

Announcements:

Colossians 1:15-18; Hebrews 10:1-7, 10

Who's in Charge? Mark 11:27-33

Just to get us thinking this morning, I would like to ask all of us to get up and go outside, but I am not going to. So, imagine doing this with me. Imagine walking outside and telling one of the trees to wither and die. Do it with all the authority you can muster up. What is going to happen? Nothing. Let's go over to the Umpqua river and let's tell it to part, to stop flowing. What is going to happen? Nothing...you're just going to look like a nut case. Let's find someone demon possessed and I want you to walk up to that person and tell the demon to leave. What is going to happen? Maybe, maybe, because you have Christ in you the demon will leave. But and this is a big BUT...that is only going to happen if that is God's authority and power at work in you. You and I don't have authority over creation...unless that thing in creation puts itself under your authority. And when it comes to the spiritual realm or intimate objects such as a tree or river or demons, we can't have power over them unless it is Christ moves in His authority through us.

Living under authority is something that is all around us. We have government that is in authority over us. We have parents that are in authority over us. We have teachers, bosses, coaches, laws, systems, and more. In the animal kingdom you see a sense of authoritative hierarchy. Look at a wolf pack. There is an alpha and then there is a line of other wolves that fall behind the alpha. There is some sense of authority all throughout creation.

Living under authority is an issue, though. Living under authority has been an issue since the beginning of creation. Humanity has struggled one way or another since Adam and Eve. We don't like to be told how to live. Essentially, we want to be our own gods. We want to run our own life.

You don't have to teach a child to disobey. It seems instinctive to want to control their own life. When a young child is told 'no', what do they do if it is something they want? Throw a fit, because they didn't get their way. They want to be in charge.

As kids grow and play with siblings or friends, there is always a power struggle at some point of who is going to be in charge.

This carries over into adulthood. We don't like people telling us how to live. I don't like people telling me how to live. I don't like being told I have to wear a mask. And sometimes, my attitude is less than godly when it comes to the mask. It becomes real hard sometimes not to take my frustration out upon a worker who is just doing their job, when in reality that person isn't the one that came up with the idea of a mask.

1 Peter tells us we should live in a way that honors God. Chapter 2:16 says, "For you are free, yet you are God's slaves, so don't use your freedom as an excuse to do evil." We have to be very careful that our attitude when we are confronted with an issue, whether right or wrong, doesn't turn into a retaliation, but instead brings honor and good to the situation. We must remember, we fight a spiritual war as Ephesians 6 says, "It's not a war of flesh and blood, but against evil rulers and authorities of the unseen world, against mighty powers in this dark world, and against evil spirits in the heavenly places."

The enemies of God want authority. They fight for authority. They deceive and manipulate to get authority. We have to be careful not to place ourselves underneath their authority, because their authority is not lasting and it only leaves a wake of pain and suffering behind it. We need to remember not to seek to have that kind of authority either.

That is the nature of authority that isn't under God's ultimate authority. What ends up happening is a need for power and a need for control. It won't be about the ultimate good of those underneath, but it will be about the power and control. It will be about the feeling of supremacy and greatness...which is a total attack upon God, because they want to be God. It is pride. It is a pride that says "I know better than God Himself." And as soon as we have gone to that place, the heart is hardened.

We see that in our passage this morning. We see a battle for 'who is in charge.' We see the battle of the religious leaders conniving and manipulating for power and control. They want ultimate authority. But, the wall they are up against is the supremacy of Jesus. Colossians and Hebrews talks about the supremacy of Jesus.

Colossians and Hebrews points to Jesus as God, the Creator, the final sacrifice, the High priests, the Son of God, the One who holds all things together, He is the head of the Church, He is infinite, has authority and power over death, and even more. Colossians

Think about the word supremacy for a minute. To be supreme means you are the highest. You are the authority. You have the final say. You have ultimate greatness. There is no one like you or above you. That is Jesus. Philippians 2 says it this way, "Name above all names." Revelation calls Jesus the "Lord of all Lords." Colossians calls Him the firstborn of creation. That word firstborn is confusing, because in our culture we think of it as created first. But, in the language of the day, it was not talking as in created, but as hierarchy, first in order, authority, supremacy.

Jesus is in charge. He is the One with ultimate authority. The question must be, are we willing to submit to His authority. Do we trust that His authority is good and best?

It is easy to call Jesus savior, it is hard to live as if He is our Lord. There are many who are willing to call Jesus savior, but less that will let Him be Lord of their life. That is the outcome of the easy gospel. That is the outcome of living in a land where there isn't real stress to be a 'Christian'. That is the outcome when we don't preach that there truly is sin and we truly are not good people. That is the outcome when we don't have a grasp upon how depraved humanity really is and how desperate we are in need of a savior. Go to China or parts of Africa or North Korea and you will be challenged with Jesus not just being savior, but you will have to make the decision is He Lord of your life. You will have to decide is He the One to whom you are going to submit to His authority over your life or are you going to place yourself under the authority of something less?

