

**University Heights Church  
of Christ**  
445 Columbia Ave.,  
Lexington, KY 40508  
(859) 255-6257  
www.uheightschurch.com

**WORSHIP SERVICES**

**Sunday**

Bible Study: 9:45 AM

Worship: 10:45 AM; 6:00 PM

**Wednesday**

Bible Study: 7:30 PM (This is  
immediately followed by a  
short worship period)

**First Friday of Each Month**

Singing: 7:30 PM

**LEADERSHIP**

**Elders**

Garry Banks, David Collins,  
John Thompson

**Evangelist**

Adam Litmer

**Deacons**

Troy Antle, Richard Brundige,  
Matt Thompson, Adam  
Litmer, Bill Morelan, Jim  
Parsons, Pat Seabolt, Adam  
Daniels, Jamie Powell

**Remember**

Let us remember Pat Seabolt  
and his family after the  
passing of his sister.

**What If It Happens Today?**

A recent survey stated that over forty percent of people in this country make resolutions of some kind at the beginning of each year. Some resolve to drop those “holiday” pounds while others resolve to start a family. Whether the resolutions are “big” or “small” many of us make them every year.

Making these resolutions assumes that we will continue to be around to follow through on them, something none of us knows with any degree of certainty (James 4:13-15). A healthy lifestyle and sober living removes much physical risk from our lives but certainly not all of it. Accidents, disease, and the violent acts of ungodly people are part of life. As the news shows us daily, we could fall victim to any of these without a moments warning.

Neither do we know if another year will pass before our Lord returns. The trumpet could sound and the archangel shout before you finish reading this paragraph (indeed, this paragraph may never *be* read). This final Day of the Lord is coming, perhaps even today.

Let’s lose that weight, exercise more, and live healthier. But more importantly, let’s resolve to live so that if this *is* the day we can face it with great peace and joy. *Come, Lord Jesus!*

**IN NEED OF PRAYERS**

Jeff Howerton, Rhonda Boyd, Paul Atkisson, Barbara Matheny, David Morrow, Debbie Parker, Vina Krissow, John Bennett, Robert Brundige, Donald Dawson, Gail Stein, Sandy Childress, Susie Burton, Jacob Profit, Valerie and Barry Boyd, Wilma Lawson, Jannett’s mother and stepfather, Sandy Driver, Erlene Young, Doris Baker, Lyn Kincaid, Bernard Larch, Burnice Richardson, Ann Chrusiel

# University Heights Messenger

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**“And They Were Astonished...Amazed”**

Mark 1:21-28

Adam Litmer

Jesus and his disciples entered Capernaum on the Sabbath Day where our Lord went directly to the synagogue and began teaching. Mark’s mention of the Sabbath here seems designed to draw attention to the specific day rather than an effort to help us keep track of the chronological movements of Jesus. His activities on the Sabbath Day were going to become a significant problem in the minds of some further into Mark’s gospel (2:23-28). Perhaps Mark is preparing us for that by informing us that the events under consideration took place on the Sabbath.

Two things happened on this particular Sabbath that astonished the people and amazed them. The first was the Lord’s teaching itself. His teaching was nothing like that of their scribes. By this point the scribes had become the “lawyers of Judaism.” They taught the people by appealing to Moses, the prophets, and human traditions (which often opposed God, see 7:1-13) handed down over the years. “It is written” or similar statements preceded everything they taught.

Jesus did something that astonished the common people and shocked the religious establishment to its core: he taught as though *he* were the source of authority (Matthew 5:21-22, 27-28, 31-32, 33-34, 38-39, 43-44, etc). Try to put yourself in that setting. All your life you have listened to your teachers quoting those who have gone before. Then this man appears, seemingly out of the blue, who not only openly points out the inconsistencies and errors of your teachers, but then boldly proclaims, “You have heard that it was said (insert something your teachers have taught all your life), but I say to you (insert something that goes so much deeper than what you’ve heard and focuses more on the heart than mere rule keeping). This was as powerful as it was different. How could they be anything *less* than astonished?

Yet in the midst of the Lord’s teaching a man with an unclean spirit appeared and cried out, *What have you to do with us, Jesus of Nazareth? Have you come to destroy us? I know who you are—the Holy One of God.* Jesus never permitted demons to serve as witnesses to him, usually ordering their silence very quickly (which he does in this place). However, I don’t know how any person present would not have

been struck by those words. First, the unclean spirit clearly knew who Jesus was. Second, he recognizes that Jesus had it within his power to destroy he and his kind. Third, he confessed that Jesus was the Holy One of God. If silence had not fallen over the synagogue at the possessed man's outburst, surely it must have as the words themselves began to sink in.

