

**Mark 1: 21-28; “Jesus Speaks with Authority”, Sermon # 5 in the series -
“Astonished at His Teaching”, Delivered by Pastor Paul Rendall
on November 9th, 2014, in the Morning Worship Service.**

If you have never understood the difference between the teaching of Jesus and the teaching of all the other religious men that the World has ever seen; it can be summed up by this word, “authority”, which we find in verse 22. Jesus taught the people as one who had authority, and not as the scribes. And further, we should understand, that this authority was not just in Jesus’ manner of delivery, when he preached and taught. His authority was, and it is to this day, a spiritual authority exhibiting irresistible power, a power that proved to men experientially that He was the Son of God, and the rightful ruler over the souls and bodies of all men. The power which the Lord Jesus exercised on this particular day, was so great when Jesus silenced and cast out an unclean spirit from a man in that synagogue, that all the people in the synagogue were amazed. Verse 27 says that “they questioned among themselves, saying, ‘What is this?’ ‘What new doctrine is this?’ ‘For with authority He commands even the unclean spirits, and they obey him.’” This authority that the Lord Jesus Christ exercised in His preaching and in His casting out demons, ought to bring to every heart here this morning the thankful realization that it is Jesus who has the authority to save my soul.

Let us ask ourselves this question this morning: What kind of authority did the Lord Jesus exercise then, which I believe and expect that He will exercise toward me now; to save me and build me up in my faith? This is what I want us to think about; and this is not something which is just for those who need to be converted to Christ. It is also very needful that you and I who know Christ should also be praying that He would come to our souls anew and afresh today; to exercise His authority over our hearts today, in the following ways.

1st – You should pray and ask the Lord Jesus to bring the teaching of His Word to your heart with great power and authority. (Verses 21 and 22)

We can see here from verse 21 that Jesus taught in such a way that the people in the synagogue were astonished. They had never heard anything like it before. The word for astonish here in the Greek, “ἐξεπλεσσοντο” means literally, “to strike a person out of his senses by some strong feeling, such as fear, wonder, or even joy.” (Robertson quoting Gould) They were dumbfounded. The people at this synagogue did recognize that the difference between the scribes and Jesus. They understood that He was teaching them “as one having real spiritual authority and not as their scribes. The people in the synagogue heard a decidedly different kind of message when they heard Jesus speak. The word, “authority” is “Exousian” in the Greek. He taught them as one having the right and the liberty; the ability and the supernatural power to convince men that what He spoke was the truth. Here are 4 reasons of why Jesus could teach, and yes, why He can still teach with authority today, through the preaching of His Word. First, He had the right. Our Lord Jesus has the divine right to teach with authority. He was and is the living Word of God. He is the King of Glory. All authority has been handed over to the Lord Jesus by His Father in order to speak to fallen men about their sinful condition. Jesus often spoke about the righteous way that He would make through His life and His death, so that men could find eternal life. “I am the Way, the Truth, and the Life; no man comes to the Father, but by Me.” No one can come to know God without being taught of God. Jesus came to teach us. God appointed Him and sent Him into the World to do this. He had the right to do so, and that accounts for His authority.

Secondly, Jesus taught people as one having liberty to do so. And once again we will see that it was God the Father who gave Jesus this liberty. Turn with me over to Hebrews 1: 1 and 2. It says here, “God in these last days has spoken to us by His Son, whom He has appointed heir of

