



MARK 1 :21-34

Pursue

- After choosing disciples, Jesus leaves the outskirts of town and steps into the middle of Jewish life, teaching on the sabbath in the synagogue, with authority. What do you think it reveals about Jesus' purpose and ministry that one of his first ministry actions is to teach? What can we understand from this story about the Spirit's work in our discipleship?
- As Jesus teaches, his authority is challenged when a man with an unclean spirit enters the synagogue. Jesus quickly and simply tells the unclean spirit to be silent and come out of the man, and the unclean spirit obeys immediately. In this story, we see the powerful authority of Jesus as king confronting the kingdom of darkness. How does seeing Jesus' authority over the kingdom of darkness challenge and encourage you in your fight against sin? What is one area of sin are you longing for deliverance from? How do you think believing and trusting in God's authority over sin and darkness could change how you put this sin to death?
- After Jesus sends the unclean spirit away, the people are "amazed" by his power and authority, and Jesus' fame begins to grow. But their response is not repenting and believing as Jesus had preached and implored them, it is simply amazement. We see in this that it is possible for us to be amazed by Jesus and even spread his fame and yet not respond to his authority in belief and repentance. Are there any areas of your life in which you are walking in amazement towards Jesus but need to respond in repentance and belief?
- Jesus heals Peter's mother-in-law of a fever displaying his power over illness. In these stories today, we see a picture of Jesus's authority and power expressed through compassion for the tormented, broken, and lost. What does Jesus' compassion mean to you? Is there an area of brokenness, confusion, or weariness that you need to experience the powerful and authoritative compassion of Jesus?

Practice

LEADERS, YOU WILL LIKELY ONLY HAVE TIME FOR ONE OF THESE ACTIVITIES.

- **OPTION 1 | Authority Exercise.** Have members of your group pray and consider any areas they believe God does not have authority over. Sometimes this can be difficult to recognize, however, when we struggle with anxiety, fear, worry, or control, these can be indicators that we may be struggling to believe God has authority over them or that His authority will be expressed in compassion. Gather in small groups, have each member share their most pressing area of concern, and as a group, find scripture passages to encourage each other and pray for each other.
 - Example: Struggling with fear of man is a struggle for Christ to have ultimate authority in my life instead of people having ultimate authority in my life.
 - Hebrews 13:6; Psalm 118:5-9; Psalm 27:1; Galatians 1:10
- **OPTION 2 | Followers & Enemies Chart.** Our Bible Study classes received this document, and this could be a great tool to use throughout our study as well. Throughout Mark, we will see two main types of people: followers of Jesus and enemies of Jesus. While the narrator will not often explicitly label someone as a follower or enemy, the reader can use the actions or responses described in the text to determine if someone is a follower or enemy. Use this linked chart to keep track of the characteristics of both types of people and how they specifically respond to Jesus. Use this list as an opportunity to consider your own character and actions: Which category do you think best describes you? Where might God be calling you to repentance or growth?
 - We watched several responses to Jesus this week, unclean spirits, the crowds, and the followers of Jesus. What can you note about them in this chart?

Proclaim

We saw this week that Jesus has divine authority in His teaching, over the power of darkness, and over illness. As you consider how to trust in His divine authority over your life, how can you invite others who may not know him into that process? What is something you learned, was convicted of, or encouraged by that you will share this week with someone who doesn't have faith in Jesus?