

Mark 1:21-39

January 28, 2018

PRAY

Margaret Thatcher—the former PM of England—famously said, “Being powerful is like being a lady. If you have to tell people you are, you aren’t.”

In other words, The powerful don’t brag about their power, they don’t flaunt their power they just get on with it. I suppose you could say the same thing about authority. Those who have real power and real authority don’t say that they have power and authority they just get on with it.

Power & Authority is better seen than talked about. We are going to see both in spades today in Jesus.

Today we follow Jesus—the King—and see him wield both his power and his authority. Jesus will show us and all of Capernaum that he, as King has matchless power and exhaustive authority.

His power and authority is on display and everyone can’t help but gawk, point, stare and whisper. This king—Jesus—has BOTH power and authority not just one or the other.

Power is the ability to do.

Authority is the authorization to do.

Power without authority is heartless tyranny. Authority without power is a fanciful game of make believe. Jesus is

neither a tyrant or a pretender. He is King. He is King of the dawning Kingdom of God.

He is the King all of creation groans for. He is the king who set all things in motion and now he had come to usher in his kingdom and restore all things.

He is the long awaited King who has the power and authority to make all things right. Finally.

Today we join Jesus for one day in his life as he visits a Galilean city called Capernaum. Like each week through Mark—

Let's Watch Jesus together
Let's Listen to Jesus together
Let's follow him around together

Jesus shows us he is the powerful & authoritative King of the kingdom of God.

PROP: Because he has all power and authority over all things—we respond to him appropriately.

We are going to see the king in 3 different locations—and walk through Mark 1:21-39.

1. The King at the synagogue (Mark 1:21-28)—

“And they went into Capernaum, and immediately on the Sabbath he entered the synagogue and was teaching. [22] And they were astonished at his teaching, for he taught them as one who had authority, and not as the scribes. [23] And immediately there was in their synagogue a man

with an unclean spirit. And he cried out, [24] “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.” [25] But Jesus rebuked him, saying, “Be silent, and come out of him!” [26] And the unclean spirit, convulsing him and crying out with a loud voice, came out of him. [27] And 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.” [28] And at once his fame spread everywhere throughout all the surrounding region of Galilee.” Mark 1:21–28

As we watch and listen and follow Jesus around in the port town of Capernaum we join him on Saturday, on the Jewish Sabbath. Jesus and his four followers were good Jews and that meant they went to the local synagogue for their weekly worship.

A synagogue is not the same as the temple. The word synagogue means ‘meeting house’ and any town that had 10 or more men could have a synagogue.

Jesus was from the region and probably knew a few people in town. The Synagogue leader asked Jesus to preach that morning. In the section we just read, Mark does not tell us what he said because we heard it last week in Mark 1:15,

“The time is fulfilled, and the kingdom of God is at hand; repent and believe in the gospel.” Mark 1:15

This was the King's message. Jesus constantly announced the dawning of the Kingdom of God—through himself—and that anyone can join if they repent and believe.

He said this again and again. And this is surely what he said that Saturday morning.

The people settled in for a dry, mundane, normal sermon and then God shows up and blows their doors off. Look at verse 22,

“And they were astonished at his teaching, for he taught them as one who had authority, not as the scribes.”

They were not astonished by what he taught but they were astonished by HOW he taught. How?

With authority.

With authority in contrast to their usual teachers—the scribes.

Who were the scribes?

They were professional interpreters. They interpreted biblical law, civil law and nearly everything else for the town.

That sounds very un-American. Right. This is ancient Israel.

The people needed this kind of interpretation because 93-5% of the people were illiterate. And so what the scribes

said about the Bible was law. The town needed the scribes because they could not read for themselves.

The scribes would read the Bible and drone on and on about different scholars opinions on what it meant.

“Rabbi Ben-David sees the command not to boil a goat in his mother’s milk as a health and safety stipulation. Rabbi Ben-Hillel sees it differently. He thinks we should avoid that because the pagans do that.”

And on and on.

It was like a long and boring dull meeting that no one ever looked forward to. Their teaching was dead and the people were dying. The scribes did not preach God’s word, they lectured on opinions and ideas.

Jesus knew this—he grew up going to synagogue but he had held his tongue in the synagogue until this day. And when he spoke—WOW!

That day in Capernaum Jesus straight up brings it. Say what you want about Jesus he is never boring. He spoke with power and authority.

