

Delivered from the Devil

Matthew 9:32-34

Halifax: 27 February 2005

Introduction

Today we come to the last miracle that Matthew presents in this section on miracles that Jesus performed in Galilee.

- In chapter 4, Matthew gave us a summary of Jesus' Galilean ministry with these words (Matthew 4:23-25):
 - Matthew 4:23-25: And Jesus went about all Galilee, teaching in their synagogues, preaching the gospel of the kingdom, and healing all kinds of sickness and all kinds of disease among the people. Then His fame went throughout all Syria; and they brought to Him all sick people who were afflicted with various diseases and torments, and those who were demon-possessed, epileptics, and paralytics; and He healed them. Great multitudes followed Him—from Galilee, and *from* Decapolis, Jerusalem, Judea, and beyond the Jordan.
 - In this summary, Matthew introduces us to the two ways that Jesus revealed Himself as the One who came to establish God's kingdom of righteousness in this fallen world:
 - By **His preaching** and by **His miracles**.
 - Matthew then develops this simple outline in the next five chapters.
 - 1) In the Sermon on the Mount, which is found in chapters 5, 6 & 7, Matthew gives us an example of the kind of preaching Jesus did at this time...
 - At the end of this sermon, He tells us how the multitude responded to Jesus' preaching—
 - in particular that they were struck by the authority with which He spoke.
 - 2) Then, in Matthew 8 and 9, he gives us specific accounts of some of the miracles Jesus performed.
 - The last of these, which we come to today, is the account of a mute demoniac that is brought to Jesus—
 - with the result that the demon is cast out, and the man speaks.
 - Following this miracle, Matthew then tells us how people responded to this miracle—
 - the multitude marvelling and the Pharisees accusing Him of “casting out demons by the ruler of the demons.”
- This response, coming as it does at the end of Matthews' catalogue of Jesus' miracles,

- presents to us the overall response to Jesus' miracles up until this time.
- Matthew has been giving responses all along, but with this miracle, there is a kind of climax that Matthew brings us to...
 - The casting out of demons is, in particular, exemplary of Jesus' entire ministry.
 - For His ministry can be summarised as His coming "to destroy the works of the devil,"
 - and this work is demonstrated outwardly by His casting out demons.
 - By casting out demons, we are able to see this aspect of His work that would otherwise be invisible to us.
- I would suggest to you that when Jesus came, there was a rise in the visibility of demonic activity for this very purpose.
 - Ordinarily, the work of spiritual beings—whether of holy angels or fallen angels—is kept hidden from us.
 - But because God wanted us to see the power of His Son to cast out demons, He allowed us to see what was going on behind the scenes.
- I don't know if you have ever considered it, but as far as the Old Testament is concerned,
 - there is very little if anything said about demon possession or about the casting out of demons.
 - But it is very obvious from the New Testament that when Jesus came, demon possession was a well-known phenomenon in Israel.
 - Demoniacs are brought to Jesus on a regular basis and cast out.
 - Interestingly, there seems to be little uncertainty about who is demon possessed and who is not.
 - There is not one account of someone being brought to Jesus who *thinks* he is demon possessed but is really not...
 - Nor is there an account of Jesus dealing with someone who is demon possessed even though nobody knew it.
 - This speaks against those practitioners today who find demons hiding away deep in the soul of their counselees.
 - It seems that the demoniacs Jesus dealt with were unmistakably demoniacs!
 - Somehow, everyone was able to tell

