

Title: THE JESUS OF SUBSTANCE, MARK 1:21-28
(Chatham, NJ; 01/29/12, AM) [D – Topical]

Theme: Jesus' teaching and his authority over demons demonstrated that he exhibited more than a human connection with people; his work was substantive not merely symbolic.

Purpose: To encourage us to believe in Jesus because he had the substance of truth and power, not merely because he was a warm, compassionate person.

Introduction:

1. You have a life-threatening disease that can be thwarted by surgery. You must choose between a so-so surgeon who has a great bedside manner and a masterful one who relates poorly to his patients. Do you want the competent one or the nice one? (I feel this way about pilots.)
2. During this election cycle you are going to hear a lot about how some candidates "connect" with people and some allegedly don't. (Negatively against those the media don't like.)
3. Singers often evoke the same feelings of connectivity from people (country singers; the Beatles)
4. It is more important to judge people on the substance of their ideas than their connectivity.
5. Jargon connects with some people but it is usually hollow rhetoric. ("A chicken in every pot" or "the Great Society") (Note commercial that suggests the road to happiness might begin with a bowl of soup, and theirs is made with "farm-grown" ingredients.)
6. C. S. Lewis suggested in *The Screwtape Letters* that jargon was a useful tool in the hands of the devil because people were prone to follow them blindly.
7. The first view of Jesus in Mark shows off his competency, not his connectivity.
8. **Jesus was "connected" or really close to only a few of his closest associates (Peter, James, and John as well as Lazarus and his sisters).
9. Anyone claiming to do some important task must demonstrate competency; how much that person relates to others is not necessarily of first importance.
10. Jesus demonstrated authority (and thus, substance) by his teaching and power over demons. This is the first thing Mark wants us to know about him.

I. Authority

- A. Teachings, Mark 1:22
 1. Mark contrasts him with the scribes
 2. Something about his teaching stirred their respect; perhaps at this early stage it struck them intuitively; Mark doesn't go into details about the contrast
 3. John the Baptist witnesses to Jesus being the "Lamb," and Andrew doesn't seek out Peter until he has spent sufficient time talking with him, John 1:39
 4. P. S. It wasn't connectivity or charisma that made the disciples follow him, 16-20
 5. Remember the disciples going to Emmaus, Luke 24:32; Scripture stirred something within them (Holy Spirit?)
 6. Matthew 7:28-29 describes the same reaction (and this after the "Sermon")
 7. They heard substance!!
- B. Cast out demons, 23-27
 1. The demons recognize him, 24
 2. He commands them, 26
 3. He has authority over the spirit-world
 4. His authority also demonstrated by healing, Mark 2:10
 5. People recognized this by the miracle of food, John 6:14-15, so his miracles add to his air of being someone with substance

6. At these things the crowds were overwhelmed; there was more than connectivity and charisma; with Jesus they saw someone with genuine authority and substance

C. Later, fulfilled prophecy

1. He was the prophet that Moses spoke about, Acts 3:22
2. Their faith was affirmed by other fulfillments, Luke 24:44-46
3. Without these truths, he would have been nothing more than some new but false prophet—perhaps even with a devoted following
4. But he had substance not just symbolism or words or jargon or false promises

II. His substance made connectivity possible, Hebrews 2:14-18

A. He shared our flesh and blood, 14

1. We believe in and celebrate the Incarnation
2. Because he was human, he suffered death
3. Because he suffered death, he destroyed the power of death
4. Because he destroyed death, he defeated Satan and delivered us from fear
5. His Incarnation provided the necessary framework (substance) to deliver us
6. His was not a symbolic death (he was fully God and fully human); his was the real, substantive thing

B. Because he was made like us, he relates to us, 17-18

1. Becoming like us made him a faithful high priest
2. Because he was a high priest, he could make atonement
3. Only after becoming both human and high priest could he “connect” with us by understanding our temptations, 18
4. He understands fully because he went through it fully

Conclusions:

1. Don't be fooled by jargon or empty words.
2. Jesus demonstrated substance by demonstrating his authority.
3. People saw it in his power over demons, his power over illness, and in his teaching.
4. His teaching tells us to heed, repent, and turn to God.
5. His authority warrants our complete allegiance.
6. His power gives us hope.
7. His substance assures us it is all true.
8. This is substance we can live by and hope in.