

Pastor Writes

Greetings to you all. We have now reached the second Sunday after Pentecost and the theme for today is 'The Unique authority of Christ our Lord'. The ministry of Jesus was marked with him clearly showing his authority as the Son of God. In Mark's gospel we see him having authority over sin as he tells the paralytic that his sins are forgiven. In another incident when the disciples are caught in a storm on the sea and the boat was about to capsize, Jesus stills the storm and shows that he has authority over nature. Jesus also taught as a person with authority. The Pharisees, Sadducees and the Essenes also had their scribes but none could be compared with Jesus. The scribes were concerned with the Law professionally. Their job entailed developing and interpreting the law on the new context; to teach the law to students and also to act as judges.

In today's reading from Mark 1: 21-28, we see Jesus's authority in driving out demons. Jesus was in the village of Capernaum which was a sizeable town on the northern side of the Sea of Galilee. Peter's house there became the base for his operations in Galilee. On one Sabbath Jesus was invited to teach in the Synagogue. Jesus taught with authority unlike the scribes and the Pharisees. There was an inherent authority in the manner in which he taught and this amazed the people who were listening to him. There was power in the manner he taught, people began to take note of what he was teaching. Jesus had soaked himself with scriptures and he was sent by the Father. His wisdom came not from human training or education but because of the God given authority. Jesus's words are God's words and they are Spirit and Life. God's word is powerful and it can pierce between bone and marrow. And when God himself expounds that through his Son Jesus, how much powerful it would have been.

When Jesus was teaching in a synagogue a man with unclean spirit cried out saying, '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.' This man was under the influence of the evil spirit. The evil spirit was distinct from his host and was an active personality controlling the behavior of the one he possessed. The process of deliverance is always when the evil spirit is commanded to, 'come out of the person.' Jesus is showing direct confrontation with the demon.

The demon possessed man pleaded as almost saying, 'Go away and leave me alone.' The demon realized that he was going to be destroyed and speaks on behalf of his threatened fraternity. The demon knew who Jesus was and that their time was up. The demon recognized that Jesus was the only Son of God. In other words one who was superior to them and was going to destroy them. Jesus has authority on evil spirits and the demons knew that. They knew that when Jesus comes they had to leave and go.

Jesus rebuked the evil spirit saying, 'be silent and come out of him!' The unclean spirit convulsed him and crying with a loud voice came out of him. Jesus was not interested in the testimony of the demons and therefore silenced them. A resident demon not only takes control of one's thoughts and words but also affects the physical behavior of the host. The convulsions and the loud cry indicated the desperate but ineffectual resistance to what Christ has said. The subjugating word of Christ has to be obeyed. When the people saw all this they were utterly amazed and said to one another, 'What is this? A new teaching- with authority! He commands the evil spirits and they obey him. Jesus has unique authority over all the powers of sin, Satan, nature and evil spirit. He is the one we need to turn to when we are attacked by evil spirits and the evil one. May we use the unique authority of Jesus to confront and overcome all the attacks of the evil one through the presence of the indwelling Holy Spirit.

Shalom

Paul Swarup