

## Mark 1:21-28 NIV

### “How Jesus’ teaching is different”

“They went to Capernaum, and when the Sabbath came, Jesus went into the synagogue and began to teach. <sup>22</sup>The people were amazed at his teaching, because he taught them as one who had authority, not as the teachers of the law.

“<sup>23</sup>Just then a man in their synagogue who was possessed by an impure spirit cried out, <sup>24</sup>‘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!’ <sup>25</sup>‘Be quiet!’ said Jesus sternly. ‘Come out of him!’ <sup>26</sup>The impure spirit shook the man violently and came out of him with a shriek. <sup>27</sup>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.’ <sup>28</sup>News about him spread quickly over the whole region of Galilee.”

**The matter of authority occurs twice in this text.**

**Authority issues have always vexed folks.**

**Failure to resolve authority questions rips friendships, marriages, and political parties.**

**Who has authority in marriages-husbands or wives?**

**Who has authority in education and in schools?**

**What or who should dominate sports decisions?**

**Similar issues fragmented Jesus’ society.**

**Jesus distinguished himself because he taught, “as one who had authority.”**

**Why was Jesus’ teaching different?**

**Somehow many long-term church goers seem to overlook certain facts.**

**A brief review helps us.**



**The *Book of Genesis* provides laws and principles that God requires of all people. Jesus quoted those laws to people of his day, who were neglecting them.**

Those Genesis laws were meant for all nations. The Books of Exodus-Deuteronomy tell how God established the nation of Israel and made a covenant with them known as Moses’ Law.

**For some reason, folks neglect to see that the Exodus-Deuteronomy laws were for only Israel as a nation, when the sons of Jacob left Egypt.**

The Old Testament books of history and prophecy tell the sad story of Israel’s repeated rebellion against God.

The following: **Exodus 21:10, 11; Leviticus 18, 20; Deuteronomy 21, 24, 27; Malachi 2,** tell how God emphasized his original Genesis marriage principles for Israel.

God called Israel to obey His word in the *OT* books of prophecy, the last of them in about 450 B.C.

**After centuries of prophetic silence, certain Jewish teachers felt that the law needed some explanations and “for instances.”**

**Those Jewish teachers began retaining records of their comments and advice to the Jews.**

**Written forms of these writings are known as the *Talmud* and *Mishnah*.**

**Two great first century Jewish teachers were known as Shammai and Hillel.**

**These two rabbis often held opposite views on marriage matters e.g. divorce.**

**A later teacher, Rabban Simeon b. Gamaliel, taught the apostle Paul.**

I have English translations of both the *Talmud* and *Mishnah* in my library.

My copy of the *Mishnah* contains about 800 pages (in fine print) of advice on subjects, e.g. what activities are allowed on the Sabbath and marriage obligations of husbands and wives.

**On the marriage subject, a subheading called *Ketuboth* refers to marriage contracts.**

**Following is from *Ketuboth* 13:11:**



“If a man married a woman in the Land of Israel and divorced her in the Land of Israel, he must pay her (her *Ketubah*) in the coinage of the land of Israel.

“If he married a woman in the Land of Israel and divorced her in Cappadocia, he must pay her in the coinage of the land of Israel. If he married a woman in Cappadocia and divorced her in the Land of Israel, he must pay her in the coinage of the Land of Israel.

“Rabban Simeon b. Gamaliel says: He may pay her in the coinage of Cappadocia. If he married a woman in Cappadocia and divorced her in Cappadocia, he must pay her in the coinage of Cappadocia.”<sup>1</sup>

**Cappadocia was then an area of central and northeast Turkey.**

**I don’t know who gave these rabbis the authority to make such decisions for married couples or why they assumed they had such authority.**

**Some people take it on themselves to decide matters for “lesser” folks.**

**When rabbis argued thousands of matters like this, you understand why ordinary people simply shook their heads.**

<sup>1</sup> *The MISHNAH: Translated from the Hebrew with Introduction and Brief Explanatory Notes*, Herbert Danby, Hendrickson Publishers, Peabody, MA 2011

Jesus simply called for people to obey God's marriage principles as stated in **Genesis 2:19-25**.

The leaders kept folks busy trying to obey the many laws they created.

**What about today's religious teachers?**

**How many laws and traditions do your church leaders bind on you?<sup>2</sup>**

**Our text tells another stunning moment.**

**Jesus' divine authority eliminated crippling evil.**

"Amazed" is a strong, unique word:

**THUNDERSTRUCK.**

**We need help because three realities stagger us:**

**They shook Adam and Eve.**

**They'll distress every thoughtful person as long as God allows this planet to exist.**

**What are the vexing three?**



**Death.**

**One day our heart will beat one last time, never to restart.**

**We will take one last breath.**

Our talking, eating, visiting and dreaming will stop.

**Are you are prepared for that moment?**

**Guilt.**

The 19<sup>th</sup> century writer James Thomson hoped, as he said: **"... to cure the pain**

**Of the headache called thought in the brain."<sup>3</sup>**

**Anxious thoughts of regret, remorse, and pangs of guilt pummel every mind.**

**How do you deal with your guilt?**

Death and guilt haunt us.

