselves. Should they accept His authority? If he was a false prophet he should be put to death! Did they really want to go that far? Their questions were answered when Jesus added actions to His words. He commanded an impure spirit out of a man and the spirit obeyed. At that, the people couldn’t help but believe and the news of Him spread like wildfire. Today we would say “news of Jesus went viral”. Many people were changed that day, and all because they heard the words of Jesus, and His words had power and authority.

Consider this short poem entitled “Power of Words:”

A careless word may kindle strife
A cruel word may wreak a life
A bitter word may hate instill
A brutal word may smite and kill

A gracious word may smooth the way
A joyous word may light the day
A timely word may lessen stress
A loving word may heal and bless – written by an unknown author.

Words are powerful. Words can heal or wound. Words can build up or tear down. Words can curse or bless. And when Jesus speaks they hold the utmost power. So, why are the words of Jesus so powerful?

1. First, when Jesus speaks, God’s truth is revealed.

- The Word of God is not just a word, but it is a person, and that person is Jesus.

(John 1:1-2 - In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. He was with God in the beginning.)

The man, Jesus, was the living Word of God. If your words could take on a physical form, what would they look like? A big smiley face? A bucket of tears? A dagger? An angry face?

- Jesus backed up His words with action as He exorcised a spirit.

If Jesus had been a false prophet he would not have been able to command the impure spirit. This proved He spoke with God’s authority and was the true prophet God had promised. Many people can talk a big talk but they fall short with their actions.

2. Secondly, when Jesus speaks, people are set free.

- In Jesus, people are set free from ritual and religiosity.

Jesus changed things up! He didn’t play by the old rules. He did something unexpected in the way He revealed Himself. He still reveals Himself in unexpected ways. But, do we notice? Or, are we so set in our routines that there is no room for an unexpected visit from Jesus. If you had been in the crowd that day, how would you have reacted?

- And in Jesus, people are set free from bondage.
 - It didn’t seem out of the ordinary for the man with an impure spirit to be in the synagogue. How long had he been coming? How long had he been hoping to be set free? The same is true today. Every week there are people who walk through our doors hoping that *this* will be the week they are set free from whatever has control over their life – finances, alcohol, perfection, gambling, control, greed.
 - Jesus could set the man in Capernaum free because He had authority over demons. (In fact, He has authority over everything). The impure spirit had no choice but to obey Jesus.

- Good news! The Spirit of Jesus lives within every believer, and in Christ, we have HIS spiritual authority. This means we don't have to be controlled by anything!

(1 John 2:14 – “and the word of God lives in you, and you have overcome the evil one.”)

3. And third, when Jesus speaks, people are transformed.

- Isn't it interesting that even the demon acknowledged Jesus as “the Holy One of God”. So many people say they “believe” in Jesus – but even the demon “believed”. The real question is – are we truly changed by the words of Jesus?
- Today, we have the Living Word both within us (1 John 2:14) and in Scripture (Hebrews 4:12). Jesus still speaks. Do His words still have the same effect?

If we believe in His authority, then we believe in the power of His words. If we believe in the power of His words then we are changed -- from darkness to light, from slavery to freedom, from guilty to forgiven, from wounded to whole. Listen to the words of Christ and allow yourself to be transformed.

Jesus is our stairway across the brokenness of life. He is solid because of his authority and power. He moves us closer to him, as we allow him to bring hope, love, power, authority, release, forgiveness, renewal, and cleansing into our lives.

Because He is the Son of God and is our stairway over and around the brokenness of the world, He also moves us closer to heaven and the promise of salvation which is ours through the life, death and resurrection of Jesus Christ.

Now he gives to us His powerful words so that we might share them with others. Because we believe in the power of His words and what they have accomplished in our lives, we are now free to serve Him and others.

In this world of words, there is one clear, loud, gracious word which stands out against all others and that is Jesus' word of grace in our lives, "The time is fulfilled, and the kingdom of God is at hand; repent, and believe in the gospel." Let's get the word out!

Amen.