

First Baptist Church Merritt Island
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The Authority of King Jesus
Mark 1:14-28

In the beginning, God created the heavens and the earth. And it was all good. The universe was completely obedient to the governing rule of God, which meant there were no politicians, so it was really good. And the crown jewels of God's creation were a man and his wife - Adam and Eve. As the first parents of humanity, they occupied a special place in God's creation. They were made in the image of God. That meant they could relate to God in a unique and intimate way. It also meant that they could represent God in His creation. And that's precisely what He told them to do. In Genesis 1:28, God commanded Adam and Eve to be part of His dominion, or His rule, upon the earth. Just think about that. Even though the King of the Universe was already completely governing His creation, His desire was for the people He had made in His image to represent Him and be an extension of His rule through their humble obedience. God not only wanted a creation, He wanted a Kingdom, a Kingdom that would cover the whole earth where we would reign with Him. It was all very good.

Until it wasn't. You see, the enemy of God came into the Garden of Eden and said there was a better way. He told Eve she could become like God if she would simply choose to go in a direction God had commanded her not to go. Eve ate the forbidden fruit. Adam followed her lead. And everything changed.

The enemy of God seemed to have staged a coup and every human on earth seemed to be his accomplice. And the result of man's sin was tragic. Although God was still God, a kingdom of darkness had invaded our world. And since our first parents had chosen the wrong side, that sinful rebellion was now part of human nature.

But God is rich in mercy and love. He God came to Adam and Eve and the enemy. And He made a promise. He promised that one day, He would send a New Man into this world who would defeat the enemy and restore God's order to this world. Over time, God made more and more promises about this New Man. He would be a Savior who would redeem people from the penalty and power of their sin. He would be a King whose Kingdom would last forever and be filled with peace and joy and abundant life, a kingdom that would be stronger than sin and death.

And for those who knew God's promises, the question became "When?" When would the Promised King come? When would He set up God's new Kingdom? When would the enemy be defeated and order restored? When?

Well, that brings me to our text for this Easter Sunday morning. A few weeks ago, we began a series on the Gospel of Mark. And, in our text this morning, Mark gives us the first words of Jesus in his account of Christ's life. And they are monumental words. They answer the question God's people had been asking since the Garden of Eden, when would the promised King arrive?

Mark 1:14–16

14 Now after John was arrested, Jesus came into Galilee, proclaiming the gospel of God, 15 and saying, “The time is fulfilled, and the kingdom of God is at hand; repent and believe in the gospel.”

As Jesus begins His public ministry on this earth, His first words are rich with meaning and good news.

The time is fulfilled...

This goes all the way back to the Garden of Eden and stretches through the entire Old Testament which is filled with promises of the coming Messiah. And Jesus says, “The time has come for God’s promises to be fulfilled.” Jesus came as the fulfillment of all God’s promises.

...the kingdom of God is at hand...

The phrase “at hand” refers to something being close enough that you can reach out and touch it.

In our home, we have a serious problem keeping track of the remote control. It’s a mystery to me that our television is ever off because, somehow, whenever we want to turn it on, we can’t find the remote, so how did it get turned off if no one had the remote? Another mystery of the universe. But the first place we look when we can’t find the remote is in the chair my son, Logan, always sits. He’s obsessed with having the remote. He breaks into hives if it isn’t close enough for him to reach out and touch it. You could say he always wants the remote to be at hand, close enough to touch.

And that’s what Jesus says about the Kingdom of God. As He begins His ministry on this earth, He says His message is gospel, or good news, from God. And what’s the good news? The time has come for the Kingdom of God to be close enough that you can reach out and touch it.

And that begs the question: how could Jesus say the Kingdom of God was close enough that people could literally reach out and touch it? Tuesday evening, I was studying this passage with an awesome small group from our church, and I asked that question. One guy who might be a future Bible scholar immediately said, “Because the King is standing right in front of their noses!” I love that! That’s exactly right.

Jesus is saying the Kingdom of God had come to earth because He is THE King who is God in the Flesh, the King who would save people from their sin and restore order to this world and renew peace and joy and abundant life. The Kingdom exists wherever Jesus is acknowledged as the King.

And that helps us understand what he says next...

Repent...

