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 Title: The Gospel of Jesus Christ in Galilee - Early Galilean Ministry - The Servant's Ministry - His Authority Established by Doctrinal Truth
 Text: Mark 1:21-34 (vv. 21-22)
 Theme: Jesus has power over doctrine, demons, and disease.

There is a rapid movement in Mark's presentation that must not be forgotten or overlooked. Our desire will be to consider each of the following thoughts separately.

BIG PICTURE:

- The Servant's Message (1:14, 15)
- The Servant's Men (1:16-20)
- **The Servant's Ministry - His authority established (1:21-34)**
 - **by doctrinal truth (vv. 21, 22)**
 - by demonic activity (vv. 23-28)
 - by diseased sufferer (vv. 29-34)

In literature 101 we would note that the first chapter of Mark is very compact and action oriented. In a mere 28 sentences, we have the ministry of John the Baptist, the baptism of Jesus, the temptation of Jesus in the wilderness, the arrest of John, the calling of the disciples, and this first episode of teaching and healing in the temple in Capernaum. That's six scenes in 28 sentences. Mark is in a hurry to tell this story. Matthew and Luke take almost 5 chapters to get to this point. The second thing we would note in literature class is that the most common word in this first chapter is "immediately." In Mark's Gospel, the word "immediately" appears 31 times in only 15 chapters. It is used more than the words faith, hope and love. Mark is not writing "War and Peace," his writing style is more like a car chase scene from "Smokey and the Bandit." http://bloomingcactus.typepad.com/bloomingcactus/2006/01/mark_12128_what.html

"The repetition of 'teaching' and 'authority' in verses 22 and 27 ties the two sub-units on teaching and healing into a single passage, as do the general setting and conclusion. It is somewhat awkward to refer to an exorcism as 'a new teaching' (v. 27), but this very awkwardness shows the intention to subordinate healing to teaching, linking Jesus' power in both word and deed as evidence of his amazing authority. [p. 49]" <http://www.crossmarks.com/brian/mark1x21.htm>

Jesus ministers in Capernaum. "The entrance into Capernaum was not immediately after the call of these four men. The calling of the other apostles, the Sermon on the Mount, the healing of the leper and of the centurion's servant, preceded this miracle in the Capernaum synagogue." (Kenneth S. Wuest, Wuest's Word Studies, [Eerdmans, 1973], 1:30)

Its Eternal Value:

Faith never operates in a vacuum; it must always have an object, and the object of faith must be valid. The truth about God, sin, man, Christ, and salvation is the content for biblical faith. Feeling emotionally good about your eternal destiny matters little if the ideas you believe about it are false. Ultimately, our destination is determined by what we believe about God, sin, man, Christ, and salvation. Jesus taught truth. Truth matters.

Because truth matters we are confronted by some basic questions.

Questions:

1. What role does instruction have in the life of a disciple?
2. Is instruction an optional aspect to the Christian life?
3. As a community of faith what steps should we take to insure that all necessary and intentional approaches have been made to instruct disciples?

To Know: The Holy Spirit desires for us to know that Jesus has absolute authority over all things and He is the well-spring of all truth.

To Choose: The Holy Spirit desires for us to choose Him as worthy of all our energy expended in study.

To Feel: The Holy Spirit desires for us to feel love for the Lord Jesus as the absolute king over all things created and to see Him in and as truth.

It has been said, "There are obviously two educations. One should teach us how to make a living and the other how to live." (James Truslow Adams) The Scriptures do not teach us how to make a living, but rather how to live. In so doing, it shows us what our vocational activity is to look like through the character of the individual.

How will they best hear?

1. I have heard it said that in some countries when you ask for directions from a local they will give you directions even if it is not the right directions. Their desire to please or help is greater than their desire to displease.
2. All of the world religions tell its adherences what they want to hear, and no matter how good this makes them feel, it is built on lies.

Our study opens in a synagogue. "Originating during the exile, it provided a place where Jews could study the Scriptures and worship God. A synagogue could be established in any town where there were at least ten married Jewish men." (NIV Study Bible on Mark 1:21). The setting tells us it was a Sabbath day. "First appearance in the synagogue" First impression (Does John 2 precedes or follows Mark 1?) All these events take place in one day.

