

“Authority Issues?”—Mark 1:27-28

The text for this sermon, the theme of which is, “Authority Issues?”, is Mark 1:27-28 → *They were all amazed, so that they questioned among themselves, saying, “What is this? A new teaching with authority! He commands even the unclean spirits, and they obey Him.” And at once His fame spread everywhere throughout all the surrounding region of Galilee.* This is the text.

Dear Brothers and Sisters in Christ Jesus:

Do you have authority issues? No, I’m not referring to the fact that you don’t like to be told what to do, especially by those in authority over you. Whether or not they realize it, most people struggle with authority issues as they encounter the onslaught of criticism, advice and “suggestions” while traveling the information super highway of life. From the advice of friends to the counsel of experts; from those considered “an authority on a subject” because they’ve authored a book to the authority of the written legal codes; from motivational speakers to preachers and teachers of God’s will; authority issues are a reality in our everyday life. Their issue is: To which authority should you listen and follow?

Like us, the people who encountered Jesus during His public ministry

also had authority issues. The Jews of Jesus' day depended heavily upon their religious authorities. The Pharisees were experts in the Old Testament Law and insisted upon strict adherence to the laws and customs given through Moses as well as separation from Gentiles. Another religious group, the Saducees, were made up of the priests and high priests who played more of a political role in their culture. Yet, both of these "religious authorities" held different beliefs even though they both adhered to the faith of Judaism.

At the beginning of His public ministry the people immediately recognized a unique authority displayed by Jesus. Mark 1:22 records the reaction of the crowds when they heard Him teaching: *They were astonished at His teaching, for He taught them as One Who had authority, and not as the scribes.* Scribes were another group of "authorities." They were a special class of priests who devoted themselves to studying and teaching the Law of Moses as contained in the first five books of the Old Testament.

What was so unique about Jesus' *teaching* that the people would be so *astonished*? Was it His style of preaching and teaching? Many people today are impressed by preachers because of the manner in which they deliver a sermon. They are animated, engaging a congregation with enough excitement to keep people interested in the topic and on the edge of their pews. Unfortunately such a focus on style

may actually hinder the teaching, causing one to follow false teaching presented by a “charismatic” teacher or leader.

Maybe it was the knowledge Jesus possessed which awed the people as He shared the Word of God with them. Luke 2:46-47 tells us at the age of twelve Jesus was *sitting among the teachers* in the temple, *listening to them and asking them questions. And all who heard Him were amazed at His understanding and His answers.* People are impressed by knowledgeable people all the time. We are constantly seeking the insights of individuals because of the knowledge they possess, proved by the education they have and the degree(s) they hold.

No doubt the way in which Jesus dealt with God’s Word in His teaching was certainly different from their religious leaders. In His Sermon on the Mount Jesus says six times, *You have heard that it was said . . . but I say to you . . .* He spoke with the authority of God Himself. Matthew records that the crowds responded the same way when Jesus finished His teaching on the Mount.

The authority of Jesus was also revealed in His Person and Work, that is, His deity and power. The recognition of Jesus as God in the flesh was immediately revealed by demons whenever they encountered Jesus. When Jesus encountered a demon-possessed man during the “church service” the demon immediately cried out: *What have you to do*

with us, Jesus of Nazareth? Have You come to destroy us? I know Who You are—the Holy One of God. (cf. Mark 1:24) Interesting! While so many people of Jesus' day—and our day as well—doubt Jesus' claims to be God, the demons had no doubt in their minds concerning His authority. As James 2:19 says: *You believe that God is one; you do well. Even the demons believe—and shudder!* Fortunately you can believe in Jesus' perfect obedience and sacrifice so you don't have shudder at the thought of God's righteous judgment upon your sin. As you trust in Christ's Person & Work you have peace with God in the complete forgiveness of your sins!

At the command of Jesus to be silent and come out the man, the demon obeyed and the man was released from his bondage. Verse 27 of the text says: *They were all amazed, so that they questioned among themselves, saying, "What is this? A new teaching with authority! He commands even the unclean spirits, and they obey Him."* The people immediately had "issues"—authority "issues." How were they going to deal with their "issues," especially in light of the "guidance" of their religious authorities who were discrediting Jesus' authority by accusing Him of working under the authority of the devil himself (cf. Mark 3:22)? How do you deal with your "authority issues" as you encounter Jesus in the written Word of God?

The same spiritual battles which waged against the human soul of

the people of Jesus' day wage against your soul today as well. You are involved in spiritual battle as Christians, as those belonging to Christ. You were marked with the sign of the cross at your baptism which serves as a target for the devil's many attacks upon your soul. He has his sights set on that mark upon you. Thus, demons are constantly using knowledge, teaching and even awesome works in an effort to deceive you to believe a lie and doubt the Person & Work of Jesus Christ. According to 1 Timothy 4:1-2, *the Spirit expressly says that in later times some will depart from the faith by devoting themselves to deceitful spirits and teachings of demons through the insincerity of liars whose consciences are seared.*

Beware! The deceit of their teachings is to lead you to depend upon something other than or along with the Person & Work of Jesus for the security of your salvation. No! **Your salvation is completely by grace through faith in Jesus Christ alone!** The deceit of their teachings is to make you feel secure in your sin while feeling secure in your salvation. No! **Jesus came to deal with your sin once and for all so you can be forgiven of your sin, not justified in your sin!** And the "icing on the cake" of this deceit is to make their teachings look authoritative by using the very written Word of God.

The devil will use many ways which look "authoritative" in order to get you to discredit the Person & Work of Jesus in His efforts to kill your

relationship with God and everyone around you! As Jesus said in John 8:44 → *The devil was a murderer from the beginning, and does not stand in the truth, because there is no truth in him. When he lies, he speaks out of his own character, for he is a liar and the father of lies.*

Verse 28 of our text says that Jesus' fame spread everywhere throughout all the surrounding region of Galilee. Could it be that even though they were impressed by His authoritative teaching that it only led to knowing about Jesus' Person & Work but not necessarily trusting in His Person & Work for the forgiveness of their sins? This is the danger when you deal with your "authority issues" by not looking to the authoritative written Word of God, through which the Holy Spirit always brings you to the atoning work of Jesus for the forgiveness of your sins and authoritative guidance in living for Him.

What is your response to the authority of Jesus as you deal with all the "authoritative voices" in your daily life? You need not react by trying to figure out Who Jesus is because the Holy Spirit has revealed His Person & Work to you **in the written Word of God**. As you repent of your sins and trust in His atoning work for the forgiveness of your sins that written Word becomes the only authority for life in all its aspects. Our spreading the news about Jesus will confess in words and actions that we have no "authority issues." It will be clear to everyone that His Word is our only authority as the Holy Spirit works faith in Christ for

forgiveness of sins and eternal salvation through that Word. That written Word is the authority by which all other authorities are judged because it will always reveal who you are and how you are to live **in Christ** Who is Lord of all! Amen.

*If you abide in My word, you are truly My disciples,
and you will know the truth, and the truth will set you free.*

(John 8:31-32)

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