

The Authority of the Kingdom

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Preacher: Philip Wells

[0 : 00] And we pray, Lord, as we have been praying, so we pray again that you will show us wonderful things out of your law, that we might see Jesus amongst us stepping off the pages of scripture and being here amongst us.

We pray in his name. Amen. Amen. So I know not everybody's up to speed with this, but I've got a little introduction going back over what we've looked at before.

Mark tells us in chapter 1, verse 1, that what he's telling us is the beginning of the good news, the gospel about Jesus Christ, the Son of God.

And that's what he's telling us. The gospel is the way to become a Christian. If you're at all interested in becoming a Christian, knowing what being a Christian is, this is exactly where you should be.

We looked at previously the agenda that's set. So the book, it sort of launches fairly well straight in, but it does set an agenda.

[1 : 08] And the agenda seems to be set in the desert. You might have noticed the repetition of the voice in the desert, John being in the desert, and Jesus being sent into the desert.

So the agenda seems to be set in this unusual place, the desert. And trying to put it very straightforwardly, the agenda is that God is bringing his people home.

They were sent away in exile, and God's intention is to bring his people back. And this is about God bringing his people home.

That's why the Lord goes into the desert, verse 3, with straight paths, to go and get his people and to bring them back. It's about God cleaning his people up.

There's a little hidden quote from the book of Malachi, which talks about somebody coming to give his people a very vigorous scrub and make them really clean.

[2 : 08] Now, how are they going to do that remains to be seen. It's also about, in verse 8, the person who will pour out the Holy Spirit, who will baptize, who will shower, immerse with the Holy Spirit.

And that, too, is an agenda that comes from the Old Testament, of the Lord who takes a sort of dry ground, pours out water, pours out the Spirit-like water, and new life pops up, like plants popping up in the desert.

And that's the agenda. Last time we saw a little bit more detail of it. In verse 15, Jesus comes saying, the kingdom is here.

So you could add that into the agenda, the restoration of the kingdom and the king being put back in place. And if you think back, I don't know how much Old Testament history you can bring to mind, but, of course, King David was the king.

I'm sure you would remember that. And then King Solomon after him. And then it all gradually deteriorated. And so at the moment, there's no real king, although Herod is politically the king, but he's not the king that God has in mind.

[3 : 24] The kingdom is coming. And what do you do about the kingdom? Well, Jesus says, you, verse 15, you turn and believe the good news.

And what does that look like? Well, the people that Jesus deals with next in verse, chapter 1, verse 16 to 20, are these fishermen.

And we've come really down to earth. We're not in the desert anymore. We're in real ordinary life. And Jesus says to these people, follow me. And they leave everything and follow him.

And that's what we've got at the moment about what the kingdom is like. It's like people who leave everything and put Jesus first.

Quite a radical thing to do. So the question that we are, the sort of questions that we have in our minds when we look at the text, are things like, well, who is this Jesus?

[4 : 24] Who is he? And I don't want you to jump to any conclusions because it takes until chapter 8, verse 29, for the disciples to get the hang of who he is.

Because Jesus says to them, who am I? And in chapter 8, verse 29, Peter says, you are the Christ. So it takes him eight chapters to get to that point. So if you're not sure about Jesus, I'm not really going to try and push you this evening into making a snap decision.

I'd like you to hear what Mark has to say and put it into the melting pot and let it simmer for a while. That's what Jesus does with his disciples.

Who is Jesus? And what did he come to do? Well, that question gets touched on. But again, that's something that isn't fully dealt with until later on.

But it's a question worth having in mind. And how will he achieve it? How will he do this cleaning up of his people? This bringing his people home?

[5 : 33] And what does he want of us? What response does he require? And again, this is something that's a... We're only beginning to touch on that.

So, in a way, I don't particularly want you to say, oh, I came along this evening and now I became a Christian, because I'm not sure that you've got all the data.

You haven't got it all in place. Aren't I silly? I've just scratched my arm and made it bleed. Please notice then, in the text, there's some features.

And one of the features is this speed with which things happen. So, in verse... There's a lot of immediately's which I put in as I read.

They're not completely obvious in the translation. If you have a look there. Can you see in chapter 1, verse 18, what's the translation say? At once. At once.

[6 : 35] Well, this is this word which you might translate immediately. Chapter 1, verse 20. First couple of words. Without delay.

So, that's the immediately word. In verse 21, it simply says, when the Sabbath came. But hidden in the original there is this word, immediately. And then, chapter 1, verse 23.

