

Before I begin the sermon I want to remind everyone we have a free multilingual daily devotional at [feedmyspirit.net](https://feedmyspirit.net) Please share that with your friends and family.

Barnhouse, a famous teacher of God's Word, was asked what his favorite music was. He answered, "Brahms first." The man asked, "How does it go." Barnhouse began to whistle one of Brahms' symphonies. Then he thought to himself how ridiculous it was to try to relate a majestic symphony with his meager whistle. But in the listener's mind, the whistle was translated into strings, horns, and percussion. Barnhouse realized that this is what happens when we preach God's Word. Our poor little whistle of trying to proclaim God's Word is empowered by the Holy Spirit and becomes in the Spirit filled person's mind an orchestra of truth.<sup>i</sup> That is my hope every time I preach (2 Corinthians 2:15-17<sup>ii</sup>). It is my prayer that God would have you hear Him in the words of the sermon.

<sup>21</sup> *And they went into Capernaum, and immediately on the Sabbath he entered the synagogue and was teaching.* Mark 1:21 Jesus and his four disciples went the two miles from the fishing site into the town of Capernaum. Capernaum had a port and a synagogue. Excavations have revealed where the synagogue and Peter's home were. The synagogue of Jesus' day was made of the local black basalt. Later, a white limestone synagogue was built on the footings of the older one. (Picture 1) There was a school built adjacent, and you can still see games etched into the limestone flooring. (Picture 2) There was also a Roman garrison attached to the city. Matthew would have been at the dock taxing the goods that came in by boat as well as those traveling the Via Maris highway that ran through Capernaum, a town with a population of about 1500. Only in our lifetime was the submerged remains of the port identified.

Immediately on the Sabbath He entered the synagogue. Mark may mean it was the following day, or it could have been at the start of the Sabbath in the evening. The Sabbath officially starts at the sight of two stars, so it could literally be when they arrived back in town. Tradition was for the Torah reader of that week to stand and read the scroll and then sit down to expound on it. That is similar to the early church and what we do today. The preacher reads the passage and then expounds on it. In some Brethren churches in our day the women still sit separately from the men as they did in Galilee.

Jesus would have grown up going to synagogue every Sabbath and to the feasts three times a year in Jerusalem (2 Chronicles 8:13<sup>iii</sup>). The town of his youth, Nazareth, was only a town of about 300 residents. When a Jewish village had at least ten families they would build a synagogue with a school. The rabbi oversaw both. That is where Jesus would have learned to read and write with the Torah as the only source of study. In the synagogue he would have also heard the prophets read and discussed. It was only natural when men gathered for them to discuss the Scriptures. Now at over thirty years of age He is one of the adult men who can take their turn expounding on the Scriptures (Luke 3:23<sup>iv</sup>). They may have invited him to speak as a visiting rabbi.

<sup>22</sup> *And they were astonished at his teaching, for he taught them as one who had authority, and not as the scribes.* Mark 1:22 When scribes in that day spoke on Scripture, they would quote sages who had gone before. There were translations with commentaries called targums along with oral traditions from which they drew their interpretations. Rarely did a rabbi or scribe deviate from previous well received explanations, but Jesus was different. He had plenty of his own unique interpretations. He often said, "*You have*

*heard it said, But I tell you...*” (Matthew 5:21,22<sup>v</sup>, 27,28<sup>vi</sup>; 7:28,29<sup>vii</sup>) That is what is meant by the expression, “*He taught them as one who had authority.*” The Holy Spirit illuminated Scripture to Jesus (John 8:26<sup>viii</sup>). While the leaders of that day saw his teaching as arrogant and a refusal to conform to traditions, the people often saw it as insightful and liberating. They were astonished at His teaching (11:18<sup>ix</sup>). He often spoke against misinterpretations that were accepted by religious leaders, but which were a burden to the working people (Matthew 7:9-13<sup>x</sup>). Teaching with authority also means that He taught with conviction and certainty.

For those reasons they were astonished at his teaching. Astonished might be better translated thunderstruck. It reminds me of the conclusion of the movie *The Passion*. After the last scene of Jesus walking out of the tomb, everyone just sat there in silence. The presentation of the crucifixion and resurrection left us thunderstruck.

