Mark 1:21-28 (27-28) The people were all so amazed that they asked each other, “What is this? A new teaching—and with authority! He even gave orders to evil spirits and they obey him.” News about him spread quickly over the whole region of Galilee.

Now as far as we can tell, that is, when you put together the four gospels we can probably conclude that the following things have happened by the time of our text. Jesus has been baptized by John the Baptist. Jesus has been 40 days in the wilderness directly tempted by Satan. Jesus has returned victorious from the wilderness and has at least Peter, Andrew, James, John, Phillip and Nathanael following him. Now comes the miracle of the wedding of Canaan. Note that somewhere in here, Peter, Andrew, James and John go back to their fishing, perhaps they felt they needed extra money or something, but it is at this time that Jesus goes to Galilee and performs the miracle of the catch of fish and now let’s Peter, Andrew, James and John know they are to be his full time disciples. After that there is Jesus’ rejection at Nazareth! (Now I want you to know that putting together the events of all four gospels is a daunting task and not everyone will agree on everything. I believe I have laid out the events in the way I see them happening.)

It is at this point that Jesus is going to head to Capernaum where our history is carried out. Here is what I want you to grasp at this point. Jesus is already beginning to distinguish himself as a preacher and as someone to listen to. But recognize that the edge Jesus had on everyone else were the signs and miracles he was now doing. It is those miracles that are revealing Jesus is different. It is those miracles that are going to begin bringing people so that they flock to Jesus. But there is more going on too. It is his preaching and teaching that is having an impact, at least for those who are truly listening. So in the scope of miracles so far, what we want to do is ask just why the Holy Spirit chose to make sure we knew about this one? What makes this event, this miracle important enough that its history is written and shared with us? Because in truth, we are told in Scripture that Jesus did so many miracles that the world would not be able to hold all the books that would be written. So why this one? Our theme will be: **AMAZING AUTHORITY!**

Let’s look at what happened. Jesus and his disciples go to the city of Capernaum. This is the city that some claim Jesus established as his base of operations, perhaps because a number of his disciples came from there. The Gospel of John mentions that Jesus mother and brothers went with him to Capernaum. It is situated right on the Sea of Galilee and was a pretty prominent town. Here is Jesus in this town and on the Sabbath (yeah, Jesus went to church on a regular basis) Jesus took the opportunity to share a message. It would be usual for the Synagogue leaders to invite Jesus to speak simply because he was recognized as a rabbi and teacher or maybe they invited him to speak because already news of the miracles he had done were known to them. At this opportunity to teach we are not told the topic or the text that Jesus used unlike the recent events at Nazareth where the people rejected Jesus as He told them Isaiah’s words were coming true in their hearing! Either way, what I want you to grasp is that this text does bring out something very interesting and important. That thing is revealed in verse 22 **“The people were amazed at his teaching, because he taught them as one who had authority, not as the teachers of the law.”**

Those words tell us that Jesus’ teaching was different than anything else the people had heard. And note how the reference was to **“the teachers of the law.”** That refers to the religious leaders and teachers, no doubt the Sadducees and Pharisees of the day. What Jesus said was different. It struck a different cord. For that matter it is labeled as **“he taught them as one who had authority.”** Such an interesting word. It refers to the power, the right, being official or even the properness of something. Jesus came across as someone who absolutely knew the Scripture. Jesus understood it, could apply it properly and did all of this in such a way that you knew there was no point in arguing. The people of Capernaum, in just listening to Jesus grasped that Jesus was someone to be amazed at!

I hope and pray that such is how we still regard Jesus. He is someone to be amazed at. His authority, his power and majesty, his unique position as our Savior and as the one who reveals all things for our life and salvation is an amazing thing! But be careful. Please note there are lots of people who like to pick and choose when it comes to Jesus. I think Jesus is amazing. I think Jesus is exactly what has been revealed to us, the very Living Word of God, the Son of God and the one who has had all authority in heaven and earth placed in his hands. Don’t be like the people of Nazareth, who though initially amazed at Jesus, they would decide that Jesus was blasphemous and should be thrown off a cliff!! That’s because they decided they didn’t like what Jesus had to say and so they rejected Jesus, if you would, they rejected that Jesus spoke with authority and truth and their amazement turned into rejection. Children of God, it is not our job to pick and choose what we are to believe or even how. Our job is to hear, believe and put our trust in Jesus because truly he is one who has authority…He is our Lord and Savior from sin. He is the Word who reveals the whole truth of the Father and life everlasting! Yep, regard Jesus as “the Authority” in all things.

