

We are in the second week of a sermon series I am calling “Savior and Lord,” looking at what it means to relate to Jesus as both Savior – the one who died for our sins to give us eternal life – and Lord – the one who we follow and emulate. We are working our way through Mark’s gospel in this series. Mark was Peter’s traveling companion, and the Gospel of Mark is mainly Peter’s eyewitness testimony of Jesus (Peter was first known as Simon). It is also the first gospel written, around 60-70 AD. Last week we began by looking at what Jesus is. According to the first three verses of Mark’s gospel, Jesus is the Messiah, the Son of God, the Lord in human form. He has come to bring the kingdom to earth and to call people to turn from their sins to faith in Him, to be restored to a relationship with God. We left off with Jesus calling a few people to follow him as disciples and with his opening proclamation that “the kingdom of God is near. Repent and believe the good news.”

Read Mar 1:21-45 and 2:1-12. Notice how often Mark refers to Jesus’ authority:

Mark 1:21-45 - *They went to Capernaum, and when the Sabbath came, Jesus went into the synagogue and began to teach. ²² The people were amazed at his teaching, because he taught them as one who had **authority**, not as the teachers of the law. ²³ Just then a man in their synagogue who was **possessed by an evil spirit** cried out, ²⁴ "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!" ²⁵ "Be quiet!" said Jesus sternly. "Come out of him!" ²⁶ The evil spirit shook the man violently and came out of him with a shriek. 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 evil spirits and they obey him." ²⁸ News about him spread quickly over the whole region of Galilee. 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 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.** ³⁵ Very early in the morning, while it was still dark, Jesus got up, left the house and went off to a solitary place, where he prayed. ³⁶ Simon and his companions went to look for him, ³⁷ and when they found him, they exclaimed: "Everyone is looking for you!" ³⁸ **Jesus replied, "Let us go somewhere else-- to the nearby villages-- so I can preach there also. That is why I have come."** ³⁹ So he traveled throughout Galilee, preaching in their synagogues and driving out demons. ⁴⁰ A man with leprosy came to him and begged him on his knees, "If you*

are willing, you can make me clean." ⁴¹ *Filled with compassion*, Jesus reached out his hand and touched the man. "I am willing," he said. "Be clean!" ⁴² Immediately the leprosy left him and he was cured. ⁴³ Jesus sent him away at once with a strong warning: ⁴⁴ "See that you don't tell this to anyone. But go, show yourself to the priest and offer the sacrifices that Moses commanded for your cleansing, as a testimony to them." ⁴⁵ Instead he went out and began to talk freely, spreading the news. As a result, Jesus could no longer enter a town openly but stayed outside in lonely places. Yet the people still came to him from everywhere.

Mark 2:1-12 - A few days later, when Jesus again entered Capernaum, the people heard that he had come home. ² So many gathered that there was no room left, not even outside the door, and he preached the word to them. ³ Some men came, bringing to him a paralytic, carried by four of them. ⁴ Since they could not get him to Jesus because of the crowd, they made an opening in the roof above Jesus and, after digging through it, lowered the mat the paralyzed man was lying on. ⁵ When Jesus saw their faith, he said to the paralytic, "Son, your sins are forgiven." ⁶ Now some teachers of the law were sitting there, thinking to themselves, ⁷ "Why does this fellow talk like that? He's blaspheming! Who can forgive sins but God alone?" ⁸ Immediately Jesus knew in his spirit that this was what they were thinking in their hearts, and he said to them, "Why are you thinking these things? ⁹ Which is easier: to say to the paralytic, 'Your sins are forgiven,' or to say, 'Get up, take your mat and walk'? ¹⁰ But that you may know that the Son of Man has authority on earth to forgive sins...." He said to the paralytic, ¹¹ "I tell you, get up, take your mat and go home." ¹² He got up, took his mat and walked out in full view of them all. This amazed everyone and they praised God, saying, "We have never seen anything like this!"

This passage is filled with references to Jesus' authority – four kinds of authority in particular:

1) He teaches with authority

*They went to Capernaum, and when the Sabbath came, Jesus went into the synagogue and began to teach. ²² The people were amazed at his teaching, because he taught them as one who had *authority*, not as the teachers of the law.*

Visiting rabbis were often allowed to speak in the synagogue when the people gathered for worship on the Sabbath. Jesus teaches, and the people were amazed that he taught with authority – he speaks for God, not about God. The teachers of

the law would quote the various rabbis - Rabbi Hillel, Gamaliel, Eleazar, but Jesus spoke directly from God. "I say to you."

