

The Memoirs of Peter
A Day in the Life of Jesus (Part 1)
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Well tonight we return to our study of the Gospel of Mark. And I invite you to turn there with me again this evening. The Gospel of Mark, and we'll begin looking at a large section in the first chapter that is really a day in the life of Jesus Christ.

The internet is a wonderful tool, but it has some significant down sides. The most significant I think is that the internet has made everyone an authority. For some people, if they find it there then it must be true. I saw a humorous example of that recently I read a news article about a man who decided just for fun to write in his blog some humorous but entirely fictitious comments supposedly made by the Vice-Presidential candidate for the Republican Party, Sarah Palin. They were meant to poke fun at her, but not in a malicious way, they were quotes that he could imagine her saying.

Apparently, once he did that, a number of major political websites were searching the internet looking for negative material on the governor, and they found this man's blog, and they quoted his fabricated comments as if they were actual quotes. And I happened to see, my wife and I watched this news article on CNN as he responded to the furor that had erupted over his humorous enterprises on his blog. On CNN he said something like this, he said, "I assumed that the five people who normally read my blog would see it. I had no idea that I was creating a national fire storm." Eventually, of course it came out that these quotes were not legitimate, that he was not an authority, and he was certainly not speaking with authority on the subject.

But that's how the internet goes. Everyone is an authority, and everyone wants to be an authority. I think to some degree that's the reason for the success of the internet. Our world is filled with people who want to speak with authority. Whenever something happens in our world, the news media searches for all those authorities or experts who can comment on that particular enterprise. By the way, you know what an expert is. An expert is just a drip under pressure. Some of you will catch that in a minute.

Jesus was notably different than those who seek authority in our world but don't have it. He both spoke and acted with real compelling authority. Mark introduces us to this fact in the

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passage that we come to tonight in Mark 1. If we were to sort of break down this part of Mark 1, in verses 14 and 15 we saw the essence of Jesus' message, in verses 16 to 20 the core group of His disciples as He called these men to Himself to interact with Him over a period of time off and on, and eventually, we'll see to make them His full-time disciples and the apostles. But then in the section we come to tonight, verses 21 to 34; we have a sort of overview, a bird's eye view of Jesus' ministry in Galilee. In fact, verses 21 to 34 describe just one day in our Lord's life, a day in the life of Jesus, and not just any day, but one particular Sabbath day.

After some eight months of ministry down in Judea our Lord has now returned to Galilee, and that's where Mark picks up the story. Mark begins his description of Jesus' ministry with these words. Notice in verse 21, "They went into Capernaum;" Now to fully appreciate what's happening here though, you really have to know what's gone on in Jesus' life leading up to this. Because something absolutely dramatic had happened in the days leading up to Jesus calling of Peter, Andrew, James and John; and His going to Capernaum. Turn with me to Luke 4. You can see it here, this event that had transpired before what we'll study tonight in Mark's gospel. In Luke 4, Jesus had returned to His home town of Nazareth. Verse 14 says,

... Jesus returned to Galilee in the power of the Spirit, and news about Him spread through all the surrounding district. ... He *began* preaching in their synagogues and was praised by all.

And He came to Nazareth, where He had been brought up; and as was His custom, He entered the synagogue on the Sabbath, and stood up to read. You're familiar with the story, He takes Isaiah's scroll, He reads it, and then He sits down to teach, verse 20, and everybody is looking at Jesus and He says, "Today this ... [prophecy about the Messiah] has been fulfilled in your hearing."

