

Our Attitude of Coming to the Meetings

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Gotthold Beck

集会に集うべき態度
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Mark

1:21 Then they went to Capernaum. As soon as it was the Sabbath, Jesus went into the synagogue and began to teach.

1:22 The people were utterly amazed at his teaching, because he was teaching them like one with authority and not like their scribes.

1:23 Suddenly there was a man in their synagogue who had an unclean spirit. He screamed,

1:24 "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!"

1:25 But Jesus rebuked him, saying, "Be quiet, and come out of him!"

1:26 At this, the unclean spirit shook the man, cried out with a loud voice, and came out of him.

1:27 All the people were so stunned that they kept saying to each other, "What is this? A new teaching with authority! He tells even the unclean spirits what to do, and they obey him!"

1:28 At once his fame began to spread throughout the surrounding region of Galilee.

[International Standard Version]

What attitude should we take when we gather at the meetings? I would like to discuss this important matter with you this morning. Let me divide the discussion into three parts. Firstly, Jesus. Secondly, brothers and sisters of the early churches. And thirdly, ourselves. How should we prepare our minds when we attend the meetings?

How did Jesus prepare his mind when he preached at the synagogue in Capernaum? Needless to say, Jesus always entered the churches to preach the Gospel. He preached good news. However, whenever gospels were preached, the devil was always there to disturb them. It is also true to say that the Lord Jesus entered the churches to defeat the devil. The only weapon Jesus could use to beat the devil consisted of the words from the Bible. Jesus came to the churches neither to impress the audience with wonderful sermons nor to seek the praise from them; He went in there just to assault the devil.

In his time, Rabbis, the Bible scholars had the most excellent education. They had a thorough knowledge

of the Old Testament and taught the Bible every Sabbath. However, there was a remarkable difference between Jesus and the scribes of those days.

Mark

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The new teachings of Jesus awakened the people. Today, some people are still tied to the old teachings based on human wisdom, while others follow the new teachings of Jesus.

Those who don't have the authority of the True God are in need of human knowledge. However, the wisdom of men cannot truly wake up humans. It cannot bring people back from their sleep; on the contrary, it is a drug that sends them into sleep. The Lord Jesus went into the synagogue to attack the devil. There was a man in the synagogue who was possessed by a filthy demon. He had been made into a slave of the devil. Men are extremely dangerous when they are possessed by a demon; they are under control of the devil, who speaks through their mouth. There was one such man in Capernaum.

Mark

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1:24 "I know who you are—the Holy One of God!"

This man possessed by the filthy demon screamed, "I know who you are—the Holy One of God!" After all, he proved that Jesus was the promised savior. He knew no sins. He was the only one who had no possibility of committing sins.

When the demons saw Jesus, what did they say to him? According to my German Bible, they screamed to Jesus, "Halt!" Jesus always came into the meeting places to drive away the demons, so the demons yelled at Jesus and pleaded with him to stop and to not come inside.

Mark

1:24 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!

In this verse, the plural pronoun 'us' is used. This represents the demons living inside the man. The

demons knew about Jesus. This indicated that the demons understood that the Lord Jesus was the Son of the true living God; they said, "I know who you are, the Holy One of God!" It is an amazing confession that the demons, who were the worst enemies of Jesus, testified that he was the Holy One of God, who knew no sins, isn't it? This bears eloquent testimony to the fact that the Lord Jesus is the promised savior, that Jesus is the true liberator. When Jesus entered the synagogue in Capernaum, the demon had to scream, "Halt! Please do not come in!"

Why did Jesus have to enter the synagogue in Capernaum? As I just mentioned, it was to assault the demons, destroy the devil and save the people. The devil resisted desperately, and the battle occurred between Jesus and the filthy spirits. Who won this battle?

Mark

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This is our Lord, Jesus. No devil can withstand him. Jesus was always the winner. The Lord Jesus is the one who wins anytime, anywhere. The Lord Jesus is the Holy One of God. He is truly sacred and as transparent as light itself. Contrarily, we are humans who are burdened. So were the brothers and sisters of the early churches. Let's look at a few verses from the Acts of the Apostles to find out what their attitude was like.

Acts

2:42 The believers continued to devote themselves to what the apostles were teaching, to fellowship, to the breaking of bread, and to times of prayer.

2:43 A sense of fear came over everyone, and many wonders and signs were being done by the apostles.

2:44 All the believers were united and shared everything with one another.

2:45 They made it their practice to sell their possessions and goods and to distribute the proceeds to anyone who was in need.

2:46 United in purpose, they went to the Temple every day, ate at each other's homes, and shared their food with glad and humble hearts.

2:47 They were praising God and enjoying the good will of all the people. Every day the Lord was adding to their number those who were being

saved.

One thing is for sure about the people who gathered in the early churches; they read the Bible very earnestly. This is the reason why the Lord could talk to them anytime he wanted. They had intimate communion with each other, they rejoiced over breaking bread and shared their food gladly, according to these verses. They were the people of prayers, and they were always connected with the Lord Jesus. They gathered every day. They were the people who praised the Lord, not only on Sundays but every night and day. The Lord answered their prayers and "the Lord was adding to their number those who were being saved", as told in Acts 2:47.

Let's not give up hope and keep praying for the salvation of our families, relatives and friends. If we keep our faith and continue believing, Jesus will accomplish so many things. We do not have to worry about relying on Jesus too much. In the days of the early churches, there was a day that more than 3000 people were added to the numbers of the believers. Eventually, about 5,000 men were led and saved, as described in the Acts of Apostles.

Acts

6:7 So the word of God continued to spread, and the number of disciples in Jerusalem continued to grow rapidly. Even a large number of priests became obedient to the faith.

