

Why Jesus Should Have Absolute Authority in My Life

Mark 1:21-28

Introduction: 1) All of us have a source of authority in our lives that will determine how we think and live. For some it is:

- 1) Reason – I live the way I live because I think.
- 2) Experience – I live the way I live because I feel.
- 3) Tradition – I live the way I live because we have always done it this way.
- 4) Revelation – I live the way I live because God says so.

2) For those of us whose authority is revelation, we understand that revelation to be what theologians call “Special Revelation,” and we understand that special revelation to take the form of a proposition and a person. It is in a Written Word and it is in a Living Word. The written Word we call The Bible. The Living Word we know as Jesus. One we love. The other we love and worship. One points us to the Other, and that One has the right to demand complete, total, comprehensive and absolute Lordship in our lives.

Transition: Why should Jesus have absolute Lordship in your life? Verses 21-28 provide 2 of what are many, many reasons.

I. Because of His teachings **1:21-22**

- Jesus goes to Capernaum. This fishing village will become something of a base of operation for His Galilean ministry. It was located on the north shore of the Sea of Galilee. Actually the Sea of Galilee is a fresh water lake teeming with fish. It is also called the Sea of Tiberius (after the major city located on the western shore), as well as Lake Kinnereth, which in Hebrew means “harp.” This is probably because the lake is

roughly shaped like a harp. Seven miles wide and 13 miles long, it is nearly 700 feet below sea level. It is strikingly beautiful.

- Capernaum means “village of Nahum.” It was a significant port and border town in Jesus’ day with a mixed population of Jews, Gentiles and Roman soldiers and officials. It was well situated for Jesus to utilize as he would evangelize throughout the Galilee. Immediately, things kick into action.

1) His teachings are astonishing. 1:21-22

- On the Sabbath – the Jewish day of worship. It began at Sundown on Friday and extended to the same on Saturday.
- He entered the synagogue. Analogous to a local church building in our day, the synagogue was an assembly hall or auditorium where the Scriptures, and in particular the Torah, the Law, were read and taught. There was only one temple and that was in Jerusalem, but synagogues were scattered throughout the Mediterranean world wherever 10 or more Jewish males, 13 years of age or older, lived. Synagogues thus were Jewish meeting places for worship, education and community gatherings. Their origin can probably be traced to the Babylonian exile after the temple of Solomon was destroyed in 586 B.C.
- Mark tells us nothing about the content of Jesus’ teaching in this passage, though the message summarized in 1:15 could give us a clue. Rather, his concern is to focus on the One who is teaching, His authority, and the astonishing response of the hearers.
- Hearing the teaching of Jesus, the listeners were astonished, alarmed, taken back. There are reactions of fear and alarm. His teachings are disturbing in character.

- Today we might say, “they were blown away!”

2) His teachings are with authority. 1:22,27

- The people immediately saw a contrast between the teachings of Jesus and a group of religious educators Mark calls “the scribes.” The scribes, also called “teachers of the law” and “lawyers,” were skilled in the interpretation and exposition of the Torah, the Law of Moses. This much respected and celebrated group of scholars traced their origin back to Ezra (Ezra 7:6, 11). Later called “rabbis,” they were deemed experts in the law who could render binding judgment on its interpretation. Edwards says they, “combined the offices of Torah professor, teacher and moralist, and civil lawyer, in that order. Their erudition and prestige reached legendary proportion by the first century, surpassing on occasions that of the high priest” (54). Many were Pharisees, though there were also Sadducees and priest among them. The Sanhedrin, the Jewish Supreme Court, was made up mostly of scribes.
- They were admired and greatly respected. They were the religious elite, and it was an honor to sit under their instruction. However, in all 4 gospels, they will stand in opposition to Jesus and His ministry. Jesus will challenge, not the legitimacy of their office, but He will call out their legalism, hypocrisy and pride.
- If some persons fear that they are too bad to be saved, this group ran the risk of believing that they were so good that they did not need to be saved! This is a perennial danger those raised in a highly religious context always face.
- Verse 22 – He taught as one who has authority not as the scribes.

Verse 27 – What is this? A new teaching with authority. The scribes derived their authority from the “traditions of the elders” (7:8-13), by quoting the fathers of Judaism. Their authority came from quoting the famous and respected teachers who had preceded them. Not so with Jesus. He spoke like 1) one of the prophets and 2) His authority came directly from God, His Father (1:11).