The word “repent” means to have a change of mind that leads to a change of direction. Remember what happened in the Garden of Eden. The first sin occurred when Eve decided to go in a direction God said not to go. She went her own way as though she could be her own god. And, in our sin, humanity has been going the wrong way ever since. A couple of months ago, NBC News conducted a poll and found that 71% of Americans think our nation is headed in the wrong direction...and the

other 29% were just plain wrong. Since the Garden of Eden, this whole world has been heading the wrong way.

So, Jesus says to have a change of mind. Stop thinking you are your own king. Stop doing life your own way and following the course of this world. Start following a new King, the real King, the One and Only King - King Jesus. And that's what I take Him to mean by the last phrase in verse 15...

...believe in the gospel.

If the good news is that the Kingdom is at hand because Jesus is the King, then believing the gospel includes believing Jesus is your King, your Rescuer, your Redeemer.

So, as Mark presents the earthly ministry of Jesus, he begins with Christ's message that He is the King of God's Kingdom. And that helps us understand what Mark does next, He launches into a series of stories that demonstrate the authority Jesus has as King. Let me show you what I mean.

Mark 1:16–20

16 Passing alongside the Sea of Galilee, he saw Simon and Andrew the brother of Simon casting a net into the sea, for they were fishermen. 17 And Jesus said to them, "Follow me, and I will make you become fishers of men." 18 And immediately they left their nets and followed him. 19 And going on a little farther, he saw James the son of Zebedee and John his brother, who were in their boat mending the nets. 20 And immediately he called them, and they left their father Zebedee in the boat with the hired servants and followed him.

As Jesus is beginning His Kingdom mission, He is walking along the Sea of Galilee and he spots two brothers, Simon (also known as Peter) and Andrew. And Mark's account is simple and straightforward. He leaves out all the details that Luke includes in His gospel. Jesus approaches them and simply says, "Follow me." Then, He walks a little further down the shore and does the same thing with two more brothers, James and John. He doesn't draw them a map of all the places they'll go. He doesn't spell out for them everything that's going to happen. He doesn't write up an offer sheet with a compensation package. It's just "follow me."

And their response tells you what they took Him to mean. They immediately dropped their nets. They left their families of origin. They uprooted every significant thing about their lives and they followed Jesus.

What's Mark telling us about the Authority of King Jesus?

1. Jesus has authority over our entire lives.

When Jesus calls us to repent and believe He is our King, He is calling us to live like He has authority over our entire lives. He means you surrender your will to His and go where He tells you to go and do what He tells you to do.

To repent and believe that Jesus is your King means you do marriage and parenting and citizenship and retirement the way Jesus says you should. It means your career, your family, your money, your

sexuality, your free time, your hobbies, your political views, your thought life, your priorities...your entire life is laid down before King Jesus as you bow before Him as your King.

And that's a defining difference between true Christianity and what our American culture says is Christianity. People consider themselves Christians so long as they hold a favorable view of Jesus. They think being a Christian means you acknowledge that Jesus was a great teacher or a great example or a great leader.

And Jesus is absolutely the greatest teacher and example and leader in all of human history, but Jesus is more than that, Jesus Christ is the King of Heaven and Earth and your life. And His call to you is to repent, to have a change of mind that leads to a change of direction by bowing before Him as your King and relinquishing your whole life to Him.

Let me put that another way, we have no reason to claim to be a follower of Jesus if we aren't following Jesus as our King. So what needs to change about your life for you to live like you believe Jesus has authority over your entire life? But that's not all we see in our text. Look at verse 16.

Mark 1:16-18

16 Passing alongside the Sea of Galilee, he saw Simon and Andrew the brother of Simon casting a net into the sea, for they were fishermen. 17 And Jesus said to them, "Follow me, and I will make you become fishers of men." 18 And immediately they left their nets and followed him.

In verse 16, Mark makes sure we know these men were fishermen. It was central to their identity. It defined who they were and what they did every day of their lives. But Jesus makes an amazing claim. He tells them that He will make them something new. He will make them fishers of men. Now, we will talk more in the weeks ahead about what it means to be fishers of men, but for this morning I just want to consider the core of what Jesus is claiming. He's claiming to be able to change what they are. And that's the second thing we learn about the authority of Jesus.

2. Jesus has authority over our identity.

This is a hot-button issue in our world today. Our world is buzzing with the idea of personal identity. And the primary argument centers around the claim that people should have the authority to choose their own identity. People are claiming to have the autonomy and authority to identify as anything they please.