all things, through whom also He made the world....” We find here, as we think about these words, that Christ was given, and even now in our days has the liberty given to Him by God the Father to speak with authority in these last days. The last days mentioned here must include all the generations from the time of the Apostles until the end of the World, or else there might be some other way of God’s speaking to us. But there is not. Who, then, could be a greater teacher than the Lord Jesus Christ? Could Mohammed be as great? No. Could Krishna be as great? No. Could Joseph Smith or Brigham Young take His place? No, it simply cannot be. They have not been appointed by God; they have not been given the right given to teach authoritatively by God the Father; and therefore they did not have the liberty to assert themselves and their teachings to be true. And we have no business listening to their representatives when they speak. Christ was, and He is, God made manifest in the flesh. It was He who was the One through whom the World was made in the beginning. It was His Father who made man’s mouth and gave our Lord Jesus His ability to speak. And He was able to speak and to teach as no other man. Christ was given the ability to teach with authority. And therefore we say with the Psalmist: “My heart overflows with a good theme.” “I address my verses to the King.” “My tongue is the pen of a ready writer.” “Thou art fairer than the sons of men.” “Grace is poured out upon Thy lips.” “Therefore God has blessed Thee forever.” (Psalm 45: 1 and 2) The Lord Jesus has been given great grace and great liberty, by His Father, to teach every man the truth if only he is willing. And if a person is unwilling, God the Father has also given to Jesus the authority to change the hearts of sinful men to make them willing. “Your people shall be willing in the day of Your power”, it says in Psalm 110, verse 3.

Turn with me to John Chapter 7, verse 14, and we will open up a third reason why Jesus’ teaching was with authority. It is because He had the ability not to speak from Himself. This also was something given to Him by His Father. It says: “Now about the middle of the feast Jesus went up into the temple and taught.” “And the Jews marveled, saying, ‘How does this Man know letters having never studied?’” “Jesus answered them and said, ‘My doctrine is not Mine, but His who sent Me.’” “If anyone wills to do His will, he shall know concerning the doctrine, whether it is from God or whether I speak on My own authority.” “He who speaks from himself seeks his own glory; but He who seeks the glory of the One who sent Him is true, and no unrighteousness is in Him.” You can see very clearly here, can’t you, that Jesus had not gone through the same schooling that the Scribes and the Pharisees had gone through? They do not see him trying to obtain a degree from their places of learning. There may be someone here who is in college who finds this upsetting to themselves; when they see someone who hasn’t had to study, and yet they know all the answers and they get the best grades, even so. Doesn’t this bother you? Some people are just more gifted than others. But Jesus gives the reason why this is the case with Him. He says to the people that He is speaking to; to those who are trying to figure Him out, “My doctrine is not Mine, but His who sent Me.”

Jesus did not learn the truths that He taught, from other men. He received them and learned them from God the Father Himself because He was one with the Father. He did not make it up on His own. It was given to Him, what to speak and what to say, as a part of His obedience and submission to the Father. This was not to say that He wasn't inherently intelligent and wise in Himself as the only perfect specimen of humanity. He was. But this is the reason why He spoke with such authority. He had a definite certainty about what was true and false, as a man; what was right and what was wrong. His source of knowing these things was not found in any book written by fallen and fallible man. The things that He spoke and taught were not spoken on His own initiative and His own authority. He would relate everything that He spoke and taught to the Father’s will, and to the authority which He derived from the Father, to speak only what the Father wanted spoken. He would not be bound by the sayings

and writings of Rabbis, either past or present. They had imposed their twisted and imaginary interpretations of the Scripture upon many people.

One of the main reasons that Jesus came into the World was to correct those errors so that sinners would be saved. You find Him doing this in the Sermon on the Mount. God the Father had given Him to know and to understand that there was nothing in their sayings, nothing in their writings which would warrant His submitting His mind to them. They were not receiving knowledge directly from God. They were commenting and writing about spiritual knowledge which came from their own fallible and finite observations of life and the Scriptures, even imposing their own observations and conclusions upon the Scriptures, making their religion a Philosophy built upon their own vain imaginings of what Truth really was; about God and about life, and about what was right and wrong. His knowledge and understanding came immediately from God and these were communicated to His human nature by means of His holy submission to what had been placed within Him and given to Him by God the Father and God the Holy Spirit. He was not seeking His own glory, but the glory of His Father who had sent Him. I would like you to ask yourself this morning if you have found the true doctrine? Jesus Christ was and is fully God and fully man; yet as a man He fully submitted to the Father's will in regard to what He taught. And this is why He taught with authority. The Father was pleased to give Jesus that perfect authority to teach so that all were amazed and the Elect would be saved.

