**Homeletical Script**:

Imagine with me for a moment that class is over. You pack up and head to your car, only to find that you’re unable to get it to start. Being the kind, Christian brother that I am, I offer to take you home, and you hop into the passenger seat of my car.

Halfway down the next street however you regret accepting my offer, because you find out that I’m a **furiously** fast driver. As you nervously fasten your seatbelt and attempt to murmur something about motion-sickness, I’m squealing the tires around turns on the way to our destination. As fate would have it, flashing lights appear behind us after a few miles, and you breathe a sigh mixed with frustration and relief…and then it strikes you, I’m driving on as if I haven’t seen the lights!

You mention the situation at hand with some slight remark, “Looks like that cop is after you…” but I cooly reply, “Nah, he’s not a cop…his car is unmarked. He’s trying to trick me. Just ignore him.” Well, the situation quickly escalates into chaos as we’re eventually forced to the curb and have to stop. You hunch down in your seat as my denial only grows more absurd, jumping out of the car, shouting at the officer, demanding to see proof of his authority…”Who do you think you are?” I shout.

[Pause] Sounds absurd isn’t it? I can see by the smirks on your faces that you have a hard time believing I could have such disregard for police officers in the U.S. Can you even believe that my self-description might be accurate? Don’t answer that or I’ll put you to the test by offering you a ride after class (j/k). But let me take it a step further—you see, I want to put you in that driver’s seat this afternoon.

It is an absurd scenario to disregard the authority of a policeman, but what’s even more absurd is to disregard Christ’s authority in our lives. The fact is, we often live in ways that communicate this same level of denial toward Jesus Christ’s proper authority. And because we disrespect Him, we miss out on joy and intimacy and opportunities that He has for us.

This afternoon I want us to investigate the need we have to give Jesus Christ the proper level of authority in our lives. We’re going to consider what it means to treat Jesus as more than a friend, a teacher, or even a Savior. (We’re going to discover what it means to treat Him as the Son of God.)

Turn with me in your Bibles to the second chapter of Mark. Our text today is Mark 2:1-3:6. In Mark chapter 2, after establishing the deity of Christ in his gospel, Mark paints five absurd scenes that characterize the differences between those who have the proper perspective of Christ and those who do not. These scenes begin in the first verse of chapter 2, and carry over into the 6th verse of chapter 3.

In our brief time together we are going to highlight several characteristics of these five periscopes, focusing primarily on the first story. We’ll answer three key questions from Mark’s gospel: What authority does Jesus claim? Why it is important to recognize Jesus’ authority? And how can we act in a manner that is consistent with this proper perspective? Let’s get started…

**BODY:**

**I. First, let’s ask: What authority does Jesus claim in Mark’s gospel?**

Keep in mind that Mark’s identification of Jesus is quite explicit in the chapter that precedes this. His opening line to the gospel declares Jesus to be the Son of God. God speaks from heaven to declare Jesus’ Sonship. Jesus himself overcomes Satan in the wilderness, begins to teach with definite authority in the synagogues, and works miracles of healing and exorcism all around the region of his hometown.

It’s safe to say that for us, the readers, there should be no doubt in our minds that Jesus is identified as God’s Son…but now in our first story, Jesus is going to declare that fact, and we are going to see how the people around Him react. Let’s look at the first story. Jesus is presented with another opportunity to heal, but he does something different this time. Read His words with me in verse 5. Verse five reads:

 **5** And Jesus seeing their faith \*said to the paralytic , "Son , your sins are forgiven ."

That’s an odd way to heal someone, don’t you think? And that’s just it…Jesus’ is communicating something extra here. He’s making a declaration. If we read on, Mark explains what everyone in the crowd understood from Jesus statement. Verse six and seven read:

 **6** But some of the scribes were sitting there and reasoning in their hearts, **7** "Why does this man speak that way? He is blaspheming; ***who can forgive sins but God alone?"***

Did you hear that? Let’s read that last part again: “Who can forgive sins but God alone?” So Jesus is declares Himself to be God. And He’ll do it again, and again.

Let’s pick out a few other titles He uses to describe Himself in this section. In verses 19 and 20, Jesus declares that His disciples will not fast while the “bridegroom” is with them. He calls Himself the husband of Israel…which is something God does in the Old Testament. In verse 28 Jesus declares Himself to be “Lord of the Sabbath” Again, this is not the kind of title a rabbi or a king would use of himself. Jesus is clear and direct in His self-identification.

It’s as if he’s pointing out his crown, his diploma, his gold A&M ring.

