



The Journey
Week of 03.10.13

On Your Mark: Demons. Really!?

by Andrew Blackburn

A lot of the really cool stuff that Jesus does in the Bible is pretty easy for us to appreciate. Right? Walking on water, healing the sick, calming the sea, feeding five thousand people—we see these displays of His authority and power as amazing because we can picture them. I've never seen a person walk across the sea. But I've seen a person, and I've seen a sea, so I think I can visualize a picture of what it would look like (and how utterly speechless I'd feel as I watched it happen).

And that's why, if you're like me, the idea of Jesus driving out demons is a little bit harder to fully appreciate. I have never seen (nor do I expect to see) a demon. I'm not saying that demons don't exist in the world today. But when I read about Jesus' interactions with demons in the Bible, it's not easy for me to relate because in so many ways demons don't seem to be a "thing" in today's world.

Think about what issues dominate our headlines today. People are starving? Through Scripture, we've seen Jesus feed the hungry. People are sick? We've seen Jesus heal all kinds of sickness. Natural disasters are striking violently all over the place? We've seen a sea stormy enough to terrify a boat full of veteran fishermen calm down just because Jesus told it to. But in today's world we don't see any stories (outside the movies) about demon-possessed people running around. And don't get me wrong—I'm happy about that. But I think it causes the real authority and power Jesus displays when he drives out demons to get lost.

Think about it: if we're following Jesus, then what is our ultimate battle against? Well, Paul says the answer to that question is "the powers of this dark world and against the spiritual forces of evil in the heavenly realms" (Ephesians 6:12). Demons. And again, if you're like me, you'll realize just how true that is. Who is it who whispers lies to us about ourselves, who tempts us to sin, and who does everything he can to keep us from a life of following Jesus? Satan and his demons. And they're masters of it. They know just the right buttons to push to control us, and on our own we are really, truly helpless against them.

Which makes what Jesus does in Mark 1 really amazing. This demon was in complete control of a man, leaving him totally helpless. But Jesus doesn't even have to lift a finger against him. He literally tells the demon to leave, and the demon obeys. And how does this relate to our lives? Well, for me, I know that I can struggle with all my strength against the temptation, shame, and fear that Satan throws at me and still come up short. But it's nice to know that if I look to Jesus in the moment, if I submit myself to His authority and accept the authority He delegates to His followers, I don't have to lift a finger either. Because Jesus can look at Satan, tell him to stop, and that's it. Game over.

And in those moments, I'm especially glad that Jesus is on my side.

"There are two equal and opposite errors into which our race can fall about the devils. One is to disbelieve in their existence. The other is to believe, and to feel an excessive and unhealthy interest in them. They themselves are equally pleased by both errors and hail a materialist or a magician with the same delight."

~C. S. Lewis, *The Screwtape Letters*

(You are encouraged to use the SOAP – Scripture, Observation, Application and Prayer Method for a guide. Click [here](#) to read more about developing your devotional life. Click [here](#) for an example SOAP journal entry. If you don't own a Bible, pick up "The Story of God" Bible available for free at the Welcome Center in our atrium.)

Week's Overview: Scripture declares Jesus as the "King of Kings and the Lord of Lords." From that Kingship flow authority and power. We can share in that authority and power when we come into a Covenantal relationship with Him and submit to His Kingdom authority.

monday 3.11

Read: [Mark 1:1-34 \(focus 21-34\)](#)

Study: clearly we see that the demons—the supernatural enemies of God and man—recognize who Jesus is and His absolute authority. Why did Jesus command the demons not to speak? Why, if demons recognize Jesus' identity and authority, do some people find it difficult to recognize the same?

Personal: when has Jesus taken your hand and helped you up? Compare your response to that of Simon's mother-in-law.

tuesday 3.12

Read: [Mark 4:35-41](#)

Study: Jesus displayed His authority over supernatural beings in Mark 1. Here we see Him exercising His authority over natural forces. Why do you think His own disciples still ask, "Who is this?"

Personal: In what ways, if any, do you still ask, "Who is this [Jesus]?" What are you doing to search out the answers to your questions?

wednesday 3.13

Read: [Matthew 14:22-33](#)

Study: Jesus again displays His authority and supernatural power over natural forces. How do you think Peter was able to walk on the water? What caused him to sink?

Personal: How have you seen Jesus' supernatural authority and power displayed in your life? What, if anything, is causing you to "sink"? If you fear and doubt as Peter did, pray that Jesus will take your hand and dispel both.

thursday 3.14

Read: [John 11:1-44](#)

Study: Jesus loved Lazarus and his sisters. Why then did He delay going to them until after Lazarus' death?

Personal: how do you respond to Jesus' statement and question in verses 25-26? More importantly, how does your daily living confirm or deny that response?

friday-sunday 3.15-3.17

Read: [Luke 5:17-26](#)

Study: what did Jesus reveal about His identity by forgiving this man's sins? What did the Pharisees think of that? What reason did Jesus give for His actions?

Personal: what physical infirmity or practical difficulty would you most like Jesus to correct for you? Submit that request to Jesus in prayer.

A popular Christian song includes these lyrics.

"Even if the healing doesn't come, And life falls apart, And dreams are still undone, You are God You are good, Forever faithful One, Even if the healing, Even if the healing doesn't come." ("Even If" by Kutless)

Even if Jesus' answer to your need is, "No" or "Not now," how can you recognize and submit to His Kingdom authority?

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grow (resources to help you in your study)

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go (action steps)

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