- Again, I would suggest to you that there is a reason for this increase in the visibility of demonic activity...
 - That we might be able to see Jesus authority to cast out Satan in order to establish the Kingdom of Righteousness.
 - In Matthew 12, Jesus tells us how the casting out of demons demonstrates this:
 - Mt 12:28: But if I cast out demons by the Spirit of God, surely the kingdom of God has come upon you.
 - It is important to realise that in those times and places where God has not made the work of demons and angels visible to us,
 - it is not for us to try to peer into the secret things...
 - In fact, it is strictly forbidden for us to do so!!
 - If God wishes to show us what is going on behind the veil that separates us from the invisible world of angels,
 - He will do it... and it will be clear!
 - But it is not for us to go speculating about or attempting to communicate with the world of spirits!
 - Col 2:18-19 warns you”
 - Col 2:18-19: Let no one cheat you of your reward, taking delight in *false* humility and worship of angels, intruding into those things which he has not seen, vainly puffed up by his fleshly mind, and not holding fast to the Head, from whom all the body, nourished and knit together by joints and ligaments, grows with the increase *that is* from God.
 - The warning here has to do with those who claim to have contact with the spirit world—things unseen!
 - These things have the appearance of wisdom, but in fact draw us away from Christ.
 - Understand that the things God wants His people to know are not hidden, but clearly revealed by Him!
 - Thus in Deuteronomy 29:29, it says:
 - De 29:29: The secret *things belong* to the LORD our God, but those *things which are* revealed *belong* to us and to our children forever, that *we* may do all the words of this law.
 - It is important to realise that whenever God reveals something, He makes it very clear that He has revealed it!

- Whenever restless disciples are trying to imitate the healing ministry of Jesus or the exorcistic ministry of Jesus, it is always fuzzy and doubtful.
- The primary purpose of Jesus work was to reveal clearly that God's kingdom had come in Christ,
 - The first purpose was not the healing or the exorcism itself, but the manifestation of Jesus as Messiah.
 - Because they were given to demonstrate and prove, they were unmistakable!
 - They were unmistakable even to sceptics—
 - They saw people they knew who had been blind for years given sight...
 - And they saw demons cast out of man and go into pigs...
 - and they saw people they knew well who had not walked for years get up and walk.
- When we understand the purpose of Jesus' exorcistic ministry, we are then prepared to benefit from what is revealed in that ministry.
 - Rather than desperately trying to imitate it ourselves, we are instead able to behold the glory of Christ as He is revealed in these encounters with demons...
 - And to see in His great works a display of His mighty power to bring His glorious promised kingdom to completion!
 - Oh how we need to see this today!
 - Not so we can run around healing people and casting out demons, but so that we can trust in Christ for eternal life—and boldly proclaim His glory to others.
 - We do not live in the age of sight, but in the age of faith.
 - It is for us to believe what God has revealed about Christ in His word, and what was made visible when Christ was made visible.
 - God's Spirit is the One who opens our hearts to believe...
 - To the apostles who were meant to see His glory, Jesus says:
 - John 20:29: "because you have seen Me, you have believed.
 - But of those who believe through their word and have not seen He says:
 - "Blessed *are* those who have not seen and *yet* have believed."

So in this exorcism that Matthew presents to us in our text today, let us see what we can learn about Christ.

I. First of all, learn from this demoniac something about the condition of fallen man with respect to Satan.

A. The man that is brought to Jesus is said to be demon-possessed, or you could say “demonised.”

1. The devil has taken control of him.

- He is under the power of a demon and this is known everyone.
- It is very obvious to all that this man has lost the freedom to do what he wants, but has become the dupe of Satan.
- He cannot even speak.

2. But I would suggest to you that Satan has dominion over every person until we are redeemed.

a. I don’t mean that every person is demon possessed in the same way that this man was—in a visible way—

- but I do mean that every man is ruled by Satan until Christ saves him.
- What is made visible in this man is in fact true of every man before salvation.
- and it is true of the world as a whole!

b. The Bible tells us that this is so:

1) In 1 John 5:19 it says:

- 1 John 5:19: We know that we are of God, and the whole world lies *under the sway of* the wicked one.
- You see from this statement that no one is excluded here except believers:
 - “The whole world lies under the sway of the wicked one.”
 - Satan has taken the whole world captive to do his will.

TRANS> Paul tells the Ephesians something similar to this...

2) In Eph 2:1-3, He tells them that before they were saved, they were **all** ruled by him.

- And you He (Jesus) made alive who were dead in trespasses and sins, in which you once walked according to the course of this world, according to the prince of the power of the air, the spirit who now works in the sons of disobedience, among whom also we all once conducted ourselves in the lusts of our flesh, fulfilling the desires of the flesh and of the mind, and were by nature children of wrath, just as the others.
- You see how he says that all the Ephesians walking “according to the prince of the power the of the air...”