Here's the third reason we need good news.

**Life's lack of meaning.**

**Most people struggle life-long to find meaning.**

**"There is no cure for birth and death save to enjoy the interval,"<sup>4</sup>** said Philosopher Santayana.

Because she struggled to find meaning in her marriage, one young anonymous wife wrote:

**"He didn't like the casserole**

**And he didn't like my cake.**

**He said my biscuits were too hard...**

**Not like his mother used to make.**

**I didn't perk the coffee right**

**He didn't like the stew,**

**I didn't mend his socks**

**The way his mother used to do.**

**I pondered for an answer**

**I was looking for a clue**

**Then I turned around and smacked the 'crap' out of him**

**Like his mother used to do."**

<sup>3</sup> James Thomson 1834-1882

<sup>4</sup> George Santayana, Soliloquies in England (1922) "War Shrines"

<sup>2</sup> A priest told me that Catholic Church has about 4,000 laws.

**We human beings constantly skirmish with these three foes; death, guilt, and meaninglessness.**

**Jesus brought Good News from God.**

**Jesus ended death's rule by coming back from the dead.**

**We can be raised with him.**

**Jesus paid the penalty for our guilt.**

Myron Madden once said, "Either we accept the atonement God . . . offered us in Christ or we seek to act out our own atonement with elaborate funerals, by sending money to a conscience fund, by going to a therapist."

On my last visit to LA, I took a lot of clothes and things that I didn't need. I dragged that stuff to airports; put it into cars and hoisted it out of cars.

**We also needlessly drag, lug, pull, and tug lots of mental burdens we don't need to carry.**

**We quit doing wrong, give Jesus our guilt, and let him wash us clean in the waters of baptism.**

Jesus then gives us new guilt-free, wearing apparel.

Jesus differs from all other because he gives our lives meaning—Good News.

We'll shortly come back to that subject.

**When Jesus went "into Galilee, proclaiming the good news of God," he brought God's solution to death, guilt, and meaninglessness.**

**Last week we talked about the kingdom of God.** "The time has come," he (Jesus) said. "The kingdom of God is near.

Jesus meant that help is available to everyone; God's kingdom is close by.

When we hear talk of God's kingdom, we imagine that everything should be agreeable and pleasant. Everyone is harmonious, friendly and treats us like a little darling.

**Jesus said that his kingdom is within you.**

"If we're looking outside ourselves to see the kingdom, we're looking in the wrong place!"

We will never see it until we,

**"Repent and believe the good news!"**

God's kingdom means that we put him in control—we practice his forgiving love.

Many people know they are in trouble and they know they need help.

A group of mice finally called a council meeting to discuss how to deal with their dreaded enemy, the cat. A young mouse stood and said, "I propose that a bell be hung around the cat's neck. Thus, when she approaches, we can hear the bell beforehand and escape." The mouse sat down amid thunderous applause.

When the clamor quieted, an old mouse who had been silent said,



"It takes a young mouse to think of such a bold plan. A bell would certainly warn us of the cat's approach. But I ask you, who is going to bell the cat?"<sup>5</sup>

**Most human solutions resemble the young mouse's idea, don't they?**

**The challenge isn't the evil cat on the outside, it's our own fear and pride.**

**We resist fully submitting to Christ.**

**We run from death, deny our guilt, and search in the wrong places for meaning.**

**Jesus tells us to quit running away.**



**We can't run past Jesus' stop sign.**

**That big, bold stop sign stands in front of God's kingdom and reads;**

**"Repent and believe the good news!"**

**Have you repented and accepted the good news?**

I came to realize years back how bitter I was toward many people; my pride had blinded me.

I felt anger toward my parents, anger toward Norma, anger toward our kids, and a lot of hostility toward certain people in the Hollywood church.

I didn't forgive and let God take care of things.

**I'm sure Norma knew it and felt it.**

**Our kids certainly felt it.**

It took me a long time to recognize it.

On the outside, I tried to be the perfect preacher, the model citizen of the kingdom.

**But my blood boiled at times.**

I felt justified because I saw myself as a victim.

**I think most the Apostles struggled similarly.**

James and John needed anger management sessions.

There's a reason they were called "sons of thunder."

Unfortunately, hate creates a lot of demonic actions.

One day at a preacher's meeting, the speaker talked about forgiveness.

**On the drive home, I began reflecting on the hostility I carried toward numerous folks.**

How much bitterness I carried hit me hard.

**Reflecting on my anger covered "many miles."**

**When we forgive as Jesus did and put him in control, we find peace in our inner being.**

That peace that passes all understanding is part of the amazing good news Jesus brought. And when we humbly try to help others find that peace, we discover a life-mission that gives us great meaning.

Doing God's will in all things, forgiving others, and waiting on God's justice, help us live different lives as Jesus modelled for us.

Bob Blair

PO Box 176

Cleghorn, IA 51014

[www.robertblairbooks.com](http://www.robertblairbooks.com)

<sup>5</sup> Aesop (c. 600 B.C.), Greek fabulist