According to the Bible, within a few weeks after the Pentecost, more than ten thousand people came to believe in him. These people gathered every day, after they were saved. Although it is unknown when and how long this continued, it is written that new believers joined every day. When non-believers came to the gatherings, they could only hang their heads. They couldn't help but worship the Lord, admitting that the true living God dwelt inside themselves.

1 Corinthians

14:24 But if everyone is prophesying, when an unbeliever or an uneducated person comes in he will be convicted and examined by everything that's happening.

14:25 His secret, inner heart will become known, and so he will bow down to the ground and worship God, declaring, "God is truly among you!"

Jesus visited the church in Capernaum for the battle against the devil. Similarly, for the members of the early churches, coming to the gathering was itself a way of battling the devil. Brothers and sisters of the early churches assaulted the devil. They gathered to destroy his works. When they gathered, they had only

one desire in their hearts: to lead the souls that were ready to accept Jesus to him.

So far, we have learned what Jesus and the brothers and sisters of the early churches had in their mind when they came into churches. Now, what are our own attitudes like? Do we truly love the words of God? "Speak, because your servant is listening." Do we have the same sincere desire? Do we have sincere and intimate communion, as the people in the early churches did? Are we filled with great joy when we break bread thinking of Jesus? Can we say that we are the people of prayers who have fellowship with Jesus? Do we come to the meetings as often as we can? Are we filled with gratitude and praise to the Lord every day just like the brothers and sisters of the early churches? If we can clearly answer "yes" to all of these questions, the Lord will save people around us every day.

'Halt!' the demons yelled. They are still screaming the same words at us today. We too are under attack of the devil. So, every morning when you wake up, please think of the Lord Jesus. Please think of the great love that the Lord gives you and appreciate that Jesus still dwells inside you today. We are always being attacked by the devil, wherever we are, all day. The devil is attacking us even when we are gathered in assembly. If someone is not assaulted by the devil at all, that person is actually useless, just like blank ammunition. And if the devil does not make any attempt on you, you won't perceive the danger of the devil, and thus, the Lord Jesus won't need you.

The devil is attacking us. You have to keep in mind that you are under attack always, everywhere. What do we have in our minds when we gather in assembly? Do we have hunger and thirst? Do we come to the gatherings with the feeling that David, author of the Psalms, sung in here?

Psalms

42:1 As an antelope pants for streams of water, so my soul pants for you, God.

Do we have a strong desire as this author did? Are we prepared to do battle with the devil when we come to the meeting? Do we pray for the speaker of the day before coming to the worship meeting? Very often, speakers find it difficult to talk in some kinds of atmosphere. Why is that? It's because the devil never sleeps and is constantly trying to disturb them. Do speakers pray seriously so that the Holy Spirit can testify about Jesus in their sermons, instead of just spreading their knowledge? Only the Holy Spirits truly know Jesus. Thus, only the Holy Spirits truly testify about him.

When we come to the assemblies, do we pray for everyone who is in attendance there? This is extremely important. While you are at your gatherings, please pray for each person there. Please ask Jesus what you can pray for each attendee. If you see non-believers, please pray sincerely for them to be led to the Lord Jesus.

Needless to say, you should pray for yourself as well. It is extremely important to always have a strong desire to know the Lord Jesus better. You should pray, "Speak, because your servant is listening", and then, "please let me become more like you."

How should we prepare ourselves as we gather at assemblies? When you see people who refuse to accept the Lord, you should understand that you are looking at the slaves of the devil. However, all believers of the Lord are greatly loved by Jesus. The devil's slaves are in the same room with the believers who are beloved by Jesus. It is no wonder we see some serious conflict there.

Any kind of gathering is much more important than we can ever imagine. When you think that you are the most faithful believer at the gathering, you are actually hindering the work of Jesus. You have to come to the meetings aspiring to know Jesus better, to meet Jesus. Contrarily, if you think of yourself as totally worthless in the gathering, it will also disturb the work of the Lord. Jesus always wants to talk to you.

The Lord Jesus wants to use you to save the souls of other people. This means that the Lord Almighty needs your help. The Lord needs your mouth to proclaim salvation to the people heading towards destruction. Jesus needs your legs to invite spiritually dead people to the gatherings. You are requested to participate in the work of Jesus. You are needed for his work.

Conducting Sunday School is an attack on the devil. The devil tries to hold back our children. He also tries to keep us away from the worship meetings. The devil tries to convince us that our job is more important. However, the Lord wants to give us his special blessing when we come to worship on Sunday. People of the early churches gathered every day.

Our assembly is constantly under the attack of the devil. The devil continues his desperate resistance to keep our souls away from the hands of Jesus. Whenever we are at our gatherings, we all have to be filled with one desire: the desire to save as many souls as possible for the Lord Jesus.

The Lord Jesus needs you to rescue the souls taken into the hands of the devil and convert them to the children of God. We need to keep in mind that the Lord can do anything. However, he still needs people like us. However, he never fails to provide us with all the powers we need.

Matthew

10:1 Then Jesus called his twelve disciples to him and gave them authority over unclean spirits, so that they could drive them out and heal every disease and every illness.

10:8 Heal the sick, raise the dead, cleanse lepers, drive out demons. You have received without payment, so give without payment.

This verse explains that the disciples received the power without payment. They were given all the powers they needed. Did we receive the power too? If we did, we can begin to use that power anytime. The man who can do anything needs each one of us. The Lord is offering his supernatural powers to each one of us.

It was to bring down the devil that Jesus entered the church at Capernaum. Brothers and sisters in the early churches always gathered to devastate the devil. How about our gatherings? Are we attacking the devil? Are people being led to Jesus through us? We now need to begin asking this question to ourselves seriously, don't we?

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