Jesus also taught the people with authority in that He had the ability to perfectly convince people, even people who were opposed to being convinced by His presentation of truth. Look over at John 7: 37. "On the last day, that great day of the feast, Jesus stood and cried out, saying, 'If anyone thirsts, let him come to Me and drink.'" "He who believes in Me, as the Scripture has said, out of his heart will flow rivers of living water." "But this He spoke concerning the Spirit, whom those believing in Him would receive; for the Holy Spirit was not yet given, because Jesus was not yet glorified." "Therefore many from the crowd, when they heard this saying, said, 'Truly this is the Prophet.'" "Others said, 'This is the Christ.'" "But some said, 'Will the Christ come out of Galilee?'" "Has not the Scripture said that the Christ comes from the seed of David and from the town of Bethlehem, where David was?" "So there was a division among the people because of Him." "Now some of them wanted to take Him, but no one laid hands on Him." "Then the officers came to the chief priests and Pharisees, who said to them, 'Why have you not brought Him?'" "The officers answered, 'No man ever spoke like this Man!'"

Now you notice how full and free the offer of the gospel is when it is given through our Lord Jesus. "If anyone thirsts, let him come to Me and drink." And this is how we, too, ought to preach the gospel. Although it is the Elect only who will be saved; it is to anyone and everyone that the gospel comes. This is teaching with authority. Are you thirsty to know God and find the forgiveness of your sins? Then come to Jesus. He will satisfy your spiritual thirst every day. Nothing will be lacking. Your heart will truly be satisfied. Your thirst to know that God is your helper in everything, that He Himself will teach you all things pertaining to life and godliness will become a reality. Jesus Himself will convince you of this. He is the only One who can. Why did division come here? It was because some did not come to Christ Himself for the answers. They rested in the answers of men who although they did know that the Christ was to come from Bethlehem, they didn't take the time to find out from Jesus Himself where He was born. This was a tremendous mistake that has a great principle behind it which you need to heed to receive.

Many people may know many things about the Scripture and never go to Jesus Himself to inquire. Are you one of them? I hope not. True knowledge of the Scriptures will lead you to Jesus, and in being led there, you must personally inquire of Jesus. The Scriptures are designed to lead you to understand that what has been prophesied in the Old Testament has been and is being fulfilled in Jesus Christ. The Scriptures are designed to lead you to the place where you will come to the living Lord Jesus for all the answers of how it is that you can be saved from sin,

and how it is that you can live a godly life, and how it is that you can serve Him in His Church. Jesus speaks to you today in and through the Scriptures. And Jesus answers your prayers; the longing of your heart, by His Spirit speaking in your heart; using the Scriptures: "Believe in Me and out of your heart will flow rivers of living water." I hope that each of you here today will do this if you haven't; come to Jesus. And I hope that each of you here who have come, will continue to live by faith in the Son of God, letting the authoritative Scriptures speak to your heart. Never a man spoke as Jesus spoke. But if you believe this then pray that His good Spirit will take the truth of His Word and bring it to your heart with power.

Now 2ndly- You should pray today and ask the Lord Jesus - What kind of spirit do I have? (Verses 23-26)

Verse 23 says, "Now there was a man in their synagogue with an unclean spirit." "And he cried out, saying, 'Let us alone!'" "What have we to do with You, Jesus of Nazareth?" "Did You come to destroy us?" "I know who You are – the Holy One of God!" "But Jesus rebuked him, saying 'Be quiet, and come out of him!'" "And when the unclean spirit had convulsed him and cried out with a loud voice, he came out of him." I think that a good many of us may believe that coming to church is only for good people. And, certainly it is true, that one of the main reasons that the church exists is to train people in accordance with the grace that Christ gives them; teach them to become good people; to be good soldiers of Christ Jesus. But we must understand that like it or not, the church is also called to minister to the poor and needy, the helpless and confused. "It is not the healthy who need a physician," Jesus says. "It is the sick." And some cases of sin-sickness are worse than others. In this case there was a man who had come into the synagogue "with an unclean spirit." And, let us think about it now; occasionally people will come into our midst whose spirit is not right. Let us understand from this passage, that the Lord Jesus has the power to deal with the most unclean, the most perverse spirit that can be found in a person. This is proven by the words that I have just read to you.