**What authority is Jesus claiming? God’s authority. Identification as God. Why does that matter?**

**II. Why it is important that we treat Jesus as the Son of God?**

Mark addresses this as well in this section. In fact, it seems to be his central point in these stories, because while we see Jesus’ claim repeated a few times, we find that the major content of this section is the reactions that He gets from two groups, those who believe in His identity, and those who don’t. In fact, in Mark’s first pericope, Jesus brings up the issue—so there’s a divine spotlight on the responses of the people. He seems to use His statement on the forgiveness of sins to draw the negative response of the scribes out into the open. The remainder of this pericope focuses on Jesus’ criticism of the scribes for their incorrect response. Let’s read this part together again, starting in verse 5:

 **5** And Jesus seeing their faith \*said to the paralytic, "Son , your sins are forgiven."
 **6** But some of the scribes were sitting there and **reasoning in their hearts**, **7** "Why does this man speak that way? **He is blaspheming**; who can forgive sins but God alone?"
 **8** ​"Immediately Jesus, aware in His spirit that they were **reasoning that way within themselves**, \*said to them, "Why are you reasoning about these things in your hearts?”

Interesting story isn’t it? The scribes don’t even say anything—they simply think it, and Jesus criticizes them! They know what Jesus is claiming, but they refuse to believe it! Their **verbal** responses are in the pericopes that follow, where they are confused and critical of Jesus actions: why? Because they don’t think of Jesus as God.

In the second periscope, they’re confused when Jesus shares a meal with men and women who have decided to follow Jesus. They think of Him as a man, and so they miss the redemptive mission of the Son of God. In the third periscope they wonder why Jesus’ disciples don’t fast, not realizing that they should be rejoicing in the presence of the Son of God. In the fourth and fifth periscope, they refuse to accept Jesus’ understanding of the Sabbath, not recognizing that He created the holy day…and they become hardhearted and violently opposed to Him.

The irony of their response is further reinforced by the people that Mark places in the story alongside them, characters who do respond to Jesus properly. Characters who respond to Him as the Son of God. The paralytic’s friends who bring their companion confident that Jesus will heal him. The crowd around Jesus in the home, who glory God after the paralytic is healed. The tax collectors and sinners and disciples that follow Jesus.

**Why does it matter whether we treat Jesus as the Son of God?**

In the case of the gospel’s accounts, it’s the difference between being **friends** or **enemies** of God. It’s the difference between **joyful intimacy** and **legalistic distance** from Him. And it’s the difference between **understanding** and **confusion**.

Let’s use a few real life examples to compare:

**First**, let’s go back to our analogy of the police chase. What is the result of my lack of recognition of authority? One word: judgment. I ignored authority and reaped punishment. Those who fail to recognize God do the same, only with both **temporal** and **eternal** consequences. This is a basic premise of the gospel, those who miss God, miss eternal life. Those who miss God bear the full weight of their sins.

**Second**, let’s consider the scenario of **construction workers** who fail to listen to their chief engineer: What happens when you don’t follow the master plan on a building? You might have some beautiful bathrooms and kitchens and buildings, but they might lack plumbing, or ventilation, or the proper supports to endure a storm. The same is true with God. He’s the master planner. We can do great things in life, but if He is not directing our work, those great things might get in the way of His master plan and thwart even greater results. We can also get confused as to why we’re doing what we’re doing, if we don’t trust that He knows why He has called us to a particular task.

**Thirdly**, let’s consider the example of **family**. Families have **toddlers, children and teenagers**. Teenagers don’t have much fun with their parents at all. They naturally distrust their parents motives and thus often disobey. Children, on the other hand, obey their parents more often, but also ask “why” constantly. They want to understand their parents motives, and thus they have a moderate level of enjoyment with Mom and Dad. Toddlers are the most fun. They are very obedient to their parents, and the result of their carefree obedience is joy. They laugh and giggle and smile and they make us do so too. The same is true with us, when we take God’s directions without questioning His motives or needing to know why, we’ll find we have a lot more joy in serving Him.

**Why does it matter whether we treat Jesus as the Son of God? Salvation. Connection with the Master Plan. Joyful Intimacy. And so much more…**

**III. Finally, how should we respond to Jesus authority?**

I believe there are 3 levels of recognition/response, just like there are three kinds of children in a family. 1. There is a call to Salvation, where we begin to trust God’s offer of ­­­­grace for the first time, and we receive eternal life—we escape the judgment. When we recognize God at this level, we worship Him for **what He’s done**.

2. There is a call to the Lordship of Christ, where we begin to seek out an understanding of His motives, leading to a life of growth and obedience—we begin to trust Him as the Master Planner. When we recognize God at this level, we worship Him for **what He’s doing**.

3. Finally, there is a call to Christ as the Son of God. Here is where we place full trust in the motives of God. We serve and live sacrificially, we trust Him for guidance, and we lose the need to understand His motives for everything that goes on around us. When we recognize God as this level, we worship Him **for who he is**.

**Conclusion**:

**What authority is Jesus claiming?** God’s authority.

**Why does it matter whether we treat Jesus as the Son of God?** Salvation. Connection with the Master Plan. Joyful Intimacy. And so much more…

**How should we respond to Jesus authority?** By living and serving sacrificially, trusting Him for guidance, and losing our need to know all of His motives or plan.

Anybody need a ride home tonight?