

One Who Had Authority

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[0 : 00] For 2,000 years now, Christianity has been a worldwide movement, a worldwide religion. It's on every continent and has been for a long time.

When Christianity first came through Jesus in the first century, within two centuries, the Roman Empire had gone from a few 12 disciples to literally millions that believed in Jesus.

That means that Jesus and that Christianity has always been really attractive in a really powerful religion, a powerful movement. One of the reasons, the reason perhaps for that is because of Jesus himself.

It's Jesus that is so attractive. When you look at other religions, you have to talk differently. You can't say that Muhammad is Islam, or you can't say that the Buddha is Buddhism.

When you look at Christianity, Jesus Christ is Christianity. It's different than all the other world religions. Jesus is both the founder and the content of Christianity at the very same time.

[1 : 07] Now, we're in our third week looking at Mark's gospel, and really one of the things that Mark is doing is just trying to explain why Jesus is so compelling and why he's so attractive and why Jesus did, in fact, flip the Roman Empire upside down within two centuries.

And the gospel that we read from here, this biography of Jesus is the earliest one that was written. It's very straightforward. It's very quick. The stories move at a very action-packed pace, and Mark really just tries to convey the basic idea of what makes this man so compelling that you would do what we read about last week when Jesus comes to Galilee and says to some fishermen, follow me without knowing exactly who he is.

They leave their lives and they follow him. They completely change. And that's what this passage is about today. Mark last week said, follow me. And today, Mark gives us a hint of why you might want to follow him, what would make him compelling, what would be the reason that you would give your life away in total allegiance, like these men did, to him.

And the answer in the text that we read is it's because of his authority. There's lots of reasons, but today's reason from Mark is his authority, that his authority is unique, his power is unique.

And we learn here that he's got the authority to vanquish what's wrong with the world, and that that actually terrifies humanity, but then it reassures humanity.

[2 : 48] And so we're going to say this morning the authority of Jesus and then the irony of fear and then why he does give us hope.

Okay, so let's do that together. His authority is really the big idea. You see at the beginning, he's there with these early disciples in Capernaum, and Capernaum is a fishing village.

There's piers going into the lake of Galilee, and there's boats everywhere, and there's fishing nets all around, drying, hanging, and there's fish and ships, fish and ship shops, you know, of course, everywhere.

Everybody eats fish there. And Jesus is here, and we learn that he goes to Peter's house. We're just told he's called Simon here. This is Peter at the end of the passage, and that's probably because the scholars tell us that Jesus is very likely living at Peter's home.

So he's left Nazareth, and his ministry is around Galilee in the first, the beginning of his ministry around this lake, and he's probably living in Simon Peter's house and doing ministry all around Galilee.

[3 : 59] And that makes sense if that's the case, because he attends the synagogue here and he teaches at it. And synagogues are just gathering places for worship, worship of the God of the Old Testament, the true God.

And so if you were Jewish or you were a convert to believing in the God of the Old Testament, you would go to a synagogue, and there were synagogues everywhere. All it took to establish a synagogue were 10 Jewish men.

10 Jewish men gathered in any region could establish a new synagogue. And so Josephus, who is a first-century historian, tells us that there were 240 synagogues just around the lake of Galilee.

And it's not that big of a space. And Jesus is here on this Sabbath morning at worship, just like us, and he gets invited to teach. And that's very normal.

It's not surprising at all, because the way that the synagogue work was normally scribes and rabbis would actually travel and guest teach weekend and week out at different synagogues all over the place, and the people would invite them to come.

[5 : 04] And so Jesus is likely living in Capernaum at the time, and that's why he's invited, very likely, though the text doesn't say, to teach on this particular Sabbath day.

They knew who he was. They knew he had been around, and he's being treated like a normal rabbi. He's got some type of reputation that he's a teacher. Now, maybe you come to St. C's or whatever church if you're visiting today that you're normally a part of, and you look at the bulletin and it has a different name, and you say, oh, we've got a guest preacher today.

Some of you get excited about that. We've got a guest preacher today. People have been saying that for centuries we learn here. Ever since the beginning, you come and you say, in the 19th century they had said, Charles Spurgeon's preaching at our church this Sunday, or Martin Lloyd-Jones, or Tim Keller, we've got Tim Keller today, and you get excited.

Imagine here in Capernaum everybody came and they opened their bulletins, and one husband said to his wife, who's the guest rabbi today? Going to open up the Old Testament and explain it to us in the worship service, and she would decide it was Jesus.

