

I need to know and believe my Lord is one with authority.

One who rules my heart
with love and humility and, yes, authority.

We can find great hope in the power of Jesus,
and when we recognize
that *nothing* can stand against Him.

Today and everyday,
let us pray for a sense of Jesus' authority inside
of us.
Whether it's in worship, fellowship,
education, outreach
or evangelism.

When we're in school, with friends,
with our enemies, our co-workers,
our families. In this time of isolation.

At all times. In all circumstances.

When we close our services, and we "walk out the
doors
in peace to love and serve,"
we hope our mission, our voice,
our actions and our love will show
authority.

I don't mean command and control.

I mean that we mean what we say,
we mean what we do,

and that those who encounter and receive
the action, the love, the words we offer,
will believe and know they come
ultimately
from the Lord who made us all.

AMEN

**Sermon preached in Immanuel Episcopal
Church, Highlands, DE**

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The Rev. Curtis A. Kennington

**Deuteronomy 18:15-20, Psalm 111,
1 Corinthians 8:1-13, Mark 1:21-28**

Do you remember your favorite teacher?
Think for a moment
about some of the teachers
you have had in the past.

If you're under twelve, this won't be so hard.

We've had good teachers
as well as forgettable ones.
There may be more than one.

Since I am the one talking,
I'll tell you about mine.
But I invite you to name your
favorite teacher in the comments.
Tell us about them.

Never underestimate the power of a good
teacher.
I remember my 10th grade chemistry teacher.
She basically came into class
and read to us from the textbook.

Contrast that with my 2nd grade teacher
who, on Friday afternoons,
put on Michael Jackson's Thriller album
during art class
and danced around the room.

Or Miss Dottie, my piano teacher of ten years,
who made me love to play,
and so I did everyday,
and then it became my first career.

Finally...my senior English and writing teacher.
She was fully alive and animated and a little
crazy.

Different women, different stages, different
approaches.

All with one thing in common:
they taught with authority.
I was under their spell.

Jesus Christ was the savior, messiah, healer and
miracle worker...

he was also a great teacher.
In today's Gospel,
Mark gives us a taste of Jesus'
teaching ministry.

The synagogue was the center of religious life
for the Jewish
people...it still is.

You might visit the temple
in Jerusalem each year,
but your local synagogue was
where all gathered for
worship on the Sabbath.

Worship included prayers,
the singing of Psalms,
readings from the Scripture
and a time of teaching.
Sound familiar?

During worship, not just anyone
could get up and start to teach.
You had to be invited.
There were regular rabbis and
teachers,
and from time to time there
were guest teachers.

If you remember from last week,
Jesus had already begun his public
preaching ministry.

The gospel of Luke tells us
it was Jesus' custom to go to the
synagogue each Sabbath,
so it was natural that the ruler
of the synagogue
might extend an invitation for
him to teach.

You may notice that Mark
does not tell us *what* Jesus taught that
morning.
(Wouldn't we like to know?)

That's because his emphasis here
is not so much on what Jesus taught
but rather on how he taught.

And the point Mark keeps making
is that Jesus taught with authority.
Our story tells us that the people were
amazed at Jesus' teaching.

I don't know what they were expecting
when they went to church that morning,
whatever it was, something about
Jesus' teaching amazed them.

Mark tells us the people were so amazed at what
happened,
they couldn't stop talking about it,
and the news about Jesus spread quickly.

This was not a typical day at church.
Can you imagine someone who missed that
day?
"So, anything interesting happen at
synagogue today?"

"Well, let's see...
there was a new teacher in town,
and he was like nothing we'd seen before.
He performed an exorcism.
The evil spirits knew this teacher
and obeyed his command.
Sorry you missed it."

We believe Jesus had authority unlike anyone.
He was commissioned by God,
filled with the Holy Spirit in Baptism,
and chosen to save the world with
love.

Jesus was not part God and part man.
He was fully God and fully man,
and when he spoke, he spoke with the full
authority of God.

Now, can we imagine a day of church with Jesus?
Like watching Picasso paint,
or Beethoven play his own Sonatas.
A day with Jesus.
His words.
His miracles.
That authority.

I'll bet we would all welcome that exchange.
Most of the time when people talk about Jesus,
we emphasize the love and the humility
and his servant lifestyle—and
rightfully so.

Jesus is the greatest example of love, humility and
servanthood.

As followers of Jesus
we also recognize the power and authority of
Jesus.