But then He goes on to tell them essentially, His home town crowd the synagogue there, look you are spiritually blind you are spiritually bankrupt. You are desperately in need of saving. You are prisoners enslaved to your own sin and even the Gentiles listen to God, but you are not prone to listen to God. The response isn't exactly overwhelming. Verse 28 says,

And all *the people* in the synagogue were filled with rage as they heard these things; and they got up and drove Him out of the city, and led Him to the brow of the hill on which their city had been built, in order to throw Him down the cliff. [They are going to kill Him.] But passing through their midst, He went His own

way.] Notice verse 31, And He came down to Capernaum, a city of Galilee, and He was teaching them on the Sabbath;

So, when we come to Mark's presentation of Jesus coming to Capernaum, understand that that's what just has happened. Jesus has returned after His ministry in Judea to Galilee. He's gone to His home town. He's preached in the synagogue, and they wanted to kill Him as a result of His message to them. And so now, Jesus must leave Nazareth. So, He decided that to relocate to Capernaum. It's very clear that He does this. Mark 2:1 says, "When He had come back to Capernaum several days afterward, it was heard that He was at home." Capernaum becomes His new home. Matthew 4:13, "... leaving Nazareth, He came and settled in Capernaum, which is by the sea...." He settled there.

Matthew 9:1 says, Getting into a boat, Jesus crossed over the *sea* and" [Speaking of Capernaum says,] "... [He] came to His own city." So, Jesus now is going to settle and minister in this city called Capernaum. The question is why? What made Capernaum the right choice for a base of operations? You need to understand where it is and why it's so important. It's up on the northwest side of the Sea of Galilee; you can see where the arrow is pointing there. It's important because of the roads. You see even in our world, towns grow and build up because they are at the apex of the crossroads; they're in important places where traffic is going. The same thing was true in ancient Israel.

There were 3 primary roads you need to know about that moved north and south in Israel. The first is called the ridge route. It ran down the central spine of the hill country. But it really wasn't a popular road, because it was difficult to travel. It was through the mountains as it were, the hill country of Israel. And so, it was not used often, although Jesus did use it you remember when He went through Samaria back up on His way to Galilee.

The other route was called the king's highway, the blue line there you see on the map, on the eastern side of the Jordan rift; the king's highway or the Trans-Jordan Highway. It went all the way from the Gulf of Aqaba in the south along the west of the Jordan all the way up to Damascus, Syria.

The third road, and the one that figures into the importance of Capernaum, is the international highway. It's represented by the red line. You can see that this international highway started, if you could if I could trace it all the way down, it goes all the way to Egypt, to Memphis, Egypt. That's not Tennessee; Egypt. It comes through Gaza, there as you can see on the bottom of the

map, along the coastal plain but inland enough to avoid all the swamps and mosquitoes. and through the Mount Carmel range up, if you see at the very top up here is Megiddo, and through the Carmel range (there's a pass). It came through there and headed on up to the Sea of Galilee, across the Jezreel Valley, through the Galilee, across the northwest corner as you can see of the Sea of Galilee to Hazor up north there and then on up to Damascus. In other words, the city of Capernaum straddled the international highway that ran all the way from Egypt to Mesopotamia.

While it certainly isn't anything like our interstates in terms of how it was constructed, I've read some of the descriptions of travelers traveling on it. It was a lot more like a terrible country lane. But nevertheless, it was an international highway with international traffic. Most of the traffic going north or south from the continent of Africa would cross this crucial junction. This made Capernaum an ideal place for the center of Jesus' ministry, as word of His teaching and His miracles would be carried by travelers passing through Capernaum going south or going north and even heading eventually the other way over to Europe. So, it was ideally located.

The city of Capernaum (that's the wrong way, let's try the other way, there we go.) The city of Capernaum in Hebrew is "Kefar Nahum", or simply the "village of Nahum". We don't know if that means the Old Testament prophet lived there, there's no way for us to know that for sure, but it ran along the edge of the lake there about a quarter of a mile. It didn't extend very far inland, it was right along the edge. There was an ancient harbor there, about a 2500-foot promenade supported by an eight-foot-wide sea wall not unlike some of the things in the pictures we've seen down in Galveston even. There were piers that extended out from that about 100 feet into the lake, so it was it was a city, a modern city in the sense even though it was ancient, it had so many characteristics that we're familiar with.

