



## LESSON 2 // WHEN JESUS COMES TO CHURCH

God is always ready and willing to give people a fresh start. Over and over we read biblical stories of men and women who found something new in their lives through their relationship with the Lord.

In this series, we're looking at people who met Christ in powerful ways and the changes they experienced through Him. From these stories, we learn lessons for our lives and believe that Jesus will change us as we experience Him. Mark 1:21-28 tells the story of a man who met Jesus in a quite unusual way:

**Mark 1:21-28 (NIV)** *They went to Capernaum, and when the Sabbath came, Jesus went into the synagogue and began to teach. <sup>22</sup> The people were amazed at his teaching, because he taught them as one who had authority, not as the teachers of the law. <sup>23</sup> Just then a man in their synagogue who was possessed by an impure spirit cried out, <sup>24</sup> "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!" <sup>25</sup> "Be quiet!" said Jesus sternly. "Come out of him!" <sup>26</sup> The impure spirit shook the man violently and came out of him with a shriek. <sup>27</sup> The people were all so amazed that they asked each other, "What is this? A new teaching—and with authority! He even gives orders to impure spirits and they obey him." <sup>28</sup> News about him spread quickly over the whole region of Galilee.*

We see from this story what new things happen when Jesus "comes to church"! We'll take a look at five things that happen when we experience the presence of the Lord. We'll also discover what's necessary to experience the beauty of His presence. When Jesus comes to His church:

### 1. The status quo is challenged.

"Status quo" means "life as usual." In the most negative sense it can describe people who are disinterested, dry, spiritually dead, discouraged or defeated. Mark 1:22 tells us how Jesus impacted status quo people in the synagogue: "the people were amazed" because "he taught them as one who had authority." The presence of Jesus in our lives challenges "life as usual." To see and hear Him is a positive, exciting, joyful and life-changing experience.

### 2. Spiritual conviction is felt.

As Jesus ministered the Word that day, people were not just impressed with His oratory—they were impacted by His authority. He brought genuine, Holy Spirit-inspired conviction to their hearts. Jesus' presence brings spiritual conviction to our lives. In the light of His authority and through the revelation of His Word, we see the error of our ways and the beauty of His ways.

Jesus shines the light of His Word on us, revealing the truth about our thoughts, motives, conscience and behavior. This brings us to points of repentance as we turn from our sin to God for forgiveness, grace and strength to live for Him (2 Corinthians 7:10).

### 3. Evil influences are confronted.

In the synagogue Jesus confronted an “impure spirit” in a man. In fact, Jesus’ authority always flushes out evil, demonic, unclean influences—long-standing strongholds of darkness in people’s lives (see Acts 16:16-18). These may include evil we hold on to or evil that holds on to us.

The key to overcoming evil influences in our lives is to worship and surrender to Jesus as Lord of all. It’s important to remember that the man who was “possessed by an impure spirit” was in the right place that day, the place of worship, and with the right Person. As he came to worship in the presence of Jesus, evil was confronted and cast out of his life.

### 4. Character is changed.

The presence of Jesus changes our character—He transforms our nature. Mark 1:25-26 describes how this happened for the man in the synagogue: *“‘Be quiet!’ said Jesus sternly. ‘Come out of him!’ The impure spirit shook the man violently and came out of him with a shriek.”*

The most wonderful words here are *“... and came out of him.”* When Jesus came to church, He changed this man’s life forever, and He wants to do the same for you. Through Jesus’ power and authority in our lives demonic voices are muzzled, hellish spirits are evicted, wholeness is restored, spiritual stability is secured, spiritual purity is possible and spiritual peace is provided!

### 5. Passion is charged.

The presence of Jesus charges us with new spiritual passion. In Mark 1:27-28 we find four marks of a church where Jesus’ presence brings passion:

- *Fresh interest in the Word of God—“What is this?”*
- *New surrender to the will of God—“A new teaching—and with authority!”*
- *Fresh faith in the power of God—“He even gives orders to evil spirits and they obey him.”*
- *New boldness in sharing the good news of the kingdom of God—“News about him spread quickly.”*

To experience Jesus’ presence in these ways, there are some things we need to do: prepare for and welcome His presence, worship Him wholeheartedly, respond to His Spirit, determine to obey His Word and remember His promise.

When Jesus comes to His church amazing things happen! Are you ready to welcome Him?

### Discussion questions

1. How does Jesus want to challenge the “status quo” in your life?
2. Mark 1:27 says that Jesus taught “with authority.” Why is it so important to submit to Jesus’ teaching and authority as Lord of all? What happens when you do?
3. In what ways can you prepare for and welcome Jesus’ presence more? What difference would this make in how you live?