Incidentally, how do you think the scribes are going to think about this new guy coming into their territory and ripping it up in their synagogues? They are not going to like it. The scribes were the most revered people in town. So much so that when they entered a room, all stood.

These scribes are not going to like Jesus much. He was undermining their authority—but he was the king with power and authority.

This was already going to be a Saturday that no one would forget and then a few demons show up.

Vs. 23

“And immediately there was in their synagogue a man with an unclean spirit. And he cried out, [24] “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.”

The kingdom of darkness recoiled and convulsed at the arrival of the King. The King preached the gospel of the Kingdom and the prince of darkness lashes out.

Demons never cried out when the scribes went on and on but Jesus was a real threat. It is panic time in the pit of hell. The King had come.

Did you see how the demons respond? They recognized him and they recognized his power and authority. They knew that he could destroy them because they knew who he was.

“I know who you are—The Holy One of God!”

Strange thing to say. They were so scared they probably didn't know what to say. It knew Jesus but the last time they saw Jesus was high and lifted up—the one as bright as the sun and worshiped day and night.

The scribes were no threat, but Jesus? He is the king. And the evil one calls him out.

And Jesus shows himself to have both power and authority and says, “Be quiet, come out!”

No rituals.

No potions.

No incantations.

Just two commands—Quiet! Leave!

Poof.

And I’m sure all in that room had eyes as big as dinner plates and mouths open in shock. And the people saw it,

“The people were amazed at the authority he had.”

He told no one of his authority, but he showed everyone that he had authority. How did the people respond? We see that they were astonished and amazed.

Astonishment and amazement does not mean that they listened.

They were in impressed by what he did, but would they respond to what he said?

Did they respond to the gospel of the Kingdom as preached by the king? Did they repent—turn from their own ways—and believe?

Nope.

They were merely astonished and amazed.

Being astonished at Jesus does not mean that anything of real value happened to them. They had an impressive experience with Jesus but they did not submit and follow Jesus as King.

If you are one who says—If I could just see a miracle or if Jesus would just do something for me—then I would believe. You wouldn't.

How do we know?

They didn't.

They saw that Jesus had authority and power but they could not see that that power and authority had anything to do with their lives.

Astonishment of Jesus and amazement toward him are not the right response to the King.

He is King with all power and all authority over all of us.

From the synagogue we go with him to a home.

2. The King goes home (Mark 1:29-31)

“And immediately he left the synagogue and entered the house of Simon and Andrew, with James and John. [30] Now Simon's mother-in-law lay ill with a fever, and immediately they told him about her. [31] And he came

and took her by the hand and lifted her up, and the fever left her, and she began to serve them.” Mark 1:29–31

The service let out and Jesus and the boys when to Peter’s house. Later we will find that this house will become Jesus’ base of ministry, his adopted home. As they arrive breathless about what just happened, Jesus learns that Peter’s mother in law had a fever.

A serious fever. Serious enough to lay her out. Jesus springs into action. With nary word, just a touch Jesus lifts the woman up to wholeness.

One moment she was not feeling herself and the next she was. Why? Because the King had touched her and healed her.

Anyone Jesus touches is lifted up.

Notice her response, ‘she began to serve.’ She was able to be the hostess she wanted to be. She didn’t know much about him. All she knew was she was on her sickbed and that man lifted her up.

Jesus is the King over sickness and disease.

His power over sickness is an authority over creation. The world created in Genesis 1 was good, without disease of body, mind or soul. But in the garden, the deep darkness of the evil one descended, marking and marring this world with cancer, Down’s, COPD, Asthma, Autism, ADHD, depression always hounding mankind.

But finally one has come to say to disease—you can go no farther—you must flee. And it was gone. He is rolling back the darkness and confronting the evil one—that is why he came.

This is a king who gives life. He is reversing the curse of death from the Garden of Eden. He is showing that he has and freely gives life. The Kingdom of God is breaking in and we see the King beginning to exercise his power and authority.

Satan bested Adam and Eve and from then on mankind was constantly being sniped by the devil and hounded by disease. Later, Jesus would best Satan by dying and rising so that his people might not be forever sniped by the devil and hounded by disease.

The King had put the evil one on notice. You have reigned long enough. I am King—I have power and authority and I am rolling back your wickedness.

In coming to earth from heaven, he declared war on the powers of darkness. And each miracle is a sign that he is indeed King with all power and authority.

