

“Authority”
Mark 1:21-28
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By Rebecca Enney

Do any of you have dogs or cats in your home? If you have TWO dogs or TWO cats, or even a CAT and a DOG, there is usually one who becomes the authority. That is the way it is for Barabas’s two dogs. Jeter has been Barabas’s dog for a long time and he is big and strong. They just got A-rod a few years ago. and he is little and very barky. And guess which one is the ‘alpha’ dog . . . it is A-rod! Jeter was nice and comfy curled up in bed next to Barabas on a sleepy Saturday morning. That is, until A-rod came bounding up onto the bed and barked and barked until Jeter hopped down and curled up on the cold hard floor. Then A-rod proceeded to curl up in the warm spot beside Barabas!



A-rod has authority over Jeter. And who has authority over A-rod? That would be Barabas. “A-rod! That was very mean and selfish of you to knock Jeter off my bed. You get down!” And Barabas called Jeter to climb back up on the bed while A-rod slunk off the bed with his little tail between his legs.

And who has authority over Barabas? Uncle Floyd does. Uncle Floyd adopted Barabas a few years ago. However, Barabas came to live with Uncle Floyd right after the car accident when he was just little, the accident where Barabas’s mother died and his father, Frank went to jail. Now his father lives in California and works as a janitor at the Disney Internet Group on Lenkershim Blvd in North Hollywood. So now, Uncle Floyd is the primary authority in Barabas’ life. “Well son, I reckon it’s time to get out of that bed and bundle up. You need to clean up the dog poop in the back yard before breakfast.”

And who has authority over Uncle Floyd? When he is at work, his boss, Pastor Ed does. You see, Uncle Floyd is the church sexton. That means he does all the cleaning and maintenance work around the church building. “You’ll need to get the Fellowship Hall set up for the Mardi Gras Dinner next Sunday as soon as worship ends and make it snappy. It’s a big dinner.” said Pastor Ed to Uncle Floyd as he gave him next week’s work schedule.

And who has authority over Pastor Ed? I guess that would be the Bishop! The Bishop called Pastor Ed this morning and they talked about the Homeless Shelter in Harrisburg.

And who has authority over the Bishop? Actually, who has authority over us all?

God! In fact, when God was incarnate here on earth, when he put on a body and lived with us humans and his name was Jesus, he taught in the synagogue and the scribes and Jewish leaders were astounded, because Jesus taught with such authority. Jesus also taught his disciples and he taught large crowds of ordinary people.



A very important lesson that Jesus taught with authority and compassion was when he said “I give you a new commandment: LOVE ONE ANOTHER. AS I HAVE LOVED YOU, SO YOU MUST LOVE ONE ANOTHER.”

When we hear authority, whether it is our teacher or our scout leader or our mom or dad, we must listen. And when we speak with authority, we must do so with LOVE.

Barabas looked at Jeter curled up next to him, wagging his tail. And there was A-rod, on the cold floor looking up at him with a pitifully ingratiating expression on his face.

Barabas loves BOTH his dogs. And so, in compassion Barabas said “All right, come on back up A-rod. But there is plenty of room here for both of you, so you need to share!” A-rod jumped up, tail wagging and curled up on the other side of Barabas.

And then the voice of authority from down stairs . . . “Barabas . . . !?”

Reluctantly, Barabas got out of bed and went downstairs, put on his boots and snow jacket right over his pajamas and went out to the garage for the poop shovel. THE END