



# Our Savior's Lutheran Church

Aurora, MN

Fourth Sunday after Epiphany

*January 31, 2021*

Pastor Greg Anderson

## PRELUDE

### HEARING OF JOYS AND CONCERNS

#### CONFESSION & FORGIVENESS

LBW pg. 77

#### HYMN "I Want to walk as a child of the Light"

WOV # 649

I want to walk as a child of the light I want to follow Jesus God sent the stars to give light to the world  
The star of my life is Jesus

In Him there is no darkness at all The night and the day are both alike The Lamb is the light of the city of God  
Shine in my heart, Lord Jesus

I want to see the brightness of God I want to look at Jesus Clear Sun of Righteousness, shine on my path  
And show me the way to the Father

In Him there is no darkness at all The night and the day are both alike The Lamb is the light of the city of God  
Shine in my heart, Lord Jesus

#### GREETING

LBW pg. 78

#### KYRIE

LBW pg. 78

#### HYMN OF PRAISE

"This is the Feast..."

LBW pg. 81

**C: Worthy is Christ, the Lamb who was slain, whose blood set us free to be people of God.**

**Power and riches and wisdom, and strength, and honor, blessing, and glory are his.**

**This is the feast of victory for our God. Alleluia. Sing with all the people of God, and join in the hymn of all creation. Blessing and honor and glory, and might be to God and the Lamb forever. Amen.**

**This is the feast of victory for our God. For the Lamb Who was slain has begun His reign:**

**Alleluia, alleluia, alleluia!**

#### PRAYER OF THE DAY

**Compassionate god, you gather the whole universe into your radiant presence and continually reveal your Son as our Savior. Bring wholeness to all that is broken and speak truth to us in our confusion, that all creation we will see and know your son, Jesus Christ, our Savior and Lord. Amen.**

#### FIRST READING

Deuteronomy 18:15-20

<sup>15</sup>The LORD your God will raise up for you a prophet like me from among your own people; you shall heed such a prophet. <sup>16</sup>This is what you requested of the LORD your God at Horeb on the day of the assembly when you said: "If I hear the voice of the LORD my God any more, or ever again see this great fire, I will die." <sup>17</sup>Then the LORD replied to me: "They are right in what they have said. <sup>18</sup>I will raise up for them a prophet like you from among their own people; I will put my words in the mouth of the prophet, who shall speak to them everything that I command. <sup>19</sup>Anyone who does not heed the words that the prophet shall speak in my name, I myself will hold accountable. <sup>20</sup>But any prophet who speaks in the name of other gods, or who presumes to speak in my name a word that I have not commanded the prophet to speak—that prophet shall die."

R: The word of the Lord. **C: Thanks be to God.**

PSALM 111 (read responsively)

<sup>1</sup>Praise the LORD! I will give thanks to the LORD with my whole heart, in the company of the upright, in the congregation.

<sup>2</sup>**Great are the works of the LORD, studied by all who delight in them.**

<sup>3</sup>Full of honor and majesty is his work, and his righteousness endures forever.

<sup>4</sup>**He has gained renown by his wonderful deeds; the LORD is gracious and merciful.**

<sup>5</sup>He provides food for those who fear him; he is ever mindful of his covenant.

<sup>6</sup>**He has shown his people the power of his works, in giving them the heritage of the nations.**

<sup>7</sup>The works of his hands are faithful and just; all his precepts are trustworthy.

<sup>8</sup>**They are established forever and ever, to be performed with faithfulness and uprightness.**

<sup>9</sup>He sent redemption to his people; he has commanded his covenant forever. Holy and awesome is his name.

<sup>10</sup>**The fear of the LORD is the beginning of wisdom; all those who practice it have a good understanding. His praise endures forever.**

SECOND READING

1 Corinthians 8:1-13

<sup>8</sup>Now concerning food sacrificed to idols: we know that “all of us possess knowledge.” Knowledge puffs up, but love builds up. <sup>2</sup>Anyone who claims to know something does not yet have the necessary knowledge; <sup>3</sup>but anyone who loves God is known by him.