We do a great disservice to Jesus if we misunderstand him to be little more than a personal sin manager. He is the king that inaugurates the kingdom. One day he will completely restore all things. The Kingdom he brings will be seen and felt by all of creation.

Until the Kingdom advances as men and women hear the message of the gospel of the kingdom—repent and believe.

Only Jesus can restore what has been broken. Jesus offers not just forgiveness but wholeness. We are all marred and broken in different way, only Jesus can restore us and make us who we were designed to be.

He did it for Simon's Mother-in-law, let him do it for you.

And as the sun went down, the town came out. Did they come out to say, 'We've been thinking about what you have said, we want to repent and believe and follow you?'

No.

“That evening at sundown they brought to him all who were sick or oppressed by demons. [33] And the whole city was gathered together at the door. [34] And he healed many who were sick with various diseases, and cast out many demons. And he would not permit the demons to speak, because they knew him.” Mark 1:32–34

The people came to be healed. Jesus was someone they wanted to get something from, not someone they wanted follow. They had not thought about what he said to them but what they could do for them.

The people did not know him.

The demons were sent away and fled. The demons saw him and knew him and fled from him. They knew him but ran from him.

The demons knew him but did not want to be in his kingdom. The people did not know him but wanted blessings from his kingdom.

Demons knew him but did not want to follow him.
People saw what he could do and wanted more.

How easy it is to want things from Jesus without wanting
Jesus himself. How easy and how frightening.

Wanting things from the king and not wanting to follow
the king are not the right responses to this king.

Jesus is the king with power and authority.

We've been to the synagogue and to a home with the king
and now we follow him out past the edge of town to the
lonely places.

3. The King Alone (Mark 1:35-39)—

“And rising very early in the morning, while it was still
dark, he departed and went out to a desolate place, and
there he prayed. [36] And Simon and those who were with
him searched for him, [37] and they found him and said to
him, “Everyone is looking for you.” [38] And he said to
them, “Let us go on to the next towns, that I may preach
there also, for that is why I came out.” [39] And he went
throughout all Galilee, preaching in their synagogues and
casting out demons. Mark 1:35–39

Saturday was long and taxing. He stayed up well into the
night healing bodies and exorcising demons. He had a
marathon day—people came and kept coming into the
small hours of the night.

And Jesus healed their bodies and sent away their demons.

What does Jesus do?

He does not do what I would do—sleep in. He knows that he needs real refreshment not just rest. So he gets up before anyone stirs and he steals away to pray.

He went out to a desolate place to be alone in that desolation he met with his God. His Father.

Meanwhile, everyone back in Capernaum was looking for him. Surely, the town woke up ready to go back and see the miracle worker. I can imagine that the town was excited to have Jesus around so that he could tend to all of their needs.

And that is basically what Peter finds him.

“And Simon and those who were with him searched (hunted him down) for him, [37] and they found him and said to him, “Everyone is looking for you.”

How Jesus responds is telling. He is not surprised. After the previous day’s display of course they are all coming out. Look at what he says,

“And he said to them, “Let us go on to the next towns, that I may preach there also, for that is why I came out.” [39] And he went throughout all Galilee, preaching in their synagogues and casting out demons.”

Jesus knew what he was about. He did not let the siren call of the crowds woo him back. He knew why he came. He

came to hunt people down and preach the gospel of the Kingdom of God.

And so he left.

But realize who he left—he left the town. Verse 34 says that he healed many who were sick with various diseases. He did not heal them all. This means there were still sick people in Capernaum and Jesus left.

Seem heartless?

It would be heartless if Jesus primary purpose was to heal people of their diseases. It wasn't.

What was his purpose?

To preach. That is why he came.

Why?

The people he healed would still face the prospect of other diseases that would invade their bodies. The demons he sent away might be replaced with other demons. The healings and the exorcisms were but temporary relief.

The people of Capernaum needed a touch from Jesus.

They needed something more than to strike out against disease and send away demons.

They needed Jesus himself. They needed to respond personally to his power and authority. They needed to turn

from their own way of life and believe that following him is better.

They needed him to King of their lives too.

That is why he went on to the next town.

There were three kinds of responses to Jesus in Capernaum on that day so long ago. And those responses are not so different than the responses we give to Jesus.

- Townsfolk were amazed and astonished but wanted to use him.

This is a danger to anyone here who is not a follower of Jesus.

They heard him, they saw him, they came to him but they remained unchanged by him. You might be thinking about what it means to follow Jesus—and you come to him to make things go a bit better for you.