You have... What does it say? Chapter 1, verse 23? Just then. Well, that's this word, immediately. And... Verse 29.

As soon as they left the synagogue. That's the word, immediately. And it's in one or two other places, which doesn't even crop up in the translation. Chapter 1, verse 42.

What is the first word there? Immediately. Immediately. So, that's one place where it actually is translated as immediately. So, there's a... So, Mark is...

[7 : 34] It keeps on saying immediately. Immediately this. Immediately this. Immediately this. Immediately this. And it's also worth noticing, there's quite a lot of movement going on. Quite a lot of verbs of motion.

So, chapter 1, verse 21. What did Jesus do? Chapter 1, verse 21. What did he do? He did what? He went into the synagogue. He went into the synagogue. Yeah. So, there's a motion, isn't there? Do you see what I mean? A verb of motion. He went in. And...

Now, let's see. I don't know. I'm not sure that I've listed all of these. Let's have a look with us. So, they went to Capernaum. Jesus went into the synagogue. Just follow it through with your finger. So, verse 25 has got a verb of motion.

Come out. Yeah. That's a coming out, isn't it? And... Verse 29.

[8 : 36] Motion. Quickly is the immediately. And what did they quickly do? They left the synagogue. Yeah.

And they went. Yeah. And... 31. He went to her. The fever left her. Now...

Not... Yeah, we've done that in English. But if you think of it, there's quite a lot of coming and going. So, it just gives you the impression of things happening. It's quite busy.

Okay. So, that sets the scene for us. And there are three scenes that are going on. So, there's in the synagogue.

That's verse 21. They went to the synagogue on the Sabbath day. Jesus was in the habit of doing that. And then we're going to go... When they're going to leave the synagogue, verse 29, to go to the house.

[9 : 37] And then in verse 33, that's outside the house. So, we're just going to look at those three different places. And the biggest scene is in the Capernaum synagogue.

So, what does it say? They went to Capernaum. When the Sabbath came, Jesus went into the synagogue and began to teach. The people were amazed at his teaching because he taught them as one who had authority, not as the teachers of the law.

Just then, a man in their synagogue, who was possessed by an evil spirit, cried out, 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.

So, I've started to do a little picture of that. So, there they are in the synagogue. And while I just get my pens, because I've got some blank spaces, perhaps you'd like to think of what those blank spaces are.

So, this is Jesus.

[10:49] These are the people in the synagogue. And what does Jesus do? T something something something H. Teach. This seems to be a particular Jesus word.

Various people proclaim, and he was proclaiming the good news, but teaching seems to be particularly something that Jesus does. So, he went into the synagogue and began to teach. There's the scriptures that he might have read from or referred to, but he's saying stuff, and he's teaching. And so, there's the people, and there's their reaction to it.

What is their reaction? Amazed. That's right. Jesus is the sort of person who amazes people.

So, when I used to do this, when we used to do this with our kids at the tea table, we would say that everybody said, wow. I mean, it doesn't say that in the text, but it wouldn't be completely a million miles off.

[11:59] It would because Jesus is teaching, and all the people are sitting there, and rather than being bored or going to sleep or not getting the point, they'll go, wow. Amazing.

God, did you hear that? Did you hear that? So, they're sitting there amazed at his teaching. And the particular thing is not the humour of the teaching or the energy of it, but what is the particular thing that impresses them?

The authority. Run out of space. The authority. So, there's part of the picture.

Now we move into verse, and it's different from anything they've heard before. The teachers in their synagogues that normally teach them are in a completely different league.

No, Jesus is in a completely different league to them because he has authority, and they sense that he means what he says, and there's something serious and powerful about what he's teaching.

[13:05] So, there's another ingredient, suddenly, I don't know whether he suddenly comes in or he suddenly jumps up. So, there's this guy.

Just then, suddenly, immediately, a man in their synagogue who was in an unclean spirit, literally, possessed by an evil spirit. So, he shouts out.

And I think there's something quite loud and uncontrolled about him because he shrieks in a minute, but here he's saying, 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. So, a little bit of a, what shall I say, a disturbance, isn't it? So, if one of you just suddenly jumped up and started shouting out, we'd all feel, oh, we don't usually do that on Sunday evening.

But this guy jumps up and shouts out in this rather confrontational way, What have you got to do with us, Jesus of Nazareth?

[14:14] Have you come to destroy us? I know who you are, the Holy One of God. We'll take that to pieces in a moment, but that's what he says.

And Jesus says to him, what does Jesus say to him? Yeah, be quiet. It literally means be muzzled. It's, yeah, be quiet.

