

Faith in the Home: Sermon Notes and Applications for the Family

Fourth Sunday After the Epiphany, Mark 1:21-28, "Who is in Charge Here?"

In Mark 1, after Jesus calls His disciples, they go to the town of Capernaum where Jesus taught in the synagogue. In verse 22, the people who heard Jesus teach were "astonished at His teaching, for He taught them as one who had authority, and not as the scribes."

Some important observations are made here. 1. Jesus distinguished Himself as having authority. 2. He distinguished Himself from the scribes, who were the experts. 3. The scribes should have taught as though had authority, but Jesus' preaching and teaching demonstrated that the leaders in that synagogue were spiritually bankrupt and in truth did not know the Scriptures as they should have.

Authority is important. Sometimes that word gets a bad rap on account of authoritarians being harsh and inept leaders. However, would you want to work for a boss who was incompetent, or a boss who was an authority of knowledge in a particular field? Would like to take you car to an auto mechanic who was an authority on diagnosing problems or a mechanic who was inept? Authority is needed.

This passage demonstrates that Jesus was an authority on Scripture in such a way that was different to the point of astonishing those who listened. What gave Him the right to be an authority on the Scriptures? Well, He inspired those Words. The Word of God is His Word because Jesus the man also is the second person of the Holy Trinity. Jesus is God, He is the Son of God. This is further proved when a man possessed with an unclean spirit comes into the synagogue and Jesus demonstrated the authority to even command the unclean fallen spirit, with the result of the unclean spirit doing what Jesus told it to do. How could Jesus do that? Well, Jesus created every spirit and being in creation and has authority as God over everyone and everything.

What does this mean for us? When we pray "Thy will be done," sometimes we hope that means that God will conform His will to what we personally think is best, turning "Thy will be done," into "my will be done." Our sinful nature is not an authority over God either, and that is good. God is God, we are mere creatures of His creation. However, He elevates us above all else in His creation. Evidence of this elevation is because God became a man, that man is named Jesus.

Mark's goal in His account is to make abundantly clear that from the beginning of His ministry Jesus was demonstrating that He is the Son of God. God became man to rule over us unjustly, or to bring misery. But with all the authority in the universe God came to bring us abundant and everlasting life. God also demonstrates that humility and mercy are part of His nature in that He laid His life down in a horrendous death on a cross. But even death didn't have authority over Jesus. He rose again showing that He is God, that He loves us, and that He has power to change our lives for the better.

Some applications to consider.

1. We struggle with wanting to be happy and wondering why things are so hard. We have to be resigned We to the fact that God in His authority is taking us through life and allowing us to endure hardships according to His purpose. This may make us feel like pawns, and yet through Jesus, we are our children of God, not just sacrificial pawns for His will. The goal is not temporary happiness in our short life in this world. The goal is salvation in this world to have eternal life with God where our paradise with Him has no end.
2. We may never fully understand why a certain circumstance had to happen in our lives. It may never make sense in the way we would want it to. We just need to take peace that a God who laid His life down for us is with and will bring us to our everlasting home with Him in His own good time.
3. God does have authority over right and wrong and will judge evil justly. His law is our guide for how to live out His will, not what our culture of here and now tells us is right and wrong.
4. When Jesus said, "It is finished," with all authority before Jesus died on the cross, He proclaimed that He took away the sting your sin. You are forgiven on God's authority through faith in His Son, Jesus. Amen and Amen.