

A Day in the Life of the King

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[0 : 00] So as I say, we're carrying on in this series in Mark. I think we were looking at somewhere in John. We had a good time last week with Tom Muir.

And this week we're back in Mark's Gospel. Quite a lot happening in this passage today. But the big question that I suppose I want to draw on, which is something that we see coming in each section of the passage, is the issue of authority.

And the question really is, how do we respond to authority? Because predominantly, we live in a society that doesn't like authority, that rejects, and doesn't like people to be in charge of authority.

You know, there's multiple reasons and it's complex why that's the case. And it's not just one simple answer to that. You've got mistrust of people who are in authority, particularly it's corruption.

So there's lots of complex reasons for that. But the question still remains, how do we each of those as individuals? How do we respond to authority ourselves?

[1 : 12] Now one of the reasons, I think, why we don't like authority is there is a dominant theme in the West, the modern Western people, how we view the world.

And it's the rise of a way of viewing the world that is prevalent in the whole of the West. It's the rise of expressive individualism. Now what is, that sounds like jargony nonsense.

What is expressive individualism? Expressive individualism is the view of looking at the world, that if someone tells you that you can't do something, that's bad.

That if you're not allowed to express your individual true inner self, then somehow you're not being allowed to be the true authentic version of who you feel to be on the inside.

That's expressive individualism. And the whole of society works like this. That it's a dominant way of thinking. You should be allowed to express who you are as an individual, how you feel on the inside.

[2 : 20] But you see, the thing is, that only works if the way that you want to express the thing that you feel on the inside, it has to fit inside a governed set of parameters.

It has to. If it doesn't, it doesn't work. Because what if the true version of what you feel like expressing on the inside is not allowed in the society.

What if it's a criminal act? You see how it just doesn't work? You know, we have these phrases like, you do you. Or you need to live your dreams.

Even, you see that in Disney movies everywhere. I forget the name of the song that Elsa sings. But that song, can anybody remember the lyrics to the song that Elsa sings?

What's the name? Let it go. She's saying she needs to let it go and let her inside, who she really is, come out. Because the society that she lived in, the kingdom that is covered in snow, they weren't allowing her to be her true self.

[3 : 25] She had to get, she had to. And they were bad for not letting. And Disney portrays that to us. That place is really bad.

Because she would have had a much happier life if she'd have just been allowed to let her true self come out. But you see, it doesn't work.

It doesn't work. Because like I said, what if the thing that you want to do, if they want to do, is actually a criminal act? What if I, now I'm going to, this sounds a little bit exaggerated, but what if I said, you know what I really feel like I need to express?

I really feel like my authentic desire is to go on a, on a, on a vigilante sort of killing spree. You can't stop me. You're inhibiting who I feel like I truly am.

You're stopping me from being happy. It seems like far-fetched, but if you're being the true authentic, if being your authentic true self is the ultimate definitive of living the best version of you, then it actually throws all morality out of the window.

[4 : 31] Because you decide what, each person has the individual right to decide what morality is for them. I decide what morality is for me and nobody should stop me.

Which is, and we know that's nonsense. It's why authority is actually a good thing. Why we need authority, why we need authority figures, why we need laws that need to be obeyed. Because living the best version of you doesn't actually work.

In a nation where everybody has conflicting desires. What we see in this passage is that Jesus has authority and that is good.

That is what we see. It's slightly, and it's slightly different to how we think of authority in our world because it's not authority like we know it.

It's not authority that is given to a person or ascribed to someone because of their role like a judge or a policeman. That is authority given to them because of their role.

[5 : 34] But here we see that Jesus has authority by nature of who he is. He has authority in and of himself. He has authority with power.

What Jesus decides to do, what he wants to do, happens. It happens. And we're going to see that on three occasions in our reading today. We see, when Jesus calls, people follow.

When Jesus rebukes, demons flee. And when Jesus touches the sick, they are healed. When Jesus calls, people follow. When Jesus rebukes, demons flee. When Jesus touches the sick, they are healed.

Now, we're going through this series in Mark's Gospel. And just a reminder of where we're at. This all comes under the heading that we looked in the first week.

What is the good news from Jesus? You remember from verse 1. The whole of Mark's Gospel is the beginning of the good news about Jesus the Messiah, the Son of God. That is the, and all the way through, that is what we're learning.

[6 : 33] We're learning what good news is. And we're learning who Jesus is. He's the King. He's the Messiah. He's the Son of God and what that means. And right from the off, we see that.