And, what else does Jesus say? Come out of him. So, it's an emotion thing. Come out of him. Be silenced and come out. And then you get this great, what's the word?

Convulsion. The evil spirit convulsed the man. So, if you could just imagine how disturbing it would be to see somebody shouting out and writhing round on the floor in convulsions.

the spirit convulsed the man. And there is this huge shriek. So, everybody wakes up. There's this huge shriek.

[15:21] And then, the man, the spirit comes out of the man. So, I want to assume that he's left sort of calm and rational and happy and peaceful.

And that was a very unusual thing. Guess what happened at the synagogue today? You'll never guess what happened at the synagogue today. That bloke, that odd bloke, he was sitting at the back.

He shouted out. Shouted something at Jesus. Jesus said something to him. And then he was better. God! And the response of the people is what emotion or what mental description are we given about them?

Verse 27. They're amazed. So, wow! Jesus is an amazing person. I mean, Mark's always telling us how amazed they are.

And then, this is what they say. what is this? You know, they each nudge their neighbour and they're quite insightful about what's been going on.

[16:33] So, a new teaching, a new teaching with authority and this is a paraphrase now, he even has authority over yeah, I think that's what they're meaning.

not just individual random evil spirits but the whole evil spirit thing that whole system and it's interesting they couple them together.

It's not just that the authority of his teaching his insightful teaching but there's a spiritual angle on it as well. It's an authority over Satan.

So, that's a picture in the synagogue in Capernaum. It's quite a if you imagine it's a snapshot on Facebook all the things going on you could tag this man and these people probably tag some of their faces you certainly tag Jesus and the comments are wow so a few things about this and then we'll go to the second scene so there was an emphasis on authority wasn't there?

Kingdom authority what sort of authority were we expecting? So usually like the kingdom of David or the kingdom of Solomon is an authority of the sword an authority of an army that's how David won his battles that's how Solomon extended his kingdom from sea to sea and shore to shore but interestingly this king seems to have the authority but he doesn't do it with the sword but with the word quite remarkable isn't it?

[18:56] and there's more to see on this so don't feel that you've got to make a conclusion at this point but do put that into the melting pot the authority of Jesus just in that particular incident and there's more to come and I want to make a comment about authority which is in Luke 646 please look at Luke 646 Matthew Mark Luke and my comment is that the person with authority if we call this person Lord that would reflect his authority wouldn't it?

and in Luke 646 Jesus says this why do you call me Lord Lord and not do what I say?

it's a challenge isn't it? if Jesus does have this authority if that's a correct reading of the situation we would call him Lord rightly and then Jesus would say well I expect you to do what I tell you if I'm the Lord with authority that's a challenge do we do what he tells us?

do we put it into operation? is that the policy in our hearts? you know if the Lord's told me to do it I should do it and if we haven't done it do we confess it and say I was wrong? what's the point of him having authority if as far as we're concerned it doesn't make much difference what he says because we won't do it and I want to make a comment on his identity because the story does contribute to this question of who is Jesus I'm just flipping back now to Mark and there is information here about the person and work of Jesus it comes from the demon the evil spirit but he says I know who you are you are the holy one of God so it's an unusual description the holy one of God but I'm going to say I don't think this is hugely different from saying he's the only son of

God I know who you are you're the holy one the one and only the one and only son of God and I know what you've come to do you've come as 1 John 3 8 says to destroy the work of the devil there in a nutshell is the person and work of Jesus he is the son of God and what he's come to do is to destroy the devil and all his works because the devil is a vandal and wrecks things and wrecks people's lives and would like to get people in his grip and do as much damage to them as possible as the devil would love to do that and what Jesus has come to do is to destroy the works of the devil to put people back into their right mind to deliver them from Satan's power and clutches and to do so in a decisive authoritative way that's what that's the person and work of

[22:27] Jesus so there's something there to inform us and let's say a little bit about this shutting down of demonic testimony now why does Jesus say be quiet the man has blurted out we know who you are have you come to destroy us but Jesus says don't want any more of that be quiet and one of the things that seems to go on in this part of the gospel you see the same thing again in verse 34 he also drove out many demons but he would not let the demons speak because they knew who he was and I'll say a little bit more about that in a moment but I want to flag up the

demons knew exactly who Jesus was no doubt in their mind about who he was but the difference is what they did with that information and I want to make a challenge of this there's the danger of demon style knowledge please look at James chapter 2 verse 19

