

Keynotes from Tim Shenton's Sermon on 19/7/2020

"The Authority of Jesus" (First of 2 sermons from Mark 1) (Please read these notes whilst listening to the sermon audio file.)

Mark 1:29-34 ²⁹ As soon as they left the synagogue, they went with James and John to the home of Simon and Andrew. ³⁰ Simon's mother-in-law was in bed with a fever, and they immediately told Jesus about her. ³¹ So he went to her, took her hand and helped her up. The fever left her and she began to wait on them. ³² That evening after sunset the people brought to Jesus all the sick and demon-possessed. ³³ The whole town gathered at the door, ³⁴ 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.

What is immediately striking about these verses is the **authority** of Jesus to deal not only with Simon's mother-in-law but also all the people who came to him for healing. An alternative way to describe this would be the **power** of Jesus, but there is a difference between authority and power as the following example illustrates well:

A government surveyor one day went to a farm, called on the farmer and asked permission to set up his stand in a field nearby to take readings. Seeing the farmer's unwillingness to let him enter the field, he produced his papers and explained that he had government authority for entering the field and could, on the same authority, go anywhere in the country to take necessary readings. Reluctantly the farmer opened the barred gate and allowed him to enter and set up his survey table, but went to the other end of the field and let in the fiercest of his bulls. The surveyor was greatly alarmed at seeing the bull approach, and the farmer from the other side of the gate shouted to him, 'Show him your credentials; show him your authority.'

The surveyor had the **authority** to enter but not the **power** to resist the bull.

- Jesus has both the authority and the power to do all things – nothing is impossible for him
- In our own lives, whatever mountain we are facing, we need to place over it a notice that says '**Nothing is impossible for him**'
- When we look at Jesus (God come to us in flesh), we are looking at the Almighty God. Seeing Jesus, we see the Father - what Jesus says and does is what the Father says and does.

- When we hear Jesus speak and see the miracles he is performing, the mighty God of whom Isaiah speaks is standing before us: Wonderful Counsellor, Mighty God, Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace. **Isaiah Ch 9:6**

In **Mark Ch1:29-34** the omnipotent God shows the authority and power he has over sickness, disease and demons. The crowds had never seen this kind of authority before and they were both amazed and shocked.

What kind of authority does Jesus possess?

1. A compassionate authority

In the world, when a man has authority it often means acting like a tyrant or despot as we see through history and still today. Many suffer under their rule as such men use their power with selfishness, cruelty and corruption to:

- Inflict fear and pain
- Imprison and torture
- Take away hope

There is a saying that absolute power corrupts absolutely. Jesus possesses omnipotence and absolute authority but used them compassionately to:

- Heal and restore - Simon's mother-in-law must have been very poorly to be in bed (**vv30-31**). Jesus went immediately to her, took her by the hand and helped her up, showing such gentleness and compassion and yet such authority. Again **v33** Jesus healed many who had various diseases. He also drove out many demons.
- Release captives from Satan's tyranny - we all knew what it was like to be under the domination and influence of Satan before we became Christians, but Jesus, with his compassionate authority, was able to liberate us
- To take away pain, affliction and bondage - to give the hurting new life and a bright future.

Jesus only uses his authority for the benefit and wellbeing of others, never for selfish ends.

A man once visited a jewellery store that was owned by a friend. His friend showed him all sorts of beautiful diamonds and precious stones, but he noticed one that seemed to have no shine to it. 'That stone has no beauty at all,' he

said to the owner. His friend picked it up and put it in the hollow of his hand, closed his hand, then after a few moments opened it again. Well, the entire stone gleamed with all the splendours of the rainbow! 'What have you done to it?' asked the man. His friend replied, 'This is an opal. It is what we call the **sympathetic jewel**. It only needs to be gripped with the human hand to bring out its wonderful beauty.'

When we grip Jesus with our hand, we see in him all the wonderful beauty of his compassion towards us. He raised up Simon's mother-in-law with his hand and she saw in his actions and in his face the beauty of that wonderful authority and compassion.

