

A black and white photograph of a lake with mountains in the background. The text is overlaid on the image.

"No One
Ever Spoke
Like This!"

By David Langford

THE CHRISTIAN
Appeal

Preface



John Gulley

What was it like? To be physically present as our Lord taught. To hear those wonderful parables in person. To assemble on a hillside and listen to the most meaningful words ever spoken. Those who were there said this: “We’ve never heard anyone speak like this man!” He pointed his hearers, and still points us, to the truth of his Father. In this issue, Consulting Editor David Langford helps us to ponder the amazing fact that Christ has commissioned his followers to share the truth in love.

By David Langford

As followers of the greatest Teacher of all, we are commissioned to speak God’s truth in love.



Curtis Shelburne

“Have you heard
the way he talks?
We’ve never heard
anyone speak like
this man.”

John 7
The Message

THE CHRISTIAN APPEAL
(UPS 107-240)

May 2022, Vol. 70, No. 11. Owned and published monthly by CHRISTIAN APPEAL PUBLISHERS, INC., 2310 Anna Street, Amarillo, Texas 79106. Senior editor, Gene Shelburne. Managing editor, Curtis Shelburne. Consulting editor, David Langford. Subscriptions: Free, thanks to our donors, to all who request the magazine. Free monthly bundles to churches, Bible study groups, and ministries. Send all orders to Christian Appeal Publishers, Inc., 2310 Anna Street, Amarillo, Texas 79106. (Offer subject to issue and print-run availability.) Postmaster: Send address changes to 2310 Anna Street, Amarillo, Texas 79106. Periodical postage paid at Amarillo, Texas. © 2022 by Christian Appeal Publishers, Inc.

COVER & PAGE 2 PHOTO by John Gulley

FOR ALMOST SIXTY YEARS of issues (and more!) visit our website at www.christianappeal.com.

CHRISTIAN APPEAL

“No One Ever Spoke Like This!”



"No One Ever Spoke Like This!"

Whether people agreed with Jesus or disagreed, it seems everyone responded to Jesus in one way or another.

For some, the responses were dramatic. Some left everything to follow him—their job, their home, their family. Others tried to make *him* leave, even tried to kill him. And not just the religious leaders. His own home synagogue folks tried to throw him off a cliff.

The majority were perhaps less dramatic, but no less interested, as they joined the crowds to hear him. Very few ignored him. He was not a teacher you could easily ignore.

What Was His Secret?

What was his secret? Was it his clever and entertaining parables that caught their attention? Perhaps, but using parables certainly wasn't unique to Jesus. Most rabbis used similar stories in their teaching. Was it that

his teachings were new and innovative? Not according to Jesus. He said he was only teaching the Law and the Prophets, and they had been around forever.

So, what was it that made Jesus so different, that made so many want to follow him? Perhaps the answer to that question can be found in what the crowd said after Jesus concluded his Sermon on the Mount: "When Jesus had finished saying these things, the crowds were amazed at his teaching, because he taught as one who had authority, and not as their teachers of the law" (Matthew 7:28–29).

What did the crowd mean? Well, look again at some of the statements Jesus made in his "sermon."

"Everyone who hears these words of mine . . ." *Mine!*

Not "everyone who hears these words of" Moses, or Isaiah, or any of the other prophets. "You have heard that

"No One Ever Spoke Like This!"

it was said . . . but I tell you" (Matthew 5:21–22).

"Therefore, everyone who hears these words of mine and puts them into practice is like a wise man who built his house on the rock" (Matthew 7:24).

Jesus doesn't say to build your house on the words of the prophet, or even the words of the Law, but on these words of *mine*.

At least eighteen different times in the Gospels Jesus uses the first person singular "I."

What boldness to refer over and over to himself as the authority of what he is saying!

And nowhere is this more amazing, or outrageous,

depending on your perspective, than in the disturbing scene



Curtis Shelburne

Jesus describes toward the end of his sermon (Matthew 7).

"Not everyone who says to me, 'Lord, Lord,' will enter the kingdom of heaven, but

"No One Ever Spoke Like This!"

only the one who does the will of my Father who is in heaven."

And he continues, "Many will say to me on that day, 'Lord, Lord, did we not prophesy in your name and in your name drive out demons and in your name perform many miracles?'"

But he warns, "Then I will tell them plainly, 'I never knew you. Away from me, you evildoers!'"

Who Do You Think You Are?