As we've noticed, there's short accounts of what it means. It's almost a little bit like an action movie, isn't it? You know, remember the start of an action movie where you get so many quick scenes of so many things happening and before the music starts, you sort of take your breath back a little bit because you've been flooded with what the movie's going to be like.

We've got that here. So many little snapshots. We've got his baptism. He was fighting Satan. He announces his mandate. Then he's calling people. He's healing. He's getting rid of demons.

He's healing people. All in chapter one. We haven't even got out chapter one yet. So here we get it. Jesus has authority. The first thing is Jesus calls.

When Jesus calls, people follow. First place where we see Jesus' authority here is when Jesus calls his, the first disciples. You just look with me, verse 16.

[7 : 40] We see Jesus sees fishermen, Simon and Andrew, they're fishing. And he shouts to them in verse 17, come, follow me. Come, follow me, Jesus said, and I will send you out to fish for people.

And verse 18, at once. It's a feature of Mark's gospel where you see at once or immediately come quite often. At once, they left their nets and followed him.

Then we see the same pattern happens again. Verse 19, he sees James and John, two brothers, getting ready to go and fish. They're preparing or mending their fishing nets. And verse 20, without delay, he called them.

And what do we see? They leave their father, Zebedee, in the boat with hired men and they follow him. Jesus calls for men and immediately they leave what they're doing and go to him.

There's a few things to say. Firstly, this was completely unheard of at the time. Normally, a disciple, which, that word just means a learner, a disciple would approach a teacher if they could sit under him.

[8 : 47] But the teacher would never go looking for his students. If that were to happen, it just sort of smacks in a bit desperation. Here, he goes to them, he calls them. The second thing is just how radical their behaviour is.

You think this was their livelihood. They were not wealthy men, but grafters who lived day by day trying to make ends meet. But they leave their livelihood behind. John and James leave their own man without even saying goodbye.

In the culture, that would have been so disrespectful as they continued to follow the Ten Commandments and respect to one of their parents. They leave him without saying goodbye. The point is, the call of Jesus on their life has authority.

They immediately, without hesitation, answer his call and go to him. They don't deliberate or go think about whether it's a good idea. There's actually no indication in this passage that they even know who he is.

The call of Jesus on their life has authority. When he speaks, they come to him. Now perhaps, as a father over children, we might wish we had that same authority that when we call our children they would come to us.

[9 : 59] But we know that we don't have the same authority as Jesus over our children. And when Jesus calls, his people go to him. And this is true of everyone who decides to follow Jesus.

Everyone who follows Jesus have heard his authoritative voice through the pages of the Bible called to them and like those disciples follow him. Now the question that often arises from this is if Jesus' voice has authority when he calls if people come then perhaps, perhaps the reason someone might not follow Jesus is because he hasn't called.

And in one sense there is an element of truth to that. Jesus says in John 6 all those the Father gives me will come to me and whoever comes to me I will never drive away.

My response to that is why shouldn't it be you as well? Why shouldn't it? If everyone is equal standing before the living God with a sinful condition and if there is no one who deserves to receive eternal life if it's all a gift if there's nothing special about me that somehow means that I deserved it and that's true of everyone else if there's nothing special then why shouldn't that call be for you as well?

Why shouldn't it? There's no reason why it shouldn't. Will you hear his authoritative voice today maybe for the first time or maybe just a fresh Jesus calling to you right now come follow me follow me and I will give you a divine purpose for your life something that is bigger than any goal or purpose you might have had I will involve you in the work of the kingdom the kingdom of heaven we get this fascinating picture of what that work is the picture that Jesus gives of these fishermen they're going to stay as fishermen but it's where they're not going to fish for fishermen but they're going to fish for people and in the bible water is always a picture of chaos of disruption of the murkiness and darkness in life and Jesus is saying to them just in the way that you pulled fish out of water for your own life you are going to pull people out of darkness to the shore where there is light you're going to fish for people you're going to bring them out of the waters of judgment into the light fish for people this is the divine purpose that he has for them and in the work of the kingdom whatever it is that Jesus would have you to do in the work of the church this is the way that he transcribes the gifts and the way that he's made you to be involved in the work of redemption in the work of the kingdom of heaven come follow me and I will make you fish in the world secondly when Jesus rebukes demons they flee with his words he casts them out now before we get there to talking about the event