- Lane says, “Jesus’ word, presented with a sovereign authority, which permitted neither debate nor theoretical reflection, confronted the congregation with the absolute claim of God upon their whole person” (72).
- The One who brings the teaching that astonishes and has authority is Himself the Christ, the Son of God. He has the right not only to decide what is true, He has the right to demand a decision.

Transition: Do you doubt this? Then note Mark’s second compelling argument.

II. Because of His power over demons

1:23-28

- Verse 23 immediately introduces us to a situation that requires some questions to be asked and some explanations to be given. There is “a man with an unclean spirit.” The more usual term for this being is “demon” (63X in the NT). Who or what is a demon?

Who Are Demons?

- 1) The spirits of a pre-Adamic evil race.
- 2) The spirits of evil men.
- 3) Product of angels cohabitating with women in Genesis 6:1-4.
- 4) Fallen angels. (Best option)
 - ❖ Mark calls them “unclean spirits” 11 times, “demons” 13 times.

What About Demons?

- 1) Possible 1/3 of the angels fell with Satan (Rev. 12:4).
 - 2) Some are free to roam now (Mark 1:21-34).
 - 3) Some will be free to roam during the tribulation (Rev. 9:13-19).
 - 4) Some are confined now never to roam (II Peter 2:4; Jude 6).
 - 5) They are powerful personalities but not omnipotent (Mark 1:24).
 - 6) Their activity may have increased during the time of Christ, and also again in the coming end time (see Rev. 6-19).
 - 7) They are set up under Satan's control (Eph. 6:11-12), probably in rank, possibly in geography (Dan. 10:10-12).
 - 8) They have authority and can promote disunity, false doctrine, inflict disease, cause mental difficulties, and hinder Christian growth.
 - 9) Demons can oppress but not possess believers.
- So here is a demon-possessed man in of all places, a house of worship! Don't miss the significance of this reality for our own day!!! Now, note the response of the demon. There is great insight here.

1) Demons recognize Him 1:23-24

- Upon seeing Jesus the demon cries out with 2 questions and a statement, "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!"
- 1) The demon recognizes Jesus in terms of His humanity and His deity.
 - 2) "Us" may refer to multiple demons in the man or the demonic realm as a whole who recognize the threat that Jesus is to their authority and power.

- 3) Come to destroy? May be a declaration and not a question. They understand more clearly than humans that the Son of God's coming is a decisive moment in history! It spells their doom.
- 4) Holy One of God – Perhaps an attempt to gain some power over Jesus by claiming to know His Name, but more likely a recognition of His deity, Sonship and the great antithesis that exist between an unholy (unclean) spirit and the Holy One of God.
- There is a striking contrast between the superior knowledge and understanding demons have of who Jesus is as opposed to that of humans.

Demoniacs

Holy One of God (1:24)

Son of God (3:11)

Son of the Most High God (5:7)

(Titles that reflect divine Son of God status)

Ordinary Sick

Lord (7:8)

Teacher (9:17)

Son of David (10:47-48)

Master (10:51)

- The Kingdom of God goes head to head with the forces of evil at the first public appearance of the Son of God's ministry. It is not a good day for the demons! It is a "no contest" event with an immediate and devastating knockout! The "binding of the strong man" noted in 3:27 has begun! The demons are forced to acknowledge grudgingly what the Father declared in 1:11!
- Interestingly, the only other person called "Holy One of God" in the Bible is Samson (Judges 16:17). He took a Nazarite vow. Though bound himself because of stupidity and sin, God used him to destroy the evil powers of his day. He was the anticipation

of the greater “Holy One of God” who would destroy for all time, also thru a death, the kingdom and powers of evil.

2) Demons obey Him 1:25-28

- Verse 25: The Command

Immediately Jesus rebuked him. Be silent, (imp./word of command) shut up, muzzle it! Come out (imp./word of command). Just a few direct words from an absolute authority! No spell or incantation. He says the word and they obey.

- Verses 26-28: The Response

- V26 → The demon 1) convulsed, 2) cried out, and 3) came out.
- V27 → The people were “all amazed” (“All” is emphatic) and asked “what is this?” A new teaching with authority. Even demons must obey Him.
- V28 → His fame spread everywhere, not just Galilee, but surrounding regions too! As if carried by the wind, people were hearing the good news of the Kingdom everywhere.

Conclusion:

The disturbance of men and demons by the Servant-King of God has begun. Life will never be the same again! Demons are expelled and broken people are made whole. This is what God’s Kingdom looks like. This is what the great King can do. This is why He should have absolute authority in your life, my life and every life.