Now, it's probably needless to say the greatest guest preacher you could have, but if they would have had that conversation, the husband and the wife, whoever would have said, who's that?

[6 : 25] It's not that they didn't know who he was. He was living in Capernaum, but we find out very quickly they don't know who he is. And in verse 21 it tells us he teaches, and in verse 22 they're astonished at his teaching.

And it says, because he taught as one who had authority, not like the scribes. Now, three times the very centerpiece of the passage from Mark is to say Jesus has authority, and it's an authority that's different.

So he has an authority to teach that's different, but then he has an authority to dismiss a possessed man, an unclean spirit from the presence of the room. He has that authority, that authority to teach that's different, that power over evil.

Later he's going to have authority and power to put his hand upon a woman with fever, and for that fever to run away scared. And so three times that the entire point it's very clear is that Jesus has got authority.

He's got a very particular type of authority, and it's one that's never been seen before. And so they say, they're astonished it says, because he has authority not like the scribes. And that's really the simple thing.

[7 : 34] The first thing that Mark wants everybody to see is the uniqueness of his authority. And they say it's because it's different. It's different than an authority that we've seen in the past.

Now, what did they mean? What does Mark mean? What did the people mean when they said his authority is not like the normal rabbis, the normal scribes? We're not told explicitly, but it's probably this.

They preached in the first century just like we do today. Derek or myself or whoever it might be, we come and we preach, but we quote people, and we read from a text and we try to explain it, but we never do it without reading other people and trying to get a sense from other people what they think about it.

And that's exactly how it was. The scribes would stand up and it was custom that they would never give their own interpretation of the passage. So they would read from Genesis and they would say, as Rabbi Hillel once said, and then the next quote, all the great teachers of old, but never would you give your own interpretation.

So it's very likely that Jesus stood up that day in the synagogue and he interpreted the Old Testament and he did it without appealing to any authorities. He just said, this is what it means.

[8 : 51] And so the first level authority, Mark is implicitly saying is Jesus has the ability to tell you exactly what the Bible means, exactly what the scriptures are trying to say. And when the people there heard that, they've never heard anybody do that before, to say this is exactly what it means.

This is how the Old Testament is all about the Messiah. I think that's probably what he taught them. And it says that they were astonished. Now, that's the more obvious point, but it keeps going and his authority comes out at a new level.

And it's in the second point and that's that all of a sudden in the midst of Jesus teaching, in the midst of the worship service, there's a disruption. And you can see it verse 23 immediately, there was in the synagogue a man with an unclean spirit and he cries out.

Now you see what's happening here. Immediately, that's a trigger word. It's saying that while Jesus was teaching the man with the unclean spirit stood up and he screamed.

He cried out. He cried out. Now that means that this is every single preacher's worst nightmare, that all of a sudden, you know, from the balcony, one of you folk up there, it's like you stood up and you just start screaming at me and telling me to be quiet that I don't know what I'm talking about, which may be true, but this is exactly what's happening in this moment.

[10 : 11] Somebody, there's a demon in the pew and he stood up and stopped the service. And he's yelling at Jesus and talking to Jesus. And Mark, I think Mark wants us to see and think about exactly why.

You know, there's a demon, a demon possessed man in the pew. There's a demon in the pew and the service, the worship service has been going for some time. Jesus has been teaching for some time, but then all of a sudden, he stands up and stops it and says, I know who you are.

Why? You see, the demon himself did not recognize this man as he came into the room, as he lived in Capernaum, as he started speaking.

But as soon as Jesus started teaching from the Old Testament, speaking with authority, it's the demon who recognizes him and says, you see, what he's saying, I've heard this man before, I've heard this message before. And he says, this is the Holy One of God. And that's an Old Testament title. That means one who stands in the divine counsel of heaven. And you see what the demon is saying, the demon is saying, I recognize him because I've listened to him in the past. He is the one who stood in the divine counsel of heaven and spoke before me. When I was cast down, when I was cast away, when I was cast out, the demon knows. And the demon doesn't know because he sees this man and knows this is the Messiah, he knows because he hears him and he says, I've heard him before. I've heard him in the heavenly realm. He knows his authority, he knows that he's the one that's made a plan. Now, Mark is trying to teach us all something in this. But before I tell you what it is, there's a problem.