Guzik comments on the expression, *He taught as one who had authority*. *Jesus taught with **authority** because He had authority. He brought a divine message and was confident that it was from God. He was not quoting from man, but from God. Jesus taught with **authority** because He knew what He was talking about. You cannot teach with **authority** if you are not familiar with your material. Jesus taught with **authority** because He believed what He taught.*<sup>xi</sup> *When you believe what you teach, it comes through to your audience with **authority**. We first saw the submitted Jesus—submitted to His Father in baptism, submitted to the Holy Spirit in going out to the wilderness. Now we see the authority of Jesus. Authority flows from submission. We are not safe with real authority from God unless we are also submitted to God.*<sup>xii</sup>

<sup>23</sup> *And immediately there was in their synagogue a man with an unclean spirit. And he cried out,*<sup>24</sup> *“What have you to do with us, Jesus of Nazareth? Have you come to destroy us? I know who you are—the Holy One of God.”* Mark 1:23,24 The news of the miraculous catch and calling of the four disciples would have spread throughout the town. The synagogue was surely packed to overflowing, with people standing at the windows and entrance waiting to hear this new teacher who performed such a wonder. Partway into his teaching a loud and creepy voice interrupts Jesus. “*What have you to do with us, Jesus of Nazareth? Have you come to destroy us? I know who you are—the Holy One of God.*” The demon is speaking for himself and his fellow fallen angels who are serving Lucifer (Revelation 12:4<sup>xiii</sup>). They know their destiny is the Lake of Fire (Matthew 25:41<sup>xiv</sup>). In a different confrontation with a man possessed by demons, they asked if Jesus had come to torment them before their time (8:29<sup>xv</sup>). “*What do you want with us, Jesus of Nazareth?*,” was a common Old Testament formula which was roughly equivalent to, “*You have no business with us yet!*” The evil spirit wanted Jesus to go away.<sup>xvi</sup> It seems they know there is a set time for justice to be applied to them. In both cases the demons declared they knew who Jesus was. They had been in the heavenly realm before they fell, and they recognize the Holy One of God who is the Son of God.

Why in the world would the demonic realm testify that Jesus is the Holy One of God? Some commentators think by declaring the name of Jesus he was making a vain attempt to take power over Him. It was believed if you knew one’s name you could use it to master them. That is why even today a Navajo’s birth name is kept secret. I thought the demon’s words were a voice of defiance, but Satan had already met more than his match in the temptation in the wilderness. Surely demons did not think they could do more than their leader. Or it could be that they were so scared and in shock that they blurted it out

without thinking. Some people wrongly claim Jesus did not declare He was divine. Here we see that even the demons declare it!

This is not just something that happened back in Jesus' day. The demonic seems to be recently surging. Look at all the people who cheered Charlie Kirk's assassination. That would not have happened twenty years ago, except in the most depraved corners of society. Now it is publicly declared. A recent poll showed a significant number of people approved of assassinating those with whom they disagree. Young people are taking drugs that open a door to demonic possession. The evidence of this surge is homeless shelters filled to maximum capacity and cities overflowing with the homeless. We see it in those who want anarchy and are willing to destroy cities to bring it about. But it is also in the temptations we face daily from entertainment, deceptive news, drugs, gossip, factions, false teaching, anger, lust and all the other things the world has to offer. If we focus on anything to a greater extent than we focus on our Savior and His love for us, the enemy of our souls is succeeding, for that is when we become ineffective. But now for the good news.

<sup>25</sup> *But Jesus rebuked him, saying, "Be silent, and come out of him!"* Mark 1:25 Jesus did not want the fact that He is the Messiah to be spread because it would endanger His followers. They would try to make Him a king which would bring on the wrath of Rome (John 6:15<sup>xvii</sup>). The Jews did not understand that the Messiah had come to give them spiritual freedom over sin. They believed He would oust Rome and take over the world. That will happen at the Second Coming, but it was not time for that (Daniel 2:44<sup>xviii</sup>). That is why Jesus commanded the evil spirit to be silent. That is why he told people not to talk about being healed by Him (7:36<sup>xix</sup>). It is why He referred to Himself as the Son of Man. That can be taken as simply being a human, a term used by God referring to Ezekiel the prophet (Ezekiel 2:1<sup>xx</sup>). But it is also a term used for the Messiah in Daniel and Revelation (Daniel 7:13,14<sup>xxi</sup>; Revelation 1:12,13<sup>xxii</sup>) and also implied in Isaiah (Isaiah 9:6<sup>xxiii</sup>).

