

What is your reaction when someone speaks to you in an authoritative way? Isn't true that we mostly resent this? We feel the one in authority is holding us back, is keeping us from something, is keeping something away from us. Or perhaps we instinctively question and reject any and all who are in authority. People can even reject the concept of authority because they reject the idea that there truth that applies to all.

It is no surprise to you that rejection of authority has only increased and continued in our day. We have even heard it in the last months as many claim that president is not their president, thereby rejecting his authority as president. We even see it in the church in many who reject the authority of God's Word.

Today's Gospel is a breath of fresh and authoritative air. Today we hear that **Jesus Speaks with Amazing Authority**. Jesus comes with his Word and speaks to us right in the middle of rejection of authority and when he speaks his words are astounding, for he speaks in order to give Good News, he speaks in order to save. And those very amazing and authoritative words have miraculous power as we hear Jesus speak: **1. Against false teachers. 2. Against the devil and his demons. 3. Against sickness and disease. 4. To all who need good news.**

*Then he went down to Capernaum, a town in Galilee, and on the Sabbath began to teach the people.*³² *They were amazed at his teaching, because his message had authority.* Jesus didn't preach and teach like the Pharisees and Teachers of the Law. He didn't rely on teachings crafted by forefathers. He didn't turn people to themselves to try to motivate themselves to be holy. Jesus spoke as the true Prophet sent from God. He called people to repent. He called sin sin. He announced forgiveness. He spoke as the One who had been anointed by God himself to bring freedom for those held captive by sin; to give spiritual sight to those born spiritually blind; to speak light into a world filled with the darkness of sin; to speak life to those living in spiritual death. Look at the power of Jesus' authoritative word. People hear him and are astonished because they have never heard anyone speak like he did, even speaking against the false teaching of the Pharisees.

Jesus' amazing authority also includes his power of the devil and his demons. Luke records,³³ *In the synagogue there was a man possessed by a demon, an evil spirit. He cried out at the top of his voice,*³⁴ *"Ha! 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!"*³⁵ *"Be quiet!" Jesus said sternly. "Come out of him!" Then the demon threw the man down before them all and came out without injuring him.*³⁶ *All the people were amazed and said to each other, "What is this teaching? With authority and power he gives orders to evil spirits and they come out!"*⁴¹ *Moreover, demons came out of many people, shouting, "You are the Son of God!" But he rebuked them and would not allow them to speak, because they knew he was the Christ.*

The power of the devil and his demons is great. They lie, they cheat, they steal. They disturb, they destroy, they damn. They injure and torment and torture. They seize and they oppress. They are your enemies and they will try and do anything to harm you. Yet look what happens. Jesus opens his mouth against them. Against the legion of the forces of hell, Jesus opens his mouth and says, "Be quiet." And they are quiet. Jesus says, "Be muzzled." And they are muzzled. Jesus say, "Be put to silent." And their mute button is pressed. Jesus says, "Come out of him." And they have no choice, not a single choice but to come out. Look how powerful the authoritative Word of Christ is. Over the devil. Over demons. Over everything that belongs to them...evil, sin, death and hell. Jesus speaks and holds authority.

Jesus' amazing authority also includes his power of sickness and disease. Luke records,³⁸ *Jesus left the synagogue and went to the home of Simon. Now Simon's mother-in-law was suffering from a high fever, and they asked Jesus to help her.*³⁹ *So he bent over her and rebuked the fever, and it left her. She got up at once and began to wait on them.*⁴⁰ *When the sun was setting, the people brought to Jesus all who had various kinds of sickness, and laying his hands on each one, he healed them.*

Peter's mother-in-law lay sick and suffering. A high fever had seized her and with its fiery talons refused to let go of her. The fever oppressed her, tormented her and threatened to take her life from her. Again, Jesus opens his mouth. And again he shows his power and authority. Here is the One who truly is the Great Physician. This is the One who holds authority over germs and illness, leprosy and disease, physical deformity and infirmity. This is the One who truly has taken up our infirmities and carried our sorrows. Not only does he open his mouth to silence our greatest spiritual enemies, with the powerful Word of his mouth, he banishes and silences the effects of living in a sinful world like pain, sickness and disease. He opens his mouth and he heals.

Finally, Jesus speaks with amazing authority to all who need good news. Luke records, ³² *They were amazed at his teaching, because his message had authority.* ³⁷ *And the news about him spread throughout the surrounding area.* ⁴² *At daybreak Jesus went out to a solitary place. The people were looking for him and when they came to where he was, they tried to keep him from leaving them.* ⁴³ *But he said, "I must preach the good news of the kingdom of God to the other towns also, because that is why I was sent."* ⁴⁴ *And he kept on preaching in the synagogues of Judea.*

How good for us this morning to hear these accounts of Jesus' authority. And it is good for two reasons. The first is to call us to repent for the times we have doubted or questioned Jesus' Word. When we refuse to hear it or study it. When we find ourselves receiving it coldly. When it becomes ho-hum and not astonishing, because how many times have I heard this before. When we trust the words of others or the words of our hearts more than the Word of Christ. When we see all of the divisions in the church, each of them claiming to follow the Word of Christ and wonder if any can be sure of the authority of Christ's Word. When we think we are powerful enough in ourselves to do battle against the temptations of the devil and his demons and so we don't employ the weapon of the Word of Christ that has been given us. When we give free reign to our sinful desires and refuse the authority of Christ's Word. When we doubt whether Jesus is hearing and answering our prayers or if he does indeed still hold power over our sicknesses and diseases. When we like Jeremiah, make excuses about speaking the powerful Word of Christ. Or when we refuse what Paul wrote to Timothy to use Christ's Word to correct, rebuke and encourage. When we think that we could possibly need something more than Christ's Word to be holy or to be saved. It is good for us to hear this morning that Jesus still speaks with authority against these sins.

But ultimately, it is good for us to hear these accounts of Jesus' authority today because as we do, he is still speaking with authority. In other words, the words of Jesus and the words about Jesus still carry divine power and authority. Jesus' Word is still all-powerful. Jesus' Word is still saving. Jesus' Word is still filled with absolute and amazing authority.

And this is the Word spoken to you. Now continue in it. Continue in the Holy Scriptures which have made you wise for salvation through faith in Christ Jesus. For his Word still delivers you from false teaching, even as it increases around you. His Word still delivers you from the false teaching of your own sinful heart. His Word still delivers you from every lie and attack of the devil and his demons. Though the devil has been lying since the Garden of Eden, Jesus' Word continues to break and defeat every whispering falsehood of the evil one. Jesus' Word still breaks the sin that entangles you and the guilt that threatens to engulf you and the hell that wants to swallow you. Jesus Word still delivers you from every sickness and disease, from everything that torments and tortures you, everything that you suffer here as a result of living in a sinful world. Even when it seems he is silent and not at work, Jesus opens his mouth to sustain you by his promises.

This is the Word spoken to you to deliver you. This is the Word spoken to you to save you. And what an amazing and astonishing and authoritative Word it is. Amen.