- And more than once, he indicates that everyone else does the same.
- He describes this prince, (Satan) as very much at work in the sons of disobedience—those who do not know Christ.
 - It is not a problem of one or two here and there, but of all men apart from Christ.

B. Now you might ask me, “But how is this so?”

- How does Satan have dominion over those who are not actually demoniacs the way this man was?

1. First of all, understand that Satan has different ways of exercising his rule.

a. Some times it is indeed by dragging a person around—in a sense, against that person’s own will.

- That is certainly the case with the demoniacs who, as this man, are unable to speak or are made blind;
 - or as others who are made to involuntarily throw themselves down on the ground and thrash about,
 - or who are forced to cut themselves with stones.
- This is the most **visible** way that Satan exercises dominion but it is by no means the only way!

b. Next to this, there are those who are brought into such bondage to their lusts that they lose all self control and are led about by their lusts as by a leash...

- Picture the drunkard who loses his business, his family, his dignity—all in the pursuit of another drink...
- Picture the crack addict who will stop at nothing to get another fix. His whole life is dominated by His addiction. See him grouping around on the floor in desperation to find what he might have spilled.
- Picture the man controlled by his sexual passions who forsakes his wife, molests children, takes prostitutes and loose women, and who even takes another man if filth.
 - See how he is as someone under a spell when his lusts rise and how he cannot rest until he has answered their call.
 - We could add to this those whose lives are dominated by bitterness, grief, outbursts of anger, compulsive shopping, eating disorders, internet addiction—
 - even though they in a sense despise these things—they cannot seem to free themselves from them!

- They reproach themselves and resolve that they will not do it again, but soon they are dragged away once more.
- Such persons are not doing what they want to do, but are driven about by their lusts (in a sense) against their will...
- They are dominated by Satan.

TRANS> But this is not the only way the sons of this world lie under the sway of the wicked one.

- It is not always even that direct a bondage.

c. He also rules by deception

1) First, there can be deception by manipulation—

- By this, I mean he deceives people by making them feel obligated to do certain things.
- For example, I once spoke to a Malaysian girl who refused to come to Christ because she did not want to betray her grandfather.
- It was pitiful to see the sway that Satan had over her by guilt and manipulation.
 - How many there are who feel obligated to follow some deceptive religion or practice that offers no forgiveness of sin and no way of righteousness...
 - They feel they must continue because of some loyalty.
- In a similar way,
 - there are people who will lie or cheat in their employment because they feel obligated to their employer...
 - They are not dragged about as one pursuing lusts,
 - but voluntarily act according to their own will out of sense of obligation.

2) But besides manipulation, there is that kind of deception that is more direct...

a) Let me ask you:

- If a man deceives a woman and causes her to think he truly loves her when he only wants her body,
 - Does he not exercise rule over her?
 - Of course he does! Perhaps even a greater rule than one who leads her around with club.
 - He makes her a volunteer by deception.

- In the same way, if a politician makes all sorts of promises to the people and they believe him
 - Does he not take dominion of them by deception?
 - His dominance may even be as powerful as Adolph Hitler...
 - He wins the hearts of people and has many devoted followers...either to himself or to his cause.
 - But would you say that he exercises less dominion over them than if he led them by force—against their will?
 - I say now, the greatest dominion is over willing subjects...

b) Satan is the master of deception!

- He has a way of making us think we are doing something that is good for us when it is not.
- This is the method he used with Eve in the Garden to get her to eat of the forbidden fruit!
 - He held out empty promises and empty hopes until she was soon devoted to his cause!
- He deceives one by making him think how happy he would be if he only had more power...
 - Soon ambition causes that person to trample over others, to tell lies, to compromise principles, all in the name of gaining power.
- He deceives another by making him think how happy he would be if he only had more wealth...
 - Soon that person is cheating and scheming and so filled with cravings for wealth that love for others completely disappears...
 - Nothing is left by a human shell, driving after the golden wedge.
- He deceives another by making her think how happy she would be if only she had a lover...
 - Soon she is lying to her parents, defiling her body with fornication, walking away from her God.