Have you noticed that when Jesus gives a command to be healed or for Lazarus to come out of the grave or for wind and waves to be still, it happens (John 11:43,44<sup>xxiv</sup>; Mark 4:39<sup>xxv</sup>)! He spoke all things into existence, and He can order His creation to do whatever He wills. He could tell all physical elements and space to vanish and there would only be the Holy Trinity. But He will not do that because He made us to be eternal beings. When He told the demon to be silent and come out, it had to obey. It had no choice. It is so amazing that He gives human beings the choice to disobey. Only then could we exercise our own volition to love Him. He gave this demon one choice millennia ago. They could stay faithful to God or follow Lucifer. This one chose Lucifer.

I have heard pastors teach that this is a thing of the past, that Jesus led all evil spirits captive in His ascension. I see the verse they interpret that way (Ephesians 4:8<sup>xxvi</sup>; Colossians 2:15<sup>xxvii</sup>). My humble opinion is they are adding to what is written by their interpretation. I have had encounters with the demonic in people. I have seen what we will read about in the next verse. A brother in Christ serving in Africa told me he witnessed things that if I told you, you would have a hard time believing. But I do not doubt that he is telling me what he witnessed.

Brothers and sisters, if you are in Christ you have no need to fear that realm. The Lord is our protector and keeper (Psalm 121:5,6<sup>xxviii</sup>). Greater is He who is in us than he who is in the world (1 John 4:4<sup>xxix</sup>), which refers to Lucifer who reigns over the earth.

Demons flee at the name of Jesus. They hate praise music. They can only do their damage in those who are open to them. Many of the youth in our culture are using a South American herb called ayahuasca. They tell me they go straight into the spirit realm and meet spirits who offer to come back into this plane with them. They hear the voice of the demon in their head and find it difficult to be free from it. It is very dangerous but looks so enticing and presents itself as a friendly helper. There are many other ways people can invite demonic spirits into their lives if they are not born-again.

We are seeing it manifest in people who glorify assassinations, for Satan's M.O. is to steal, kill, and destroy. We saw it in what Hamas did to the villages in Israel on October 7 two years ago. It is a horror that is sickening to see. We saw it in what Al Queda did to Christian villages in the Middle East and what Boko Haram is doing in northern Nigeria. It sickens normal people, but they did it with glee. That is the face of evil, of the demonic realm (John 10:10<sup>xxx</sup>).

<sup>26</sup> *And the unclean spirit, convulsing him and crying out with a loud voice, came out of him.* Mark 1:26 This man was taken over by the demon so that the demon was using his voice and his body. See him writhing on the floor and shrieking as it leaves his body. But now see the relief and peace on the man's face as he lifts himself off the floor and looks into the face of Jesus.

Yes, creepy things like this do happen. Once out of the man it has no voice. Jesus gave a word of caution about casting demons out of a person. <sup>24</sup> *"When the unclean spirit has gone out of a person, it passes through waterless places seeking rest, and finding none it says, 'I will return to my house from which I came.'* <sup>25</sup> *And when it comes, it finds the house swept and put in order.* <sup>26</sup> *Then it goes and brings seven other spirits more evil than itself, and they enter and dwell there. And the last state of that person is worse than the first."* Luke 11:24-26 In the encounters I have had with people who ask for help, I first ask if they want to permanently separate from the spirit and receive Jesus as their Savior. If they do not express that desire, I will not help them be freed because they would end up worse off. In two out of the three situations like this, people would not commit to staying free. Despite the torment they experienced at times, they wanted the benefits they thought they were receiving.

I am not in the deliverance ministry. These are situations that came to me. I did not seek them out. It does not take a special gifting. You just need to be certain of who you are in Christ and under His authority. The seven sons of Sceva saw Paul cast out demons and decided they would do the same. They cornered a demon possessed man and order the demon out in the name of Jesus and Paul, as if their names had magical powers. The demoniac ripped their clothes off, wounded them, and sent them running (Acts 19:13-16<sup>xxxii</sup>). The demons can see the presence or absence of Christ in us.