James chapter 2 verse 19 give us a page number if somebody's got it from the back 1214 if you've got a bible from the back 1214 and James is very very practical but he's very wise and he says he's talking about whether Christian faith is really engaged with somebody's life and he says someone will say chapter 2 verse 18 you have faith I have deeds someone will say you have faith I have deeds show me your faith without deeds I will show you my faith by what I do you believe there is one God good even the demons believe that and shudder so the demons are very orthodox they know the truth about

God but it's not the sort of knowledge that is adequate for somebody who says they're a Christian does anybody like to say what difference there is why is it that the demons faith is not good enough what is it that James says he wants in someone's life to make it difference from the demon style knowledge sorry is it it doesn't mention love does it although I think love is certainly part of it sorry it's a fearful yes so that would tie in with what you're saying it's a they don't like what they know they're not attracted to it so that would be a good point but there's something else that he mentions faith yeah so they place reliance on this and yeah by what

I do and it's it's rather unpoetic but he says the difference is that I put it into practice I say I believe it and I do something it changes the way I act it's very pragmatic isn't it's it's not asking the question how deeply do you feel it it's asking the question that's what you say you believe do you act as if that's true and in some ways that's a very liberating thought so our emotions sometimes go all over the place and if we looked within us and said how deeply do I feel all this how real does it all feel we might say I'm all over the place today but James doesn't ask that question he says are you living out what you say you believe so are you putting it into practice in your deeds and

I think that is the essential difference between demonic so called faith and the faith of a Christian and there's a danger so this is a warning of us becoming demon style believers which we know it all but we don't put it into practice so let's go to the second scene so we're now in the house yeah yeah it's not perfection it's not perfection but it's I think if you were to say if it was illegal to be a Christian would there be enough evidence to convict you so would people be able to say they did that they did that they did that and they did it because they were a Christian and you can see that that's what they did it's that sort of obedience not perfect obedience but it is a definite change of the way you live because of faith is that helpful thank you it's a good question let's go into the house then so we're in

[28 : 13] Mark chapter one going back again so we were in the synagogue in this amazing scene that nobody there would forget in a hurry and so much so they tell their auntie and they tell their cousin and the news about him verse 28 spread quickly over the whole region of Galilee I don't think it spread that very evening but it did spread quickly and then immediately they leave the synagogue because it's getting late and they go into the house they go with James and John incidentally James in Greek anybody know what James is in Greek Yakov yes which we would say Jacob so Jacob do you know the name Jacob so it gets translated as James strange why do English people say Jacob is James apparently they do so in Greek it's Yakov and in Hebrew it would be Yakov which you normally say

Jacob anyway so there's Yakov and John and they've gone to the home of Simon and Andrew and so there are the four of them the sort of!

embryonic Jesus group and there's Simon's mother-in-law she's in bed she's very hot she has a fever and they tell Jesus about her that's a rather lovely touch isn't it great to be able to bring something to Jesus and say Lord can I bring to your attention this person this situation that's prayer isn't it it's like praying to Jesus can I tell you about my mum she's not very well and Jesus this time instead of doing anything with shouting or anything like that it says Jesus went to her verb of motion took her hand and helped her up so there's Jesus going over to this lady and helping her up and immediately the fever left her so she doesn't need a couple of days in bed to get over it she's better straight away and what does she do next verse 31 what does she do next she waited on them it doesn't mean that she waited as in come on come on it means that she was like a waiter she brought them food she probably said oh

I feel a better now would you like some soup and so she waited in the sense of being a waiter she served it's a very marked thing so here are my comments this time Jesus uses a very quiet method

no shrieking no shouting no words of command he just helps her up and I like Jesus variety of method I wouldn't like Jesus to shout at me but the idea of Jesus taking somebody's hand and helping them up I think is a very attractive picture and this woman as soon as she's saved from the fever she begins to serve and it's a very Mark thing saved to serve seems to be the order of the thought and if you were to turn to Mark chapter 10 verse 43 to 45 we would find that this is actually not just a random idea but a key note of the gospel

Mark chapter 10 verse 43 so this is a key speech of Jesus in verse 42 Jesus calls them together and says you know that those who are regarded as rulers of the Gentiles lord it over them and their high officials exercise authority over them not so with you instead whoever wants to become great among you must be your servant whoever wants to be first must be slave of all for even the son of man did not come to be served but to serve and give his life as a ransom for many Jesus says this is what I came to do!