And it's the problem that all of us face when we come to a passage like this. And it's the problem that we face as modern people. Even if you're a Christian today, it's probably still difficult for you to come to passages like this and wrestle with the fact that Mark is saying by eyewitness testimony, there is a man in the middle of this room that's possessed by a demon. And if you're not a Christian today, if you're coming and you're an atheist, you're an agnostic, or you're curious, you're not sure, you're a skeptic, you're a modern person, you come and say, I'm a man of science, I'm a woman of reason, and I believe in things by evidence, by what I can see, that's what I can know.

[12 : 55] And so you come to a passage like this and say, okay, you're saying, Mark is trying to say, this is eyewitness testimony from Peter, who was there in the synagogue this very morning. But even if it is, don't we now know that what people believed in as demon possession in the past is actually just illness, was actually just sickness and illness. And that's what a lot of people have said over the past couple of centuries. But let me say a couple of things to you very briefly, and we'll move on. Verse 34, at the end of the passage, Mark himself says that they were bringing both people who were sick and possessed by demons to Jesus. Okay, meaning Mark makes the simple distinction that you can't simply say, we now know demon possession was just sickness, because Mark knows the difference. He says both the sick and the possessed came. And so Mark won't let you do that.

You can't dismiss it in such an easy way, saying, oh, what they once thought was evil spirits, we now know better. Well, Mark, I don't think Mark will let you do that. But let me say three reasons today, and I'm just going to list them off of why you should, why you can consider the fact that unclean spirits, evil spirits are actually real. And the first one is just to say, if you say today, I'm not sure, it's important to know that most people across the world today, and in the United Kingdom, believe in evil spirits. This is not proof that they exist, but I want to say that it is a sociological fact, not in the 16th century or 17th century or 18th century or 19th century, but in 2023, over 80% of all people on planet earth believe in evil spirits. And that's just to say that again, you can't simply dismiss it and say that it's silly to believe in something like this when four fifths of the whole world does still today in the modern world. Now the second reason, and more specifically, is to say, no matter what you might believe in today, every single one of us believes in the invisible realm. And so let me suggest that probably you are like me and you would say, say things like this, you would say all people are equal. And a good society should protect the weak and the vulnerable, and consent is necessary for relationship and intimacy. And all people should be free and we must progress beyond the evils of yesteryear into the good of the future for the next generation. Every single one of us is going to say that. So we're going to say today, I believe in compassion, equality, freedom, consent, good, evil, progress. And I want to ask you, if you're struggling with believing in the invisible, the spiritual realm today, how do you know that any of that is real? Evil and good, consent, equality, freedom, justice, progress, all of these things are invisible. You can't put them in a laboratory, you can't cut them open, you can't dissect them, you can't see them, you can't taste them, you can't touch them.

They're all beyond the realm of physical evidence because they're moral claims. And moral claims are invisible, they're part of the invisible realm, they're realities, and yet you can't see them.

And the reason that we know there are realities is because the invisible spiritual realm exists. And the last thing I'll say, and we'll move on to simply this, if you say today, and I think probably you want to, that evil is real, that when you look back at the 20th century, and after the age of preaching progress, the next century will be progress, it was the most bloody, murderous century of horror beyond horror, you want to say so much evil in the age of progress happened.

The only way you can call that evil is if you believe in the spiritual realm, if you believe in God, if you believe that evil is more than just a construct. And that means it's not very far stretch at all to say that there is such a thing as personal, absolute evil. Spirits that truly are evil, that truly do want to do horrible things to the world, it makes so much sense of what's happened in the 20th century, if this is actually the case. Now, the demon here recognizes Jesus.

[17 : 25] And he says, I've heard you before, you're the Holy One. He knew him because of what he said. And he recognized that this is the one who has authority in heaven and on earth. Now secondly, and briefly, that means that Mark wants us to see the reactions of the people, that that's really where the application, the point is, and that leads us to see then the irony of fear.

All right, you can see the people respond. It says first that they're astonished by his teaching and then amazed whenever he dispels the demon from their midst. If you get behind these words that are translated here as astonished and amazed, and you look at the definitions of them in the Greek text, they're ambiguous words. And both of them can be translated in several different ways.

But the first word that the people were astonished can very literally mean that they were repelled by him, astonished in the sense that they wanted to get away. So astonished here isn't that everybody was amazed in giving each other high fives and saying, this is amazing, this is so great.

