

**Alan W. Gumm**

**Text: Mark 1:21-28**

**Theme: Jesus Displays His Authority**

**Parts:**

- I. By teaching God's Word with authority**
- II. By commanding an evil spirit with authority**

**Preached it: 1/28/18 Christ the King, Port Charlotte, FL**

**The Fourth Sunday After The Epiphany  
Staff Minister Mark Becker Conducted the Service**

*21 Then they went into Capernaum. On the next Sabbath day, Jesus went into the synagogue and began to teach. 22 They were amazed at his teaching, because he was teaching them as one who has authority and not as the experts in the law. 23 Just then there was a man with an unclean spirit in their synagogue. It cried out, 24 “What do we have to do with you, Jesus of Nazareth? Have you come to destroy us? I know who you are—the Holy One of God!”*

*25 Jesus rebuked the spirit, saying, “Be quiet! Come out of him!” 26 The unclean spirit threw the man into convulsions, and after crying out with a loud voice, it came out of him. 27 Everyone was so amazed that they began to discuss this with each other. They said, “What is this? A new teaching with authority! He even commands the unclean spirits, and they obey him!” 28 News about him spread quickly through all the region of Galilee. Mark 1:21-28 (EHV Translation)*

The only thing worse than an expert is someone who thinks he is an expert.

Pastors are not experts in the Word of God. They know much of Holy Scripture, but they don't know it all. They constantly need to keep on learning more of God's Word to preach and teach the whole counsel of God. The true expert in the Word of God is our Lord Jesus Christ. Unlike earthly pastors and lay people who study the Word of God, Jesus knows all of Holy Scripture. From our text chosen for our meditation today, we see that

### **JESUS DISPLAYS HIS AUTHORITY**

While Jesus was in Capernaum, He went to the local synagogue to teach. He was given the opportunity to explain the Scriptures to the people there. Usually that was done by one of the elders of the synagogue, but Jesus was considered a special teacher.

So, Jesus read a portion of the Old Testament and the people were amazed by the way He taught. He taught as one who had authority, very much unlike the teachers of the law. Jesus was a man with a message. The people were impressed, amazed, and astonished, because Jesus taught with authority. He reached their hearts and minds. His words were alive. They had power because they were the words of God.

The teaching of Jesus was unlike the droning on and on about the traditions and observances of the elders' commandments that the teachers in the synagogue presented. There was nothing of the dead monotony of the method of the Scribes here. Maybe they lacked enthusiasm. Maybe they lacked joy in what they were doing. Maybe they didn't believe in what they were reading. Their teaching lacked authority.

Has God's Word become so repetitive to us that we have lost our joy for it? Let's ask ourselves some serious questions. At home, do we race through the table prayer, instead of consciously thinking of what we are praying? Do we sing the hymns during the worship service with a ho-hum attitude? Does our worship life lack joy for the Word of God? Is our personal worship life growing stagnant?

Holy Scripture gives us some directions as we consider these questions. In Psalm 122 we read: ***"I rejoiced with those who said to me, 'Let us go to the house of the Lord.'"*** In 1 Chronicles joy and enthusiasm for the Lord and His Word is expressed: ***"Give thanks to the Lord, call on His name, make known among the nations what He has done. Sing to Him, sing praises to Him, tell of all His wonderful acts. Glory in His holy name, let the hearts of those who seek the Lord rejoice. Look to the Lord and His strength, seek His face always. Remember the wonders He has done, His miracles and the judgments He pronounced."*** Our worship life will be filled with joy, enthusiasm and love for our Lord. It is not to be like the other teachers of the synagogue who just went through the motions.

The amazed people thought Jesus was teaching them something new, but rather He was teaching them God's plan of salvation that had been recorded for them in the Old Testament. He could teach the Old Testament with authority because He is God. He is the author of it.

Jesus wasn't teaching the people something new. Throughout His ministry He would often say, ***"What does the Law say?"*** or He would ask, ***"What do the prophets say concerning this or that?"*** What made Jesus' teaching seem new and different was that He preached with authority. He is also the main subject of Holy Scripture. He was explaining to them that what the Scriptures taught was being fulfilled in Him. That's what made Christ's teaching seem so new and different.

Amid our troubled world many new religions are springing up that proclaim new and different ways to happiness. Many of these religions teach strange and off the wall philosophies that center around work righteousness. We can give thanks to God that His Word and message of salvation through Christ is still being taught in its truth and purity in our congregations, Sunday schools, elementary schools, Lutheran high schools, college and seminary. Thank God that nothing new or strange or off the wall is preached in our pulpits, but, by the grace of God, only sound doctrine from God's Word. May God grant our churches continued blessings until the end of time!

