



Following the One with Authority (Mark 1:16-39)

A Handout

Jesus is the true Son of God (Mk 1:1) to whom all authority in heaven and on earth has been given (Matt 28:18), and this Jesus has a message, the gospel of God: “The time is fulfilled, and the kingdom of God is at hand; repent and believe in the gospel.” Jesus’ authority rests in His message and His mission to be salvation for all who would call on His name. In His authority He calls us to be His disciples and join in the mission and message faithfully, knowing that His authority is true.

“ ‘Everyone is looking for You.’ He said to them, ‘Let us go somewhere else to the towns nearby, so that I may preach there also; for that is what I came for.’ ” (Mk 1:38)

A) The Call to Discipleship (Mk 1:16-20)

“And Jesus said to them, ‘Follow Me, and I will make you become fishers of men.’ ” (1:17)

1. Jesus’ Authority and Initiative: Follow Me

- “Follow Me” is an imperative command literally meaning “Go behind me as my disciples”
- Jesus has the authority and He himself purposefully calls us to follow Him (1 Tim 1:12)
- “Fishers of men” refers to drawing people to Jesus in light of His mission and message, the gospel of God
- Our discipleship and our calling and purpose are directly tied to the gospel

2. Responding to His Call (1:18,20)

“Immediately they left their nets and followed Him.” (1:18)

- Jesus called 4 (Simon, Andrew, James, John). All four left their occupations, James and John also their father (“and they left their father Zebedee in the boat...and went away to follow Him” 1:20)
- Rather than calling all to leave behind work, family as these disciples did, this is a call for our hearts to leave behind the worldly things we used to treasure and to hope in
- Whether or not our call is truly to leave those things, we must not treasure them such that our hope is in them but treasure the Lord and His mission so that these become our indispensable hope, center, and purpose

Summary: Jesus’ call to discipleship is a calling to put Jesus and the gospel message as the central purpose of all the things which we do in our hearts.

B) Jesus’ Authentic Authority (Mk 1:21-34)

Are His message and the authority by which Jesus calls us both true? Jesus’ ministry offers a definitive answer: Yes!

1. Jesus teaches with authority (“He was teaching them as one having authority, and not as the scribes” 1:22)

- Scribal tradition: teaching by quoting predecessors; Jesus taught with contrasting originality and authenticity

2. Jesus has authority over illness (1:31, 34) and unclean spirits (1:24-26, 34, 39)

- “And He healed many who were ill with various diseases, and cast out many demons” 1:34
- Jesus demonstrated the authority of His teaching by showing His real power over illness and unclean spirits

3. People were amazed and spread news of Jesus (1:27-28), and “the whole city had gathered at the door” (1:33)

- People saw His authority and flocked to Him for healing

Summary: Jesus, the Son of God, indeed has authority over all things. His calling and His message are true. His disciples need not fear knowing Jesus' authority (1 Tim 1:12).

C) Jesus' Authority and Our Mission (Mk 1:35-39)

'Let us go somewhere else to the towns nearby, so that I may preach there also; for that is what I came for.' (1:38)

Jesus elevates His mission above all. His authority and mission go hand in hand, the verification of His authority expressly for salvation of men

1. Jesus' Prayer: "In the early morning, while it was still dark, Jesus got up, left the house, and went away to a secluded place, and was praying there" (1:35; also Mk 6:45-47; 14:32-41)

- Mark mentions Jesus praying in darkness and solitude 3 times, and each time Jesus is faced with the temptation to achieve His messianic mission in an easier, less costly way
- Messianic Mission: In suffering, to the cross → Glory with all authority on heaven and earth
- Significance:
 - Jews expected a Messiah, and Jesus' miracles (rightly) suggested that He might be the One
 - But Jesus' kingdom was spiritual at heart, never meant for a physical (healings) or political center
 - His miracles confirmed the message of the gospel, salvation not only for Jews but for all men through the cross, a holy sacrifice acceptable to God so that people from all nations could be saved ("by [the Jews'] transgression salvation has come to the Gentiles, to make them jealous" Romans 11:11; also Rom 9:25-26/Hosea 2:23;1:10)
 - If the Jews accepted the witness of the unclean spirits or elevated Him before His time, before He could go to the cross, He fails to accomplish the Father's will

2. Focus on the Mission: "Let us go somewhere else to the towns nearby, so that I may preach there also; for that is what I came for." (1:38)

- Jesus did not want His ministry to be consumed by physical healing but by the gospel and spiritual healing
- The current crowd did not respond in kind, and Jesus left to share His message elsewhere, both preaching the message and casting out demons as witness to His authority and message

Summary: The mission always comes first. We must not be distracted but watchful and in prayer that our hearts remain focused as Jesus was

Conclusion

- Calling: Jesus has called us purposefully to be His disciples and follow in His mission to preach the gospel
- Authority: His authority is true and gives us hope, peace, and strength for the fulfillment of the mission, and we must submit to it in our lives
- Centrality: The gospel must be at the center of our lives and the things we do and say
- Prayer: It is a monumental program and mission! We must be watchful in prayer to avoid distraction from our missional purpose in our hearts and to rely on God for the strength to submit and to endure (just as Jesus did!)

Discussion Questions

- Share one example where your recognition of (and submission to) Jesus' authority impacted your faith (e.g. in a decision that you made or a thought that you had).
- What distractions or temptations commonly shift your focus away from his mission?
- Why is it important for us to come to God in solitude to pray during the day? Pray for each other (if you have time) in your groups and also throughout the upcoming week.