<sup>4</sup>Hence, as to the eating of food offered to idols, we know that “no idol in the world really exists,” and that “there is no God but one.” <sup>5</sup>Indeed, even though there may be so-called gods in heaven or on earth—as in fact there are many gods and many lords— <sup>6</sup>yet for us there is one God, the Father, from whom are all things and for whom we exist, and one Lord, Jesus Christ, through whom are all things and through whom we exist.

<sup>7</sup>It is not everyone, however, who has this knowledge. Since some have become so accustomed to idols until now, they still think of the food they eat as food offered to an idol; and their conscience, being weak, is defiled. <sup>8</sup>“Food will not bring us close to God.” We are no worse off if we do not eat, and no better off if we do. <sup>9</sup>But take care that this liberty of yours does not somehow become a stumbling block to the weak. <sup>10</sup>For if others see you, who possess knowledge, eating in the temple of an idol, might they not, since their conscience is weak, be encouraged to the point of eating food sacrificed to idols? <sup>11</sup>So by your knowledge those weak believers for whom Christ died are destroyed. <sup>12</sup>But when you thus sin against members of your family, and wound their conscience when it is weak, you sin against Christ. <sup>13</sup>Therefore, if food is a cause of their falling, I will never eat meat, so that I may not cause one of them to fall.

R: The word of the Lord. **C: Thanks be to God.**

GOSPEL ACCLAMATION

LBW pg. 83

***C: Alleluia. Lord to whom shall we go? You have the words of eternal life. Alleluia.***

GOSPEL INTRODUCTION

LBW pg. 83

***C: Glory to you O lord.***

GOSPEL

Mark 1:21-28

<sup>21</sup>They went to Capernaum; and when the sabbath came, he entered the synagogue and taught. <sup>22</sup>They were astounded at his teaching, for he taught them as one having authority, and not as the scribes. <sup>23</sup>Just then there was in their synagogue a man with an unclean spirit, <sup>24</sup>and he cried out, "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." <sup>25</sup>But Jesus rebuked him, saying, "Be silent, and come out of him!" <sup>26</sup>And the unclean spirit, convulsing him and crying with a loud voice, came out of him. <sup>27</sup>They were all amazed, and they kept on asking one another, "What is this? A new teaching—with authority! He commands even the unclean spirits, and they obey him." <sup>28</sup>At once his fame began to spread throughout the surrounding region of Galilee.

GOSPEL RESPONSE

LBW pg. 83

***C: Praise to you, O Christ.***

SERMON

**Sermon 4th Sun After Epiphany 2021 Mark 1.21-28**

"One crazy church service"

Can you imagine how crazy it would be if a possessed person jumped up during the worship service. Talk about being out of control! The closest I have been to that is to have an older person pass out during the service. People running around, some yelling some crying, chaos takes place. When Jesus was confronted at worship he remained calm and in control. Almost as if it was expected, for Jesus was challenged a lot in His ministry by the forces of evil. We can also call upon His authority when we are confronted, for His power is the ultimate power. I have included a sermon outline in my message and another excellent commentary from Osvaldo Vena, taken from the Luther Seminary *Working Preacher* web site.

Peace,

Pastor Greg Anderson

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**I. The Drama of Mark**

-After the calling of the fishermen

-Journey to Capernaum, Galilee Trading center, mixed area, fought Romans

-The beginning of his Teaching, a long discourse

**II. "They were astounded"** astonished, 1:22, Greek: to strike out, shocked, drive out or away, prolonged amazement, incredibly new

**III. "as one having authority"** usually this word described delegated authority, tradition, Roy

-In this case the authority comes from Jesus, radical message, not scribes

**-We thus have a special authority in our teaching**

**IV. The demon jumps up! "unclean spirit"**, 1:23 took up residence, had bodies

- "Cried out" 1:24 "a cry from the depth of the throat" terrible cry, a shriek!

Invoking the god's of the underworld "*Yashua Nazarenos*"

**V. "Jesus rebuked him"** 1:25 rebuked as two meanings, acknowledgement of sin

**"Be silent!"** or "hold thy peace" Luther: *phimoo* "Shut up!"

**"Come out of Him"** *exerchomai*, a command

**"Convulsing him"** 1:26 *sparasso*, spasm,

We can also command by the authority of Jesus!

