



## Mark 1:21-28

**21 Jesus and his followers went as far as Capernaum, and as soon as the sabbath came he went to the synagogue and began to teach. 22 And his teaching made a deep impression on them because, unlike the scribes, he taught them with authority.**

**23 In their synagogue just then there was a man possessed by an unclean spirit, and it shouted, 24 'What do you want with us, Jesus of Nazareth? Have you come to destroy us? I know who you are: the Holy One of God.' 25 But Jesus said sharply, 'Be quiet! Come out of him!' 26 And the unclean spirit threw the man into convulsions and with a loud cry went out of him. 27 The people were so astonished that they started asking each other what it all meant. 'Here is a teaching that is new,' they said, 'and with authority behind it: he gives orders even to unclean spirits and they obey him.' 28 And his reputation rapidly spread everywhere, through all the surrounding Galilean countryside.**

Other readings: Deuteronomy 18:15-20 Psalm 94 (95) I Corinthians 7:32-35

After the call of the first disciples, the evangelist tells us of a healing worked by Jesus, the first miracle in this gospel. He reaches Capernaum, a busy town by the Sea of Galilee, which he made the centre for his ministry. His teaching impressed the people, for it was given with authority, with conviction. Jesus spoke the truth without fear. The people are even more astonished by the healing of the man who was 'possessed by an unclean spirit'.

The initial part of the gospel is dominated by the words and the actions of Jesus. The healing actions show the power of God, while the teaching proclaims the coming of the kingdom. Jesus' powerful deeds confirm the message of the coming of the kingdom of God.

The sick man was probably suffering from some kind of mental illness, and considered to be 'possessed'. All sickness was considered evil and in some way the work of Satan. The sick man was somehow a victim of evil. By healing him Jesus challenges and conquers the power of Satan. He demonstrates that the kingdom is near.

The reading from the book of Deuteronomy includes the words of Moses that God would one day raise up a great prophet, a prophet like Moses. This reading prepares us for the gospel reading and the fulfilment of that promise. Jesus, who is greater than Moses, speaks powerful words, words of truth, words which heal. The good news Jesus brings can change our lives as it changed the life of the sick man in the gospel.

*What does this gospel say to us today?*

*What does the gospel tell us about sickness?*

*Let pray for all those who care for the sick and work for their healing.*

*Let us pray for those who preach the gospel that they may do so with courage and love.*