

ESF, Lord's day service message
2/28/2016

The Spiritual Authority

Mark 1:21-28

²¹ They went to Capernaum, and when the Sabbath came, Jesus went into the synagogue and began to teach. ²² The people were amazed at his teaching, because he taught them as one who had authority, not as the teachers of the law. ²³ Just then a man in their synagogue who was possessed by an evil spirit cried out, ²⁴ "What do you want with us, Jesus of Nazareth? Have you come to destroy us? I know who you are—the Holy One of God!"

²⁵ "Be quiet!" said Jesus sternly. "Come out of him!" ²⁶ The evil spirit shook the man violently and came out of him with a shriek.

²⁷ The people were all so amazed that they asked each other, "What is this? A new teaching—and with authority! He even gives orders to evil spirits and they obey him." ²⁸ News about him spread quickly over the whole region of Galilee.

The word "authority" indicates power to be respected, rule and lead. The story is told of the military legend Alexander the Great who had conquered almost all of the known world. One day on the warpath, Alexander and a small company of soldiers approached a strongly fortified walled city. Alexander raised his voice and demanded to see the king. When the king arrived, Alexander ordered him to surrender the city and everyone inside to Alexander and his little band of fighting men.

The king laughed in response to his order, "Why should I surrender to you? You can't do us any harm!" But Alexander offered to give the king a demonstration. He ordered his men to line up in a single file and start marching. He marched them straight toward a sheer cliff.

The townspeople gathered on the wall and watched in shocked silence as, one by one, Alexander's soldiers marched without hesitation right off the cliff to their deaths! After ten soldiers died, Alexander ordered the rest of the men to return to his side. The townspeople and the king

immediately surrendered to Alexander the Great. They realized that if a few men were actually willing to die at the command of their leader, then nothing could stop his eventual victory.

The power which Alexander demonstrated at that time was authority. He had authority to command his soldiers to die, and his enemy to surrender even without fighting.

In today's text, we can see the authority of Jesus. Jesus' authority is more powerful than Alexander, but His authority is not an authority to kill men but to save men. His authority is an authority to destroy all evil forces and to bring healing to the sick. There is nothing in this life that Jesus does not have authority over (Matthew 28: 18). Jesus Christ is the Lord of all! Others may have authority and power but only Jesus has the power to save people from the wages of their sin, which is death (Romans 6:23). The authority of others is limited by time and boundaries as their authority will one day come to an end. But, the authority of Jesus never ends!

The authority from the word of God

The authority of Jesus came from depending upon God's authority through the word of God and speaking the word of God directly. The teachers of the law were the primary teaching authorities in Israel at this time. But they never taught with authority – as the people in the synagogue understood. The reason why their teaching had no authority was because they did not rely upon the word of God but relied on the word of esteemed men. They taught their traditions as authoritative (Mark 7:9, 13). They placed their opinions above the word of God (Matthew 15:9).

When they taught, they laid out a long litany of opinions of various rabbis who had established themselves as experts on the Law of Moses and the Prophets. What you would hear from the teachers of the law would be a reading from the OT scriptures, and then something similar to this: “Rabbi Jose says this” then give Rabbi Jose's comments on

the passage, followed by, “But, Rabbi Hillel says that ...” And then you would hear what Rabbi Hillel said about the verses in the lectionary. Then they would continue, “But Rabbi Shammai says that ...” And, so it would go.

But Jesus put the word of God above all and taught directly the word of God. Spiritual authority cannot come from men’s traditions or wisdom but comes only from the word of God.

In Mark 8, four thousand people came to Jesus to hear His teaching. Jesus’ word was so authoritative and powerful that they chose not to eat for three days.

The priests at one time sent the guards to arrest Jesus, and as they heard Him speak, they were so amazed at His teachings that they were unable to arrest Him. When they returned, the priests asked where Jesus was, and the guards answered, “No one ever spoke the way this man does.” On the road to Emmaus, Jesus spoke the word of God to two disciples. Later on they testified “*Were not our hearts burning within us while he talked with us on the road and opened the Scriptures for us?*” (Luke 24:32).

There is power in Jesus’ words because He directly spoke the word of God as it should be spoken. The word of God is living and active. Nothing is hidden. Everything is uncovered and laid bare. Hebrews 4:12 says: *For the word of God is living and active. Sharper than any double-edged sword, it penetrates even to the dividing soul and spirit, joints and marrow; it judges the thoughts and attitude of the heart.* It was the power of God’s word that was demonstrated in Jesus’ life.

To receive and exercise spiritual authority as Jesus did, we have to depend upon the authority in God’s word and speak the word. In 2 Timothy 2: 15, Paul says: *Do your best to present yourself to God as one approved, a workman who does not need to be ashamed and who correctly handles the word of truth.*

Spiritual authority cannot come from men's traditions or rules but comes only from the word of God. If you want to receive spiritual authority, put the word of God first.

The authority from the anointing of the Holy Spirit

Jesus' authority came from the anointing of the Holy Spirit. Jesus prayed continuously, day and night without ceasing to be anointed by the Holy Spirit. Jesus prayed early in the morning before he started doing anything: Mark 1: 35, *Very early in the morning, while it was still dark, Jesus got up, left the house and went off to a solitary place, where he prayed.*

When many people followed Him, He often withdrew to lonely places and prayed: Luke 5:16, *But Jesus often withdrew to lonely places and prayed.* After performing a miracle to feed five thousand people with five loaves of bread and two fish, he went up to a mountain to pray (Mark 6:46).

