

2012.4 - Preaching with Authority

Mark 1:21-28

“What is this? A new teaching – and with authority!” Vs. 1:27.

The crowds were amazed a Jesus’ teaching and preaching. He had power. And He preached with an authority that could penetrate locked hearts with holy love and rescuing grace. With faith-filled steadiness He brought the reign of God into the world and into the microcosm of the individual lives.

This introductory incident of Jesus’ general teaching/preaching raises several questions and possible themes.

First, repeatedly Jesus’ preaching reached the core of many, even those who were mentally ill, even demon-possessed, to confront and conquer the fears, the madness, the lostness of individuals and set them free. *There is unlimited power in the Word of God preached.* But the world, the church, even we preachers, have lowered our expectations of what God can accomplish through a God-inspired sermon. Authentic preaching with authority in Jesus’ Name will rock boats, set long-bound people free and change this world. Does our preaching today in His Name do this? How might we receive such power for His work through us?

Second, I see in this text a microcosm of the larger confrontation being played out on the cosmic stage. *Good confronting evil. Health and hope confronting illness, God confronting Satan.* Jesus has moved onto this man’s turf and pressed closely into this man’s life. The demon, recognizing and proclaiming who Jesus is, cries out in terror. Overwhelming good, the overwhelming Word of God has invaded the man’s space, his life. God confronting evil. God reclaiming Satan-usurped ground. In Matthew 28:18-20, with all authority Jesus commissions His disciples to go and make disciples. In Ephesians 6:12 the writer warns: “For our struggle is not against flesh and blood, but against rulers, against authorities, against powers of this dark world and against spiritual forces in the heavenly realms.” And so, for the fight, we put on the full armor of God. Have we forgotten this cosmic battle? At what peril?

Third, *this passage speaks to me about why pray.* Today, if the man in the Gospel showed signs of mental illness, we would encourage the treatment of a psychiatrist. For those ill with various diseases later in this chapter, we would recommend a doctor’s care. But Jesus, full of the spiritual power of God, will treat people effectively with spiritual care. In her book *Absolute Power*, Susan Howitch describes spiritual healing for what appear to be physical or psychological illness. She explains that she sees the person as a whole, and that a person may be treated through the psychological portal of the soul, or from one side, or through the spiritual portal, from another side, or even at the same time – and God brings the healing. And prayer? While doctors work on the person through one facet, we pray and preach to the person’s soul through the spiritual facet. All to the freeing of the person. *Let us never again think little of the spiritual tools and abilities Christ has given us to bring to the work of freeing persons. And, with hearts yielded to Christ, let us preach with His authority! To the glory of God. Amen!*

