**Theme Sentence (what is the passage saying to us now):** Jesus comes with power

**Aim Sentence (why the passage is saying it):** God’s word demonstrated power then, and still has power today.

**Context and Style of Writing**

* Rights at the start of the Jesus ministry
  + In Mark, the only proceeding events are John the Baptist, Jesus baptism and calling of the first 4 disciples
  + The passage sets the context for all that is to follow in the book of Mark – right up to his death and resurrection
* Gospel account
  + Biographic: expected to be read as an historical account of precisely what happened
  + Parallel accounts:
    - Luke 4:31-36 – records the same events – both the people’s reaction and the casting out of the demon.
    - Matthew 7:28-29 – does not record the casting out of the demon, but does include an example of the teaching at which the people marvel – the sermon on the mount. (although of course in Mark we’re told it was in the synagogue that this teaching occurred, while Matthew is on a mountainside)

**Content of the Passage**

* Start with the location and context of this teaching: he’s in the town of Capernaum, and taking advantage of the Jewish custom of allowing visiting teachers to speak as part of the Sabbath day celebration
* Mark doesn’t record the teaching itself, but of course he does record amazement at all that was said
* He then follows it with the account of Jesus’ encounter with a man possessed by a demon
  + The demon (or demons, since it says ‘us’) acknowledges who Jesus is and asks what Jesus is there to do
  + Jesus commands the demon, first to be quiet, and second to leave the man
  + The demon does what it’s told
* Mark again records the reaction of the people – who first come back to the power of Jesus’ teaching, but this time including his demonstrated power over evil spirits.
* The brief encounter closes with the effects: news of Jesus spreading over the region

**Explain Theme and Aim of the Passage**

* **Theme:** The Word comes with power
* **Aim:** God’s word demonstrated power then, and still has power today.
* At the first TEAM training session we looked at the different uses of the “Word of God” in the bible
* In this passage we have the word of God in the form of Jesus demonstrating the power of his teaching, and his power over demons
* The people acknowledge his power
  + Beginning of Jesus ministry and there is already power in his teaching
    - No previous reputation to rely on, not relying on the teaching of others, on tradition, or any other source of authority (only after this act that the news of Jesus spreads in the region)
    - Contrasted with the teachers of the law
  + Mark leaves out the teaching itself – he wants us to focus on the reaction of the people
* The demon acknowledges his power
  + It’s *afraid*
  + So many books and films are produced in which the demonic is used as a plot device to generate fear in people – imagine if people knew that these demonic beings are terrified by the very presence of Jesus
* Jesus demonstrates his power by casting out the demon
* The people comment in response to the casting out of the demon, but refer to both the teaching they have heard and the act they have witnessed
  + If it were me, I think I would focus on the act that I had seen and have forgotten any teaching that came before
  + For the witnesses, and for Mark, the teaching and the miracle are one, both demonstrate the power Jesus had right from the beginning of his ministry

**Main Application for us Today**

* Mark clearly records the power of God’s word then, and this is still true today
* Jesus, the word of God, is now risen in glory, and still has the power so clearly demonstrated here
* The preached word, the power of which is evident in the people’s reaction, still has power today, as we hear it preached each Sunday and through the week
* God’s written word in the Bible, is still powerful, as it records the events which took place, prophecy, poetry, history, narrative
* God’s word came with power then, and still has power now!