The population there was mostly Jews, but there were some Gentiles. And they're differing estimates of how many people lived in Capernaum, the lowest one I've seen is 1500 and the highest one I've seen is 10,000. Somewhere in that range, in thousands, under 10,000, the number of people who lived in this strategically located city. It was a fishing town first and foremost. Archaeologists have found hooks and other fishing equipment there, and you can figure on the lake that would be appropriate. There were also farmers, there were artisans. That area has a lot of the rock, volcanic type rocks, and they would make mill stones and olive presses from that dark volcanic rock, basalt. And there were merchants there as well. It housed a customs station between two areas. We'll talk more about that when we get to Matthew's conversion. There was a military garrison of Roman soldiers located in Capernaum which made it an important city. And it was even an important enough city to have an official an officer of

the king there according to John 4:46. It was by all extents an important economically successfully and prosperous city; a trade route city, and Jesus chose it, just as Paul often chose strategic cities in his ministry so that the Word could be radiated out from there. Most of Jesus' recorded miracles occurred there; more than in any other city.

Let me just give you a few pictures of Capernaum just so you can kind of appreciate it. This is looking at that northwestern sea line of the Sea of Galilee. You can see the area there marked Capernaum. That's the area we're looking at on the northern shore of the Sea of Galilee. Now there's another shot of that area, and a little bit closer in yet an aerial of what the Capernaum coast looks like on the Sea of Galilee. That's looking out to the sea from inland over that same area, and there again you see a couple of structures that still remain. And we'll talk about those; one tonight and another in the coming weeks.

So, Mark introduces us to the start of Jesus' ministry in this strategic city. In fact, Mark 1:21 to 34 are all in the city of Capernaum all during one day's time. And the theme of this section is Jesus' authority. He teaches with authority, verses 21 and 22 tell us. And in verses 23 - 34, He acts with authority as He casts out demons and heals. Tonight, I want us just to consider Jesus' teaching with authority in verses 21 and 22. Look at them with me, it says,

They went into Capernaum; [That is Jesus and these four men that He has now connected to Himself.] and immediately on the Sabbath He entered the synagogue and *began* to teach.] They were amazed at His teaching; for He was teaching them as *one* having authority, and not as the scribes. [Here we have Mark wanting us to understand what made Jesus' teaching unique.]

Now as we examine Jesus' teaching here I want you to notice first of all the primary venue for His teaching. Mark 1:21 says "... on the Sabbath, He entered the synagogue and began to teach." Now, this is going to happen again and again so I think it's important that you understand what a synagogue was all about. Synagogues arose during the 6th century BC during the Babylonian captivity. The 500's before Christ. The Greek word "synagogue" means "a gathering of the people or a congregation, an assembly". The Hebrew word is "Knesset", it's the same word used for the "parliament" of modern Israel. To form a synagogue there had to be ten men over the age of 13 and when there was a synagogue built there were basically three purposes that it served.

First of all, it was a place of worship on the Sabbath.

Secondly, it was a school house during the week for the young men of that community and it was a civic center, a sort of place where various gatherings even sometimes trials were held those kinds of things occurred.

But by far the primary use of the synagogue was worship on the Sabbath. The synagogue was the local place to meet, to pray, and to hear the Word of God read and explained. Understand there was only one temple at any one time; one temple where they went for the feast. But there were synagogues scattered all over the land where they gathered just as we gather here today. In fact, some historians estimate that there were over 400 synagogues in the city of Jerusalem alone that's 70 AD.

So, this is where Jesus went, and specifically He went to the synagogue in Capernaum. Very interesting, we know something about this synagogue, we know according to Luke 7:5 that it was built by a Roman Centurion whom Jesus actually ends up meeting. He loves our nation, the Jews said, and it was he who built us our synagogue. Jesus would eventually meet and heal the daughter of the ruler of this synagogue there in Capernaum. And of course, his name was Jairus, and we'll read about it and study it when we get to Mark 5.