<sup>27</sup> *And they were all amazed, so that they questioned among themselves, saying, "What is this? A new teaching with authority! He commands even the unclean spirits, and they obey him."* Mark 1:27 They were amazed because their rabbi tried to cast out demons by following a formula of having certain elements and saying certain words while calling on God and renouncing the powers of evil by their revealed names. The Catholic Church does something similar. Not Jesus! He just says, "Shut up and get out!"<sup>xxxiii</sup> That is authority. That is why we do not need to fear. Jesus has total authority over them, and they know it and fear Him.



<sup>28</sup> *And at once his fame spread everywhere throughout all the surrounding region of Galilee.* Mark 1:28 The spread of His fame was a mixed blessing. We will see in verse 45<sup>xxxiii</sup> that the multitudes that came to Him kept Him from entering openly into towns. He had to stay away from civilization so He would not be swamped with requests. There were plenty of desperate people in that age. Medical care was primitive. We take antibiotics for granted, but in that age a simple infection could kill you. One had to be fit to make a living in Galilee as a stone mason or farmer. A serious injury could mean a life of begging for one's food.

What should we take from this account of Jesus' power over the demonic realm? It must be very important for us to understand for we will see it multiple times in Mark's Gospel. The first point is that when we step up to do what God is leading us to do, **we should not be surprised by resistance** (John 16:33<sup>xxxiv</sup>). It can turn out to be an opportunity to show that Jesus reigns. The enemy's devices often backfire. Jesus set this poor man free. We just need to **have faith that Jesus is Lord over all**, which is the second point. Evil spirits know when we are speaking with His authority.

The demonic realm has power, but nothing like the power of Jesus. Which leads to the third point, **we do not need to fear the spiritual realm.** The demons know their destiny in the Lake of Fire is coming (Matthew 25:41<sup>xxxv</sup>). They seem to know the general time frame, which we will see in another passage. At the same time, we should not be messing around with it unless it confronts us. Nor should we be seeing demons in everyone, like some in the deliverance cult. The idea that everyone has a demon only gives people an excuse for their lack of self-control. Demons cannot make a believer do anything. <sup>14</sup> *But each person is tempted when he is lured and enticed by his own desire.* James 1:14 Our personal weaknesses are not the result of demons, but rather of our fallen nature and its desires (James 1:14,15<sup>xxxvi</sup>). This is why we must put to death our old nature on a daily basis if we are to live in Christ (1 Corinthians 15:31<sup>xxxvii</sup>). We can command our old nature to be silent just like Jesus commanded the demon to be silent. We can turn our thoughts to praise and worship and silence the voice of our flesh.

And the last point I want to make is the difference between the way the demonic works in people and the way Jesus works in us. The demonic wants to take over a person to the point of freely using their body in any way it pleases. Jesus, on the other hand, wants a relationship with us. He will not violate our will. He wants to use us as His instrument too, but only in willing cooperation for what is good for us and others. It is a joyful cooperation of mutual love, whereas the demonic takes over and abuses its subjects. We willingly sing, *Take my life and let it be consecrated Lord to Thee. Take my moments and my days. Let them flow in endless praise. Let them flow in endless praise.*

Questions:

- 1 What was basic education in Jesus' day?
- 2 How was His teaching unique?
- 3 What confronted Him in the synagogue?
- 4 What did its expressions mean?
- 5 Why were the people surprised at what happened?
- 6 How powerful are Jesus' words?
- 7 Why do we not need to fear the demonic?
- 8 Why did Jesus not yet want people to know He is the Messiah?

## 9 Review the takeaway points.

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<sup>i</sup> Rewording of Kent Hughes quoting Joseph Bayly's book *I Love to Tell the Story*

<sup>ii</sup> **2 Corinthians 2:15-17 (ESV)**

<sup>15</sup> For we are the aroma of Christ to God among those who are being saved and among those who are perishing,  
<sup>16</sup> to one a fragrance from death to death, to the other a fragrance from life to life. Who is sufficient for these things? <sup>17</sup> For we are not, like so many, peddlers of God's word, but as men of sincerity, as commissioned by God, in the sight of God we speak in Christ.

<sup>iii</sup> **2 Chronicles 8:13 (ESV)**

<sup>13</sup> as the duty of each day required, offering according to the commandment of Moses for the Sabbaths, the new moons, and the three annual feasts—the Feast of Unleavened Bread, the Feast of Weeks, and the Feast of Booths.

