

The title for today's message is: **By Who's Authority!**

Jesus said to the evil spirit: **"Be quiet!" "Come out of him!"**

Grace and peace to you from God the Father and our Lord Jesus Christ.
Amen

Speaking with authority! How important is it, that someone who is speaking, does so with authority?

Well, according to our text for today, its very important. Mark said: ***The people were amazed at his teaching, (meaning Jesus) because he taught them as one who had authority.***

Our text begins with Mark telling us that Jesus went to Capernaum, and being the Sabbath, He went to the synagogue, and began to teach.

But something different, and unexpected happened, something that no other teacher had ever done.

Yet, something, that only Jesus could do. Jesus spoke with authority, He spoke the Word of God with ownership.

Now, when Jesus taught that day in the synagogue, no one there expected to see, or hear anything out of the ordinary.

But those who were in the synagogue that day heard, and saw something special in Jesus, that made Him stand out, from all other teachers?

What made Jesus stand out was, that His teaching was new. It was new because Jesus moved scripture, from past tense, to present tense.

I would say it this way; Jesus' teaching caused the scriptures to come alive, in a way that only Jesus could do.

Now, I'm told if you take a tour of the Holy Land, one of the places you'll visit is the ancient ruins of Capernaum.

Capernaum is the same town where Jesus called Simon, later called Peter, and his brother Andrew to follow Him as His disciples.

Its also where Jesus made His headquarters, while in Galilee. Staying in the home of Simon and Andrew.

Remarkably as you visit Capernaum, you'll run upon the walls of a small first century house.

And this first century house has been identified, from the time of Constantine, as the house that Jesus stayed.

And 100 feet from the front door of that house are the remains of the synagogue, the same synagogue, where Jesus taught.

And standing there with the winds of the Sea of Galilee blowing through the ruins, you can picture Jesus, and His disciples.

Waking up on the Sabbath and walking across the street to the synagogue, again where Jesus would regularly teach.

For some period of time, Jesus would teach every week in Capernaum's synagogue, as a visiting Rabbi.

Mark tells us, when Jesus began to teach, the people were amazed at His teaching, for a couple of reasons.

One reason was when Jesus started teaching, He didn't say the usual things like; This is what Moses or the prophet Isaiah taught.

No. Instead, when Jesus taught He would say: “I, say to you,” meaning that these are My Words.

He also proclaimed that believing in Him; “There sins were forgiven.” Indicating that He had the power to forgive.

And unlike the other Rabbis that could only offer a blood sacrifice to God for the forgiveness of sin, Jesus actually forgives the sin

The Rabbis did however encourage the people to believe in God. Jesus too told them to believe in God. But also to believe in Him.

And it was clear that the Rabbis of the day, got their authority from quoting the Scriptures, and speaking of the God of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob.

But with Jesus! He was the authority, He said in acts chapter 7; ***I am the God of your fathers, the God of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob.***

God was no longer in the past, God was now in the present, in the life of Jesus of Nazareth.

And it was obvious in the synagogue that day, that Jesus was a teacher of a different order.

Then something happened right in their midst, that stunned them. Something that made everyone in the synagogue sit up, and listen.

Something that allowed Jesus to back up He’s teaching with action, demonstrating His Authority, and His divine powers.

Right when Jesus was teaching, a man, possessed by an evil spirit, interrupts Jesus.

Now there's a few things here you should note. First, is that the man with the evil spirit, didn't burst into the synagogue disrupting the service.

Mark tells us, that this man was within the synagogue, probably a respected lay person, and a productive member of society.

And the second thing is, that this man's affliction is only identified as an evil spirit, so apparently the evil spirit isn't tied to any disabling condition.

So I guess the question should be, what was the evil spirit doing inside this man in the first place.

Now, the scriptures are silent about why, but I would suggest, the influence of the evil spirit in this case, was that of a moral nature.

Yet, we don't know what kind of moral issue, I guess its just not important for the telling of this story.

However, it may well have been the evil spirit of hate, revenge, lust for power, greed, distorted ambition, fear, guilt, envy, or jealousy.

Or perhaps it was the evil spirit of, negativism, slander, deceit, or gossip, we just don't know.

But, what is clear, is that this man had an evil spirit inside him, somehow causing him problems.

Yet, it was the evil spirit, that had the problem, the evil spirit was stirred up, and desperate by the mere presents of Jesus.

A third thing to note, is that this man had given authority over to the evil spirit. Which is the only way the spirit could gain total control over the man.

As Paul reminds us, the chief evil spirit himself, Satan, is like a roaring lion, relentlessly seeking whom he may control, and devour.

Once confronted by Jesus, the evil spirit said to Jesus; ***“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.”***

What’s interesting here, is that Jesus wasn’t the one who confronted the evil spirit, it was the evil spirit, who confronted Jesus.

Probably because, not only did he know that Jesus saw him, but he also knew, he was in big trouble.

Here, the evil spirit acknowledges Jesus, and His power, he realized that the one with greater authority had arrived.

Jesus then says to the evil spirit; ***“Be Quiet,” “Come out of him.” The evil spirit shook the man violently and came out of him with a shriek.***

Now, Jesus wasn’t ready to be exposed by the evil spirit, so Jesus first tells him to be quiet, and then to leave the man.

Do you see what was happening Here, the divine authority of God was occurring right before the eyes of those in the synagogue.

How great was this, well it was like watching Moses part the Red Sea. There was simply no doubt, that the power of God was present in the synagogue that day.

Yet, those in the synagogue still didn’t recognize Jesus as the long awaited Messiah the savior of the World. Instead, they asked each other;

“What is this?” “A new teaching and with authority. He even gives orders to evil spirits and they obey him.”

It was as if those in the synagogue were blind, for what ever reason, they just couldn't see through the haze, of their self-proclaimed righteousness.

Yet, through this one incredible act, Jesus made it perfectly clear, that He Himself, is the King of kings, and Lord of lords, yes, the Messiah.

He all but said, that He's the One who will deliver them from the clutches of the evil spirits, who are seeking to destroy them.

And, not only the Jews in the synagogue that day, but He will deliver us here today, from the clutches of the evil spirit as well.

My friends, we need never fear evil spirits, because God Himself, in the form of the Son Jesus Christ, walks with us, and protects us, every day.

Only we, can allow evil spirits to take total control of our lives. And only through the grace of God, are we able to ward off evil spirits.

Jesus came to this world, to forgive us, and to empower us, through His Word, and Sacraments.

Jesus met and faced the evil spirits, our enemy, that day in the synagogue at Capernaum, and He won the fight for us all.

Amen.

The grace of the Lord Jesus Christ and the love of God and the fellowship of the Holy Spirit, be with us all. Amen.