TRANS> How sad it will be when these persons meet the Lord their judge and realise that they have been deceived all their life long.

2. And so you see that Satan does not have just one way of exercising his dominion.
 - a. He is above all the adversary of God...
 - He does not care for what reason people follow him...
 - He does not care if they love him, are devoted to him, or even acknowledge him at all...
 - His only concern is that they are drawn away from God.
 - If He can bring them into the deception of self-righteousness and make them pride themselves in being good moral people, that is no matter to him.
 - He has severed them from God and that is all he cares about.
 - b. Wherever you see a person who has not bowed to Jesus Christ as Lord, you see a person who is under the dominion of Satan.
 - This demoniac in our text is a visible picture of that dominion that Satan exercises over all who are outside of Christ.
- C. I want you to notice further how helpless this man is to free himself from the devil's embrace.
1. Like every other demoniac in the scripture, he does not come to Jesus to be delivered!
 - a. In the case of some demoniacs, Jesus appears on the scene and they may come to Him to speak to Him...
 - but they never come to be delivered of the demon.
 - That is their last intention!
 - b. In the case of our demoniac, he is brought to Jesus by others...
 - verse 32 says, "They brought to Him a man, mute and demon possessed."
 - Unlike the blind men in the previous account who came eagerly pursuing after Him for mercy,
 - He does not come to Jesus for mercy.
 - He is brought by others against his will.
 2. What a picture this is of every sinner in bondage to Satan!
 - a. Jesus tell us very plainly in John 6:
 - John 6:44 "No one can come to Me unless the Father who sent Me draws him"
 - We have to be dragged to God or we will never come!
 - Jesus does not limit this statement to demoniacs, but He says, "**no one** can come."

- You need to realise that we are all in such bondage to Satan that we will never leave him on our own...
 - God Himself must draw us—He must bring us from where we are to His Son.
- b. This doctrine is confirmed again and again in scripture.
- 1) 2 Cor 4:4 explains that we are so deceived by Satan that we can't even see the glory of Christ and His salvation:
 - 2 Cor 4:3-4: But even if our gospel is veiled, it is veiled to those who are perishing, whose minds the god of this age has blinded, who do not believe, lest the light of the gospel of the glory of Christ, who is the image of God, should shine on them.
 - And the Bible tells us that this is true of all if left to what they are by nature:
 - 1 Cor 2:14: But the natural man does not receive the things of the Spirit of God, for they are foolishness to him; nor can he know *them*, because they are spiritually discerned.
 - You cannot come because you cannot see.
 - That is why God must draw you.
 - 2) Romans 3:10-11 declares that no one seeks after God:
 - Romans 3:10-11: As it is written: "There is none righteous, no, not one; There is none who understands; There is none who seeks after God.
 - There is such a commitment to Satan, that even when Jesus comes to save, we refuse to seek Him.
 - We simply will not come unless the Father draws us...
 - We are dead in trespasses and sins.
- c. Now you might contend with me about this and say,
- But how can you say that no one can come? Did the blind men not come seeking after Jesus for mercy?
 - And I would answer, "Of course they did."
 - But they only came because the Father drew them by the Spirit...
 - Jesus did not say that no one ever would come to Him...
 - He only said that we cannot come apart from the divine working of God.
 - He said,
 - John 6:44 "No one can come to Me unless the Father who sent Me draws him"

- Those whom God draws will all come to Him...
- but no one comes on his own.

TRANS> And so you see that this demoniac is a picture of every person without Christ.

- The whole world lies under the sway of the wicked one and there is nothing we can do to extricate ourselves.
- That is what we learn about our condition from this demoniac!
 - It is a depressing lesson, but it lays the ground work for a much more encouraging lesson!
 - The Holy Spirit shows you your wretched condition through this demoniac only that you might see the power of Christ!

