

“A New Teaching with Authority”
(Mark 1:21-28)

I. Introduction.

A. Orientation: what have we seen?

1. John has been removed from the public scene:
 - a. His work was complete – the people were ready through the Law to receive Jesus.
 - b. To make Jesus’ ministry more obvious – there were not to be two competing lights.
2. Jesus has already done battle with the enemy and overcome him in the wilderness.
 - a. The devil is now bound.
 - b. Jesus can now plunder his house.
3. Jesus has begun His preaching ministry.
 - a. The time was fulfilled – the OT prophecies regarding the coming of Messiah.
 - b. The kingdom was at hand – the King has come bringing the kingdom.
 - c. They now needed to repent and believe the Gospel – the only message that saves.
4. And He has called His first disciples.
 - a. He called four fishermen.
 - b. That He will train now to be fishers of men.

B. Preview.

1. We saw last week that what now follows:
 - a. Was meant not only to be Jesus’ work of advancing the Kingdom,
 - b. But also to train His apostles to carry the work forward.
 - c. And so there is much we can learn.
2. This morning, we see one of the most prominent features of His ministry.
 - a. His work leading up to His crucifixion consisted of about four things:
 - (i) His preaching.
 - (ii) His obedience.
 - (iii) His teaching.
 - (iv) His miracles.
 - b. In our passage, we see His teaching – the kind of teaching that advanced the kingdom: teaching with authority. Let’s consider two things:
 - (i) That Jesus taught with authority.
 - (ii) That His teaching was authenticated through miracles.

II. Sermon.

A. First, let's consider that Jesus taught with authority (vv. 21-22).

1. Those who heard Jesus recognized that something was different.

a. They hadn't heard anything like this before.

(i) It's not that John's ministry was without authority.

(a) He was the greatest of the Old Covenant prophets.

(b) He preached by the power of the Spirit.

(c) But still there was a difference.

(ii) Jesus' message was certainly different from the lifeless teaching they were accustomed to.

(a) The scribes might explain something that had to do with the Law, the traditions of the elders, the rabbinic scholars, perhaps an allegorical interpretation of Scripture.

(b) But much of it was lacking truth, and there was no power, no authority.

b. Jesus spoke with authority.

(i) He spoke not as a servant of Scripture, but as its Author.

(a) Let's not forget who He is – the Word of God: "In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. . . . And the Word became flesh, and dwelt among us" (John 1:1, 14).

(b) He gave us the Word through His Spirit. Peter writes, "As to this salvation, the prophets who prophesied of the grace that *would come* to you made careful searches and inquiries, seeking to know what person or time the Spirit of Christ within them was indicating as He predicted the sufferings of Christ and the glories to follow" (1 Pet. 1:10-11).

(c) He was the only One who could say, "You have heard that it was said . . . but I say to you" (Matt. 5:27-28).

(d) This is how He was different from John and from the scribes.

(ii) But like John, He also spoke with power.

(a) Only more so, because He was anointed with the Spirit above measure – "For He whom God has sent speaks the words of God; for He gives the Spirit without measure" (John 3:34).

(b) He spoke with grace, with seriousness and sincerity, with evident power.

(c) This was something again the scribes couldn't do since they didn't have the Spirit.

(d) They spoke as strangers to the truth and in the power of their humanity; He spoke as One commissioned and empowered by God.

2. This is the kind of teaching we need in the church today – teaching with power.

a. Sadly, it's not usually welcome – most people don't want to hear anything that comes with authority, even those professing faith in Christ.

(i) So many don't want to change or submit.

- (ii) They like to hear sermons on God's promises – what He will do for them.
 - (iii) But they don't care to hear what He wants of them – they don't want to be exhorted to holiness.
 - b. Today, charisma has replaced authority.
 - (i) Churches are being built on personality or novel views.
 - (i) If a man can say something convincingly enough, people will believe them – that's how Harold Camping has garnered so many followers.
 - (ii) They draw people after them on the strength of their personality – they are SNLs (strong natural leaders) – people are compelled to follow them.
 - c. But saying something authoritatively is not the same as teaching with authority. To have the kind of authority we see this morning:
 - (i) What is preached or taught must be the Lord's truth – if it isn't, it has no authority – it's only the opinion of man.
 - (ii) And it must come by work of the Spirit, anointing the messenger to speak, and the congregation to hear, with power.
 - (iii) When these two come together, then the Word will bring change – it will have the ability,
 - (a) To awaken the dead.
 - (b) To convert lost souls to Jesus.
 - (c) And to sanctify true believers.
 - (d) We need to pray that God would provide this kind of ministry.
 - (e) This what Jesus and His apostles had, and what the Lord desires in His church.
- B. Second, let's consider that Jesus teaching was authenticated – or shown to have authority – through miracles (vv. 23-28).
- 1. Unlike the scribes, His Word had power over the demonic realm.
 - a. We see this in His delivering the man with the unclean spirit.
 - b. Jesus commanded that spirit to come out of him and it had to obey.
 - (i) The spirit didn't want to – his throwing the man into convulsions and coming out with a loud voice showed that he did this to a large degree against his will (v. 26) – but he had to submit.
 - (ii) Here we see Jesus exercising authority over the kingdom of the devil.
 - (iii) This was the beginning of His plundering the strong man's house (Matt. 12:29).
 - c. It's quite likely the demon possessed man wasn't threatened at all by the teaching of the scribes.
 - (i) It didn't have power; it didn't have authority; it was delivered by someone as bound by the enemy as this demoniac.
 - (ii) Again, this is true of so much of the preaching and teaching going on in the church.

- (a) It doesn't threaten the flesh or worldiness; the unconverted can listen to it without being convicted.
 - (b) Because it doesn't come in truth and power.
 - (c) But it must, if it is to change hearts.
- 2. We shouldn't miss the reason He cast out this demon.
 - a. It was to prove the authority of His teaching.
 - b. The fact He spoke with authority amazed them (v. 22), but even more so that He was able to cast out demons (v. 27).
 - (i) Miracles stop traffic and make people notice.
 - (ii) They prove the teaching came from God and so they must listen.
 - c. Note too where this took place: Capernaum.
 - (i) This was the place Jesus was referring to when He said it would be more tolerable for Sodom than that city in the judgment (Matt. 11:23-24).
 - (ii) Why? Because He preached in their streets, and taught and performed miracles in their synagogues, but they still rejected Him.
 - (a) When the Word comes with authority those who hear have a greater responsibility to listen.
 - (b) Make sure you don't make the same mistake as the Jews at Capernaum – listen to what Jesus says; repent and believe.
 - (iii) One final point to note:
 - (a) Even though they rejected Him, the news of what He had done spread throughout the region of Galilee (v. 28).
 - (b) People talk about miracles, even if they don't believe what those miracles set out to prove – today people talk about Jesus even though they don't receive His message.
 - (c) It's not enough to admire Jesus and talk about His truth or wisdom or authority; you must receive His Word, submit to it, turn from your sins and trust in Jesus Christ.
 - (d) May the Lord help us all to do so. Amen.