2) He has authority over evil spirits

²³ Just then a man in their synagogue who was *possessed by an evil spirit* cried out, ²⁴ "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!" ²⁵ "Be quiet!" said Jesus sternly. "Come out of him!" ²⁶ The evil spirit shook the man violently and came out of him with a shriek. 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 evil spirits and they obey him." ²⁸ News about him spread quickly over the whole region of Galilee.

There are angels and demons, fallen angels. There is a distinction between those who are sick and those who have a demon. Demonic possession is when a spiritual force has taken control in a human and attempted to thwart God's purposes by twisting them and alienating them from God and others. Most people were at their mercy. But Jesus has authority over them because He is God.

3) He has authority over sickness and disease

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 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.*

Jesus has the power to heal people.

4) He has authority to forgive sins

A few days later, when Jesus again entered Capernaum, the people heard that he had come home. ² So many gathered that there was no room left, not even outside the door, and he preached the word to them. ³ Some men came, bringing to him a paralytic, carried by four of them. ⁴ Since they could not get him to Jesus because of the crowd, they made an opening in the roof above Jesus and, after digging

through it, lowered the mat the paralyzed man was lying on. ⁵ When Jesus saw their faith, he said to the paralytic, "Son, your sins are forgiven." ⁶ Now some teachers of the law were sitting there, thinking to themselves, ⁷ "Why does this fellow talk like that? He's blaspheming! Who can forgive sins but God alone?" ⁸ Immediately Jesus knew in his spirit that this was what they were thinking in their hearts, and he said to them, "Why are you thinking these things? ⁹ Which is easier: to say to the paralytic, 'Your sins are forgiven,' or to say, 'Get up, take your mat and walk'? ¹⁰ But that you may know that the Son of Man has authority on earth to forgive sins...." He said to the paralytic, ¹¹ "I tell you, get up, take your mat and go home." ¹² He got up, took his mat and walked out in full view of them all. This amazed everyone and they praised God, saying, "We have never seen anything like this!"

This is perhaps the most shocking of all of Jesus' displays of authority. Forgiveness in Jesus' time was connected to the temple. Only a priest could pronounce forgiveness of sins on the basis of repentance and sacrifice. That's why the religious leaders see what Jesus is doing as blasphemy. It is like giving someone a driver's license apart from the DMV. You don't have the authority to do that! He is claiming to be God, proclaiming forgiveness for sins not done to Him.

And He calls Himself the Son of man, which points back to Daniel 7:13-14:

Daniel 7:13-14 - "In my vision at night I looked, and there before me was one like a son of man, coming with the clouds of heaven. He approached the Ancient of Days and was led into his presence. ¹⁴ He was given authority, glory and sovereign power; all peoples, nations and men of every language worshiped him. His dominion is an everlasting dominion that will not pass away, and his kingdom is one that will never be destroyed.

He calls himself the Son of Man whenever he wants to emphasize his authority. The Father has given the Son authority to forgive sins.

So it's clear that Jesus teaches and acts with a divine authority. Let me just point out four characteristics of Jesus' authority, which I think we can learn from for the situations where we find ourselves with some authority. In a later week we'll look more closely at whether or not we share Jesus' authority when it comes to healing and evil spirits.

1) Compassionate authority

He does not just exercise his authority dispassionately, or lord it over people. He delivers the man in the synagogue with the demon instead of sending him out. He tenderly heals Peter's mother-in-law. And then, in the greatest display of compassion, Jesus heals a leper by touching him.

⁴⁰ *A man with leprosy came to him and begged him on his knees, "If you are willing, you can make me clean."* ⁴¹ *Filled with compassion, Jesus reached out his hand and touched the man. "I am willing," he said. "Be clean!"* ⁴² *Immediately the leprosy left him and he was cured.* ⁴³ *Jesus sent him away at once with a strong warning:* ⁴⁴ *"See that you don't tell this to anyone. But go, show yourself to the priest and offer the sacrifices that Moses commanded for your cleansing, as a testimony to them."* ⁴⁵ *Instead he went out and began to talk freely, spreading the news. As a result, Jesus could no longer enter a town openly but stayed outside in lonely places. Yet the people still came to him from everywhere.*

Leprosy was humiliating, isolating, thought to be highly contagious, seen as a punishment from God.

Leviticus 13:45-46 - *"The person with such an infectious disease must wear torn clothes, let his hair be unkempt, cover the lower part of his face and cry out, 'Unclean! Unclean!'"* ⁴⁶ *As long as he has the infection he remains unclean. He must live alone; he must live outside the camp.*

Lepers had to shout "Unclean! Unclean!" and live out of the camp. To touch a leper was to become ritually unclean. But Jesus disregards it and touches the man. Instead of Jesus becoming unclean, the man becomes clean. We would do well to emulate this kind of compassion. Use your authority or position of leadership to show compassion to people without any authority.