Now again, just to give you a little mental glimpse of what the synagogue in Capernaum was like; here are some pictures. This particular structure, the white part of the synagogue, was built in the 300's A.D.; so, 300 years after Christ. But it's built on, and I'll show you this in a moment, the foundation of the previous synagogue where Jesus Himself would have taught. And this gives you some idea of the size and what the synagogue would have been like in Jesus' time. So, this just gives you some ideas of how the roof would have been supported, how it was structured, there were there's was here's the interior where you can see the where they met. It would have held a large crowd. Here is, from one of the carvings, I inserted this because here is a picture of the arc that would have held the scrolls, the Torah. Inside this structure I just showed you would have been this arc, and in it would have housed the sacred scrolls. And the reader would have come and pulled them out and would have read from them, and then when they were finished, they would have been deposited back in this arc.

This is an annex room next to it, a kind of fellowship hall if you will. It was used in much that way. Sometimes travelers would stay there. Other times it would be used for various meetings, for the schooling of the young people. So, this was the synagogue there in Capernaum. Here is an artist's rendering of what that 4th century synagogue would have looked like, and it gives you some idea of what the earlier synagogue would have looked like as well. Here is the foundation

I was telling you about. The white stones date to the 300's. The dark stones underneath are the stones that are indigenous to that region and comprise, archaeologists believe, the original synagogue the floor of which would have housed the synagogue when Jesus was there. And He would have moved about and taught in this place.

So, this is where Jesus entered - the synagogue. And He entered the synagogue on the Sabbath. Now the weekly service at the time of Jesus was composed of very simple elements. There would have been prayers. The chief of those prayers dates to the time of Ezra and are called the 18 Benedictions. In their present form, as you'll hear them today, they date to shortly after 70 A.D. Then was the reading of the Scripture; especially the Pentateuch, the first five books of the Old Testament. This was the center of the service; the reading of the Scripture. There was a reading plan that was followed. And then there would be after the reading an explanation of the biblical text or an exposition. There was in every synagogue a ruler; and that ruler's job was to select who would read and who would teach on that particular day. It was open to really any person who was qualified, didn't require a priest or a rabbi, but usually, customarily there was a rabbi present, and he was invited to teach.

On this particular day it was Jesus who was asked to teach. He taught the exposition in the regular Sabbath synagogue service. He would have stood to read the Scripture according to Luke 4, and according to historical references, He would have then sat down to teach. He would have sat in what was called the chair of Moses. In many of the ancient synagogues there was a stone seat in front in which after the person had finished reading the Scripture, they would then sit down to show their authoritative position as the one who would teach; which doesn't sound altogether bad, I wouldn't mind sitting, but I might, I might get a little too excited. So, He sat, and this is what it looked like. This is the chair of Moses that was discovered in the nearby town, about 2 miles away, the town of Chorazin which Jesus you remember condemned. So, this gives you an idea of He would have finished reading the scroll and then would have sat down to teach in the chair of Moses.

Now understand that this synagogue ministry became very important in the life of the New Testament. Jesus, over and over again, used this approach. Matthew 4:23 says, "... [He] was going [through] ... all [of] Galilee, teaching in their synagogues and proclaiming the gospel of the kingdom...."

At the end of His ministry in John 18, when He stands before Pilate, [He answers him and says,] "I have spoken openly to the world; I always taught in synagogues and in the temple, where all

the Jews come together; I spoke nothing in secret.” This was Jesus’ method. You see a number of places, even in Mark’s gospel, that I’ve listed there where Mark makes a point of this. Later Paul would adopt this same approach. In Acts 17 we read that,

“when [he] ... came to Thessalonica, there was a synagogue of the Jews. And according to Paul’s custom,” [this is what he did.] “he went to them, and for three Sabbath’s reasoned with them from the Scriptures.”

Again, in Acts 18, “... he was reasoning in the synagogue every Sabbath and trying to persuade Jews and Greeks.” This became a wonderful method of reaching the people of Israel, because the God-fearing people would be there on the Sabbath, and they were right, to hear the gospel of Jesus Christ. And so, this was Jesus’ method. It became Paul’s method. So, Jesus goes into the synagogue, and He is there in Capernaum, the regular Sabbath expositor for that Sabbath.

