

PREPARING AT HOME

January 22-28, 2018

Focus reading: Mark 1:21–28 (<http://bible.oremus.org/?ql=380263173>)

Other lectionary readings: Deuteronomy 18:15–20 Psalm 111 1 Corinthians 8:1–13

Theme: Called to Truthful Love

Last week we saw two fishermen drop everything to follow Jesus without hesitation. We wondered how that would be possible. What was it about Jesus that elicited such a life-changing response? This week's reading affirms that there was something different about Jesus and the manner in which he taught. He taught with "authority." In Jesus' culture, the scribes were respected teachers who showed knowledge and skill, but Jesus' teaching was based on more than scholarship. Jesus had authority from God. It was apparent and undeniable, and it threatened the scribes and those who were in positions of authority. While teaching in the synagogue, Jesus heals a man, freeing him from the unclean spirits that haunt him. The account of this healing, while fascinating to modern readers, is merely an illustration of Jesus' authority. It plays a secondary role. This is primarily a story about teaching, not healing. The truly amazing fact is that Jesus has divine authority, as evidenced when unclean spirits obey him! He is unlike anyone they have seen before.

JESUS IS DIFFERENT

People knew that Jesus was different. He was unlike their other teachers. What Bible stories do you remember that show that Jesus was different? Draw a picture of the one you remember best.

POWERFUL LOVE

Jesus' loved people with a love that was powerful. It made a real difference in people's lives. Jesus wants us to love others with powerful love as well. Think of something you can do this week that would make a difference in someone's life. How can you share God's love in a powerful way?

AUTHORITY

Who are the people who have authority in our lives today? For example, when we see a badge, we know that the person wearing it is a police officer who people need to obey. Jesus' authority came from God, so it is greater than any other authority. If even "unclean spirits" obeyed Jesus, how can we show that we obey him today?

PRAYER

Powerful God,
Jesus showed your power in the way that he
taught, lived, and loved.
Help us to obey him and
to love others in ways that make a
difference in their lives.
Amen.

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