[13 : 32] I just want to pause for a moment because talk of demons the devil spiritual evil to the modern mind it can seem a little bit far-fetched isn't that just make-believe or something from a horror film the reason we think like that is that ever since the enlightenment and the age of reason there has been a gradual distrust or rejection actually of the supernatural or anything that can't be scientifically proven the way we've been taught to think is that spiritual evil the devil it should really just be put in the same basket as Santa in the Easter way but the reason we think that is because we've been taught a thing like that that reason or rationalism is the right way to process the world it's the idea that truth actually can only be discerned through repeated empirical scientific investigation in which we see a repeated result and what that has led to is a deep skepticism surrounding anything that can't be scientifically proven however if you come to that conclusion what we notice if we look in the world that we live in it really ignores past history and present reality because for most of history you look at history the spiritual realm is taken for granted it's accepted as the norm it's not even questioned now you might think that that's because they're more primitive people before we got here and that we've made progress since then but even in the present day non-western cultures assume a spiritual view of the world and actually even if you look at surveys within the west over 90% of western people believe that there is more than exists than just our physical world that we can see the majority of people throughout history past and present have an awareness that there is more to reality that you can see and touch it is difficult to say that spirituality or a belief in the supernatural is just the delusions of primitive people and what we really notice is that disbelief in spiritual evil is really what we'd ever want you to think you might remember

I don't know it's quite an old film now it's back in the 90s film Usual Suspects there's a main character Kaiser Sorsay and he has this famous line he says the greatest trick the devil ever pulled was convincing the world he didn't exist that's true and so the question is how should we respond to the fact that this it really is real that spiritual evil the demonic is real now you could do what I've talked about and deny it but the other danger is that you become obsessed with it and fearful of the fact that it exists the healthy balanced view of the existence of dark spiritual forces comes from how we see Jesus respond to it right here he has authority Jesus is teaching in the synagogue we read in verse 22 that the people are amazed because he's teaching with authority it's not teaching like that of the scribes who just their teaching was kind of they just repeated the law or read it out or read the mission that had been passed down to them what Jesus says is different it has weight there's original teaching that isn't just reading from a book it's clearly heaven's sound the surprise really that we get there in the synagogue the surprise is that a demon an evil spirit is in the synagogue

Satan must be desperate you notice the spirit doesn't raise the alarm until after Jesus has been teaching he's there to steal away the truth what Jesus would later call the good seed that is deposited but the birds come and eat it the demon knows who Jesus is verse 24 what do you want with us Jesus of Nazareth have you come to destroy us I know who you are the holy one of God and look at the authority Jesus has verse 25 be quiet come out of him do you notice that there's no incantations or bargaining it's not like the exorcist his head doesn't rotate or starts spewing out green slime Jesus doesn't need to pull an emergency all night prayer meeting because the authority of the living God speaks over the evil be quiet come out of him verse 26 the impure spirit shook the man finally and came out of him with a shriek there is nothing the evil spirit can do but obey

Jesus Christ does sound like a traumatic experience the people are amazed Jesus has authority over evil over the demonic and over Satan now that's not something that we regularly see today is it we don't often see people demonised in the same way this man is but we must come to the conclusion that at some point every one of us or people that we meet will be captivated by the lies of Satan the truth but the truth that Jesus speaks still has the authority the words that he says in the Bible he speaks to set us free from all falsehood he breaks the power that temptation from Satan has over us and as we hear Jesus' voice the way the truth and the life we see lies from what they really are and they have no hold over us Satan shut us when the king is present

Satan shut us when the king is present and he can however much he comes and tempts and tries to disturb your life he can never separate you from him he can never separate you from him Jesus has authority over Satan over evil because he's the king finally we have Jesus when Jesus touches the sick they are healed Jesus has authority over sickness did you notice here though he doesn't he doesn't show his authority with his voice but by touching we see that in the same instance we see his authority and his compassion for Peter's mother verse 13 so he went to her took her hand and helped her up the fever left her and she began to wait on him in the same instance we see

[20 : 20] Jesus power and authority over the sickness it is gentle compassion and empathy interesting the word for helped here is identically the word for raised or lifted literally it would mean he raised her up and let's not be under any confusion about the seriousness of a fever 2000 years ago today we would go and get paracetamol and go back to sleep a fever was much more serious if left untreated you would just burn up sickness in general didn't have the same survival rate but Jesus raises her up potentially from her death with a touch and you see the impact it has it's not a partial healing she is healed immediately and completely she doesn't have to take a few days to recover but gets up and serves and news spreads because it doesn't just stop there verse 34 the whole the whole town he heals many of them can you can you we can't really imagine that today can we we can't imagine