Instead, it actually has the connotation that they were so taken aback that they wanted to run away. And we see this throughout the rest of the Gospels that whenever he performs miracles, like sending demons away into pigs or whatever it may be, the city actually asks Jesus to leave.

They don't want him to stay. The same thing's happening here. The second word amazed is very ambiguous and can also be translated terrified. And so most commentators and scholars think that it's not saying that everybody was happy. Instead, what's happening is when they see his teaching and they see the demon being dismissed, that they're terrified of him and they want him to leave. Now, this is the irony of fear. The absolute good, the Holy One of God, enters into the midst of the worship space and they're terrified of him. But there's been a demon in the pew for years and years, perhaps, and they've completely ignored it. You see that there's absolute evil in the room and they're okay with it, but when the absolute good stands up and speaks, they want him to leave. And Mark is making a really simple point here. He's, he's saying they're okay with the demon in the pew, but not the God in the pulpit.

[20 : 04] And he's saying that when the Holy comes into the room, it's not just the unclean spirits that get exposed. You know, when the Holy One stands in the room with human beings, it's not just evil spirits that are named unclean. It's every single person in their midst. Every single person in the room is terrified because they've hurt, they've seen the Holy One. And it's just like Moses at the burning bush and every other instance in the Old Testament that when you approach the Holy God, the consuming fire, when he's there, when you're in the presence of holiness, you have to say, I want to go near him, but I've got to run away. You see, they fear him. They're terrified of him.

But there's also, there's also a subtle point here. And the problem, Mark is saying, don't you see, there's been a demon in the pew. There's been a possessed man worshiping in the synagogue, weekend and week out in Capernaum, and the people aren't aware of it.

And that means that this is not like Hollywood, you know, it's not like the exorcist. The demon possessed man has not been crawling on the ceiling, you know, up and down.

That's not what's been happening. It's been much more subtle. And this is actually what CS Lewis wrote a book about in his famous screw tape letters. In Lewis's screw tape letters, there's a senior demon screw tape giving instruction to a junior demon, Wormwood, about how to be a good demon. If you can say good demon, I don't know. But rule number seven, you know, you remember rule number seven in the screw tape letters, it was screw tape said to Wormwood, the goal is always do your work without anyone knowing. Be subtle. You know, we don't want, we don't want people to believe in us at all. The goal is not that they would believe in you, but that they would never know you exist. He says, they'll worship science. They'll practice their religion, but they'll never really care about anything. Let them be serious and extreme about anything but the fact of the supernatural. Don't let them know the extent of evil. Help them to see that evil doesn't really exist. And Mark is saying that's exactly what had happened. There was a demon in the pew and they didn't even know it. It was subtle. It was concealed. And that means that the work of the unclean spirits may not be as visible as you think it would be. And that the goal really is to block people from realizing that what they sing about, what they maybe pray about, what they hear about is okay, but it's not that serious of a thing. That's when the demons in the pew, in other words, it's when the message of mere religion creeps down into the bottom of our hearts.

And we think that it's good to be religious, but it's not that important to take it seriously. It's not that important to say, I'm going to give my life away to follow him. And Wormwood says it discreetly like this. He says, whenever the patient is at church, make sure they're too distracted by the flaws of other people all around them so they won't realize the enormity of the claims.

[23 : 40] And this is what he said, if any of those people around them sing out of tune, have boots that squeak or double chins or odd clothes, the patient will quietly believe that their religion must be somehow ridiculous. You see, spiritual evil may be different than you think it is. It's actually subtle. It's actually to say, yeah, be interested in religion, but don't actually believe that Jesus is calling you to follow him with your whole life. See, it's the claim of compartmentalization. Jesus is just this one drawer in the midst of the whole chest of drawers, but I'm not going to give him the whole thing. And that's exactly what the work of the demon in the pew was in the midst of the first century. And the irony here is that they're afraid of the absolute good who is God, the Holy One, who can give them everything they've ever wanted, every desire of their heart. They're terrified of them and they want to run away from them, but they're okay with the evil in the pew.

Now, there's a transition as we close, thirdly and finally, and it's why this man of authority actually gives us hope in the midst of our fear. And you can see the transition. If you look down at verse 33, it says that the entire city by the end of it is gathered at the door in Capernaum, trying to bang the door down to get this again to see Jesus. Okay, so on the one hand, they're shaken in their boots. When Jesus stands in the synagogue, it says that they want to run away from him. They want him to leave. But by the end of the passage, they're banging down his doors as the whole city was gathered, trying to knock down his door to see him. What's happened?