Jesus ordered the unclean spirit to be silent and to come out of the man. After throwing what appears to be a tantrum, the demon did what it had been instructed to do. Mark tells us that it first convulsed the man, perhaps causing some to imagine that it injured him upon departure. Luke, however, informs us that the man was not harmed at all by this petty act (Luke 4:35). The result of this scene is described in verses 27 and 28. *And they were all amazed, so that they questioned among themselves, saying, "What is this? A new teaching with authority! He commands even the unclean spirits, and they obey him." And at once his fame spread everywhere throughout all the surrounding region of Galilee.*

The people were astonished and amazed at our Lord's teaching and power. They were not, however, prepared to offer him their lives and there's the problem. It is good to be astonished at the Lord's authority *if* it moves one to submit to it. It is good to be amazed at his power *if* it moves one to humbly bow before him. Astonishment and amazement are *not* trust and obedience, nor do they necessarily produce them. The words and actions of Jesus caused the people of Capernaum great excitement. Unfortunately, it caused very few of them to seriously consider what it all meant about Jesus and who he really was (Luke 10:13-15).

Let us never lose the astonishment and amazement that should always be present when we consider our Lord's authority and power. Even more, let us bow before him in humble submission.

### **Some Penetrating Questions**

John Thompson

Sometimes all it takes for one to take a life-altering look at oneself is a penetrating question. For much of our lives we proceed merrily along avoiding opportunities to examine ourselves to see if we are overdue for change. We become quite skilled at erecting facades behind which we not only hide from others but from ourselves. The fine-looking or false side of a façade normally faces outward, but those we humans erect in presenting ourselves in society are alike on both sides so that what we hide from others is the same that we hide from ourselves. It takes something sharp and pointed, something that forcefully probes through the façade to allow the light of reality to enter one's mind. Penetrating questions work just fine, and those from God are the most profound.

When Adam and Eve sinned, they surely, as my father would often say, bit off more than they could chew, and hardly any of it pleasant. Later, God came walking in the garden

in the cool of the day, and they hid from Him. God called to Adam, asking, "Where are you?" Now God knew Adam's exact location, so that's not what He was asking. Adam also knew that God was not asking for his physical location or else he would have answered God differently. Through this penetrating question God was calling for Adam to carefully, very carefully, consider his present situation, especially in light of his past and his future. "Adam, where are you now in comparison to where you were before you disobeyed Me? Adam, where are you now and how is that going to affect your future?" You know, God could have come storming into the garden with one accusation after another, but He did not. Instead, He gave Adam and Eve the opportunity to step away from their hiding place, acknowledge their disobedience, accept the consequences and move forward. To their credit, they took advantage of that opportunity.

Assuming that Adam and Eve had told their son, Cain, about that first sin, it is too bad he did not learn the value of self-examination. After Cain's offering was rejected he was very angry, even wrath. God wasted no time in approaching him, asking, "Why are you angry?" Now if Cain had been a man of more sterling character he might have at least tried to answer. "God, I'm so angry because ...." "I tried to please you, Lord, but you...." "Abel always gets the better end of the deal." "No matter how hard I try...." When God asked him a penetrating question, rather than answer, Cain proceeded to plug up any holes in his wall of defense and proceeded to erect additional barriers. If only he had made an honest attempt to answer God he might have sensed how vain and foolish he was sounding, and maybe things would have been better for him. Instead, he did not answer God and then, driven by his wrath, slew his brother.

Are we really committed to making our "calling and election sure"? (2 Peter 1:10) We need to ask ourselves the questions that God asked so long ago. Where am I? Where am I on the upward way? Where am I relative to spiritual growth? Where am I in becoming more and more like Jesus? The question can be made applicable to each and every scripture by which I need to live. Where am I is such a penetrating question.

The second question is equally penetrating. Why am I angry? What's the real reason? When I strip away all of the outer layers and get right down to the core reason for my anger, I will probably find that I am the reason I am so angry. I am the reason I stay angry.

God's word is truly remarkable in so many ways, not the least of which are those questions that stop us in our tracks and grant us the opportunity to honestly answer and change for the better. *For the word of God is living and active, sharper than any two-edged sword, piercing to the division of soul and of spirit, of joints and of marrow, and discerning the thoughts and intentions of the heart. And no creature is hidden from his sight, but all are naked and exposed to the eyes of him to whom we must give account.* (Hebrews 4:12-13)