2) God-empowered authority

³⁵ *Very early in the morning, while it was still dark, Jesus got up, left the house and went off to a solitary place, where he prayed.* ³⁶ *Simon and his companions went to look for him,* ³⁷ *and when they found him, they exclaimed: "Everyone is looking for you!"*

He depends upon the strength and power of His Father. Instead of sleeping in, He gets up early and goes out to be with His Father. We should learn from this and do the same, so that we might exercise our authority in a manner that is Christlike.

3) Humble authority

He doesn't want anyone telling who he is.

He also drove out many demons, but he would not let the demons speak because they knew who he was

⁴³ *Jesus sent him away at once with a strong warning: ⁴⁴ "See that you don't tell this to anyone. But go, show yourself to the priest and offer the sacrifices that Moses commanded for your cleansing, as a testimony to them."*

Think of how this contrasts with our approach. We think popularity and fame are great – I've made it! Oh if we could get our names in the papers! But no – that is not the way Jesus works. He knows if he becomes too popular, that some will try to kill him, and others will give him no peace. If we are doing things for the fame and notoriety, we are not walking in God's will.

Matthew 20:25-28 - *Jesus called them together and said, "You know that the rulers of the Gentiles lord it over them, and their high officials exercise authority over them. ²⁶ Not so with you. Instead, whoever wants to become great among you must be your servant, ²⁷ and whoever wants to be first must be your slave-- ²⁸ just as the Son of Man did not come to be served, but to serve, and to give his life as a ransom for many."*

4) Purposeful authority

He doesn't just heal to heal. There is a purpose. It is a demonstration of the kingdom. When God reigns, people are healed, evil is cast out. This is what the kingdom is like. Notice what happens – he heals and casts out demons, and the next day everyone has gathered for more of the same. But Jesus isn't there! And so his disciples go out searching for him. They must have been so aggravated. Where are you? And how does Jesus reply?

"Let us go somewhere else-- to the nearby villages-- so I can preach there also. That is why I have come."

He hasn't come to just be some miracle worker. He has come to proclaim the good news, the gospel. That is his priority.

And then look at what happens with the paralytic in chapter 2. The friends bust through the roof to bring their friend to Jesus. Roofs were made of rough basalt without mortar, thatch roof of wooden cross beams overlaid with a matting of reeds, branches, and dried mud. Why? Because Jesus can heal his paralysis. And how does Jesus respond?

⁵ *When Jesus saw their faith, he said to the paralytic, "Son, your sins are forgiven."*

Okay... but that's not why I came?

What does that mean?

Our greatest need is not physical healing but spiritual healing, forgiveness from sin. Not just temporal sickness, but eternal sickness. Not just a disease that can kill the body, but a disease that can kill the soul. Greater than raising someone from their sickness is raising them from spiritual death to life.

Yes, Jesus cared about the sick and demon-possessed, but healing them was not his priority. Preaching the gospel was his priority. What does this mean for us? It is right to pray for healing and to ask God to heal us. But there is a greater priority to God, and that is deliverance from sin. Do you know Him as Savior? Has He forgiven your sins?

This prioritization means that sometimes sickness and suffering will be allowed so that people might be saved and sanctified. The kingdom of God is near. But it is not yet here in its fullness. On that day, every disease will be healed and Satan and his demons will be destroyed. But for now there is still sickness, death, and there are demons. That is why we pray as Jesus told us to pray in Matthew 6:10 - *"your kingdom come, your will be done, on earth as it is in heaven."*

God's priority for your life is deliverance from sin. As Joni Eareckson Tada put it, *"The same God who healed eyes and hands also said gouge out your eye if it causes you to sin. Cut off your hand if it leads you into sin."* Physical healing is important, but spiritual healing is necessary, or we will end up in Hell. Your soul is a much bigger deal to God.

Paul reminds us of this in **2 Corinthians 12**, where he says *To keep me from becoming conceited because of these surpassingly great revelations, there was given me a thorn in my flesh, a messenger of Satan, to torment me.* ⁸ *Three times I pleaded with the Lord to take it away from me.* ⁹ *But he said to me, "My grace is*

*sufficient for you, for my power is made perfect in weakness." Therefore I will boast all the more gladly about my weaknesses, so that Christ's power may rest on me. **God did not remove it, not because Paul wasn't spiritual enough** or didn't pray right or because he had some hidden sin, but to remind Paul that God was enough for him, that His grace would be sufficient for him. **You may not be healed, but God promises that His grace will be all you need.***

Jesus is our Savior, using His authority to die for us. He is also our Lord, showing us what it means to exercise a Christlike authority in our lives.