Connection to Unit Theme: Jesus Christ is central to the Christian faith. That statement may seem obvious, but even Christians need a constant reminder that everything in our faith is built upon the person and work of Jesus Christ. Every aspect of Jesus’ life—from His birth to His current exalted state—is unique from any other person. His uniqueness means His life and character merit our fullest attention, and because He is uniquely God, His life and character greatly impact our lives.

After a short introduction establishing the truth that Jesus taught “as one having authority” (Mark 1:21-22, Session Four focuses on the story of the rich young man from Mark 10:17-22. The Point of the study is “Jesus teaches us how to live and calls us to follow Him.”

These text based sermons draw from the same Scripture passages as the small group studies, but explore other themes from the passage. This way, you as the pastor can reinforce the passage without repeating the small group study.

Introduction: Some time ago a new employee at a Wal-Mart had an unusual experience. The young man had just been at work three days and was the low man in the pecking order at the store. He was standing with a broom in his hand near the entrance when an irate customer came into the store. The customer had made a purchase that had not turned out satisfactorily and was coming back with a complaint. “Young man,” the customer growled, “I want to speak to someone with a little authority around here.” The new clerk looked around to the left and right and leaning on his broom said, “Well, sir, you might as well talk to me, I guess I got just about as little authority as anybody in this whole place.” (Author unknown. Taken from pastorlife.com)

Whenever we have a problem that needs fixing, we want someone with some authority who can get things done. In Jesus’ day, the Pharisees were the authority, or at least that’s what they told everyone else. They taught the people what they should do, and the people listened. But the problems never got fixed. Then came Jesus. He was like no other. He had authority, and He showed it in His teaching, in His healing and in His calling.

1. Authority in His teaching (1:21-22; 10:1-12)
   - They made a statement concerning Jesus authoritative teaching (“he taught them as one that had authority” [1:22]; Matt. 7:28-29)
     - They were surprised by what He taught The people recognized this as a new kind of teaching (Mark 1:27)
     - They were surprised by the way He taught (“authority…not as the teachers of the law”) How do you teach in a non-authoritative way? You don’t say anything controversial or new. You just repeat what has already been said by others. You
don’t require obedience to what you say or make promises of what will happen if you do obey (Josh. 1:8). You look to others to validate what you say rather than taking that responsibility on yourself (i.e. “According to Rabbi Shimei…” instead of “I say”)

In the Sermon on the Mount (Matt. 5), there were many examples of Jesus declaring His authority to be greater even than that of Moses. Moses was considered the #1 authority at the time. But Jesus showed that He was the ultimate authority in every area, even in those areas where what He had to say was contrary to what they wanted to hear. Jesus followed the pattern of “You’ve heard it said, but I say” with murder (5:21-ff); adultery (5:27-30); divorce (5:31-32); taking oaths (5:33-37); revenge (5:38-42); and loving your enemies (5:43-48).

2. Authority in His healing (1:23-31) Jesus healed two people with both spiritual and physical maladies:

Spiritual: a demon-possessed man [v. 23])

What the demon said (v. 23-24)
- Stay away! (“let us alone”[v. 24])
- Don’t hurt me! (“come to destroy us?” [v. 24]) Both of these are lies that Satan would put in the mind of the unbeliever – telling them to push Jesus away because Jesus only wants to destroy them.
- I know you! (“I know thee” [v. 25]) The demon recognized Jesus even though Jesus was dressed in human flesh. Did he recognize Jesus by the words and way He spoke? (i.e. “I know that voice!”) He remembered when God had spoken with authority, “Let there be light”, and light shone out of the darkness.

What Jesus said (v. 25-26)
- Shut up! (“Hold thy peace” [v. 25]) Why did Jesus want the demon to be quiet if the demon was accurately saying who Jesus was? Possibly it was because Jesus didn’t want the witness of a demon confusing people.
- Get out! (“come out of him” [v. 25]) Jesus showed that He was the authority in this situation. The spirit did not want to leave the man. He made that very evident through his actions. Before he came out, he hurt the host (“torn him”; possibly he did this hoping that Jesus would relent when he saw the pain being inflicted on the man) and cried out (possibly in a feeble attempt to intimidate Jesus or the crowd). But, in the end, the spirit had to submit to the authority of Jesus.

What the people said (v. 27-28)
- “What did we just see?” → casting out demon
- “What did we just hear?” → Jesus spoke → authority
- NOTE: They questioned each other and the situation, but they didn’t question Jesus. Others did. They said, “By what authority…” (Matt. 21:23)
- NOTE: Talking among ourselves (i.e. church) is not enough. We need to take it to everyone.
- They talked with everyone else (v. 28) They wanted everyone to know about what they had seen and heard.

Physical: A woman infested with a sickness (“sick of a fever” [v. 30]) The end result is that there is no area – physical or spiritual – over which Jesus does not have authority. Whatever issue it is that you are dealing with in your life or in the life of someone you care about, you
can be assured that there is no issue that is outside the influence, control and authority of Jesus Christ!

3. Authority in His calling (1:16-20; 10:17-22)

Some with Authority Called after Jesus—the rich young man (10:17-22) – some left Jesus to gain other things

1. **The man sought Jesus** (“running...kneeled...asked” [10:17]) He had heard Jesus teaching with authority, and he believed that Jesus could answer the question that no one else had been able to answer. He had probably asked his question to others, but no one could give him an authoritative answer. “Finally”, he thought, “someone with answers!”

2. **The man wanted heaven** (“what shall I do...eternal life” [10:17])

3. **The man wasn’t willing to pay the cost** (v. 18-21) He wasn’t willing to…
   - Admit his sinfulness (“none good” [v. 18]... “all these I have observed” [v. 20])
   - Change his priorities (“give to the poor...treasure in heaven” [v. 21])

The man walked away (“went away grieved” [v. 22]) He rejected Jesus’ authority over his life.

Jesus called those who had no authority—the Disciples (1:16-20) – some left everything to gain Jesus

- **Jesus sought the disciples** (“Come ye after me” [v. 17]) They weren’t seeking Him. They were seeking…fish!
- **Jesus changed what they wanted** (“fishers of men” [v. 17]) They stopped seeking fish and started seeking men.
- **Jesus was worth any cost** (“forsook their nets… [v. 18], “left their father...ship...hired servants” [v. 20])
- **Jesus walked away…and they followed** (“followed him” [v. 18], “went after him” [v. 20]) They recognized Jesus’ authority over their lives, and nothing was ever the same for them.

Conclusion: The people recognized the authority of Jesus in His teaching. The demon and sickness inside different individuals recognized the authority of Jesus in His healing. You can agree that both of those realities are true and still come away with nothing unless you do as the disciples did and submit to the authority of Jesus in your own personal life for Him to call you to whatever task it is that He has for you. Jesus loved the rich, young ruler. But Jesus’ love was not enough. Even Jesus’ love could not save him if the man was not willing to submit to Jesus’ authority. There is a very interesting phrase in this whole thing – “he went away sad, for he had great possessions.” (Mk. 10:22) Usually, being sad goes with being poor, but this man’s sadness was connected to his riches. His riches kept him from submitting to the authority of Jesus…and kept him separated from real joy. Don’t let that be true of you.

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