The synagogues, the Jewish houses of worship, where the Jews met every Sabbath, furnished Jesus a congregation and a suitable place for teaching. It was customary to read the Old Testament in course, and after the reading, a teacher or a rabbi, was usually called on to speak. The custom gave Jesus, and his apostles after him, a fine opportunity to declare the New Covenant.

THE SYNAGOGUE is so often named in the New Testament that one ought to clearly understand its character. It corresponded to the Christian *congregation*. Wherever ten Jews were found it was their duty to form a synagogue. It had its elders, of whom the president was called the "ruler" of the synagogue. The ruler presided over the worship, and all the elders sat on raised seats. These were "the chief seats" that the Pharisees liked to sit in. There was a set lesson from the Scriptures for each Sabbath, for they were read in order. The reader was appointed by the ruler and might be any member.

http://www.mun.ca/rels/restmov/texts/bjohnson/hg1/PNT01-04.HTM#Mt4_23

In the ministry of our Lord, his authority is established by three actions: by doctrinal truth (vv. 21-22), by demonic activity (vv. 23-28), and by diseased sufferers (vv. 29-34). In every case, a response of the crowd was utter amazement. John tells us that a conclusion was, "No man ever spoke like this man!" (John 7:46). I desire to pause on each of these points for they form for us some very basic ideas. Let us begin with His doctrinal teaching.

I. His manner of teaching

A. He taught

The grammatical structure of the word gives us, "The meaning is, that as He began this practice on the very first Sabbath after coming to settle at Capernaum, so He continued it regularly thereafter." <http://www.ccel.org/ccel/jamieson/jfb.xi.ii.ii.html>

"When Jesus speaks, the major verb that is used in the gospel accounts is 'to teach....' He teaches his disciples, he teaches in the synagogues, he teaches the crowds.... What is he teaching?" "Jesus' Ministry and Teaching," by Shaye I.D. Cohen (Samuel Ungerleider Professor of Judaic Studies and Professor of Religious Studies Brown University). <http://www-c.pbs.org/wgbh/pages/frontline/shows/religion/jesus/ministry.html>

Teaching or instruction was a real part of our Lord's earthly ministry. Over forty times Jesus is referred to as "Teacher." Never is He referred to as Preacher or Healer. This is where the emphasis lies in the ministry of Jesus Christ.

"In 1:21-22 the first point to note is that Jesus enters the synagogue on the sabbath. He is at home in his own religious tradition among his own people. Mark tells us more: he teaches. So he is not only at home there; he takes on a responsibility within that tradition: he teaches. After the powerful introduction of 1:1-15, we might wonder what this Jesus is going to do. Here we have an answer: he teaches. By implication that will also be a role for the fish-workers who follow him, right through to today. **It is a little odd that in so many parts of the church teaching must be defended or reawakened – sometimes desperately when we realize how lack of teaching has created such a gap between clergy and lay people.**" <http://wwwstaff.murdoch.edu.au/~loader/MkEpiphany4.htm> (emphasis added)

Belief/faith does not operate in a vacuum. It always has an object that it believes in, and the object must always be valid. To teach someone something assumes that he understands what is being said. Did the people understand what Jesus taught?

The word for teaching is used in 17 references in Mark's Gospel. Our present study is the first time the word occurs in Mark's Gospel. It would do us well to read the various references highlighting this idea in Mark's Gospel (1:21, 22; 2:13; 4:1, 4; 6:2, 6, 30; 8:31; 9:31; 10:1; 11:17; 12:14, 35).

Perhaps one of my favorite verses in Mark's Gospel is Mark 6:34.

"When Jesus went ashore, He saw a large crowd, and He felt compassion for them because they were like sheep without a shepherd; and He began to teach them many things" (Mark 6:34).

Notice the language of Mark 14:49.

"Every day I was with you in the temple teaching, and you did not seize Me; but this has taken place to fulfill the Scriptures" (Mark 14:49).

Teaching or instruction is a part of a disciple's life. This becomes more pronounced in Matthew 28:18-20. We make and mature disciples through the process of instruction/teaching.