Jesus showed His superior knowledge and authority of the Scriptures when He taught the people in the synagogue.

He didn't preach anything new to them as they thought He did, but He preached with joy and love for them and for the Word of God.

While Jesus was teaching in the synagogue a surprising event took place in which Jesus was able to display His authority in another aspect. He did this by commanding an evil spirit to leave a man.

A man possessed by an evil spirit was there. Why would a man who was possessed by an evil spirit come to a synagogue when Christ the Son of God was teaching there? It was the will of God that that man be present that day. God would use that evil spirit to display the glory and power of His Son. Christ would display His authority over evil.

Our text tells us what happened: ***“Just then there was a man with an unclean spirit in their synagogue. It cried out, “What do we have to do with you, Jesus of Nazareth? Have you come to destroy us? I know who you are—the Holy One of God!”*** The evil spirit cried out in fear. The evil spirit knew who Jesus was. The evil spirit knew Jesus was his enemy. The evil spirit recognized its own unholiness in comparison to the holiness of Christ. The evil spirit feared that Jesus would condemn him to hell forever.

From the beginning of time the devil was acquainted with God. Satan can even quote Scripture. The devil not only knows Scripture very well, but he also knows human beings very well. He knows when we let our guard down so that he can tempt us. He is constantly trying to make us fall into sin. He knows that because of our sinful nature we have a desire to sin against God all because our first parents, Adam and Eve, fell into sin in the Garden of Eden.

God's Word warns us to be on our guard against the soul-destroying devil. Peter writes: ***"Be self-controlled and alert. Your enemy the devil prowls around like a roaring lion, looking for someone to devour. Resist him standing firm in the faith, because you know that your brothers throughout the world are undergoing the same kind of sufferings."*** Be on your guard for Satan is looking for a chance to lead you into sin.

Jesus didn't waste any time to rid the man of the evil spirit. He commanded the spirit to be quiet – not to say another word. Jesus commanded the evil spirit to leave the body of the man. All Jesus had to do was speak and the evil spirit had to obey.

This demon, forced against his will to obey Jesus, tried to vent his hatred in one last effort to harm the body of his victim. ***The unclean spirit threw the man into convulsions, and after crying out with a loud voice, it came out of him.*** The evil spirit had to obey the command of the Son of God and left the man with a great and final shriek.

Jesus is the Lord and Master of all things – in heaven, on earth, and under the earth. Jesus displayed His authority by commanding the evil spirit to leave the man. And the evil spirit had to obey.

The effect of this miracle, coming immediately after the address that had made a deep impression, was overwhelming. A hubbub arose. The people were blown away by all of this. They were saying to each other, ***"What is this? A new teaching with authority! He even commands the unclean spirits, and they obey him!"*** What they had heard and seen went far beyond their human reason.

Jesus not only came to display power and authority, but He came to show that He indeed is the Holy One of God. He did that in that synagogue by teaching the people with authority. He did it by commanding the evil spirit to get out of the man with authority. He truly is the Holy One of God. He truly is the Lord and Master of all.

His main purpose for coming into the world was to save all people from their sins and bondage of Satan. Satan cannot keep all people in sinful bondage because Jesus Christ has conquered Satan. Jesus won the victory over Satan on the cross. Christ earned God's forgiveness for all our sins. Christ paid for our eternal life in heaven. Through God-given faith and trust in Him

we have that life. Thanks be to God for loving us so much that He sent His Son into the world with all power and total authority.

The people of the synagogue couldn't contain themselves. The news spread like wildfire, at once, everywhere, in the whole region of Galilee. Jesus had here given indisputable evidence that He is indeed the Holy One of God, with total power and authority over all things.

We have heard and seen the power and authority of Christ from God's Word. How can we keep these things from our lips? How can we refrain from telling someone about their Savior? We have a multitude of opportunities to share the saving message in our lives in word and deed. Follow the example of the people in the synagogue and tell others of the glory and love of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ.

Jesus is an authority because He is the Son of God. He displayed His authority by preaching His Word with joy. He preached to the hearts of His hearers. The people were amazed at His preaching. With the visual aid of casting out a demon, Jesus displayed His authority over Satan's disciple. Jesus is Lord and Master over all things in heaven, on earth, and under the earth.

To us this can give us great comfort in a world in which new teachings are springing up all over and where Satan is working harder and harder every day to lead more souls away from Jesus. May God grant us hearts filled with an eager desire to hear and to read His Word with joy so that we may be on guard against the temptations of Satan. May the Holy Spirit fill us with boundless zeal to share the good news of our salvation through Jesus Christ with others.

Amen