[32 : 42] picture of me don't think of the ambassador to the United Nations arriving in a big limo without riders don't think of me like that think of me as somebody who's cleaning up doing the washing up when everybody else has gone home somebody who's serving in a lowly way that's what I've come to do says Jesus and that's what you need to do if you're going to follow me so Simon's mother is sort of right on the button with this isn't she as soon as Jesus has blessed her she's out making soup or whatever it was she began to wait on them I think it's a great encouragement if you are actually a serving sort of person and as a Christian that comes very naturally to you and you might think oh well I don't do very much but actually serving in that sort of way is absolutely the keynote of being a

Christian let's come finally outside the door so verse 32 that evening after sunset the people brought to Jesus!

all the sick and demon possessed the whole town gathered at the door and Jesus healed many who had various diseases he also drove out many demons but he would not let the demons speak because they knew who he was so let's go outside the door the Jewish Sabbath would end when the sun went down so it's probably a few stars coming out maybe they had to light a candle or two don't know but do you see how many people there are out there those people from the far end of the village and those people from and those people it's just a huge crush of people out there and all the people who are unwell all the people who are spiritually oppressed!

many many just lots of them and Jesus heals them and there he is healing and driving out demons not told any of the details but just that he did lots and we notice also that Jesus shushes up the demons he would he also drove out many demons but he would not let the demons speak because they knew who he was so we'll say a bit about that in a moment certainly a repetition of what we've already seen so what this bit is telling us is really the large scale of Jesus power it's a town full of people so when Jesus is doing this healing it isn't that you know you've really got to really summon up all your willpower and a few people are healed Jesus just heals everybody huge outpouring of power and you can see the crowds

I don't know whether you'd say a mob but he's becoming almost overnight a hugely popular healer and we'll see next time which we mentioned this on Wednesday that this isn't quite where Jesus wants to go the agenda of healing anybody like to say anything about where this agenda comes from so the agenda of healing who anybody like to put that into words what sort of agenda is it if Jesus is there to heal people full stop yeah it's an agenda set by people themselves I don't think I've got every sympathy with somebody who's poorly wanting to be healed but it is an agenda that's set by them isn't it you know set by your bad back or your poorly tummy or whatever else it is that might not be the agenda that Jesus has in mind because Jesus is a very unusual person he doesn't just rubber stamp everything that we think is a great idea you know we can be left feeling quite embarrassed that

[37 : 26] Jesus says no that's not right at all and in this matter of the healing it's an agenda which you don't need any spiritual insight to set that as an agenda so we put that up as a little bit of a warning and let's just come back to the secrecy thing why is Jesus reticent why is Jesus not immediately jumping on the bandwagon say I want you to know exactly who I am and I want you to know it now he doesn't do that and I've got a couple of comments on it and one is that there is such a thing as making up your mind too quickly in Christian things please look at Luke 14 verse 28 Matthew Mark Luke chapter 14 verse 28 there is such a thing as jumping on the bandwagon too quickly Matthew 14 verse 28 thank you very much

Jesus says before you say I'm going to be a disciple just make sure you know exactly what's involved or you know not exactly exactly but as much as you can and he says in Luke 14 28 suppose one of you wants to build a tower will he not first sit down and estimate the cost to see if he has enough to complete it for if he lays the foundation and is not able to finish it everyone who sees it will ridicule him saying this fellow began to build and was not able to finish and he says there are people who say oh I'm a Christian but they haven't actually counted the cost of it and there is a cost there is a cost to being a Christian Jesus does make demands and I would reckon there are hundreds of people in this city probably maybe thousands who at some point have said oh I'll be a Christian but it's all gone pear shaped because when they said that they hadn't really taken on board what it would cost they hadn't really understood who Jesus was they hadn't really understood what it would involve to follow that sort of Jesus they just thought oh this is easy and it all went pear shaped so this is partly what's going on in Mark's gospel Jesus is going to take another eight chapters before people really begin to see who he is and are therefore really in a position to make up their minds whether to follow him and then there's the chapters after that which spell it out even more so as I said at the beginning I don't want anybody here to jump to quick conclusions about being a Christian make sure that you've prayed about it and thought about it and have got a real good idea of what's involved so that's one thing and then the second thing which we will see and I don't want to give the game away too much Jesus is going to find that the healing can easily produce a false emphasis which gets in the way of what he really wants to do and here's a warning if you like about the American TV evangelists who offer healing who offer health and wealth and say if you just follow Jesus you have everything that you had already on your agenda and Jesus is really saying hold on I don't want you saying that sort of stuff I don't want the false emphasis I don't want anything that gets in the way of really what I want to talk to you about and that is what we will find out next time