B. He taught them doctrine

The word "teaching" is the noun form of the verb form noted earlier. It is found five times in Mark's Gospel (1:22, 27; 4:2; 11:18; 12:38). It is the Greek word **didache**. In church history, the **Didache** is the common name of a brief early Christian document (dated by most scholars to the early second century), containing instructions for Christian communities. It is similar to religious catechism.

Mark 1:14, 15 provide a clue as to the content of His instruction. He taught them the good news of God's kingdom. What He taught brought . . .

- Good news to the poor,
- Release to the captive,
- Recovery of sight to the blind, and
- Freedom to the oppressed (Luke 4:18).

Our instruction should be no less. What Jesus taught was a cohesive and systematic body of truth or learning. There was a non-negotiable body of truth which Jesus taught that was completely sourced in the Old Testament text. Doctrine is proper and right. Doctrine is the truth that comes from the text of Scripture.

I feel compelled to help you understand what this instruction is to look like.

- Exegesis is the work in the biblical text.
- Expository preaching is exegetically based.
- Exegesis produces a biblical theology.
- Biblical theology is book based. Biblical theology honors the idea of progressive revelation.
- Contributing to the study is historical theology.
- Historical theology honors the work of gifted people in the church universal in her understanding of God's revelation.
- Biblical theology births systematic theology.

- Systematic theology is structured and ordered biblical theology. It is not always clean and neat.
- Dogmatic theology is identified by labels.
- Dogmatic theology is restrictive and limited. If you begin with dogmatic theology, you will allow your presuppositions to determine the meaning of the biblical text. The danger of dogmatic theology is trying to make everything clean and neat.

If this order is not honored, you are going to be greatly hindered in your pursuit of God through your understanding of the biblical text. Regardless as to whether this instruction is formal (e.g. GLORIA Institute or ABF) or informal (e.g. small groups), it should be intentional.

What are doctrinal cores?

- The Bible as inspired and without error.
- God as a Trinity.
- God as Creator and Lord over all things created.
- Man as fallen and redeemable.
- God as author and finisher of faith by grace alone, through faith alone, in Christ alone.
- Jesus Christ in His role as prophet, priest, and king as the storyline of biblical revelation.
- The already-not yet victory of God in the outworking of His unchanging plan in time and in eternity.

These are the non-negotiable cores. I can expand on every one of these ideas, but the more I do, the more I will categorize and divide the body of Christ. I am all for their expansion, but I believe an understanding must exist as to what is necessary and what is secondary. The further you move down the categories for understanding, the more splintered and divided the body will become. Each of you individually and all of us collectively will determine what is the core.

The Present Danger:

There is no question they we live in a pragmatic and consumer based culture. Our desire for pleasure and immediate gratification compels us along paths that can blind us to truth and eternity. This has a significant impact on the local church.

C. He taught them with authority

The word "authority" is found 10 times in Mark's gospel (1:22, 27; 2:10; 3:15; 6:7; 11:28; 29, 22; 13:34). It is the same word used in Matthew 28:18.

"It was used in legal practice of delegated authority. Here it is used of our Lord as having that authority in Himself, not derived from others. The rabbis quoted from other rabbis and felt themselves to be expounders of tradition. The Messiah struck a new note here, and the people were quick to recognize it. They saw that here was a Teacher who spoke on His own authority." (Kenneth S. Wuest, Wuest's Word Studies, [Eerdmans, 1973], 1:31)

“The ‘scribes’ (v. 22) were specialists in the interpretation and application of Mosaic law to daily life. They frequently quoted scripture, but Jesus (on this occasion) does not: he speaks directly, confident of his authority.” <http://montreal.anglican.org/comments/archive/bpr04m.shtml>

The office of Scribe speaks of “a man learned in the Mosaic law and in the sacred writings, an interpreter, a teacher.” The word comes from the Greek word “grammateus.” The office was noble. The problem did not lie in the office, but in the person who becomes consumed by the journey and deceived by their own inflated worth. The discipline of study is not the end. Study is only the means to the end. It is through the lens of study that we are to see God. All study should act as a magnify glass that brings the triune God closer and clearer to the naked eye of faith. When study becomes the end and our self worth the goal, then we are white sepulchers filled with dead-men’s bones.