Just who do you think you are, Jesus?! No wonder the crowds were amazed. No wonder some felt he should be executed. How could Jesus speak with such boldness, confidence, and such authority without

coming off as unbelievably arrogant and full of himself? What made him think he had such authority, an authority that many considered nothing

less than blasphemous?

Actually, Jesus answered that question several times, most directly in the following passage recorded in the Gospel of John (7:14–18):

Not until half-way through the festival did Jesus

go up to the temple courts and begin to teach. The Jews there were amazed and asked, "How did this man get such learning without having been taught?" Jesus answered, "My teaching is not my own. It comes from him who sent me. Anyone who chooses to do the will of God will find out whether my teaching comes from God or whether I speak on my own.

How could Jesus speak with such boldness, confidence, and such authority without coming off as arrogant?

"No One Ever Spoke Like This!"

Whoever speaks on his own does so to gain personal glory, but he who seeks the glory of the One who sent him is a man of truth; there is nothing false about him.

It is pretty clear why Jesus thought he had the authority to say what he said. He had been sent here to say it. And doing and saying what he was sent to do and say was all-important to Jesus. He once told his disciples, "My food is to do the will of him who sent me and finish his work" (John 4:34).

When you have been sent, you have the confidence and

the authority of the One who sent you. I learned the power



Stacy Conner

of this principle many years ago in London, England.

Lisa and I were privileged

"No One Ever Spoke Like This!"

to travel to England not too long after we were married. We couldn't wait! We were both lovers of everything England.

While we were there, we spent some time in London and saw all the sights. But I must confess, what I most wanted to do was go to see the London professional basketball team play, because their star player was a former star at Texas Tech, Bubba Jennings. At that time they were called the Hemel Hempstead Lakers.

I wasn't sure when or where the game was to be played, and I wondered if Bubba's phone number might be listed in the phone book. I was amazed to find that it

was, and, more amazing still, when I called it, he answered. I told him who I was and that I was a big fan, and he told me the game would be played

at Wembley Arena, and then he said for me to be sure to come by and say "hi" after the game.

It's Who You Know

We watched the game with great excitement, but I was even more excited

for it to end so I could meet Bubba.

When the game was over, I saw where Bubba Jennings was standing with some of the players, and I headed over to meet him. As I headed that way, a security officer stepped in front of me. He said I didn't have clearance to enter that area. I said, "But

Jesus had confidence because he knew he had the authority of the One who sent him.

"No One Ever Spoke Like This!"

I'd like to say hello to my friend Bubba Jennings."

The officer said in amazement, "You know Bubba Jennings?" I said, "Sure. We went to school together. He told me to come see him after the game."

The officer was impressed to say the least. "If you're a friend of Bubba's, it's okay" and let me pass. I went over to Bubba and quickly introduced myself, and he very graciously welcomed me as if we were old buddies.

Standing in front of that policeman, I had confidence because I wasn't just standing on my own authority; I had been sent by Bubba Jennings and in London, England, in 1985, Queen Elizabeth didn't have that kind of authority!

Jesus had confidence because he knew he had the authority of the One who had sent him. Now here is an exciting truth about the

authority you and I have.

Jesus said to those who followed him, "As the Father has sent me, so I send you" (John 20:21). As followers of Jesus Christ, we have his authority to go into all the

world with the message he has given us to proclaim. And having that authority makes all the difference in the world.

We have been given Christ's authority to go into all the world with the message he has given us to proclaim.

Before and After

Just look at the disciples. When they were followers of only a crucified Lord, the disciples were uncertain followers. After Jesus' death, they ran

"No One Ever Spoke Like This!"

and hid from the Jewish leaders, probably in that same "upper room" where Jesus had revealed to them so much about who he was and why he had come. Now it was little more than a room to hide in, a place where they could cower and hope they would not be discovered as followers of Jesus.

But then Jesus appeared to those disciples in that room, this time not as a charismatic rabbi, or a powerful prophet, but as the risen Lord Jesus who had conquered death itself. What a difference it made to be commissioned by a risen Lord to go and preach the Good News of who Jesus was! We see that difference quite clearly only a few weeks later. Luke records it in Acts 4:

The priests and the captain of the temple guard and the Sadducees came up to Peter and John while they were speaking to the people. They



John Gulley

were greatly disturbed because the apostles were teaching the people, proclaiming in Jesus the resurrection of the dead. They seized Peter and John and, because it was evening, they put them in jail until the next day.

