

“The Authority of Christ”  
Mark 1:21-28  
(Preached at Trinity, July 8, 2009)

I’m supplying these notes for the benefit of busy pastors who may be engaged in bi-vocational work, feeling the pressure of preparing to preach twice on the Lord’s Day while trying to balance full-time secular work as well as caring for their families. While the notes of another man are no substitute for personal study, I pray that these may aid in the process of preparing to preach.

**Disclaimer:** These are the actual notes I bring with me to the pulpit, which I follow loosely. They are not designed for publication. While I try to make every effort to give proper credit to my sources from the pulpit, adequate citations will sometimes be absent from my notes. If anyone feels their intellectual material has been used without adequate citation, please contact me and I’ll make immediate correction giving credit.

1. As we’ve seen, **Verse 16** marks the beginning of Christ’s Galilean ministry. As we come to **Verse 21** we find Jesus arriving at Capernaum which became His home after leaving Nazareth.
  - A. Capernaum comes from two Hebrew words: *Kephar Nahum* which means “village of Nahum.”
  - B. It was an ideal place to carry out His Galilean ministry. It was located at a distance from the political centers where Jesus could avoid interference, at least in the early days of His ministry.
  - C. Capernaum was adjacent to a major trade route and thus a prosperous town. Relations were favorable between the Jews and Gentiles. It was in Capernaum that the Roman Centurion had built a synagogue for the Jews as you can read in Luke 7.
2. According to custom, Jesus entered into the synagogue on the Sabbath and began to teach. The synagogues were large assembly halls where people would gather to hear the Torah expounded.
  - A. The only official in charge was the “ruler of the synagogue.”
    1. In **Chapter 5** Mark speaks of one such ruler.  
**Mark 5:22** – “And, behold, there cometh one of the rulers of the synagogue, Jairus by name; and when he saw him, he fell at his feet,”
    2. Their primary job was that of custodial duties, maintaining the written scrolls, and keeping order in the worship, and reading from the Scriptures.
    3. There were no “official” speakers in the synagogue although the scribes carried on a somewhat official capacity.
  - B. Anyone standing to speak might be recognized and given the floor. We find this with Paul in **Acts 13**  
**Acts 13:15-16** – “And after the reading of the law and the prophets the rulers of the synagogue sent unto them, saying, *Ye men and brethren*, if ye have any word of exhortation for the people, say on. <sup>16</sup> Then Paul stood up, and beckoning with *his* hand said, Men of Israel, and ye that fear God, give audience.”
3. **Verse 21** tells us in abbreviated form that Jesus was recognized and He rose and taught. Mark doesn’t give us any details as to what Jesus said. Mark wants us to focus our attention upon the reaction of those present. They were astonished, amazed.  
**Mark 1:22** – “And they were astonished at his doctrine: for he taught them as one that had authority, and not as the scribes.”

4. Tonight I want us to take a brief peek at the authority of Christ.  
We'll look at His authority during His earthly ministry.  
We'll look at His infinite authority after His resurrection and ascension.  
We'll look at what this authority means for us.
  
- I. First, let's look at Jesus' great authority while He was upon the earth
  - A. He demonstrated His authority in His preaching and teaching  
**Mark 1:22** – “for he taught them as one that had authority, and not as the scribes.”
    1. They had heard the scribes many times. The scribes were experts in the Torah and were capable of issuing binding decisions on interpretation. They were respected and honored by the people who greeted them by the title, “rabbi” which literally means, “my great one.”
    2. Mark states that Jesus had authority not like the scribes - ἐξουσία
      - a. The teachings of the scribes were sometimes mixed with hypocrisy. Hypocrisy is poison for any teacher. The scribes would be among the ones receiving the condemnation of Christ.  
**Matthew 23:14** – “Woe unto you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites!”
      - b. The scribes derive their authority from the authority of the Torah – It was a mediated authority.  
Pastors derive their authority from the Scriptures
      - c. Jesus spoke with the authority He received from the Father.  
**Matthew 17:5** – “This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased; hear ye him.”  
**Matthew 28:18** – “All power is given unto me in heaven and in earth.”
      - d. Jesus is recognized as having greater authority than the scribes. He spoke with an authority that demanded submission – absolute obedience.
    3. Jesus spoke with authority and taught with authority  
The greatest of prophets said, “Thus saith the Lord.”  
Jesus said, “But I say unto you.”  
He spoke with the authority of God.  
**Matthew 7:24** – “Therefore whosoever heareth these sayings of mine, and doeth them, I will liken him unto a wise man, which built his house upon a rock:”  
**Mark 13:31** – “Heaven and earth shall pass away: but my words shall not pass away.”
    4. No one could oppose His teaching – He had infinite knowledge and wisdom
  - B. He demonstrated His authority by His works – Everything He did carried Divine authority  
**Mark 1:27** – “for with authority commandeth he even the unclean spirits, and they do obey him.”
    1. Mark gives us an account of a man in the synagogue possessed by a demon. Not only did Jesus manifest great authority as a teacher, He also demonstrated His authority over Satan and his demons.