**IV. "What is this? A new teaching-with authority!"** 1:27

we ask the same question: answer the gospel

-for the Jews it was like a spring thaw had come on a winter's day

-in lives with no control, here was the power of God

-was their some fear? Psalm 111:10 **The fear of the LORD is the beginning of wisdom**

-But the adventure has begun, and our God invites us along for the ride of our lives with the One who gives us life and salvation For free! Amen

### **Oswaldo Vena**

Professor Emeritus of New Testament Interpretation / Profesor de Nuevo Testamento  
Garrett-Evangelical Theological Seminary  
Evanston, Ill., USA

Jesus' teaching ministry starts in Capernaum, on the Sabbath day, in the synagogue. Jesus' exorcism represents a demonstration of authority, and Mark distinguishes that authority from the scribes'. (By the way, Mark refers here to *acquired* honor, the honor that is gained actively through social interaction).

The main activity of scribes was teaching. It consisted of an exposition of the Law or the Prophets with relevant implications for the present. Jesus is showing more authority than them. As Mark describes it, he is not presenting a new teaching but is giving an interpretation that proved to be more relevant.

The passage can be structured loosely as follows:

**a.** Jesus *comes* into the synagogue (21)

**b.** Jesus teaches with *authority* and this is acknowledged with *amazement* by those present (22)

**c.** A man with an *unclean spirit cries out* (23-24)

**d.** Jesus heals the demoniac (25)

**c'**. The *unclean spirit cries out* and leaves the man (26)

**b'**. People acknowledge Jesus' *authority* with *amazement* (27-28)

**a'**. Jesus *leaves* the synagogue (29)

The center of the structure, **d**, shows where the main emphasis resides; it is in the exorcism. The rest of the passage is constructed around it in a rhetorical parallelism that is not coincidental. It betrays an intentional structure, perhaps already present at the oral stage of the tradition and later put into writing in order to facilitate its memorization and transmission.

Two mentions of Jesus' authority seem to frame the exorcism (verses 22, 27). That is the reason why Ched Myers affirms that the demons speak on behalf of the scribes.<sup>1</sup> "Have you come to destroy us?" is spoken by the demons, but in Mark's narrative, it represents the scribes' opinion. The narrator seems to be leading the reader to ponder what a demon-possessed person is doing in the synagogue, especially in the light of a later accusation of the scribes' that Jesus performs miracles by the power of the prince of demons (3:22). In Mark's view, the scribes' teaching is "demonic" because it does not liberate, but oppresses and enslaves people. A liberating act was needed and Jesus did it!

*The Jewish Annotated New Testament* suggests at this point that the expression *Holy One of God*—applied to Elisha in 2 Kings 4:9, and opposite to *unclean spirit*—means that Jesus, like Elisha, "would restore the correct boundary between the demonic realm of death and the world of life created by God."<sup>2</sup> It is not to be taken as a messianic title, as suggested by the capitalization of "Holy One" (which is not marked as such in the Greek text), but wrongly assumed by the translators. The expression refers to Jesus as belonging to God, being pure and separated from impurity, and thus contrasting sharply with the unclean spirits. The reason why they recognize this attribute, while no other human being in the narrative has done it yet, is because demons are spiritual beings.

Jesus' command to the demons to be silent has to do with the fact that he does not want them to name him, since in that culture the one doing the naming had more authority than the one being named (see Adam naming the animals in Genesis 2:19-20). The order to come out of him has eschatological connotations; if the time has been fulfilled and the domain of God has come near, that means that God's enemies are beginning to be defeated, and that Satan's rule over the world is about to end.

## Contextualizing the text

The demons that I am talking about are those who possess us as a community, as a nation, and as members of the human race. They are intent on destroying us, and we need to cast them out. How? First, we have to name them. Second, we have to pray as Jesus did in Mark 9:29 when he exorcized the boy with a spirit.