Now that’s the primary venue - the synagogue. Let’s look at the primary response, verse 22. “They were amazed at His teaching” Literally, it’s interesting the text here says, “they were struck out of themselves.” D Edmond Hiebert writes, “Jesus’ teaching struck the people like a blow, knocking them out of their normal state of mind.” They’d come to the synagogue, they were accustomed to a certain kind of teaching, we’ll talk about that in a moment, and Jesus started speaking. He started teaching, and it struck them like a blow. It knocked them out of the routine that they were accustomed to there in the synagogue.

Now why? Why did Jesus’ teaching have such an impact on them? Well, let’s look at the last part of verse 22, at the primary reason for this response. They were amazed, they were struck out of themselves, and here’s the reason, verse 22 says, “He was teaching them as one having authority, and not as the scribes.”

Now, to understand and appreciate this you have to understand a little bit about the scribes. And so, let me give you just a very brief history, but then I want to get to how they taught because that’s the key issue. The scribes during the monarchy were just like secretaries during the time of Saul and David and Solomon. There are a number of passages where they’re just described really nothing more than recorders or recording the details of the kingdom. But after the Babylonian exile, so about after 586 BC, after the people returned to the land, seventy years later, an expert in the Torah is what a scribe was, and you see that with Ezra. Ezra’s the first one called Ezra the scribe, and Ezra was an expert in the Law of God. By the time of the New

Testament that continued, but they were almost entirely Pharisees; the ultra-conservatives of their day.

And a scribe's responsibility was three-fold; first of all, he was to be an expert in the law, to interpret it. And their interpretations were kept orally, at first, and then eventually they were recorded in the Mishnah by about 200 A.D., and their interpretations wherever they landed was binding, and the people of Israel were expected to follow it.

They were teachers as well of the Torah. Their responsibility was to teach the law to the people; they were the ones who were called rabbi or rabi which meant "my great one". That's how their disciples referred to them.

And they were also, a third responsibility they had, was they were jurists, or judges. That is, they were to apply the Law of God to specific circumstances. They would sometimes hear cases of problems there in Israel. They were respected, or if not respected, at least feared because when they entered a room people stood. The first seats in the synagogues were reserved for the scribes.

And here we're told that their teaching was different than Jesus' teaching. I love William Hendrickson's commentary here, because he gives several suggestions as to what these differences are, and he supports them with Scripture. It's another message for another time, but I love this, he says here's one comparison.

Jesus spoke the truth, their sermons were often marked by corrupt and evasive reasoning, unbiblical thinking. Jesus spoke about issues of great importance; they wasted their time on trivialities. Jesus had a plan and organization in His teaching, but the Talmud, their writings showed that they rambled. He illustrated the truth; their sermons were dry as dust. [Hendrickson says,] He loved those He taught, they obviously did not. [And there are a number of texts that support each of these points he makes.]

But here, Mark tells us the primary difference between the teaching of the scribes and Jesus was Jesus' authority. Mark 1:22 says, "For" [Here's why] "He was teaching them as one having authority..." Which is what the scribes didn't do. There're several other passages that drive home that this was Jesus' approach. Jesus spoke with a real authority.

Now when you start thinking about Jesus' authority; you have to ask why? Why did He have authority? Well obviously, the first reason that you can think of undoubtedly some of Jesus' authority had to do with His person, just who He was; both in His character and in the nature of His being the God Man. Mark uses the word authority nine times, six of those times refers to Jesus. John 7:46, you remember the officer sent from the temple, they return and said never has a Man spoken the way this Man speaks. There was something compelling about the person of Jesus Christ. And I think that's implied here, but I also think the Scripture shows us there's something more; because Jesus' disciples would later teach with the same authority. You can see it several places in Mark. They act with that authority. In Luke 21, Jesus tells them, "I will give you utterance and wisdom which none of your opponents will be able to resist or refute."

Acts 6:10, those who opposed Him there in the Synagogue of the Freedmen who opposed Stephen, "... were unable to cope with the wisdom and Spirit with which he was speaking." So, you might be tempted to think that this kind of authority was Jesus' authority and His apostle's authority, but that's not true. Notice what Paul tells Titus, his young son in the faith. Titus 2:15, "[what I'm telling you to teach, I want you to teach] ... with all authority."

