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Mark 1

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Introduction

Probably one of the most valuable assets any of us have is our career, our job, our way of making a living. Whether we are in farming or finance, the public sector or the private sector, threaten our job, and something feels threatened at the very heart of our beings.

As much as we love money, we love something else even more: security. According to a 2009 survey by the Pew Research Center, 59 percent of U.S. adults prefer a job that offers better security over one that offers higher pay but less stability (33 percent). Researchers insist this value isn't driven by the current economic crisis, either. A General Social Survey in 1989—a year of economic expansion—produced similar results.

"Recession Turns a Graying Office Grayer," Pew Research Center Databank (9-3-09)

So with this in mind, "What would it take for you to give up your job?" What would it take for you to change careers?

Just the question strikes uneasiness, trepidation, consternation, and even fear.

Yet, as we are going to see today, at the very start of the ministry of Jesus, this is what was at stake. This is what happened at the start of Jesus ministry.

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Let's read:

Mark 1:16–20 (ESV)

16 Passing alongside the Sea of Galilee, he saw Simon and Andrew the brother of Simon casting a net into the sea, for they were fishermen. **17** And Jesus said to them, "Follow me, and I will make you become fishers of men." **18** And immediately they left their nets and followed him. **19** And going on a little farther, he saw James the son of Zebedee and John his brother, who were in their boat mending the nets. **20** And immediately he called them, and they left their father Zebedee in the boat with the hired servants and followed him.

Let's ask some questions? Why would they do this? This is just the beginning of Jesus ministry he hasn't done anything notable. Why would they leave the job they had known their own life to follow this unknown? The Answer?

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Authority. Jesus lived, taught and loved, as no other because he did so with authority.

The fisherman sensed this. Now you say, "Well, how do we know that? It doesn't say that? You are correct, until you read the account of Mark all around this life changing moment. The first chapter of Mark is devoted to one big idea:

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The authority of Jesus Christ. Everything Jesus does in this chapter carries the mark of authority.

Let's ask ourselves, how do YOU know authority when you see it?

It is easy in some circumstances, you see the flashing lights of an ambulance, so you pull over, just their flashing lights give them the authority. You see the uniform of a police officer, it communicates authority. You see the rank of a serviceman, it designates authority.

Jesus had none of these. How did the fisherman know Jesus had authority?

The first chapter of Mark begins by describing the many different facets that establish authority of Jesus Christ.

And it begins in the first verse. Let's look.

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Mark 1:1-4 (ESV)

1 The beginning of the gospel of Jesus Christ, the Son of God. 2 As it is written in Isaiah the prophet, "Behold, I send my messenger before your face, who will prepare your way, 3 the voice of one crying in the wilderness: 'Prepare the way of the Lord, make his paths straight,' "
4 John appeared, baptizing in the wilderness and proclaiming a baptism of repentance for the forgiveness of sins.

Many people in history have claimed that they are someone great. But few make the claim based on the fact that someone 700 years in advance predicted they would appear on the scene of world history. But no one to my knowledge has ever claimed that the person who would announce their coming was also predicted in prophecy 700 years in Advance. Isaiah made this prophecy about John the Baptist preparing the way of the Lord, 700 years before the coming of the Lord.

Mark established the authority of Jesus, first in prophecy, but remarkably, pin pointing the prophecy that spoke of the forbearer of the Messiah, the one who would come before Christ.

This make Jesus unique on the pages of history.

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Not only are their hundreds of prophecies spoken as far back as 2000 years before his birth, but it was also prophesied who would come before him and prepare the way for his coming.

In this case, the prophet Isaiah spoke of John the Baptist.

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So the authority of Christ as established in prophecy.

1. **In prophecy**
2. His presence
3. His teaching
4. His command over evil.
5. His healing

Mark wants this issue to be known and settled from the start of his gospel.

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Second, as we have read, he established his authority in his presence.

1. His prophecy
2. **His presence**
3. His teaching
4. His command over evil.
5. His healing

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But third, it was his teaching.

6. His prophecy

7. His presence
- 8. His teaching**
9. His command over evil.
10. His healing

When Christ taught, there was something different about it. And people noticed.