II. The second thing we learn from this demoniac is the power of Christ that is far greater than the power of Satan!

A. See how effortlessly Christ delivers this man from bondage to the demon!

1. In a wonderful way, Matthew doesn't even tell us about the details!
 - a. All we are told is that the demoniac is brought to Jesus, and then Matthew simply says:
 - "And when the demon was cast out, the mute spoke."
 - He doesn't even tell us how Jesus went about doing this—he doesn't even tell us that He did do it...
 - It just tells us that the demon was cast out and the man who could not speak spoke.
 - b. This is such a wonderful picture of the ease with which Jesus works...
 - It does not say that He sprinkled whiffle dust around and the floor and danced around the man three times...
 - It doesn't say he burned the heart and liver of a fish or performed some magic the way Tobias did in the Apocrypha.
 - It simply tells us that after he was brought to Jesus, the demon was cast out and he spoke.
 - c. The Bible never gives us formulas or methods for casting out demons because God does not call us to be practitioners of magic—He forbids it!
 - I have been very grieved in the past by Christians I know who borrow formulas and ceremonies straight out of sorcery to cast out demons or effect walls of protection about someone's property!
 - God strictly forbids all such practices!

- This is the kind of superstition that was going on in the Catholic Church when God raised up the reformers.
 - They reformed the church by leading us back to the word of God as our only rule of faith and practice!
 - All these other practices of binding spirits and erecting walls of protection and using crosses to ward off evil are contrary to Jesus Christ!
 - We are not to receive instruction from sorcerers, but from our Lord, and He has given all we need in the Holy Scriptures!
2. You see, Jesus does not require all these ceremonies and rituals!
- a. His majesty is displayed in the simplicity of His power!
 - By a mere act of His will He can deliver one who has been all his lifetime subject to Satan!
 - We are to come to Jesus trusting in Him, not performing rituals.
 - b. In every case where Jesus exercises a demon, there is no contest!
 - He always exhibits an authority over them that is absolute!
 - The multitude was familiar with the methods that the exorcists used in their day, but here is Jesus by majestic power casting them out by sheer authority!
- B. Yes, we have seen that Satan is much stronger than we are in that He brings us into helpless bondage, but Jesus is stronger still!
1. This account and others like it show us that Jesus has all authority in heaven and earth so that no one can stand in the way of His kingdom!
 - a. This is as it was when God brought His people out of Egypt...
 - He caused them to feel the power of Pharaoh and his power over them in order that He might be known by them when He delivered them!
 - He says to Pharaoh,
 - “For this cause have I raised you up, that I might make my power known.”
 - b. Do you see brothers and sisters?
 - God wants us in a weak, helpless, sinful condition to see clearly the power of His Son to deliver us.
 - There is no sin, no principality, no power, no circumstance that can stand in His way!
 - His kingdom will come and He will be exalted!

- Satan and all his minions will be utterly crushed and we will receive complete deliverance!
- You can rest assured that if you are in Christ, the wicked one cannot harm you...
 - Nothing can separate you from Christ's love...
 - All his efforts will only serve to make you stronger!

2. How the scripture heralds the glorious news!

- a. From the very beginning He promised it the destruction of Satan when He said:
 - Gen 3:15: And I will put enmity Between you and the woman, And between your seed and her Seed; He shall bruise your head, And you shall bruise His heel."
- b. The promise was confirmed again and again by the prophets:
 - Mark 12:36 "For David himself said by the Holy Spirit: 'The LORD said to my Lord, "Sit at My right hand, Till I make Your enemies Your footstool."
- c. And so by taking on our flesh, Christ is declared to have destroyed the devil and released us from bondage to serve God.
 - Heb 2:14-15: Inasmuch then as the children have partaken of flesh and blood, He Himself likewise shared in the same, that through death He might destroy him who had the power of death, that is, the devil, and release those who through fear of death were all their lifetime subject to bondage.
- d. And so it was that when Jesus came, He totally disarmed Satan and all His forces by taking away our sins on the cross...
 - For our sin was the basis by which God permitted them to torment us... but the cross did away with it all and rendered them powerless against all who believe!
 - Col 2:13-15: And you, being dead in your trespasses and the uncircumcision of your flesh, He has made alive together with Him, having forgiven you all trespasses, having wiped out the handwriting of requirements that was against us, which was contrary to us. And He has taken it out of the way, having nailed it to the cross. Having disarmed principalities and powers, He made a public spectacle of them, triumphing over them in it.