So, Jesus taught with authority. His apostles taught with authority. Paul tells Titus to teach with authority and because it's the Pastoral Epistles which are intended to teach pastors, elders how to act in the church; elders and pastors are to teach with authority as well. So, how does that happen? What constituted Jesus' authority that constituted the apostle's authority, that's to constitute our authority?

Well, there are several places we can go, but I want you to look at 1 Peter 4, and you can look on the screen, or you can look in your Scriptures. First Peter 4:11, he's talking about Spiritual gifts and Peter breaks down all Spiritual gifts into two categories; speaking gifts and serving gifts. And he says this about speaking gifts, if anyone has a speaking gift let him speak, "as one who speaks the utterances of God;"

The utterances of God; what does that mean? Well the word "utterances" in classical Greek usage is used of the "word of a deity". In the Septuagint it's used in that expression, you remember the curse used so often in the Old Testament, "the word of the Lord"? That's what used. And in the New Testament it's used to refer to the Old Testament Scripture. So, if you speak as one who speaks the utterances of God, you speak as one who is speaking the very words of God.

Now it's impossible to do that unless your message is built on God's actual Word so this is really a call for expositional preaching, expositional teaching, an expository ministry. If your message is simply an exposition of God's Word, then when you are speaking you are God's mouthpiece, you are delivering God's Word and that brings authority. Now, compare that with the normal approach of the scribes. Let me tell you how the scribes did it. In the first century the scribes loved to cite one another or other rabbis at great length. They cited either tradition or other rabbis. Ken Hughes said, "they were in bondage to quotation marks." They established their views by these long scholarly quotations from other rabbis, they were pedantic. They were boring. They were occupied not with the greatness of God, but with their little legalistic rules. They also fabricated their messages; they just twisted and distorted the Scripture however they chose. Listen to the great expert Alfred Edersheim, he says,

"They were scarcely bound to the liberties taken by the first century synagogue preacher. He would divide a sentence, cut off one or two syllables from a word and join them to the next so producing a different meaning or giving a new interpretation to the text. The great point," Edersheim says, "was to attract the hearers. Parables, stories, allegories, witticisms, strange and foreign words, absurd legends, in short anything that might startle the audience was introduced."

Ancient seeker-sensitive synagogues. If you want to see what it looked like and I don't have time to turn there but read Mark 7 where Jesus talks about how they built their whole life on these traditions. They had no authority, because it was all pretend, it was all made up, all spun out of their own minds.

Jesus on the other hand, came along, and He explained the Bible. To some extent it was this simple explanation of the Bible that gave Jesus His authority. There are several texts we could look at, I want you to turn to just the last one I've indicated here, turn to Luke 24. Here you get a glimpse of what Jesus did with the Bible. This is on the Emmaus road you remember the story, after His resurrection. Verse 27 says, "Then beginning with Moses and with all the prophets, ... [Jesus] explained to them the things concerning Himself in all the Scriptures." So, He takes the Scriptures, and He explains them, and they begin to understand. Verse 32, after Jesus vanishes, They said to one another, "Were not our hearts burning within us while He was speaking to us on the road, while He was explaining the Scriptures to us?"

There was the source of Jesus' authority. It wasn't built on the air. It wasn't built on His imagination. He was an expositional Teacher of God's Word. You have heard it said this, let

Me tell you what that really means. The Sermon on the Mount, over and over again He says, this is what God meant, and He teaches God's Word to the people. That's what He would have done in all the synagogues because He would have read the text and then sat down in the chair of Moses and explained the text. This was the source of Jesus' compelling authority. He spoke, not as the scribes, but as one who had authority.

So, with that understanding what are the implications and application for us, how do we apply this glimpse from our Lord of His teaching authority?

Number one: this is obvious, but if He has such authority then you'd better obey Him. If He's speaking with the authority of God, then what Jesus Christ says you should do. The verse that popped into my mind as I was thinking about this was Luke 6:46, where Jesus says, "Why do you call Me 'Lord, Lord,' and not do what I say?" If I'm speaking with authority, with the authority of God Himself, then you'd better do what I tell you.

