

One truth shared: Christ Jesus has absolute authority in every aspect of our lives as his children on earth.

They went to Capernaum, and when the Sabbath came, Jesus went into the synagogue and began to teach. The people were amazed at his teaching, because he taught them as one who had authority, not as the teachers of the law. Just then a man in their synagogue who was possessed by an impure spirit cried out, “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!”

“Be quiet!” said Jesus sternly. “Come out of him!” The impure spirit shook the man violently and came out of him with a shriek.

The people were all so amazed that they asked each other, “What is this? A new teaching—and with authority! He even gives orders to impure spirits and they obey him.” News about him spread quickly over the whole region of Galilee.

Mark 1:21-28

Absolute Authority

Even the demons knew who Jesus was and had to admit his absolute authority! How amazing.

Jesus shows up with his disciples at the Capernaum synagogue on the Sabbath Day. Already well known, he is invited to speak to the assembled crowd. His wisdom about Scripture and the manner in which he applies it to the people’s lives does not go unnoticed. The crowd is in awe as he “taught them as one who had authority, not as the teachers of the law.”

This wasn’t limited authority, though. A teacher has authority over a classroom. A mayor has authority over a city. The owner of a sports franchise has authority over every aspect of his team, and a governor has authority only over his state. Not Jesus, though. He not only taught as one who had authority over the Scriptures, but exhibits with the man possessed by an evil spirit that he had power over much more than that. This Jesus of Nazareth was God become man. He had absolute authority in any and every situation.

What a comfort that gives us, dear friends. When life seems to be spiraling out of control, Jesus has got us. Divine authority must be factored in. When no one else seems to understand, our Savior does. Not only does he have the want and desire to help, though. He’s got the power and authority to help us through any and every situation as well.

Throughout this Epiphany season, we see Jesus revealing himself as the true Son of God and Savior of the entire world. We see little glimpses of his divinity, all the while marveling at his humility which led him through life and to the cross. As we look at our reading today, no wonder “news about him spread quickly over the whole region of Galilee.” Let it be today’s headline for your life! Jesus still is the authority of what’s best for your life. He will continue to work faith in people’s hearts and strengthen us for life today and life eternal in heaven.

Prayer: Lord God, Heavenly Father, you alone are worthy of my worship and praise. I look to you for all things and ask you to never leave me. Amen.

Foundation Teen Facilitators Guide

Year B – Fourth Sunday after Epiphany

From the River to the Mountain

One truth shared: Christ Jesus has absolute authority in every aspect of our lives as his children on earth.

Absolute Authority

Starting the Discussion: *This first section is intended to be light and easy, to engage and get the conversation going. Have a little fun with these questions.*

- List as many positions of authority as you can in 45 seconds.
- What are the benefits of being someone in a position of authority? What are some of the challenges?

Connecting: *This section serves as a bridge between the opening conversation and the body of the study/discussion. It should get the group thinking about the topic/text even before they've looked at it.*

Let's try to look back at Jesus' ministry on earth and come up with as many times as we can that he showed his authority as the true Son of God.

Digging In: *Here we want to dig into some texts or the text for the day and see what Scripture says. The questions are meant to be open ended to give a beginning of a scriptural conversation. These are a guide for a spiritual and scriptural conversation.*

- The people in Capernaum were amazed at Christ's preaching on the Sabbath in the synagogue. What do you think made Jesus such a great preacher? What encouragement is this for preachers today?
- Reread verse 24. What important thought do we take from what the demon-possessed man admitted about Jesus for all to hear?
- Verses 25-26 present a very dramatic scene that day in Capernaum. What do you make of Jesus' command to "Be quiet"? What about his command to "Come out of him"?
- Why was news about Jesus so quickly being shared around the entire region?

Conclusion: *Here we want to wrap up the discussion, perhaps circling back to the "connecting question" above.*

There are plenty of occasions in Scripture where we see Jesus' absolute authority on display. Discuss times in our lives where we've seen the same thing.