You want a better job.

You want success.

You want happiness.

You the kids to be good.

You want to be well-rounded.

Jesus is king. He cannot be used by any man or woman. The king came to earth to exercise his power and authority and deal with those fundamental flaws, those deadly deficits in our nature.

We need more than to have our lives improved a little bit—we need to be completely changed and restored. That is the work of this king, King Jesus.

Jesus does not promise a better life.

The king does not always give success.

The king does not promise happiness.

The king does not say your kids will be good.

The king does not promise you will be well-rounded.

He promises you that if you follow him and trust him and turn from your sins to believe and follow him—he will give you something much better than all of your dreams for a better life—he will give you himself.

King Jesus would be coronated later in this book and he would be raised up to die like a slave on a splintery, wooden cross. In that action he promises you himself—if you humble yourself and turn and believe in him.

He does promise that when you turn to him and trust him come what may, he promises to:

- Be with you
- Uphold you
- Walk with you
- Guide you
- Strengthen you

He promises that though you have hard times, the worst of times, when you hurt body and soul, when depression hits, when the marriage is trying, he promises never to depart or renounce you.

He promises you cannot use him but you will find that there is nothing better in all the world but than to be used by him. I have never talked to a seasoned saint, grown old with Jesus who as the end of their journey draws near says, “It is not worth it.”

It always is.

Not a Christian? Don't wait to be amazed or astonished or try and use him.

Follow him.

The townsfolk were amazed and astonished but wanted to use him. You can trust him and turn to him.

Another response to the King we saw in how the demons reacted to Jesus.

- The Demons knew all about him but did not follow him

This is a unique danger to those in this room who call themselves Christian.

What?

The devil and his fallen angels are biblical experts. They know theology and scripture backward and forward. They can rightly identify Jesus and the work of Jesus. But they refuse to follow him.

Just because you know a thing or two about the Bible, have a lot of theological knowledge, just because you can

quote scripture and wax eloquent about the hypostatic union—THAT alone means NOTHING.

If you do not have a meaningful life-giving relationship with the King your understanding about who Jesus is little more than demonic. Some signs that knowledge about God is like the demons—Knowing about without character change:

- You can quote facts about the Bible, but you cannot and do not go to scripture for comfort or conviction.
- You know where other people need to change, but don't see that you need to change much.
- You are rarely wrong, others just misunderstand you.
- You read scripture to make a case against those you disagree.
- You accuse people regularly but add a qualifier like, "I know I'm no better OR I know I'm a sinner."
- You use your biblical knowledge to make a point, win an argument or make someone feel small on facebook.
- You correct others more often than you are corrected by God.
- You disguise selfishness by saying, "It is God's will."
- You can't remember the last time you asked forgiveness of someone.

Those are signs that your knowledge of God has led to blindness of Jesus. Like the demons.

It is perilous to know about Jesus without really submitting and following him.

What to do?

Jesus has come close to those who know him like the demons. The Demons cannot (they would not come anyway) to the King.

You can.

He came to save us from the tonic of self-sufficiency. After all, he said in vs. 38,

“Let us go on to the next towns, that I may preach there also, for this why I came out.”

Jesus has come to our town too. The message of the gospel has come to us too. You need not double down in self-trust. Don't be afraid.

Jesus will not treat you like you have treated him or like how you have treated others. You might be frightened to go to him—you might be afraid that he might say—Be Quiet—Leave!!

He will not.

He says—come to me.

He is compassionate and gracious, patient and abounding in steadfast love. Will you acknowledge his power and authority in your life?

There are those that tried to use him, those that merely know about him and there are those that follow him.

- Peter's Mother-in-law: She served and followed him

The dear unnamed saint was touched by Jesus and never remained the same.

She didn't have all her questions answered.
She didn't know much about him.
She didn't know what it all meant.

She knew that she was afflicted by a fever and the king with power and authority sent it away. None that are touched by him remain the same.

You know this if you follow and serve him.

You were dead in your sins and Jesus brought you up and to new life. You didn't have all your questions answered. You might not have known much about him. You did not know what it all meant.

But, Jesus lifted you up.

Keep serving him.
Keep following him.

Keep listening to him.
Keep watching him.
Keep following him around.
Keep building your life upon him.
Keep running to him.
Keep standing on his testimony.
Keep loving him.

There is nothing like following this king.

PRAY