Jesus is our greatest friend – our sympathetic jewel. The North American Indians had a language that was full of expression – instead of just using the word 'friend', they described a friend as '**one who carries my sorrows on his back**' – what a beautiful picture of our compassionate Saviour. He has enough power and authority to carry all of our sorrows on his back.

Looking at the miracles of Jesus, we can see that they are motivated by his compassion. **Mark 1:40-42** A man with leprosy came to him and begged him on his knees, "If you are willing, you can make me clean."⁴¹ Jesus was indignant. He reached out his hand and touched the man. "I am willing," he said. "Be clean!"

⁴² Immediately the leprosy left him and he was cleansed.

Some rude children in Madagascar were one day calling out, "A leper, a leper," to a poor woman who had lost all her fingers and toes by the dreadful disease. A missionary lady who was near-by put her hand on the woman's shoulder, and asked her to sit down on the grass by her. The woman fell sobbing, overcome by emotion, and cried out, "A human hand has touched me. For seven years no one has touched me." The missionary says that at that moment it flashed across her mind why it is recorded in the Gospels that Jesus touched the leper. That is just what others would not do.

It was the Saviour's touch of compassion as well as of healing power.

Throughout his ministry, Jesus reached out to the hurting, the poor, the fatherless, widows, orphans and those who were sick. **Hosea 14:3** In you the fatherless find compassion.

An English publication offered a prize for the best definition of a friend and they had 1000s of replies. The definition that won the prize was: 'A friend – the one who comes in when the whole world has gone out'

Isn't that Jesus? When everyone else has forsaken us or has no power to help us, Jesus our sympathetic high priest and friend comes in.

- When Jesus was going to the cross, at the time of his greatest grief, he reached out in compassion to the daughters of Jerusalem (**Luke 23:28** Jesus turned and said to them, "Daughters of Jerusalem, do not weep for me; weep for yourselves and for your children.")
- When Jesus was on the cross, he reached out in compassion to the dying thief and to his distraught mother
- On the cross, he cried out to his Father for forgiveness for those who crucified him

Henry Giles says 'Those who have the profoundest sympathies are those who have had the profoundest sorrows'

- Jesus is a man of sorrows and that is why he is able to reach out with such compassion.

Jesus possesses absolute power and absolute authority but with it he has perfect compassion.

2. An all-inclusive authority.

Jesus has authority over everything and everyone – it's a limitless authority. **Mark 1:22** The people were amazed at his teaching, because he taught them as one who had authority, not as the teachers of the law. **Mark 1:27** The people were all so amazed that they asked each other, "What is this? A new teaching—and with authority! He even gives orders to impure spirits and they obey him."

From an endless list, here are a few things that Jesus has authority over:

- Sickness, diseases and the devil (**Mark 1:29-34**)
- Trees (**Matt 21: 18 ff**) and the sea (**Matt 8:24ff**)
- Death (**John ch11**)
- Bread (**Matt 14:17ff**) and fish (**Luke 5:1ff**)

- Sin (Mark 2:10)

In these uncertain times, whatever we are facing, the all-inclusive authority of Jesus can deal with it.

3. A complete authority

When Jesus heals, he heals completely. People were not just a little better, but were made completely well:

- Simon's mother-in-law was healed instantly and completely
- The lame were not left limping, but were jumping for joy
- The dead weren't revived for an hour or two but restored fully
- The demon-possessed were delivered to complete freedom

The same applies with our salvation. When Jesus saves us it is a **complete** salvation:

- All our sins (past, present and future) are washed away
- We are completely reconciled to God forever – he will never reject us again because of our wrongdoing
- We are saved eternally in body and soul
- We've been taken fully out of the dominion of darkness and placed fully in the kingdom of God's son

The authority he has to save is not 85% but 100% - a complete authority

God has done all this because he is a gracious and compassionate God, slow to anger and abounding in love (**Psalm 103:8**)

Wherever you are in your Christian walk – whether on fire for the Lord, currently backslidden or just dry today is the day to give your life afresh to the Lord, seeing his authority to look down on you and help. If you know that you are not saved, give your life to Jesus today, and he will make something beautiful out of it.

We can depend absolutely on his authority. He is for us and if he is for us, who can be against us?