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Mark 1:21–22 (ESV)

21 And they went into Capernaum, and immediately on the Sabbath he entered the synagogue and was teaching. 22 And they were astonished at his teaching, for he taught them as one who had authority, and not as the scribes.

And Forth, his command over evil.

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Mark 1:23–28 (ESV)

23 And immediately there was in their synagogue a man with an unclean spirit. And he cried out, 24 “What have you to do with us, Jesus of Nazareth? Have you come to destroy us? I know who you are—the Holy One of God.” 25 But Jesus rebuked him, saying, “Be silent, and come out of him!” 26 And the unclean spirit, convulsing him and crying out with a loud voice, came out of him. 27 And they were all amazed, so that they questioned among themselves, saying, “What is this? A new teaching with authority! He commands even the unclean spirits, and they obey him.” 28 And at once his fame spread everywhere throughout all the surrounding region of Galilee.

There are two interesting facts in this account.

The first is that he people instantly recognizes the difference between Jesus and all other teachers. It is authority. He teaches with authority, and he follows it up with confrontation with evil, demonstrating his authority.

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But forth, it was his teaching.

1. His prophecy
2. His presence
3. His teaching

4. **His command over evil.**

5. His healing

His command over evil. His triumph over evil. We share in the this triumph. 2 Corinthians 2:14

2 Corinthians 2:14 (NASB95)

¹⁴ But thanks be to God, who always leads us in triumph in Christ, and manifests through us the sweet aroma of the knowledge of Him in every place.

And last his triumph was his authority over illness.

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And last it was his healing.

1. His prophecy
2. His presence
3. His teaching
4. His command over evil.
5. **His healing**

Let's continue in the first chapter of Mark.

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Mark 1:29–33 (ESV)

29 And immediately he left the synagogue and entered the house of Simon and Andrew, with James and John. 30 Now Simon's mother-in-law lay ill with a fever, and immediately they told him about her. 31 And he came and took her by the hand and lifted her up, and the fever left her, and she began to serve them. 32 That evening at sundown they brought to him all who were sick or oppressed by demons. 33 And the whole city was gathered together at the door.

In the passage that follows he heals leprosy. Leprosy was viewed as a disease as today. The difference was the healing had immediate outward effect. Skin that was once destroyed, was now returned to purity.

Mark starts his account of Jesus by focusing on his authority. People follow him without performance, people recognize his authority, evil submits to his authority, and even illness gives way to health.

Mark calls this a gospel. Good News.

Why does he write?

So we will respond to this good news.

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Do you have an authority in your life you can trust?

I hope today you see there is one figure in history you can trust. A figure with Authority!

The time and the culture Rome was corrupt and in control. The synagogue was corrupt. The priesthood was corrupt.

We live in a world with many of the same corruptions.

So the question is who are you going to trust? Who has authority you can trust.

The answer is Jesus.

Will 2010 be the same for you as any other year, will this decade be the same as the last?

It need not be.

There is one who has authority, who is worth your loyalty, his name is Jesus.

end

I noticed something about my two sons when they moved from childhood to adolescence. I noticed that my boys responded differently to my touch as they got older. When they were little, they seemed eager to hug me. They would jump into my arms and cling to me with all their might. When they became teenagers, things changed. Oh, they still let me hug them. But in their teen years, they stiffened, ever so slightly. There was a resistance that wasn't there before.

What changed? Some of it, I am sure, can be attributed to the awkwardness of adolescence. Many teenagers seem to go through a stage where they feel uncomfortable showing affection. But I think the change was also a symbol of their growing independence. The autonomy they declared with their body language was matched by many of the choices they made. They stiffened against the constraints my wife and I had placed on them, just as they did my embrace. The rules and standards that we saw as an expression of love and a means of protection, they mistook for a prison.

I wonder—which is it for you, when it comes to God's strong hand of love? Is it a source of comfort to you or something that you stiffen against and resist? Does the inescapable presence of God make you feel protected? Is that steady footfall that you hear the mark of a faithful companion? A guide? A rear guard who has your back? Or do you feel like God has laid siege to your soul? Do you see his relentless pursuit as the pursuit of an adversary?

If we are honest, we would probably have to say a little of both.

John Koessler, in the upcoming sermon "Knowing the God Who Knows You," PreachingToday.com