There's a transition. They were afraid and now they want him. They want to be near him and with him. And here it is. It's very simple. It's that he extended his authority. He showed them the reaches of his power and his authority. You see, in other words, if God came into, came to earth, and he only came to stand in the pulpit and explain the law like he did in the synagogue that day, if he only came to stand right here and to say to you, this is what Exodus and Leviticus and Deuteronomy really mean, then there's nothing we can do but be terrified. Because when Jesus opens and explains what the Old Testament really means, it means that for every one of us, we're totally exposed.

That the uncleanliness is not just in the evil spirits. It's all the way through us. It's down in our hearts. That's exactly what the Old Testament says. And Jesus preached it that day. And if that's the extent of his power and his authority, then you have to be afraid. It can only be bad news, but that's not where the passage ends. His authority gets extended beyond that. And you see what he does. Very simple. First, he dismisses the evil from their midst. He says, be quiet, get out of here, and the demon leaves. And then he goes home and the woman whose house he lives in, he touches her and her fever runs away. Notice every time in the gospels, when there's a demon, an unclean spirit, Jesus speaks the unclean spirit out of the presence of the people. But when there's a sick person, if he's there in their presence, he always touches them.

And you see why? He's saying on the one hand, absolute personal evil cannot win. It can't stick around. It has to go. It has to be destroyed. But the evil and the uncleanliness and the sickness and the disease that's inside of people, I will touch them. He said, he dismisses the unclean spirit by saying, get out of here, but he touches the people. And he tells them that I've come to not dismiss you, but the evil and the death that encompasses you. I've come for you. I've come to help you, but dismiss the evil that's in your midst. And they realized it. And all of a sudden, they're banging down his door because he gives them hope. Now, isn't it the case, isn't it the case that there are two things in this life, two things that make us most afraid most sad, most miserable, most full of pain? And those two things are our physical bodies wasting away unto death and watching those around us experience that.

[28 : 35] And the evil, the evil deeds that are outside of us, but also within us, are those the two things that make us the most sad, that give us the most suffering.

And you see, the reason they're banging down his door is that Jesus came in their midst and he dismissed the two things that bring us to a place that we don't have hope. And that means that Jesus came to give hope. And the word hope is not mentioned in this passage, but it's exactly what it's about. Jesus Christ, why is he so compelling? Why did the world flip upside down to believe in him? Why did people go to death in every century, even today in 2023, go to death because they want to follow him? Why is he so compelling? And it's because he gives hope.

And we live today in the midst of a world that doesn't have hope. It's a world of meaninglessness. Ever since Nietzsche in the 19th century, the greatest atheist philosopher of all time, he said it. He said, if you don't believe in God, this is not from a Christian, this is from an atheist.

He said, if you don't believe in God, you have to say there's no such thing as evil, there's no such thing as good, and there's no meaning to this life. And Nietzsche said, the only thing you can do is create your own meaning. And Nietzsche's goal, answer was seek power, and maybe then you'll find some happiness. But he was exactly right. We live in an age in the western mind of meaninglessness, and we try to fill the meaning gap as the philosophers call it with all sorts of things like hoping in politics and thinking that the next election will be the one that finally fixes everything. And it never will. Only the one that's going to be the last election. Only Jesus Christ, only God entering into our existence, could dismiss the evil outside of us and within us and say no to the death and the disease that our bodies always feel.

Only that kind of authority can give you hope. And so the people come and they bang his door down because there are people looking for hope. Now, let me close by saying this. Last thing, verse 34.

[30 : 50] And verse 34 is a strange thing because it says that his fame spread everywhere. He was very famous. He went throughout all Galilee preaching and casting out demons. But in 34, he told the demons that they could not speak because they knew him. Now, Mark is trying to bring it all together here in verse 34. He does bring it all together. He doesn't try. He actually does it. He brings it all together here in verse 34. And it's when he says the demons knew him as he went around healing and dismissing, but he wouldn't let them say it. He tells them to be quiet. Why? Now, the scholars call this the messianic secret, that there's this theme that runs through all throughout the gospels that Jesus does not want to be known in his early ministry. And it's the demons above all that he says, you cannot say my name. You see, the demon had already said it. He said, this is the Holy One of God. He got it in before Jesus could stop him. This is the Holy One of God. And he had said, this is the one who comes from the heavenly realm. And the Holy One of God didn't just mean one of divine authority from the heavenly realm. It's also used a few times in the Old Testament of people.