But will you not also understand that you and I who minister to, and care about, such people cannot deal with their problems unless the Lord Jesus comes to us, to help us to help them. When people are troubled by demonic influence, and that is what an unclean spirit is, here in this context; when people are troubled by demons or voices or thoughts that do not come from their own mind, they must have Jesus. They must not simply be given a drug or a psychotherapy. They must have Christ. You will notice that demonic influence can come to the place where it can, or actually will, take possession of a person's personality if they know not Christ. I believe that this can happen for one of two reasons. Either the person has already compromised in a large way, toying with the forces of evil. Or, they themselves have been abused and have been taken advantage of by another person, to the place where it affects their own conscience, so that they feel justified in doing evil to others also. In both cases Satan can take advantage of such compromises and sins.

In regard to the first reason that I gave to you, I believe that there are many people in this world that would like to be more powerful, more famous, and to experience powers that go beyond what God has given to them; what He would want them naturally to have. And such people, I am saying, are willing to compromise morally, in a great way to obtain these supposed blessings. They take drugs and open themselves up to the spirit world. They go looking for greater power for themselves, by investigating witchcraft and the occult and they think that it will not defile their spirit. But when they actually begin to feel and sense that these powers are real, they foolishly pursue them, asking them for their help. When God comes to address their sins, He sees that they are not seeking Him for the true and righteous power to change to become righteous, He delivers them over to Satan and they really find this power that they are looking for. They have found power, but they do not realize that they are not the one who is in control of their own life any longer. They do not understand that whatever Satan gives, he will

always take back, and he will ask for more in return than the person will be willing to give. But by that time it is too late, and possession has been taken of that person's soul. They sold it to the Devil in little compromises which turned to bigger compromises and finally they were overcome by their own sinful desires. Sometimes Satan will use baits to lure sinners into his grasp more and more. It may be drugs, it may be opportunity for power, it may even be something like pornography or gambling or secretly stealing or embezzling money. Each of these sins involves experiencing certain pleasures for a season; pleasures which are addictive and have depths of pleasure in the experience of them. Satan works in a way to defile a man's spirit through these things which bring power or pleasure. And then by that means, he seeks possession of the soul. If he cannot gain possession, he will still try to have as much influence as he can upon that soul. Does this mean that Christ is not greater than the demons; that He cannot break this foul power over their soul? No, Christ's power to save and deliver is infinitely greater than that of the demons. These demons which produce an unclean spirit in a person do have recognition of Christ and his power over them. This is very evident from the text. "Let us alone!" "What have we to do with You, Jesus of Nazareth?" "Did You come to destroy us?" "I know who You are – the Holy One of God!" You will notice that they used all of these defensive measures to keep from losing their prey; the soul that they had submerged underneath their own perverse control.

Let us understand that we may never see radical cases of demon possession as they existed in that day. But we should also understand that there sometimes may be a person who will come into our church who has indeed been influenced by demons. They may want to come to church. They may want to change. But they have terribly conflicting thoughts and emotions in their heart. They may want the help of Christ and the church, but they do not want to give up the power of demonic influence which they have been deceived by. It may be false religious notions that are deceiving them. Jesus at one point said to some of those who had deceived themselves into thinking that they were righteous when they were not: "You are of your father the devil and the deeds of your father you will do," Jesus was addressing a group of Pharisees who had professed faith in Him. Each of us should be willing to pray and ask God, "Is my spirit right?" Am I overly defensive about the idea that Jesus needs to save me and help me with my sinful heart? A person may recognize Jesus as God's Son, the Holy One of God and yet in their spirit they are saying, "Let me alone!" They may think that in believing in Jesus and following Him in accordance with the Scriptures, it will mean the destruction of everything that they take pleasure in, in this life.