A&E; being cleared the guy with the broken leg after playing football and walking out the chest cough of someone with COPD or the little girl with croup and Jesus emptying the waiting room and we might read that and marvel at that and wish that we would see some of that today and perhaps when we read of healings in the bible perhaps it might leave us with more questions because the question we might have is why don't we see that today so much we prayed to see people get better sometimes they do and sometimes they don't there are two wrong extremes at the opposite end of the spectrum where you can land the first wrong end that you might perhaps think is that God perhaps God just doesn't heal but we know that that's not the case because people do get better sometimes there is dramatic times when people are prayed for and they're healed and I heard of a lady that happened to the other week but people also get healed through modern medicine the provision of modern medicine is definitely an answer to prayer let's not forget that that is a part of

God's creation that he's in charge of and that we're still thankful and dependent of him that he provides that so we do see people get better the opposite end of the spectrum is that we expect God always to heal and that if you're not maybe it's your own fault like you don't have enough faith and you should have trusted God that is a pernicious lie and should be rejected because it is God says that you only need the faith the size of the mustard seed that is enough the point of the mustard seed is the smallest thing it is the smallest seed that you can think of if I went you would never find it you need only the faith of the mustard seed the reality is when it comes to thinking about healing is that we don't know we don't know the mind of God but we still pray with expectation healings in the Bible are there as a signpost they're ultimately a reminder that the total healing that is promised is the gift of eternal life at the end of the Bible there is a promise that there will be no suffering in the new creation there will be no pain and no tears the question of healing is not a question of if but when yes of course we want a foretaste of that now and we pray for it but we do know that he promises us spiritual healing comfort in the midst of distress and healing for our souls the reason we see so much healing when Jesus comes in the Bible is because the kingdom of God is inaugurated here with

King Jesus arrival to let us know that this is what the kingdom will be like this is the fortieth of heaven everything broken will be restored and the fallen creation renewed it is the kingdom of God in operation throughout each of our lives at some point each one of us will have to deal and be touched with pain and sickness emotional physical and spiritual pain and suffering every one of us Jesus Christ reaches out his hand to you in that moment or maybe today in the middle of it he reaches out his hand with compassion and gentleness and he promises just like he promises to Peter's mother to raise you up to new life and to be with you in the middle of your pain he promises in the middle of it all to hold your hand and to give you hope and comfort through his word he promises that you'll never be on your own because he's with you by his spirit that is the promise that in the middle of your distress in the middle of the pain and your suffering when what you really all you want is sometimes you don't actually want anybody to say anything but you do want somebody to grab hold of your hand and say

I'm with you and he is he is with you he reaches out to you with compassion and gentleness and says I'll never leave you Jesus has authority he demonstrates it when he speaks he demonstrates it with a touch when Jesus calls someone they follow him the call of Jesus it is irrevocable when Jesus speaks demons leave they have to bow the knee Jesus will reach out to you in your deepest need and stay with you never alone because the king does not need to be served but comes by your side with compassion and care and outrageous radical love for you is authority a good thing well Jesus' authority is a good thing what could be more needed than to have the king of kings rule over our world of suffering what could be more needed than to have the king of kings call and to call people out of darkness into light to follow him will you hear him today for the first time or afresh come and follow him mighty lord and king we come to you and we want to hear your voice we want to hear your voice and you say to each one of us come follow me and we come today and we hear your voice once more and we want to respond to you by saying yes lord we come to you we thank you that you have the voice of authority to speak to us and we pray lord that you would know that voice of authority that rebukes evil that speaks truth where there's lies forgive us where we've fallen into temptations where Satan has had his grasp over and we've given in we thank you that we know true forgiveness through knowing you as our king having a relationship with you we pray that you would rid us of all temptation lord Jesus we praise you and we thank you that you have promised a day where all when all healing will be known when you come back and you'll restore the broken creation that we live in would you give us a foretaste of that day would you give even today as we pray to give

[28 : 44] Ben a foretaste of that of that healing that physical healing would you heal us emotionally would you heal us spiritually heal us physically lord come and minister to us and we reach out to you and we need to know your hand of compassion that walks with us day by day and so we ask that you bless us and help us and we pray that you change us each day and change us to walk with you we ask for this in the name of christ amen