Prayer is a key to feeding your spirit with the Holy Spirit. An old American Indian tale recounts the story of a chief who was telling a gathering of young braves about the struggle within. "It is like two dogs fighting inside of us," the chief told them. "There is one good dog who wants to do the right and the other dog always wants to do wrong. Sometimes the good dog seems stronger and is winning the fight. But sometimes the bad dog is stronger and wrong is winning the fight."

"Who is going to win in the end?" a young brave asks.
The chief answered "The one you feed."

When you feed your spirit with the Holy Spirit, the Holy Spirit enables you to overcome the power of the flesh. When you overcome the power of the flesh, people respect you as a servant of God.

When you preach and teach the word with the empowerment of the Holy Spirit, God gives you spiritual authority. In 1 Corinthians 2: 4-5, Paul says: *My message and my preaching were not with wise and persuasive*

words, but with demonstration of the Spirit's power, so that your faith might not rest on men's wisdom, but on God's power.

If you want to be empowered by the Holy Spirit feed your soul with prayer. If even Jesus prayed a lot to be empowered by the Holy Spirit, how much more do we have to pray to receive the authority of the Holy Spirit?

The authority from love

Whose word and teachings do we listen to with respect? Not just with our ears but also with our hearts? We listen to the word and the teachings of those who love us most. Mothers have compassion and love for their children so their children listen to them. Therefore, we can say that a mother's words have authority to their children.

Video clip <http://www.wingclips.com/movie-clips/elizabeth-the-golden-age/fear-creates-fear?play=1>
Queen Elizabeth ruled her people with authority from love. She refuses to punish the Catholics because of their beliefs, even though they pose a threat to her.

Jesus' authority came from His love for people. Jesus says: *I am the good shepherd. The good shepherd lays down his life for the sheep. I **know** my sheep and my sheep know me.* When Jesus loves His sheep, they recognize His authority.

When Jesus loved their souls, Jesus felt the same pain they felt. He was even ready to die for the souls of the people. In His teachings, people could see the love and compassion so their hearts were moved by Jesus' teaching.

Jesus comes to us not as a teacher who delivers religious knowledge, but as a compassionate Savior who weeps with us and feels as we feel. His teachings touch not only our head but also our hearts. Jesus loves you more than anybody loves you. Jesus loves you more than you love yourself. Because He died for you. That is why He has authority over your life.

When Jesus chose Peter to be the leader of the first church in Jerusalem, Peter needed authority. Then Jesus said to him that he needed to love people as a good shepherd (John 21: 15-17). When Peter served the people as a good shepherd, Jesus gave him His authority. Peter made many mistakes. But by following Jesus' instruction to love people as a good shepherd, he could receive Jesus' authority and help many people.

Are there times when you want to help some people but they refuse to listen to you? Do you need authority which others are willing to respect? Try to be a good shepherd to them. Try to know them by forgiving, loving, sacrificing and serving. And Jesus will give you His authority so that they may respect you and listen to you.

The authority over evil forces

Jesus has authority to overpower all evil forces. The evil spirit recognized Jesus as "Jesus of Nazareth," and "the Holy One of God." The evil spirit had accurate knowledge of Jesus. But, the evil spirit cried that Jesus came to destroy him. What the evil spirit knew about Jesus was knowledge in head. It was not faith in heart. It was not surrendering to the Lordship of Jesus.

James 2:18,19 says: *But someone will say, "You have faith; I have deeds." Show me your faith without deeds, and I will show you my faith by what I do. You believe that there is one God. Good! Even the demons believe that and shudder.*

So, Jesus silenced the evil spirit and commanded the evil spirit to come out of the person. Then the evil spirit obeyed Jesus' command. Jesus' authority overpowers all evil forces.

1 John 3:8 says: ... *The reason the Son of God appeared was to destroy the devil's work.*

Hebrews 2:14 says: *Since the children have flesh and blood, he too shared in their humanity so that by his death he might destroy him who holds the power of death-that is the devil.*

All of us face evil forces which are trying to take control of our lives and rob us of joy in life. We try to put up a good fight, but the evil forces wear us down over time. They are beyond our control.

What are the evil things you're facing today desperately beyond your control? What things in your life seem never to change or improve despite your best efforts? All of these things could ultimately control your life and keep your faith from growing. The truth is, these things can only exercise authority over you if you let them.

There is nothing you face that Jesus doesn't have authority over. Put yourself under Jesus' authority. Listen to His word of authority and set yourself free from the bondage of evil spirits. Command the evil spirits with Jesus' authority. To the spirits of idolatry and witchcraft- "Be quiet and come out." To the spirits of stubbornness and rebellion "be quiet and come out" To the spirit of doubt and fear "be quiet and come out". To the spirit of hatred, and bigotry- "be quiet and come out." To the spirit of depression, eating disorders, and nervousness – "be quiet and come out." To that spirit of sickness "be quiet and come out." To the spirit of pornography and adultery- "be quiet and come out." To the spirit of addiction-cocaine and nicotine- "be quiet and come out."