You say to me: Do you mean that if I believe in Jesus that I will not be able to continue to pursue power and pleasure in the way that I like? Do you mean that I will have to give these things up? Yes, you have sensed rightly. All the sins and all the sinful bad habits must go. That is repentance; and you must repent or you will perish. But let us learn from this passage that Jesus comes to silence all of our objections, and to take these things away. He does this to give you something much, much better. What is that?, you say. It is rest for your soul, and peace for your conscience, and His own dear presence to cheer and to guide. Strength for today and bright hope for tomorrow. Blessings all yours, and ten thousands besides. Has Jesus brought peace to your troubled soul? Jesus said to this man: "Be quiet, and come out of him!" Let us understand that there comes a time when we need to be quiet; when our troubled mind and heart need to stop resisting God. When Jesus comes to take possession of your soul, He will make you be quiet. Your soul may be so troubled by sin and Satan that His coming to you will convulse you because of the forces of evil being driven out. There may be loud protests on the part of the demonic forces, but Jesus is greater than them all. The demons will leave; they will come out at the name of Jesus. If you come to Jesus the forces of evil will have to leave, for it says in Micah 7: 19: "He will subdue all of your iniquities." He will "deliver you from all evil." "He will keep your soul." (Psalm 121, verse 7) This is because Jesus' teaching is with authority and power.

And then finally - You ought to pray today and ask the Lord Jesus to command blessings for you related to your willing obedience. (Verse 27 and 28)

“Then they were all amazed, so that they questioned among themselves, saying, ‘What is this?’ ‘What new doctrine is this?’ ‘For with authority He commands even the unclean spirits, and they obey Him.’ ‘And immediately His fame spread throughout all the region around Galilee.’ Let us think about this in closing. If the Lord Jesus has this kind of authority, to command the unclean spirits and they obey Him and leave; then can He not also command blessings for each of you related to your willing obedience? Yes, I am very sure that He can. But the question is, do you have the faith that will believe that it is so? Do you have saving faith in the Lord Jesus Christ? Saving faith in Jesus Christ is a faith that is willing to be taught by Jesus, and those who He appoints to teach you. It is a faith that wants to be taught experientially and practically all the matters related to your coming to a sincere obedience to Him in relation to the Scriptures. I am asking you now: “Are you praying and asking the Lord Jesus to command blessings for you in relation to this willing obedience?” When Jesus teaches you, His teaching is accompanied with power and authority. There is nothing currently hindering your sincere obedience to the commandments of God except your own unbelief that Jesus can help you by His grace to change your weakness into strength. He will help you to turn away from bad habits and help you establish new ones so that you will have a pattern of good behavior and obedience being seen in your life.

Most of the time our problems are really related to ourselves rather than other people. But we like to blame other people for the problems that we have. You would tell me, if I asked you whether you want to grow into a mature Christian and become more like Christ, “Sure I do”. But are you willing to pray and ask the Lord Jesus to command blessings for you so that you will come to this? Do you want to love the Lord your God with all your heart and soul and mind and strength? Do you want to love your neighbor as yourself? Do you want to grow in this regard? Then you must learn to pray and ask the Lord Jesus to command that all sinful thoughts, all sinful habits, all self-justifying behavior as to why you can’t obey him in regard to these things, be changed and taken out of your life. Are you teachable? Can you bear to be reproved by others who have a righteous concern for your soul? Proverbs 9: 8 says, “Do not correct a scoffer, lest he hate you; rebuke a wise man, and he will love you.” “Give instruction to a wise man, and he will be still wiser; teach a just man, and he will increase in learning.”

Are you becoming more tender-hearted toward believers around you; even the ones who are difficult? Are you obeying the commandment of Colossians 3: 12, “Therefore, as the elect of God, holy and beloved, put on tender mercies, kindness, humility, meekness, longsuffering; bearing with one another, and forgiving one another, if anyone has a complaint against another; even as Christ forgave you, so you also must do.” If you are not this way, beloved; will you not pray and ask for the Lord Jesus to command blessings to come to your soul so that it will be the case? It is when you live in this way, by prayer and the faith that Christ will save you and help you in relation to yourself, that many good things will come to your life. And you will find that you can become useful to Christ in serving in His Church. You will certainly still have trials and difficulties that will come, but Christ will become your helper in everything. He Himself, in your minds and heart will become your chief delight. He has the authority to command these blessings. But will you not pray and ask for them today?