His authority is contrasted with that of the Scribes. The Scribes were in the habit of quoting various rabbis, but Jesus spoke with courage, confidence, and directness. Jesus not only taught authoritatively, but decisively. He demanded or forced the conscience into action. His authority would be attacked because the only acceptable response to authority is submission and obedience.

II. The people’s response

It is of interest to read of the response His audience had to what He said and did. Mark employs a variety of terms to express the astonishment of the multitude and the disciples at the word and deed of Jesus.

“Mark’s phrasing is in itself striking, and the amazement of the audience at his authoritative manner is reiterated expressly in vs. 27; although we are not told at all the focus of the teaching, **the manner is what impresses: it is not a matter, evidently, of reiteration of what scripture says but a challenging assertion of God’s will as demanding response**: exactly what we observe in Matthew’s ‘Sermon on the Mount’ (Mt 5-7).” <http://www.ioa.com/~cwconrad/Mark/> (emphasis added)

A. Astonished (1:22; 6:2; 7:37; 10:26; 11:18)

“To be astonished, to be amazed, to strike a person out of his senses by some strong feeling such as fear, wonder, or even joy. The imperfect [tense] here corresponds to the imperfect of teaching in verse 21, indicating that as long as he taught astonishment overwhelmed them.” (Rogers and Rogers, 68).

“The people were amazed [ekplesso, GSN1605] at Jesus’ teaching. It means they were struck with astonishment. In this word lies a sense of; ‘It was too great for them to conceive.’” http://onefamilyoutreach.com/bible/Mark/mk_01_21-28.html

“A very strong word meaning, ‘to strike out, expel by a blow, drive out or away, to strike one out of self-possession, to strike with panic, shock’ in a passive sense ‘to be struck with astonishment, amazed.’ The verb is in the pictorial imperfect, describing the prolonged amazement of the audience. It is in the passive voice, showing that this amazement was caused

by an outside influence, the tremendous impact that the Messiah made upon them by the new type of teacher and teaching that met their eyes and ears.” (Kenneth S. Wuest, Wuest’s Word Studies, [Eerdmans, 1973], 1:30)

- B. Marvel (5:20; 15:5, 44)
- C. Amazed (1:27; 10:24, 32)

There is nothing ordinary about God. He, in His words and works, is extraordinary. The response to Jesus words and deeds has overtones of fear and alarm; it reflects an awareness of the disturbing character of His presence. (William L. Lane, Mark, p. 72 (ftnt #1101)). Friends, we have lost the awe that deity demands. We have, through ignorance, failed to fear and tremble in His presence. We are too flippant and too vulgar. May we never lose the wonder and marvel of our faith and its founder.

Our eyes are veiled to God, but He is no less extraordinary now as He was then or will be in the imminent future. It is my pray that my eyes would be opened to the utter unimaginable magnitude of “Christ in me, the hope of glory.” That I would be stunned into silence at the sheer enormity of God and His redemptive work.

ILLUSTRATION:

The amazement experienced by the audience could be likened to being in the immediate experience of a tornado or any severe natural disaster. You are overwhelmed by the sheer magnitude of the experience, but also in a place of panic and loss of self-possession.

The impact on His audience was severe. They demanded of each other answers to their inquiry. “The infinitive is in the present tense, emphasizing durative action. Mark is describing an animated, prolonged discussion.” (Kenneth S. Wuest, Wuest’s Word Studies, [Eerdmans, 1973], 1:35)

- D. Fear (4:41; 5:15, 33, 36; 6:50; 9:32; 10:32)

The sheer magnitude of God should cause us to tremble. I tremble before Him because He is God. I melt before the radiance of His glory. I bow before the majesty of His being. Because of who He is, I fear.

APPLICATION: (What’s the NEXT STEP?)

1. What intentional steps are you taking to acquire biblical truth? Let me suggest attending the ABF studies, a small group, GLORIA Institute, etc. There are a number of opportunities available to you through Men’s breakfast and Pre-school moms.
2. Are you allowing the truth to shape your thinking or are you shaping the truth by your thinking? Is dogmatism controlling you? Are you identified more by a label or system than you are by the truth?
3. Are you willing to let the truth control your thinking and behavior?