<sup>iv</sup> **Luke 3:23 (ESV)**

<sup>23</sup> Jesus, when he began his ministry, was about thirty years of age, being the son (as was supposed) of Joseph, the son of Heli,

<sup>v</sup> **Matthew 5:21-22 (ESV)**

<sup>21</sup> "You have heard that it was said to those of old, 'You shall not murder; and whoever murders will be liable to judgment.' <sup>22</sup> But I say to you that everyone who is angry with his brother will be liable to judgment; whoever insults his brother will be liable to the council; and whoever says, 'You fool!' will be liable to the hell of fire.

<sup>vi</sup> **Matthew 5:27-28 (ESV)**

<sup>27</sup> "You have heard that it was said, 'You shall not commit adultery.' <sup>28</sup> But I say to you that everyone who looks at a woman with lustful intent has already committed adultery with her in his heart.

<sup>vii</sup> **Matthew 7:28-29 (ESV)**

<sup>28</sup> And when Jesus finished these sayings, the crowds were astonished at his teaching, <sup>29</sup> for he was teaching them as one who had authority, and not as their scribes.

<sup>viii</sup> **John 8:26 (ESV)**

<sup>26</sup> I have much to say about you and much to judge, but he who sent me is true, and I declare to the world what I have heard from him."

<sup>ix</sup> **Mark 11:18 (ESV)**

<sup>18</sup> And the chief priests and the scribes heard it and were seeking a way to destroy him, for they feared him, because all the crowd was astonished at his teaching.

<sup>x</sup> **Mark 7:9-13 (ESV)**

<sup>9</sup> And he said to them, "You have a fine way of rejecting the commandment of God in order to establish your tradition! <sup>10</sup> For Moses said, 'Honor your father and your mother'; and, 'Whoever reviles father or mother must surely die.' <sup>11</sup> But you say, 'If a man tells his father or his mother, "Whatever you would have gained from me is Corban"' (that is, given to God)— <sup>12</sup> then you no longer permit him to do anything for his father or mother, <sup>13</sup> thus making void the word of God by your tradition that you have handed down. And many such things you do."

<sup>xi</sup> Kent Hughes writes, "Jesus was the most truly passionate man in history because he believed more than any other in his message."

<sup>xii</sup> David Guzik, *Mark*, David Guzik's Commentaries on the Bible (Santa Barbara, CA: David Guzik, 2013), Mk 1:21–22.

<sup>xiii</sup> **Revelation 12:4 (ESV)**

<sup>4</sup> His tail swept down a third of the stars of heaven and cast them to the earth. And the dragon stood before the woman who was about to give birth, so that when she bore her child he might devour it.

<sup>xiv</sup> **Matthew 25:41 (ESV)**

<sup>41</sup> "Then he will say to those on his left, 'Depart from me, you cursed, into the eternal fire prepared for the devil and his angels.

<sup>xv</sup> **Matthew 8:29 (ESV)**

<sup>29</sup> And behold, they cried out, "What have you to do with us, O Son of God? Have you come here to torment us before the time?"

<sup>xvi</sup> R. Kent Hughes, *Mark: Jesus, Servant and Savior*, vol. 1, Preaching the Word (Westchester, IL: Crossway Books, 1989), 42.

<sup>xvii</sup> **John 6:15 (ESV)**

<sup>15</sup> Perceiving then that they were about to come and take him by force to make him king, Jesus withdrew again to the mountain by himself.

<sup>xviii</sup> **Daniel 2:44 (ESV)**

<sup>44</sup> And in the days of those kings the God of heaven will set up a kingdom that shall never be destroyed, nor shall

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the kingdom be left to another people. It shall break in pieces all these kingdoms and bring them to an end, and it shall stand forever,

<sup>xix</sup> **Mark 7:36 (ESV)**

<sup>36</sup> And Jesus charged them to tell no one. But the more he charged them, the more zealously they proclaimed it.

<sup>xx</sup> **Ezekiel 2:1 (ESV)**

<sup>1</sup> And he said to me, "Son of man, stand on your feet, and I will speak with you."