- a. The demon cries out, “We know who you are ... the Holy one of God!”  
The demon spoke in the plural perhaps recognizing that Jesus was laying waste to the entire demonic power structure.  
Jesus answers with authority, “Be quiet and come out of him!”
  - b. The demons recognized the power and authority of Christ even before human beings did.
  - c. Once again all stood in amazement. The word for “all” implies the whole body, all without exception were amazed.
2. He healed all manner of diseases and even raised from the dead demonstrating His power over death.
  3. He forgave sins which infuriated the Pharisees  
**Luke 5:20-21** - And when he saw their faith, he said unto him, Man, thy sins are forgiven thee. <sup>21</sup> And the scribes and the Pharisees began to reason, saying, Who is this which speaketh blasphemies? Who can forgive sins, but God alone?”
  4. Even the wind and waves were subject to him.  
**Mark 4:41** – “And they feared exceedingly, and said one to another, What manner of man is this, that even the wind and the sea obey him?”
- C. Equally impressive, Jesus demonstrated His authority over the Temple
1. The Temple was the seat of worship – the presence of God
  2. It was the place of atonement, of the mercy seat
  3. When Jesus entered into the Temple He entered as one having authority  
**Matthew 21:23** – “And when he was come into the temple, the chief priests and the elders of the people came unto him as he was teaching, and said, By what authority doest thou these things? and who gave thee this authority?”
  4. He entered the Temple and overthrew the tables of the money changers and drove them out.  
**John 2:13-15** – “And the Jews' passover was at hand, and Jesus went up to Jerusalem, <sup>14</sup> And found in the temple those that sold oxen and sheep and doves, and the changers of money sitting: <sup>15</sup> And when he had made a scourge of small cords, he drove them all out of the temple, and the sheep, and the oxen; and poured out the changers' money, and overthrew the tables;”
  5. Jesus told the Pharisees:  
**Matthew 12:6** – “But I say unto you, That in this place is *one* greater than the temple.”
- D. As we saw last time, He demonstrated His authority in calling forth His disciples
1. One by one He called them – and they followed – **Verses 17-18**
  2. He still calls with this authority and His disciples still follow  
He called you and me – and we followed. This is the power of the Gospel.