Secondly: listen to and obey the Word of God. There are many texts in the New Testament to make this point, in 2 Thessalonians 3:14, Paul puts it like this, "If anyone does not obey our instruction in this letter, take special note of that person and do not associate with him, so that he may be put to shame."

Obviously in the context he's talking about those who won't work those who are so anticipating the return of Christ that they are good for nothing here in this world. The implications are broader. We are compelled to listen to the Word of God, it speaks with authority. When Jesus spoke with authority it's because He was speaking the Word of God. So, you and I have to listen to Him, we have to respond to the Word of God. It's authoritative.

Number three: you the church must insist that the Word be taught. You see this in a number of places, in Acts 17 you remember those noble Bereans, why were they noble? They were more noble than those in Thessalonica because they searched the Scriptures daily to see whether what was taught was really in line with the Scriptures. In other words, they demanded that those who taught them teach them from the Word of God. We live in a day when that's very unpopular. Paul said that would happen. In 2 Timothy 4 he said the days will come when people will just want to hear what they want to hear. You as the church, today and into the future or wherever you go, whatever church in the future God brings you into, you must insist that the Word of God is taught. Only there is the authority.

And number four: we have a lot of teachers in our church at various levels. Teachers you must not teach your own imagination. Our job is not to be the chef and to make the meal; our job is to be the waiter and to get the meal to the table without messing it up. Teach the Word. Second Timothy 4:2, “preach the Word”. First Peter 4, “speak the utterances of God.” It’s not personal authority, I have no personal authority. I only have authority, and you as a teacher only have authority as your message conforms to the Word of God. There’s the authority, just as it was with our Lord.

Dr. Donald Grey Barnhouse, 10th Street Presbyterian Church before James Montgomery Boice was there, he tells the story of writing in the car with his friend. When the friend asked him a question, he said, “What’s your favorite symphony?” Dr. Barnhouse answered, “You know I think its Brahms first symphony.” And his friend said, “Well how does that go?” And Dr. Barnhouse stated that in response to his friend’s request he started to whistle the main theme of that symphony. Then suddenly, Dr. Barnhouse realized just how ridiculous it was that he was trying to communicate Brahms first symphony with a weak whistle. He later said, “But you know by the wonder of the human brain, my weak whistle was changed in my friend’s mind into the strings and percussion and brass of the full symphony orchestra.”

Dr. Barnhouse compared that to teaching the Bible. He said, “Every time I stand up to teach the Bible, I am overcome with how ridiculous it is that I should be trying to communicate God’s Word.” It would be hopeless except for one thing; the Holy Spirit is in me teaching through me, and He’s also in the men and women who listen, so He turns my weak whistle into the full symphony of God’s revelation in their minds and lives. That’s God’s plan, and you see it fleshed out in the life and ministry of our Lord. May God give us the same commitment.

Let’s pray together.

Father, we thank You for this glimpse into a day in the life of our Lord. We thank You that we see Him as the compelling Teacher teaching with authority and teaching with authority because His message was based in Your eternal Word. Even as our Lord said He taught nothing but what You told Him to say. Father, help us to do the same.

Lord, I pray that You would help us to be responsive to Jesus' authority, help us to obey Him to do what He said, He spoke with Your authority. Father don't let us call Him Lord, Lord and not do what He says. Lord, help us to listen to and obey the Word of God, Your words to us.

And Father, may we as a church; may we as individuals within the church, insist that in the church the Word of God be taught and heard. Lord, we live in a day when that's not popular, it's increasingly unpopular. Help us to follow our Lord's model.

And Father, I pray for those of us who teach, that You would remind us of just how ridiculous it is that we should attempt to take Your message in our mouths. But then Lord, encourage us to remember that Your Spirit takes our weakness, and through the power of His work in us and in the gifts You've given us and in those who hear, He turns it into the full symphony orchestra of Your revelation. Lord, we thank You, and we pray that You would give us a commitment to Your Word.

We pray it in Jesus' name, Amen.