TRANS> By casting out demons, Jesus demonstrated that He has full authority over Satan to set all His people free.

- He will surely establish a kingdom of righteousness and no one will be able to stop Him...
 - nor will anyone be able to spoil that kingdom.

III. Consider, therefore, how you ought to respond to all this.

A. First you see how the multitudes responded...

1. They marvelled when they Jesus' power!

- a. Can you imagine what it must have been like to actually see people they had known years transformed by a single meeting with Jesus?
 - Here comes this demoniac, probably familiar to the residents of Capernaum.
 - There he is, dragged to Jesus and simply presented to him...
 - The man has not been able to speak for who knows how long...
 - And instantly the demon is cast out and the man begins to speak!
 - No whiffle dust, no incantations, just the majesty and power of Jesus!
 - And this comes right on the heels of the opening of the eyes of two blind men!
 - Well do they say, "It was never seen like this in Israel!"

b. This is how it is, to a certain extent, when the gospel breaks into someone's life.

- 1) The people around that person see a radical change and they marvel at the power of Jesus and at the power of the gospel!
 - I lament that the transforming power of Christ is not seen so much among us as it ought to be!
 - We need to pray that God would again work mightily within our city and that we would see marvellous transformation in our own lives as well as in the lives of others.
- 2) But I say "to a certain extent" because, as I mentioned earlier, God primarily calls us to behold His power as it was revealed in Christ.
 - The scriptures are given to us to reveal Christ and His glory...
 - And so when you are confronted with an account like this exorcism that shows you the power of Jesus,
 - You ought to marvel just as much as the multitudes did who witnessed it with their own eyes...
 - God gives the Spirit to us so that we believe the testimony that God has given us concerning His Son—
 - The testimony of the apostles given to us by the Spirit in the Bible.

2. But let me add to this that simply marvelling is not enough!
 - a. John tells us that when the crowds saw Jesus miracles at Jerusalem, many not only marvelled, but even believed on Him!
 - Yet, John says that Jesus would not commit Himself to them because He knew what was in their hearts.
 - They may have marvelled and believed that they had truly seen the power of God...
 - but that is never enough!
 - b. As I showed you last week, you must come to Jesus for mercy—the way the blind men did...
 - 1) You can marvel and believe that He is who He says He is all day, but you must trust in Him if you wish to be saved.
 - James tells us that the demons believe and tremble!
 - They marvel at His awesome power and majesty,
 - and hate Him all the more on account of it!
 - 2) Many who were in this multitude marvelled and dreamed about how Jesus could give them whatever they wanted!
 - a) They were happy to see one with such power—
 - Surely He could deliver them from the Romans and make them all rich and prosperous and healthy...
 - And truly He could!
 - b) But that is what I described last week as belly religion!
 - If you think your greatest need is prosperity and health in this world you have missed the whole point!
 - The power of Jesus is revealed to us to show us that He is the One who can save us from our sins!
 - Go ahead and marvel when you see His power revealed, but don't stop there!
 - Come to Him to be saved from your sin!
 - That is your greatest need!
 - And Jesus is the only One who has authority to do it.
 - c) You need both forgiveness and a new heart!
 1. He brings forgiveness through His death on the cross, for it was there that all our sins were laid on Him...

- He bore them for us so that whoever believes in Him is fully pardoned—the penalty has already been paid in full!
2. He gives His Holy Spirit to all who ask Him to renew our hearts—to free us from the dominion of sin so that we can serve God...
 - This begins by bringing you to repentance so that you turn from your sin to Him to be saved...
 - And it continues with the transforming power of His grace to renew your mind and reform your life so that you become more and more like Jesus...
 - And the work is completed at the resurrection when you are completely freed from sin to serve God and your neighbour in perfect love forever.

TRANS> You say, but how could He ever do that?

- He can do it by His mighty authority—the same authority that was revealed when He cast out this demon.
- Yes, marvel at Him as the multitudes did, but do not stop there!
 - God on and trust in Him to deliver you from bondage to Satan!