- E. He demonstrated His authority in laying down His life – and taking it up again
1. Jesus predicted His own death and His own resurrection  
**Mark 8:31** – “And he began to teach them, that the Son of man must suffer many things, and be rejected of the elders, and of the chief priests, and scribes, and be killed, and after three days rise again.”  
**Mark 9:31** – “For he taught his disciples, and said unto them, The Son of man is delivered into the hands of men, and they shall kill him; and after that he is killed, he shall rise the third day.”  
**Mark 14:27-28** And Jesus saith unto them, All ye shall be offended because of me this night: for it is written, I will smite the shepherd, and the sheep shall be scattered. <sup>28</sup> But after that I am risen, I will go before you into Galilee.  
**John 2:19** – “Jesus answered and said unto them, Destroy this temple, and in three days I will raise it up.”
  2. To make such claims would make Him a mad man, unless of course it was true. Unless He did have such power and authority.
  3. All witnessed His authority on the night of His arrest. He was in absolute control.  
**John 18:4** – “Jesus therefore, knowing all things that should come upon him, went forth, and said unto them, Whom seek ye? They answered him, Jesus of Nazareth. Jesus saith unto them, I am *he*. And Judas also, which betrayed him, stood with them. As soon then as he had said unto them, I am *he*, they went backward, and fell to the ground.”
  4. Jesus wasn't killed – He laid down His life. And then by infinite power took it up again. He sits at the right hand of Majesty as both Lord and King
- II. The greatest manifestation of His authority is seen in His resurrection and ascension
- A. As infinitely powerful as Jesus was He limited the exercise of His power in obedience to the Father
    1. He spoke the words received of the Father  
**John 8:28** – “Then said Jesus unto them, When ye have lifted up the Son of man, then shall ye know that I am *he*, and *that* I do nothing of myself; but as my Father hath taught me, I speak these things.”
    2. Jesus had the power of judgment, but did not exercise it  
**John 12:47** – “And if any man hear my words, and believe not, I judge him not: for I came not to judge the world, but to save the world.”
  - B. After the resurrection Jesus was given unrestricted power – or shall we say He was restored to His infinite throne of dominion  
**John 17:5** – “And now, O Father, glorify thou me with thine own self with the glory which I had with thee before the world was.”

**Philippians 2:9-11** – “Wherefore God also hath highly exalted him, and given him a name which is above every name: <sup>10</sup> That at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, of *things* in heaven, and *things* in earth, and *things* under the earth; <sup>11</sup> And *that* every tongue should confess that Jesus Christ *is* Lord, to the glory of God the Father.”

1. Jesus now has unrestricted power, absolute authority and dominion
2. This power is the reward of His labors

**Ephesians 1:19-23** – “And what *is* the exceeding greatness of his power to us-ward who believe, according to the working of his mighty power, <sup>20</sup> Which he wrought in Christ, when he raised him from the dead, and set *him* at his own right hand in the heavenly *places*, <sup>21</sup> Far above all principality, and power, and might, and dominion, and every name that is named, not only in this world, but also in that which is to come: <sup>22</sup> And hath put all *things* under his feet, and gave him *to be* the head over all *things* to the church, <sup>23</sup> Which is his body, the fulness of him that filleth all in all.”

3. As the Mediator, His work upon the cross earned Him dominion  
This is the meaning of 2 Peter 2:1 that Arminians often quote as support of a universal atonement

**2 Peter 2:1** – “But there were false prophets also among the people, even as there shall be false teachers among you, who privily shall bring in damnable heresies, even denying the Lord that bought them, and bring upon themselves swift destruction.”

4. Jesus now rules and reigns with absolute sovereign authority
- C. He will manifest this infinite authority when He returns.

### III. We are the benefactors of Christ’s authority

- A. He is our mighty King – are you amazed by His power

1. He drew us by His power  
**John 6:39** – “And this is the Father's will which hath sent me, that of all which he hath given me I should lose nothing, but should raise it up again at the last day.”

2. We are sustained by His power  
**2 Samuel 22:2-4** – “And he said, The LORD *is* my rock, and my fortress, and my deliverer; <sup>3</sup> The God of my rock; in him will I trust: *he is* my shield, and the horn of my salvation, my high tower, and my refuge, my saviour; thou savest me from violence. <sup>4</sup> I will call on the LORD, *who is* worthy to be praised: so shall I be saved from mine enemies.”

- B. We serve Him by His authority – we carry the Gospel with His authority

**Matthew 28:18-19** – “And Jesus came and spake unto them, saying, All power is given unto me in heaven and in earth. <sup>19</sup> Go ye therefore, and teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost:”

1. He is the power of the Gospel  
Only Christ can raise sinners from the grave
2. Jesus manifests His authority in His Word

- C. We battle the forces of evil by the authority of Christ  
**Ephesians 6:10-13** – “Finally, my brethren, be strong in the Lord, and in the power of his might. <sup>11</sup> Put on the whole armour of God, that ye may be able to stand against the wiles of the devil.

Conclusion:

1. Are you amazed by His authority?
2. Do you rest in His authority?