*Naming the demons* is a way to recognize that they exist. We start with the big one, Unbelief: losing one's faith in God, in life as a sacred force, and in our fellow human beings. It is the feeling that nothing can be done to solve our problems. Then, springing from this one, come the others in fearful company: homophobia, racism, sexism, classism, religious and ideological intolerance, violence at home and at school, poverty, militarism, terrorism, war, greed, extreme individualism, globalization, out-of-control capitalism, media-infused fear that leads to paranoia, and governmental manipulation of information. To name just a few.

*Praying* is not a pious resignation to God's will, or an exercise that puts our minds at ease, but rather, using Ched Myers' words, that "intensely personal struggle within each disciple, and among us collectively, to resist the despair and distractions that cause us to practice unbelief, to abandon or avoid the way of Jesus."<sup>3</sup> In other words, it is the struggle to believe that change can really happen. A better world is possible.

Unless we name the demons, they will name us; they will control us and destroy us. But it takes courage to do so, for it will make us unpopular. Some will consider us apostates, negating the faith. I am not sure that we are willing to pay that price, as Jesus did.

## Notes

1. Ched Myers, *Binding the Strong Man*, (Maryknoll, NY: Orbis 1995), 142.
2. Amy-Jill Levine and Mark Zvi Brettler, ed. *The Jewish Annotated New Testament*, (Oxford University Press, 2011), 61.

HYMN

“Songs of Thankfulness and Praise”

LBW # 90

Songs of thankfulness and praise, Jesus, Lord, to Thee we raise, Manifested by the star To the sages from afar;  
Branch of royal David’s stem In Thy birth at Bethlehem; Anthems be to Thee addressed, God in man made  
manifest.

Manifest at Jordan’s stream, Prophet, Priest, and King supreme; And at Cana, wedding guest, In Thy Godhead  
manifest; Manifest in power divine, Changing water into wine; Anthems be to Thee addressed, God in man  
made manifest.

APOSTLES’ CREED

**We believe in God, the Father almighty, creator of heaven and earth. We believe in Jesus Christ, his only Son, our Lord. He was conceived by the power of the Holy Spirit and born of the Virgin Mary. He suffered under Pontius Pilate, was crucified, died, and was buried. He descended into hell. On the third day he rose again. He ascended into heaven and is seated at the right hand of the Father. He will come again to judge the living and the dead. We believe in the Holy Spirit, the holy Catholic Church, the communion of saints, the forgiveness of sins, the resurrection of the body, and the life everlasting. Amen**

PRAYERS OF INTERCESSION

P: .... let us pray,      **C: *Have mercy, O God.***

THE PEACE

OFFERING

OFFERTORY

OFFERING PRAYER

THE LORD’S PRAYER

LBW pg. 91

**Our Father, who art in heaven, hallowed be thy name; thy kingdom come; thy will be done on earth as it is in heaven. Give us this day our daily bread; and forgive us our trespasses as we forgive those who trespass against us; and lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil. For thine is the kingdom, and the power, and the glory forever and ever. Amen.**

BENEDICTION

LBW pg. 95

SENDING HYMN

“On Our Way Rejoicing”

LBW # 260

On our way rejoicing Gladly let us go; Christ our Lord has conquered, Vanquished is the foe. Christ without, our safety;  
Christ within, our joy; Who, if we be faithful, Can our hope destroy?

Refrain ~ On our way rejoicing As we forward move, Hearken to our praises, O blest God of love!

Unto God the Father Joyful songs we sing, Unto God the Savior Thankful hearts we bring, Unto God the Spirit  
Bow we and adore, On our way rejoicing Now and evermore.

Refrain ~ On our way rejoicing As we forward move, Hearken to our praises, O blest God of love!

DISMISSAL

LBW pg. 95

### **Prayer Concerns**

Lorna Kallio, Charlotte and Ken Carlson, Marie Anderson, Louise Ellingson, Glorene Clark, Herb Moore, Bill Utley, Bob Kallio, Marilyn Koschak, Susan (Paula Skelton's sister), Tom Lehtinen, Ruby Okstad (218-749-2866)