"No One Ever Spoke Like This!"

filled with the Holy Spirit, said to them: "Rulers and elders of the people! If we are being called to account today for an act of kindness shown to a man who was lame and are being asked how he was healed, then know this, you and all the people of Israel: It is by the name of Jesus Christ of Nazareth, whom you crucified but whom God raised from the dead, that this man stands before you healed. Jesus is 'the stone you builders rejected, which has become the cornerstone.' Salvation is found in no one else, for there is no other name under heaven given to mankind by which we must be saved."

When they saw the courage of Peter and John and realized that they were unschooled, ordinary men, they were astonished, and they took note that these men had been with Jesus. But since they could see the man who had been healed standing there with them, there was nothing they could say. So, they ordered them to withdraw from the Sanhedrin and then conferred together. "What

The next day the rulers, the elders and the teachers of the law . . . had Peter and John brought before them and began to question them: "By what power or what name did you do this?" Then Peter,

"No One Ever Spoke Like This!"

are we going to do with these men?" they asked. "Everyone living in Jerusalem knows they have performed a notable sign, and we cannot deny it. But to stop this thing from spreading any further among the people, we must warn them to speak no longer to anyone in this name."

Then they called them in again and commanded them not to speak or teach at all in the name of Jesus. But Peter and John replied, "Which is right in God's eyes: to listen to you, or to him? You be the judges! As for us, we cannot help speaking about what we have seen and heard."

Wow! These guys aren't hiding in any upper rooms now. They have a boldness they've never known before, and they have no doubt where

it comes from. They know they have been sent, and they know the One who sent them has "all authority in heaven and on earth."

The principle of authority, in and through Christ, is one that we who follow Jesus today need never to forget.

And that's a principle that those of us who claim to follow Jesus today need not to forget. When we know we are sent, and we know exactly who has sent us, we have the courage to say to this world what Jesus said to his world.

Radical things like "Blessed are the poor in spirit."

"Blessed are the merciful."
"Blessed are the peacemakers."

"Seek first the kingdom, and all these other things will be added to you."

"Love your enemies and pray for those who persecute you."

"No One Ever Spoke Like This!"

When we know we have been sent and Who has sent us, we have the courage to speak to the people we need to speak to.

We Can Speak

We can speak to families about what Jesus says is necessary for marriages to be blessed.

We can speak to businessmen about what Jesus says are the dangers of loving money and exploiting the poor.

We can speak to governments about what Jesus says about the importance of passing laws that are just and fair and recognizing that all earthly authorities rule only by the final authority of God.

We can speak to ourselves and to our churches about the importance of proclaiming a

faith that is centered in Christ and Christ alone, and not in all our own endless interpretations and traditions.

Speaking such things to

Each of us has been placed in various relationships and positions of influence to represent the One who sent us.

such people is what we have been sent to do. Each of us has been placed in various relationships and positions of influence, and we've been sent to certain places in this world to represent the One who sent us.

Is it too much to say with Jesus, "Our food is to do the will of the One who sent us"? More than that, not just to do the will of the One who sent us but also to do so in the spirit of the One who has sent us. Confidence and arrogance are not the same things. We speak not as the Author of our words, but as lifelong

"No One Ever Spoke Like This!"

students of those words, so we must speak with humility and love. As the apostle Paul instructed us, we must learn to "speak the truth in love."

Speaking Truth

To speak truth without love is to be cold and condemning. If we speak like that, is it any surprise some might say we are arrogant?

To speak truth without love is to be guilty of a sin at least as bad as any sin we might speak against. Paul explained, "If I speak with the tongues of men or of angels, or have the gift of knowledge or have the faith to move mountains, or give all I possess to the poor and have not love, I am nothing but a clanging cymbal"

(1 Corinthians 13:1–3).

To "speak the truth in love" is to speak with patience and kindness, not being proud or rude or self-seeking or eas-

ily angered. "To speak the truth in love" is to do so in a way that protects people, trusts people, hopes the best for people, perseveres with people.

On the other hand, love without concern for truth isn't really

love. Love cannot ignore behavior that leads to disaster. A loving police officer doesn't sit by while someone drives recklessly "under the influence." A loving teacher doesn't ignore a student who disregards his studies. A loving physician isn't indifferent to a patient whose lifestyle will kill him.

To "speak the truth in love" is to do so in a way that protects people, trusts people, hopes the best for people.

"No One Ever Spoke Like This!"

We are rightfully angry when a driver is injured, a student failed, or a patient diagnosed with a disease because no officer or teacher or doctor ever spoke up and tried to change what they were doing. What kind of love sees one whose life is headed for trouble and says nothing?

