

MARK 1:21-22

KINGDOM AUTHORITY

²¹ 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.

One might say that Jesus' ministry in Israel was three-fold: he proclaimed; he taught; and, he acted. We read that he not only proclaimed that the kingdom of God was near, but elaborated on how Scripture supported that statement. It is not enough to simply proclaim the Gospel, for people will not hear and understand the truth because of the twisted thinking of the world. We have all experienced in church the effect of preaching that lacks teaching. It may entertain or warm the heart, but it has little lasting or transformational effect on the lives of the hearers if it does not instruct in the ways of the Lord. The element of teaching is what makes a sermon or proclamation relational, for it takes into the consideration the need of the hearer. To proclaim is to publicize one's message, to teach is to "relate" the message to the life of the audience. It is a gross over simplification, but proclamation takes zeal, while teaching takes patience.

We live in a culture of experts. Our specialized society places a high premium on the credentials of our teachers. It is the list of degrees and experiences after a person's name that causes us to take note of what they say. These are the people we consider to have authority on a given subject. But this is the authority of the scribes and Pharisees, it is a delegated human authority. What Jesus exhibited was divine authority, the direct authority of God. When we teach about the kingdom, we must remember that the authority that validates our teaching comes from God and his Word. Any other authority but Scripture and the Holy Spirit is but derived human authority, and will be dismissed as merely our opinion. In matters of the kingdom, including our lives, our only authority is God.

As you, Lord, taught with authority in Capernaum, teach me the ways of your kingdom that I might be transformed. Be the authority for my life. Teach me so that I might demonstrate your Gospel in and through my life, thereby revealing your truth to those around me. Amen.