One time it's used of Moses. It's used of Moses, the Holy One of God. And it's a reference to Moses' role as the one who carried Israel from Egypt across the Red Sea into the Promised Land.

And it's used once in the Greek translation that Jesus probably read from this very day in the synagogue, the Septuagint. It's said of Samson. Samson's called the Holy One of God. And remember Samson? He was the strong man who could bind the strong men. But in the end of his days, in order to defeat evil, Samson put his arms out and he pulled the temple down. You see, Samson was the strong man with authority who went down to death so that he could defeat the evil.

And now this title is being used of Jesus. And they say, the Spirit say, have you come to destroy us? It's not a question. They're not asking a question.

They're giving a retort. It's rhetorical. It's saying, of course, you are the Holy One of Israel. You have come to destroy us. You see, the demons know. The demons know exactly what's going to happen.

[33 : 25] They know that Jesus Christ is headed to the cross. And they know that this has been the plan. And they say, have you come to destroy us? You have. He's the Holy One. He's the one that's been talked about in the heavenly realm for centuries. And he's come and they saw in his baptism. And when he went into the wilderness with Satan last week, and he vanquished Satan how? Not by becoming the king of the world right then and there, but by starving, by being weak, by submitting.

You see, the messianic secret is that Jesus is headed to vanquish evil and death by submitting to it. Jesus is headed to defeat the demons by coming underneath the domain of death and evil to die. And Jesus says, you can't say it yet, because if you say it, the people will try to kill me today. They're terrified, but it's not yet my time. And that means the last word, that Jesus's authority is an absolute paradox. Jesus has the power to tell you exactly what the Bible means.

Jesus has the power to dismiss death and evil and every unclean spirit from the world just by speaking and by touching. And yet he's chosen that he would exercise his authority at the uttermost by giving his life to death itself for you. And that means that the heart of his authority is the holy paradox that Jesus Christ, the all powerful creator, became the ultimate servant.

Now let me ask you six questions. I'm not, I'm just going to ask them. Six sentences as we close. The very last word. Christian friends, are you awake today to the spiritual reality of evil?

That there really is a domain called the spiritual realm, the invisible realm of evil spirits, and they're at work to do subtle things and explicit things all throughout the world. Paul says, the battle is not against flesh and blood, but for the Christian against, it's against the principalities and powers of darkness, Satan himself, and we fight with the armor of love and truth. Second question. For all of us, in what ways has religion become for you a merely comfortable event in your weekly schedule? And Mark is saying here that true religion is following Jesus in every domain of life, that we can't be blinded by the demon and the pew to think that religion is just for this place. Third thing, third question, the obvious question of the text. Do you submit to Jesus today the true authority of heaven and earth? Have you? It's an invitation this morning.

[36 : 24] Do you submit today on the Sabbath this day of renewal? Do you submit to the true authority of heaven and earth? Is he who makes sense of your life? Is he your real authority? Fourth, that means have we today given up personal authority to say that I'm in charge of my own life? I'm the commander of my own existence. I'm the master of my own fortune. Have you given that away and said, no, I'm willing to follow him. I'm willing to submit to him from top to bottom. Fifth, do you know the cost? And we see it here. The cost is serious. The fishermen left and changed and hear the cost of what it means to follow Jesus. It's that you have to give your whole life away.

Do you know the cost? And then finally, here's the cost. Do you see the paradox of his authority as the example of your own, for your own life? In other words, if you say I give full allegiance to Jesus today, have you put into place the paradox of his authority, which is that you're called to then be like him by becoming servant to all. His authority is that he's the creator, yet he became the lowest. And so Mark is saying, if he is your master, if you give him true authority, final authority, then that's got to be the paradox of your life too. That in him, he's given you everything, the inheritance of the nations, yet in this life, you live like him by becoming servant of all. Let's pray and ask that God would do these things for our hearts. Lord, we ask that you would show us what it means to follow Jesus today. And we give thanks that in the face of evil and death and disease, there's hope. And until we see hope fully accomplished in the new heavens and the new earth, that you would give us the ability to have full allegiance to the true author, the authority

Jesus himself. So I ask now, Lord, that you would come down as we sing and that you would touch our hearts and maybe Lord, meet with someone today who needs to give their life away to Christ, to submit. And so we ask for the presence of the Spirit now as we lift up our hearts to you in song. And we pray that in Jesus' name. Amen.