No Guarantee

Speaking the truth—even speaking it in love—is no guarantee we will not experience negative responses from people. Jesus certainly did. Some may hear our words and choose to follow the Lord.

Others may rather throw us off a cliff. We can't control that.



John Gulley

What we can control is to be able to say, "My teaching is not my own, but comes from the One who sent me."

Years ago in a college classroom, I learned the difference this can make. I was studying Marriage and Family Theory. There were about

"No One Ever Spoke Like This!"

fifteen in the class, mostly women, and the professor made it clear that she was a devout feminist.

During one lecture, the professor asked us to list the things necessary for people to have a successful marriage. After she had written several student comments on the blackboard, I noticed one was missing that I thought was important. So I raised my hand.

When she called on me, I said, "I think it's important for a husband and wife to be one." That's what I had always been taught, and I figured everyone would agree. I couldn't have been more wrong.

The professor put down

her piece of chalk, turned and looked directly at me, and said, "And just what exactly do you mean by 'one'?"

I said, "You know, one—

together, united." I could tell I was in trouble as all the other students, mostly female, were glaring at me.

The professor continued, "You mean women need to submit to men and give up any sense of their own indi-

viduality, and simply agree with whatever their husbands tell them to think and do?"

Yes, I knew I was in trouble. I had used language that triggered in her a negative response to the very religious teaching that I had been brought up on. At first, I felt defensive and wanted to defend myself, my parents, my church,

I knew I was in trouble; I had used language that triggered a negative response to what I had been taught.

"No One Ever Spoke Like This!"

and everyone who had ever taught me what I believed.

But then I had one of those moments that occasionally happens when an answer

comes that just seems right. I said, "I'm sorry. I didn't mean to say anything offensive. You see, I'm a follower of Jesus, and I try to conform my life and my thinking to his teaching.

And it is my understanding that Jesus taught that men and women become in some sense one when they are married. I'm still learning, and it may be that I don't yet fully understand what it is that Jesus meant by that. But whatever he meant, that's what I want to believe."

The mood in the room suddenly changed amazingly.

One of the women in the class spoke up. "I'm also a Christian, and I agree. Men and women do need to be one when they get married."

A few others seemed to nod in agreement.

The professor sighed, picked up her chalk, and wrote the word "one" on the blackboard, but in a last note of defiance, put it in quotation marks suggest-

ing the meaning was very much still in doubt.

I learned that first speaking in Christ's name and authority is much more effective than speaking in my name.

Valuable Lessons

I learned a lot that day. I learned, first, that speaking in the name and authority of Jesus is much more effective than speaking in my own name, or the name of my church, or my heritage,

"No One Ever Spoke Like This!"

or whatever. I also learned that it was no less important to speak humbly, not defiantly, seeking to build and not undermine relationships, choosing reconciliation over confrontation.

I actually liked my professor a lot. She was very good, and I learned a lot from her. We became good friends and had some good conversations. When I decided to enter graduate school, she even wrote me a letter of recommendation.

I learned that day that our being sent by Jesus into the world to speak his message to the world doesn't necessarily have to lead to polarization between us and others, even when they might disagree with us. One can be confident

without being arrogant.

Of course, no matter how hard we try to speak in humility and love, there will be times when people will respond negatively, sometimes even harshly. They did to Jesus.

But if we speak in the authority and in the spirit of Jesus, we will have the best chance for people to respond to us as they did

to Jesus. And as we speak his words, we can have real hope that those who hear his words today will be amazed at his teaching, as were those who heard his words then.

Perhaps they too will say of Jesus, "No one ever spoke like this."



“As we speak Christ’s words in Christ’s spirit, we can have real hope that those who hear will hear our Lord.”

“My teaching is not my own; it came from the One who sent me.”



Jesus
John 7

Curtis Shelburne

Follow Me



*Reflections on
The Sermon on the Mount*

David Langford

*By
David
Langford*

***An Inspiring New Book
Focuses On:***

***Christ's Sermon on the Mount:
Perhaps the Greatest Words
Ever Spoken***

ORDER NOW!

To order, please indicate how many copies you want and send \$15.00 per copy, plus shipping and handling, \$2.00 for each book. (Tax, where applicable, is included in the price.)

To Order:

5301 27th Street, Lubbock, TX 79407
(806) 787-8044 • dlangford@quakeravenue.com

Released by Ketch Publishing www.KetchPublishing.com