What is also amazing is how the next event happened. In this synagogue is someone who is demon possessed. Just a few words here to help you grasp this. There is such a thing as demon possession. It is clear that as Jesus was walking the face of the earth it is a tactic that Satan used to confuse and destroy the faith of God’s people, not to mention get at Jesus himself. The reason you hear of so many demon possessions is not because the people were backward dolts and fools who didn’t know real illness from spiritual attack. It is because God’s Son was walking the earth and there was out and out warfare going on between God and Satan. In truth the people of this day were pretty medically adept. So grasp that this is a demon possession, an evil spirit attacking a soul. This is one of the ways that Satan is trying to stop the ministry of Jesus, of Satan working interference in the life of Jesus. It is just that Satan underestimates the power of Jesus.

So here is this demon possessed man in the Synagogue. He shouts out at Jesus: **“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!”** Think about these words. This clever, evil spirit mentions that Jesus is from Nazareth, the very town that just recently rejected and tried to throw Jesus off of a cliff. Notice how this “spirit” keeps speaking in the plural? **“What do you want with us…come to destroy us?”** This “spirit” clearly recognizes that Jesus is someone to be reckoned with and that Jesus had come to break the stronghold of all the demons or evil spirits. Jesus had come to bring judgment on their master and them. In other words, this demon sees that Jesus is an enemy. I submit that this spirit’s words show true fear of Jesus!

And then recognize the very confession of this demon. Interesting that in this confession the demon speaks as an individual. **“I know who you are—the Holy One of God.”** Um…people, take notice of that! This evil spirit, this spirit in the control of Satan and a servant of Satan, this spirit who is bent on the destruction of the person they have possessed, cries out and testifies to the truth of who Jesus is! This spirit from the realm that contains God, heaven and hell, knows that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God, and the One who is prophesied as the Savior of the world from sin, death and the Devil! That is the complete implication of these words. The impact of those words is amazing!

Nor should this surprise us. In the Epistle of James we hear this verse: **“You believe that there is one God. Good! Even the demons believe that—and shudder.”** I have always appreciated those words of James. The context speaks of living our faith, having faith and deeds. James, with these words, is giving a contrast between the person who lives their faith and the one who just talks about it. The point of his verse is that you say you believe in God but do nothing to show that. In contrast he says, “Hey, the demons believe in God too, but at least they are smart enough to be totally afraid of God!” Again, should we contemplate that? Do we treat God like a “take him or leave him” kind of God? I pray not! I pray that we not only know the truth of God and his Son Jesus! That we live that truth and that we get, truly get, the grace and peace that only God the Father and Jesus can give. Another way of saying that we are to be amazed at Jesus!

Note how Jesus simply commands and the demon listens. Jesus says, **“Be quiet”** and the demon stops speaking. Jesus commands this demon to leave and he does! No mumbo-jumbo, fancy rituals or long drawn out prayers…the simple command of Jesus is obeyed!

Here are a few other thoughts. Evidently the people of the Synagogue knew this man’s condition AND COULD DO NOTHING ABOUT IT! I’ll bet they tried. What is also interesting is that the people did not keep this man from coming into the Synagogue but welcomed him. Is that because they knew it was God’s Word and only God’s Word that was going to be his help and deliverance? And while the people watched, the demon left at the command of Jesus. Get this, from this point on this man did not show the signs and symptoms of what had been going on. This man returned to normal and everyone there knew that it happened because of the power and command of Jesus! What do you think that said to them?

We can see what it said and meant to them by our last verses: **“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.’ News about him spread quickly over the whole region of Galilee.”** Again a few insights into these words. The amazement of these people got even greater! Jesus’ words had an impact and now this miracle had an impact on them so much so that they couldn’t keep their mouths shut because of what they had seen and heard. All the more amazed!

And did you catch that often overlooked phrase found here? **“A new teaching!”** Jesus didn’t talk about how to be good and how to earn your way to heaven. Jesus didn’t talk about obeying the law or doing your best to obey or how obeying was the way to go. I have no doubt that Jesus spoke of the forgiveness God would give, the salvation that was to come because God would wipe away their sins and tears, troubles, hardships, and doubts about eternal life. I have no doubt Jesus spoke to them of their Jewish faith pointing to the atoning sacrifice of the One God sent to them. Maybe of how the entire Scripture spoke of this Savior and what to look for. And it was all going to be found in Jesus! That new teaching was the gospel and the fact that God would be the source, the cause, the reason and the hope for eternal life and salvation!

All of this makes Jesus pretty amazing, don’t you think so? Amazing and with authority. I wish I could have heard that sermon, but as I study this text I realize I don’t need to. Just looking at these words leads me to grasp the amazing authority of Jesus. May these words cause you all the more to contemplate the wonder of Jesus, God’s Son, sent to be our Savior, sent to atone for us, sent as “the Holy One of God” for our eternal life! Amen.