

Jesus Wow! Series Part 7

The Amazing Authority of Jesus

Mark 1: 21-34

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Sermon Summary

The gospel of Matthew finishes with what we call The Great Commission – go out into the world and make disciples (Matthew 28:19-20). Why? Because we call Jesus Lord. And a servant obeys and pleases his or her Lord.

We have a great fear of dying. It is this that motivates governments to do something to mitigate that fear by abolishing the death that Covid-19 imposes upon us through breath, touch or kiss.

Our lives ought not to be lived in fear; rather, they should be lived through the Great Commission. Why? How?

The “why” is answered because Jesus is our Lord. The “how” is answered because “all **authority** in heaven and earth has been given to Jesus” – that statement being the prelude to The Great Commission (Matthew 28:18). Now, if Jesus has this authority, not only over sickness, but life and death as well, then what is our fear if we are living under that authority?

Mark begins his account of Jesus’ ministry with several WOW! anecdotes that attest to His greatness and distinct teaching (Mark 1:21-34). Mark states that the people were astonished because he taught as one who had **authority** (v.22). This trait was recognized right at the beginning of his ministry. During this first teaching, Jesus is interrupted. However, He recognizes the demon behind the man’s interjection and commands it to be quiet and to come out of the afflicted person (v.25). It does so, screeching with a loud voice (v.26). This astonished the congregation. It was new teaching and the **authority** Jesus had over an unclean spirit that amazed them (v.27).

The next anecdote Mark records is that of Simon’s mother-in-law with a high fever (See Luke 4:18). Jesus immediately heals her completely, to the point of her being able to serve them a meal. Today, we know physicians are able to heal us from diseases (mostly), but never immediately. It always takes a few days at best, weeks at worst. Authority over disease and illness is instantaneous with Jesus. This amazing authority is revealed through His powerful teaching. The healing ministry is not the main reason for Jesus’ appearance on planet Earth; teaching about the Kingdom of God is the prime work, which continues to this day.

Jesus’ words carry the same authority that created the universe and all the living creatures that reside on this little planet of ours. The same authority that could still a storm or heal the sick is the same power that comes from the words he utters to those who would hear,

understand, and obey. Long ago, Isaiah prophesied a coming Kingdom and Jesus and the authority by which He would work. And it wasn't only to be Jerusalem and Capernaum; Jesus had many towns throughout Galilee in which He had to preach (Mark 1:38-39).

Rabbis taught according to the scriptures and the many commentaries and traditions written on them down the ages. They taught according to the knowledge of those 'professors' before them, in much the same way that today's university professors teach their students. But not so with Jesus. His words were given with authority; they came directly from God.

The prophets of old began their utterances with, "Thus sayeth the Lord." Jesus began, "But I say unto you." You cannot get more authoritative than that! Jesus always spoke the Word of God and we too are to rely only on the Word of God, or in Martin Luther's phrase Sola Scriptura.

When Jesus spoke, the people recognized the power and authority coming from his very being. This was especially so whenever He cast a demon from a person. Demons are fallen angels under the control of Satan. Demonic activity increased dramatically during Jesus' earthly time and will do so again at the end of this 'age.' Demons are responsible for many bad things; they know who Jesus is, and they know they are bound by his commands. They certainly influence many humans and will certainly probe for a weak spot in a Christian given half a chance. Hence the importance of being covered by the blood of Jesus, under which a demon cannot penetrate. It is no wonder those early watchers of Jesus at work were wowed by his work in casting out demons. What would we do if confronted by a possessed human? Oughtn't we do something? We do have Jesus with us. Can we appropriate him? After all, Jesus' authority over health is **comprehensive**.

But there are limits to our usefulness. For example, we cannot rebuke fever; even a doctor can't. But Jesus can. Verse 34 states that Jesus healed many who were sick with various diseases. The only person capable of doing all these healings **MUST** be our Lord. To submit to Jesus, we Christians must recognize our true needs. Often, we think we have a physical problem that needs healing. But our true problem may be deeper; it may be spiritual. It is important to understand that physical healing is **NOT** spiritual healing. Jesus knew that many people wanted only physical healing from Him.

Right now, we have Covid-19 dominating our lives. We are living in a cursed world. Literally everyone needs healing, but not just from Covid-19. Most of our problems are spiritual in nature – far deeper than a cough or cold or flu. Only Jesus can provide the spiritual healing we truly need.

Discussion Questions

1. How would you respond to your deepest need today? Do you know what it is – what it might be?
2. Is it time to review your current submission to Jesus' commands on your life?