B. Now let's consider how the Pharisees responded.

1. They were threatened by it.
 - a. They were smart and they understood that His authority was already starting to cross with theirs.
 - And so their minds began to work to see how they might resist His authority... how they might explain away what was so clear!
 - Certainly they could not deny that He was doing great things,
 - And so they said, “He casts out demons by the ruler of demons.”
 - They actually attributed His power to Satan!
 - That was the best they could come up with in the face of His miracles.
 - It is interesting to note that even after Jesus died, the tradition long continued among the Jews that Jesus was a sorcerer.
 - They could not pretend that He had done no miracles—nobody tried to do that because it was too obvious—
 - all they could do was attribute His power to Satan.
 - b. Although they would never have admitted it,

- the reason His authority was conflicting with theirs was because they themselves were in league with Satan.
 - As Jesus once told them, “You are of your father the devil...”
 - When they saw His power over Jesus, demonstrated in casting out demons,
 - they found it very unsettling...
 - not because they knew themselves to be in league with Satan,
 - they did not think such things about themselves,
 - but rather because they reasoned in their hearts something like this:
 - 1) This man does not have much use for us...
 - He has not chosen one of us as His disciple and He says many things against us...
 - He claims that He has a righteousness that exceeds our righteousness and that nobody can enter God’s kingdom without that righteousness...
 - 2) And if this man who has little use for us has the authority to cast out demons, what can we do to stop him?
 - And so their minds got very busy to figure out how they might discredit Him.
 - He was clearly a force to be reckoned with,
 - and since he had not accepted them, he must surely be against God.
 - Surely, He must be casting out demons by the power of Satan.
 - That was it—
 - That was the only plausible explanation!
2. Oh what a dangerous course this is!
- a. Beware of it, for it lurks in the heart of every sinner!
 - 1) We are all too much in love with our own righteousness.
 - As soon as the light of Christ shines to expose us,
 - Our first inclination is to criticise the light instead of humbling ourselves...
 - “That can’t be right,” we protest!
 - 2) Do you not find this attitude in your own heart?

- When you are challenged about some sin in your life, don't you usually begin by defending yourself?
 - Do you not begin to look for a way out when your sin is first exposed?
 - How full the human heart is of self-flattery and excuse making!
 - We always want to blame someone or something else for the things that are wrong with us...
 - "It's the way my parents treated me..."
 - "Joe deserved it when I yelled at him..."
 - "Well I have to look out for myself, don't I?..."
 - "I may have some faults, but at least I'm not like *those* people."
- 3) God's Spirit is the one who breaks you so that you are able to receive God's word...
- not for application to others, but for application to yourself.
 - When you truly do receive His word,
 - You will no longer pretend to stand in your own righteousness...
 - You will be brought to the dust for your sins!
 - You will understand that you have sinned against God!
 - That you have gone your own way instead of living for your Creator—
 - and you won't minimise it!
 - You will say, "I am all undone!"
 - You will admit what you are—
 - You will admit that you are in hopeless bondage to Satan—
 - and you will look outside of yourself for salvation!
 - You will put no confidence in yourself!
- b. When that happens,
- 1) Instead of seeing Jesus' authority as a threat, you will see it as a wonderful consolation!
 - The more desperate a sinner you are, the more you will be encouraged by His strength that overcomes Satan and saves sinners!
 - 2) In part, this could be illustrated with a person's attitude toward the police...

- If you are in a dangerous place where there is a lot of crime going on and you see the police, your reaction depends on your relationship to them...
 - If you are breaking the law, they are the enemy who has come to harass you...
 - But if you are trying to keep the law, you are relieved because they have come to set things in order...

3) But this illustration is not at all complete...

- Because the truth is, we are all guilty law breakers when Christ is revealed to us...
 - What makes the difference is when we realise that He has come to exert His power and authority to redeem sinners!
 - Then it is good to be sinner if you are a sinner who wants to be saved from your sin!
 - Here is this One with all power in heaven and earth who is able to deliver you from bondage to sin and Satan!
 - Now you can rejoice in His power!
 - It is all your hope!