<sup>xxi</sup> **Daniel 7:13-14 (ESV)**

<sup>13</sup> "I saw in the night visions, and behold, with the clouds of heaven there came one like a son of man, and he came to the Ancient of Days and was presented before him. <sup>14</sup> And to him was given dominion and glory and a kingdom, that all peoples, nations, and languages should serve him; his dominion is an everlasting dominion, which shall not pass away, and his kingdom one that shall not be destroyed.

<sup>xxii</sup> **Revelation 1:12-13 (ESV)**

<sup>12</sup> Then I turned to see the voice that was speaking to me, and on turning I saw seven golden lampstands, <sup>13</sup> and in the midst of the lampstands one like a son of man, clothed with a long robe and with a golden sash around his chest.

<sup>xxiii</sup> **Isaiah 9:6 (ESV)**

<sup>6</sup> For to us a child is born, to us a son is given; and the government shall be upon his shoulder, and his name shall be called Wonderful Counselor, Mighty God, Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace.

<sup>xxiv</sup> **John 11:43-44 (ESV)**

<sup>43</sup> When he had said these things, he cried out with a loud voice, "Lazarus, come out." <sup>44</sup> The man who had died came out, his hands and feet bound with linen strips, and his face wrapped with a cloth. Jesus said to them, "Unbind him, and let him go."

<sup>xxv</sup> **Mark 4:39 (ESV)**

<sup>39</sup> And he awoke and rebuked the wind and said to the sea, "Peace! Be still!" And the wind ceased, and there was a great calm.

<sup>xxvi</sup> **Ephesians 4:8 (ESV)**

<sup>8</sup> Therefore it says, "When he ascended on high he led a host of captives, and he gave gifts to men."

<sup>xxvii</sup> **Colossians 2:15 (ESV)**

<sup>15</sup> He disarmed the rulers and authorities and put them to open shame, by triumphing over them in him.

<sup>xxviii</sup> **Psalms 121:5-6 (ESV)**

<sup>5</sup> The LORD is your keeper; the LORD is your shade on your right hand. <sup>6</sup> The sun shall not strike you by day, nor the moon by night.

<sup>xxix</sup> **1 John 4:4 (ESV)**

<sup>4</sup> Little children, you are from God and have overcome them, for he who is in you is greater than he who is in the world.

<sup>xxx</sup> **John 10:10 (ESV)**

<sup>10</sup> The thief comes only to steal and kill and destroy. I came that they may have life and have it abundantly.

<sup>xxxi</sup> **Acts 19:13-16 (ESV)**

<sup>13</sup> Then some of the itinerant Jewish exorcists undertook to invoke the name of the Lord Jesus over those who had evil spirits, saying, "I adjure you by the Jesus whom Paul proclaims." <sup>14</sup> Seven sons of a Jewish high priest named Sceva were doing this. <sup>15</sup> But the evil spirit answered them, "Jesus I know, and Paul I recognize, but who are you?"

<sup>16</sup> And the man in whom was the evil spirit leaped on them, mastered all of them and overpowered them, so that they fled out of that house naked and wounded.

<sup>xxxii</sup> "The Greek word *phimōthēti*, *be silent*, is better translated as 'be muzzled': it is both strong and blunt, like 'shut up' in modern colloquial English." Alan Cole TNTC commentary

<sup>xxxiii</sup> **Mark 1:45 (ESV)**

<sup>45</sup> But he went out and began to talk freely about it, and to spread the news, so that Jesus could no longer openly enter a town, but was out in desolate places, and people were coming to him from every quarter.

<sup>xxxiv</sup> **John 16:33 (ESV)**

<sup>33</sup> I have said these things to you, that in me you may have peace. In the world you will have tribulation. But take heart; I have overcome the world."

<sup>xxxv</sup> **Matthew 25:41 (ESV)**

<sup>41</sup> "Then he will say to those on his left, 'Depart from me, you cursed, into the eternal fire prepared for the devil and his angels.

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<sup>xxxvi</sup> **James 1:14-15 (ESV)**

<sup>14</sup> But each person is tempted when he is lured and enticed by his own desire.

<sup>15</sup> Then desire when it has conceived gives birth to sin, and sin when it is fully grown brings forth death.

<sup>xxxvii</sup> **1 Corinthians 15:31 (ESV)**

<sup>31</sup> I protest, brothers, by my pride in you, which I have in Christ Jesus our Lord, I die every day!