Jesus placed Himself under the authority of God the Father. Matthew 28 says that Jesus was given 'all authority in heaven and on earth.' Jesus is supreme. Jesus is in charge.

Throughout Jesus's life He showed and proved His authority.

We see this through His time on earth

- He was in the temple at the age of 12 teaching
- Mark 1:23-26 He casts out demons

23 Suddenly, a man in the synagogue who was possessed by an evil[h] spirit cried out, 24 “Why are you interfering with us, Jesus of Nazareth? Have you come to destroy us? I know who you are—the Holy One of God!”

25 But Jesus reprimanded him. “Be quiet! Come out of the man,” he ordered. 26 At that, the evil spirit screamed, threw the man into a convulsion, and then came out of him.

-Mark says, "the people were amazed because He spoke with such authority" (1:27)

-Mark 2:10 He forgave the paralytic man's sins, they questioned His authority to forgive sins

-Mark 4:39-41 and Mark 8:1-10 He has authority over creation (storm and feeding of the 5,000)

-Mark 7:37 He has authority over the human body

-John 11:25 He has authority over life and death

-He raised Lazarus from the dead

-He can give eternal life to those who believe

-Jesus even said He can give His life, and He can raise it up again.

Let's look at our passage this morning.

[Read Mark 11:27-33]

This confrontation is in response to Jesus cleansing the temple

-Cleansing the temple was an act of authority.

-those in 'charge' of the temple said what was ok and not ok

-what they were doing was for their benefit, not the people and it wasn't to make more of God.

-They were not making it easier for people to worship, but harder

The religious leaders wanted to kill Jesus (11:18)

-they had to find a way to do it that proved He was a fraud because the people were amazed at Jesus's teaching.

-they were afraid of the people

Verse 27-28

-again entered Jerusalem—Day 2

- Temple—huge
- The confrontation “By what authority are you doing all these things? Who gave you the right to do them?”
 - This was a battle of authority— who gets to be in power
 - The hope was Jesus would claim to be the Messiah and so they could stone Him on the spot
 - They were doing the right thing, but with wrong motives
 - leadership of the church should protect the church from false teaching
 - 2 Timothy 4:3 “For a time is coming when people will no longer listen to sound and wholesome teaching. They will follow their own desires and will look for teachers who will tell them whatever their itching ears want to hear.”
 - This is the role of the pastor and leaders, to guard against things that aren’t the truth and deceive
 - the right thing, done with the wrong motives, doesn’t make the action good, but will lead to destruction
 - that is why Christ-followers should be mindful of their actions. That is why we don’t give Jesus or second-best or left-overs

Verse 29-32

- Jesus’s response
 - His response itself shows His authority, His supremacy
- This puts the religious leaders between a rock and a hard place.
 - either answer will not help them quest for power and ridding them of Jesus
- If they claim John’s baptism was from heaven,
 - then they have to claim John’s teaching and baptism of preparation for the Messiah is true
 - that John is a prophet
 - they have to acknowledge that Jesus is the Messiah
 - John 1:15; 22-23; 29-30; 32-34
- if they claim John’s baptism was from man, they would lose their authority with the people.
 - The people believed John the Baptist to be a prophet of God
 - Luke 20:6 adds “the people will stone us”
 - If they didn't listen to a prophet of God, then they couldn't be trusted. If the people weren't willing to trust these pride-filled religious leaders than they would lose their power and money.

Verse 33

- In their heads there was only one response “We don’t know.”
 - Pride vs humility
 - Pride keeps us from doing the right thing
 - Pride blinds us
 - Pride breeds more hatred
 - Pride seeks lifting oneself up, making more of self
 - Humility could have saved them
 - Humility would have led the people to the truth
 - Humility would have created less division
 - Humility can bring peace
 - Humility lifts up Jesus
 - There answer was safe
 - It wasn’t about truth
 - It wasn’t about doing the right thing
 - It was to manipulate to keep there power

A. A. Hodge wrote, “Whatever God teaches or commands is of sovereign authority. . . . The Scriptures of the Old and New Testaments are the only organs through which, during the present dispensation, God conveys to us a knowledge of his will about what we are to believe concerning himself, and what duties he requires of us”

The big question we must ask ourselves...who is in charge of our life?
Whose authority have we placed ourselves under?

We can place ourselves the power of sin's that we struggle with.
We can place ourselves under the power of people.
We can place ourselves under the need to feel loved.
We can place ourselves under the power of feeling like we are important.

Do we trust that the authority of Jesus is really worth placing ourselves under? If so, it takes intention on our part to live under it.

Salvation comes down to authority. Who gets the authority of our life. It is so much more than intellectual. It is so much more than emotion. It comes down to who gets authority.