And Jesus comes to His first disciples and, in His initial call to them, He tells them up front that He is the One who has authority over their identity. In other words, Jesus says, "You are what I will make you to be." And that doesn't just mean a man or a woman, though that certainly is part of the equation. I mean, whatever Jesus says He has made you to be, that's what you are.

2 Corinthians 5:17 says, "*if anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation. The old has passed away; behold, the new has come.*"

When you bow before Jesus as King, He makes you a new creation. You are who Jesus says you are. And who does Jesus say we are when we trust in Him?

- He says we are citizens of God's Kingdom...so our primary identity is not as an American, it's as a citizen of Heaven.
- He says we are children of God...so our primary identity isn't defined by our families of origin, it's defined by our Father who is God.
- He says we are heirs of God...so our primary identity isn't how much earthly wealth we have or don't have, it's what our Father will give to us in eternal treasure.
- He says we are ambassadors of God...so our primary identity isn't advocating for temporal causes, it's representing God's kingdom and gospel to those who are lost.
- He says we are wanted and accepted by God...so our primary identity isn't whether or not people want us or accept us, it's that God Almighty wants and accepts us through Jesus.

When you lay your life down before King Jesus, you are a new creation. You are who Jesus says He has made you to be! So, are you living like you believe you are who Jesus says you are? Before we close, let's look at one more thing Mark shows us about the authority of Jesus.

Mark 1:21–28

21 And they went into Capernaum, and immediately on the Sabbath he entered the synagogue and was teaching. 22 And they were astonished at his teaching, for he taught them as one who had authority, and not as the scribes. 23 And immediately there was in their synagogue a man with an unclean spirit. And he cried out, 24 "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." 25 But Jesus rebuked him, saying, "Be silent, and come out of him!" 26 And the unclean spirit, convulsing him and crying out with a loud voice, came out of him. 27 And they were all amazed, so that they questioned among themselves, saying, "What is this? A new teaching with authority! He commands even the unclean spirits, and they obey him." 28 And at once his fame spread everywhere throughout all the surrounding region of Galilee.

After Jesus calls His first disciples, He leads them to a local synagogue, a place where people would go to learn about God. And He teaches as "one who has authority." King Jesus can teach the Bible with authority because He's the Author of God's word. And a man who was possessed by a demonic spirit is there. And the demon recognizes Jesus as the Holy One of God. And notice what the demon fears. It fears that Jesus has come to destroy demons. Why would the demons who are part of the army of the enemy fear that Jesus had come to destroy them? Because He did come to destroy them! That's the third thing we see about the authority of Jesus.

3. Jesus has authority over our enemy.

Jesus came to defeat the power of the enemy. At the cross, Christ was not only sacrificing His life to pay for our sins, He was also fighting against the powers of hell. And for a moment, it looked like the enemy had won the day. King Jesus died under the weight of our sin and was laid in a borrowed tomb. For three days, the Creator of Heaven and earth was lifeless in a tomb. And it appeared that

the enemy who had slithered into the Garden at the dawn of creation would be victorious at the end of the world's darkest day. It was Friday, but Sunday was coming.

And, up from the grave He arose with a mighty triumph o'er His foes. He arose the Victor from the dark domain and He lives forever, with His saints to reign...He arose...He arose...Hallelujah, Christ arose!"

King Jesus has authority over the powers of hell, over Satan and the armies of darkness, over death and the grave. And when He calls us to repent, to have a change of mind, He is calling us to live like we believe He is stronger than the enemy.

That means you don't have to live in fear of a world gone mad. You don't have to be anxious about the darkness of this age. You don't have to cower in defeat or even dread death itself. The enemy is defeated. The sting of death has been removed. King Jesus has already won the victory and has given it to the people of His Kingdom. The very worst our world can do is take our lives, but if we are trusting in Jesus we have a one-way ticket to Paradise, so why should we fear what man can do to us? Our future is glorious and secure.

So, are you living like Jesus has authority over our enemy? Are you living with hope for your future and peace in your present? Look to the cross and the empty tomb. King Jesus is alive and reigning from on high! Let the good news of the gospel change your heart and mind this Easter morning! Our glorious King has come in power and authority, so turn to Him in faith and believe His good news and follow Him.

And that's our big idea this Easter:

Big Idea: King Jesus has authority over our life, our identity, and our enemy...so follow Him.

Are you trusting in Jesus as your King? Are you following Him with your life?